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A Guided Study to the Gospel According to John

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A GUIDED STUDY TO THE GOSPEL
ACCORDING TO JOHN

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Chapter 1

PURPOSE, RATIONALE, AND METHODOLOGY

This project is intended to be used as an adult Bible study guide. It could be used in a Bible study, Sunday School class, or Sunday evening service. The purpose of this research project is compound.

First, it is to make the Scriptures vividly understandable to the student. Hopefully it will be so real that the student can almost reach out his hand and feel the splinters on the cross. It is the hope of the author that each student will see each Biblical person as someone the student can identify with and that he can put himself in the historical person's place. This will move the Scriptures from abstract facts to vivid encounters with the person of Jesus Christ.

Second, it is to teach Biblical study techniques by demonstrating that with some background information and by learning what questions to ask, a layman can understand the Scriptures. This is only possible as he receives guidance from the Holy Spirit. It would be a horror to the fathers of the Reformation if they saw how an elitist attitude still prevails in the area of discerning Scriptures. The priesthood of all believers demands that all Christians can understand the Scriptures through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and have no need of a human interpreter.

Finally, this project is not intended to be exhaustive. The treatment of each section will be superficial in several aspects since paging is restricted. Items will be focused on as they fit the purpose of

the study guide; that is, to teach study techniques and put the student in the Biblical character's situation so as to understand the meaning of the Scriptures.

This project will not attempt to be exhaustive in comparing the Gospel of John to the Synoptics in either an exhaustive or analytical manner. This type of study does not fit the purpose of the project, the intended audience, or the length. Reference to the Synoptics will be made only when it fits the purpose of the project. The project will not attempt to be a critical apparatus since this would not fit either the purpose or the audience.

Some of the rationale has already been indirectly mentioned but now must be addressed specifically. The rationale of this project lies in five conditions present in the church today. The first problem that disturbs the author is the casual manner in which most devotional Bible reading occurs. The emphasis is usually on reading a certain number of chapters each day rather than seeking to understand the chapters read. Hopefully if a layman learns how to ask questions and finds fulfillment in discovering Biblical truths, his Scripture reading will no longer be superficial.

A second problem is that most laymen feel inadequate to understand the Scriptures. This lack of confidence in himself and the Holy Spirit discourages his seeking to discover Biblical truths. Thus what occurs is a vicious circle of not attempting to discover God's truth and the inability to learn, reinforcing the notion that they cannot understand the Bible. Hopefully this study guide will break the vicious circle.

A third problem is that somehow we have removed Biblical people from the realm of actual flesh and blood. Either we see them as bigger, smarter,

or better than we are, or we marvel at their spiritual ineptness. It is hoped that by continually placing the student in the place of the Biblical figure, the Biblical figure will not only take on human form with the frailty and courage exemplified by the incident but that the student might realize his own weakness while discovering his God-given potential. This discovery of commonness should open up a new realm of spiritual honesty and issue a challenge to live as if Christ walks beside us and helps us as He did the great men of faith. After all, God is the same today as He was in the time of the Bible writers. A fourth reason that is connected to the previous one is that if a student can effectively identify himself with the historical figure in the Biblical account, then the theological motif will naturally follow. An attempt will be made to focus primarily on the historical and cultural situation with a secondary interest in the literary aspect when it helps us understand the event. The theological motif will only be dealt with in the most major of issues. The thought is to rather leave this aspect open to the direction of each study group. As the issues and questions arise, they are encouraged and stimulated with a minimum of leader participation. It is not that theology is not important; far from it. The reason for its omission is that if one understands the historical and literary aspects of a passage, the theological understanding is usually clear. Also, most laymen shy away from theological questions if asked by a leader; but if it becomes an interest to a member of the group, the interaction and dialogue among all members provides an opportunity for them to test their "discernment wings". An important note is that a person's interest in Bible study increases if they share their opinions actively and feel that they genuinely have discovered or solved a problem on their own. A final rationale for the approach which is taken is that some Bible

study techniques use the Scriptures as an end to a means. The technique popularized by Cedar Mill Bible Church in Beaverton, Oregon, exemplifies this. The manual "Christians - Come Alive!" illustrates the early technique that Pastor Albert Wollen's Cedar Mill Bible Church popularized. This technique promotes the Scriptures as a means of stimulating discussion and personal sharing. Subsequent books such as Miracles Happen in Group Bible Study, do not exhibit this misuse of Scripture. It is improper to use the Scriptures as a means for one to say something about himself. The Scriptures surely say something to the reader and directs him; but it cannot be properly used to make a statement about himself which is separate from the context or intended meaning of the passage. The Scriptures are not something subjective that are used to objectify one's life. Too often this method is used so that participation can be stimulated since there are no right or wrong answers in such a system. The author's proposed approach focuses on the passage and holds that there is only one correct understanding; yet because of our humanity, we must withhold certainty in some instances. This method is superior in several respects. Its view of man is more Biblically correct; it allows discussion without demanding uniformity of thought; and it stimulates discussion and study as each student tries to discover the answers on his own. Since these last comments deal with methodology, it shall be the subject of further comment.

The methodology will be to study John in a thematic form as suggested by the outline. Each incident, such as Jesus' discourse with Nicodemus, will be approached by giving information on the culture and background not common knowledge or easily accessible to a layman. This section is called "Behind the Scene". The next section, which deals with each incident is entitled "Guided Discovery" in which questions are listed to draw out the

intended meaning of each passage and its application. The questions will be of such a nature that they may suggest a direction or be of a nature that places the student in the life setting so as to facilitate understanding. In other words, the question may suggest the correct answer. Discussion questions will be noted by a question mark (?) in front of the question. These questions should be the first omitted if time is limited. These questions also provide an opportunity for the participants to brainstorm over less important items. Key questions which are important to the intended meaning will be noted by placing an exclamation mark (!) in front of the question. These questions should be dealt with even if time is limited. All teachers will do well to let the students interact and should refrain from input except to cut the discussion off and move on once the subject has been dealt with sufficiently. The last section of each incident is entitled "Wrap-Up". This section will answer the questions raised in the preceding section on the more important or less obvious questions. It is intended to be used by the Bible study leader and is presented to help the teacher keep the lesson on track. It answers the "Guided Discovery" section so that auxiliary questions of the leader's own choosing may assist when primary questions do not achieve the desired results. The "Wrap-Up" is not used to measure the success of the Bible study. Such a usage would be counter-productive by repressing the students' free thought and self-expression by interjecting definitive answers that might be seen as the only correct rendering of a particular passage.

This freedom of self-expression and free thought is especially important in the beginning of the Bible study where the guidelines and direction are verbally and non-verbally expressed. Since one of the objectives is to teach good Bible study techniques through discovering what

questions need to be asked, then a certain latitude must be allowed for incorrect answers. This latitude is especially important early in the study. The teacher must be diligent to point out the correct or possibly correct part of each answer. Positive reinforcement is an important part of such a study. Typical key questions are: "What would have been your reaction if Jesus had said this to you?" "What does this teach us about Jesus' personality?" "What did Jesus mean by this statement?" "What did the person think Jesus means?" "What would Jesus mean if we take Him literally?"

An outline or structure of the Gospel of John is extremely difficult, but to provide a division into manageable sections, the following outline is used.

The Gospel of John

- I. The Introduction 1:1-2:25
 - Prologue 1:1-18
 - The Signs, Witnesses, and Calling of Disciples 1:19-2:12
 - His Death Foretold 2:13-25
- II. Personal Demographic Encounters 3:1-5:47
 - Nicodemus 3:1-21
 - John the Baptist 3:22-36
 - Samaritan Woman 4:1-42
 - Herodian Official's Son 4:43-54
 - Healing of Invalid 5:1-47
- III. Public Ministry 6:1-12:50
 - The 5,000 6:1-71
 - Feast of Tabernacles, Jerusalem 7:1-10:21
 - Amazing Teacher 7:1-52
 - Woman Caught in Adultery 7:53-8:11
 - Testimony and Sign of the Light 8:12-9:12
 - Healing of the Blind 9:13-41
 - The Good Shepherd 10:1-21
 - Feast of Dedication, Jerusalem 10:22-42
 - The Raising of Lazarus 11:1-12:11
 - Triumphal Entry and Passover 12:12-50
- IV. Private Ministry 13:1-17:26
 - Answer of Who is Greatest 13:1-17
 - Jesus' Predictions of Betrayal and Denial 13:18-38
 - Jesus Comforts Disciples 14:1-15:17

The World's Hatred 15:18-16:4
 The Coming Counselor 16:5-15
 Jesus' Farewell and Summary 16:16-33
 Intercessory Prayer 17:1-26

- V. Christ's Passion 18:1-21:25
 Arrest and Appearance Before Jews 18:1-27
 Appearance Before Pilate 18:28-19:15
 Crucifixion 19:16-37
 Burial 19:38-42
 Christ's Glory, Our Hope 20:1-31
 Epilogue 21:1-25

This outline is provided for a structure to aid in studying a passage in its context. The divisions are not to be construed as a lesson plan. The teacher is encouraged to study a section until all of the students' questions, "Guided Discovery", and discussion is complete. In some instances, the group may study several sections in a Sunday School class or take several weeks to get through one section. Each group will differ in the amount of time spent in a study because each study group is different. These are things which are of prime consideration to the study leader. It is important to look specifically at the role the leader will play in this Bible study.

The importance of the study leader cannot be underestimated. The leader must not be insistent on his particular interpretation of a passage. Rather than seeing himself as an infallible interpreter, he would do well to turn questions directed toward himself back toward the group for their input. The teacher is to serve as primarily a facilitator, by helping the participants learn for themselves through asking the right questions. Interaction between students provides a positive addition by demonstrating that students' participation is important.

A teacher must have his mind set toward being open to learning from the students. Each time the author has taught the Gospel of John by

this method, new insights have been added by the students. A teacher must be willing to admit his inability to know all the answers. At the same time, he must be willing to research their questions. The teacher must allow a latitude in the answers which are given. A student may be wrong in his understanding of a passage, but he must be allowed a right to his view. Any other view denies the rights of personhood. A teacher can admit the possibility of an opinion or emphasize the positive aspects of a view, or admit that the position is held by others without condoning it. After such an incident, a teacher may also want to ask what other views are possible. Usually it is best to follow the paragraph divisions of a good study Bible within the outline already mentioned. This will further reduce the sections to manageable parts. Students should be encouraged to read the paragraph in turn and the three sections of the study guide used at this time.

Students should also be encouraged to bring different Bible versions. Paraphrased versions should be discouraged as well as the Authorized versions since the former has already done a certain amount of interpretation and the latter is often difficult or obscure in its meaning. Bibles which serve well are New International Version, New American Standard Version, and Revised Standard Version. A good study technique is to survey the translation of several versions in a difficult passage. Study Bibles can be profitable if students are encouraged to share their study Bible notes.

At times the questions may appear wooden or perhaps not worded as the teacher may naturally word them. In such cases the teacher may want to share the question in his own words. The teacher should add any questions which he may deem noteworthy and omit any that may seem inappropriate. In

short, a Bible study guide is written with a hypothetical average audience in mind. The problem is that no such group exists and each group will require adaptation.

A useful technique is to reword a student's statement to clarify what he is saying and encourage him to correct or expand on the teacher's understanding of the student's meaning. Many times this will keep the subject on track while allowing a student to clarify what he means. If a person's view is expressed in another person's words, it allows them to make their thoughts more precise and correct. This also allows the teacher to have input and to point out a significant thought without injecting a value judgment. Other students are likely to "piggy-back" on the idea or react to it. This sort of technique is very helpful in promoting group interaction.

A teacher also needs to be sensitive to move on when the subject has been exhausted or is becoming mundane. In this regard he serves as a guide influence. The other extreme would be feeling bound to complete a certain amount and not allowing student input. A good teacher will value input but will not allow the study to drag. If this guide is to be used in a specific time period, it is much better to omit whole sections and allow time for good input than to cover all passages in a hurried fashion.

An important part of the Bible study is to open and close in prayer. Praying for God's wisdom and the Holy Spirit's guidance in the opening and closing prayer is especially appropriate, as is to pray for the implementation of what has been learned. A short synopsis of what was studied last session is used to inform those who were not present of the context and to refresh the memory of the other students of what was studied in the previous session.

The bibliography is divided into two sections. The first section will deal with general items which all could use for more in-depth study. The second section is labeled "Advanced Materials" and may require knowledge of Greek or scholarly Biblical training. The layman will find these sources beneficial if they take the time to study them carefully or ask a pastor for assistance. This bibliography reflects the author's indebtedness either directly or indirectly for the content of this project.

During the opening remarks is an appropriate time to share the answers to questions not answered during the last session that the teacher has investigated before this session. The closing moments of the Bible study is an excellent time to promote the student's independent study by sharing several key questions to be asked in the next Bible study. This will also raise the curiosity of the students and they will be more likely to return next week. It also tells the student that his input is needed and expected. These guidelines provide an introduction to the purpose, rationale, and methodology of the Bible study guide. With these outlined, the way is paved for the actual study guide.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Christians Come Alive! Wheaton, Ill.: Home Bible Class Ministries, Inc.

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ADVANCED MATERIALS

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Chapter 2

JOHN'S INTRODUCTION 1:1-2:25

Prologue 1:1-18

BEHIND THE SCENE

John's introduction to his Gospel is the most difficult portion to study or teach. If the teacher is not somewhat experienced or if the class is unresponsive, it would be better to start with verse 19 and come back to the prologue at a later date. The Apostle John uses the "word" as common grounds in explaining the religious significance of Jesus. To the gentile "word" or "logos" was the order of the universe or that which held it together. The "word" also is the force which keeps the world in its present order. The "word" was the creating force of the universe. To the Jewish mind, "logo" meant reason, wisdom, the dynamic empowered personified creative power. It was no accident that under the guidance of the Holy Spirit the Apostle John used the concept of "logos" as common grounds to introduce the person of Jesus Christ. Jews, Samaritans, and Greeks would be curious to discover more about this person who is presented as the "word" of God.

The main focus of this first chapter is the person and attributes of Christ, the testimony of John the Baptist, and the calling of the first disciples. The symbolic language of this Gospel is difficult but can be dealt with if looked at singly in a slow and elementary manner. This can be done by first noting the attributes of the symbol, such as light, and then to apply the appropriate attribute to that particular context. For instance,

light illuminates the true nature which may be hidden by darkness. Light and darkness are mutually exclusive and total opposites. Light is positive and welcomed. Darkness is negative and suggests something ominous or hidden. These attributes should then be applied to the particular context. Care must be taken not to press this symbolism to extremes. Any illustration will lead to erroneous conclusions if pushed too far.

John the Baptist would be of natural interest to people of this time, due especially to his popular appeal resulting from his denunciation of Herod, taunting the religious establishment, identification with the common man, and his martyrdom. It also appears that the Apostle John may have been a disciple of John the Baptist before Christ's advent. It must constantly be stressed that John the Baptist's ministry was preparatory and pointed not to himself but to Christ who was to come after him. John the Baptist's comment in 1:23 is not only reminiscent of Isaiah 40:3 but also the cultural practice of clearing a crowded street in front of a royal procession.

GUIDED DISCOVERY

verses 1-5

- ! 1. What Bible verse is reminiscent of John 1:1?
2. Who would be acquainted with Genesis 1:1 during John's time?
3. Why would the author write John 1:1 so similar to Genesis 1:1?
- ! 4. Who is the Word?
- ! 5. What are the characteristics and attributes of Jesus as the Word?
6. What kind of life is found in Christ?
7. How is this spiritual life a light to men?

8. What can light and darkness symbolize?
9. What is significant about all the verbs in vs. 1-4 being in the past tense?
10. What is significant about "the light shines in the darkness" (v. 5) being in the present tense?

verses 6-8

11. Who is this John of verse 6?
- !12. What is John the Baptist's purpose in relationship to Jesus?
13. What is John the Baptist's authority?
- ?14. What imagery does the term "light" convey in general usage?

verses 9-13

15. What is Jesus' relationship to the world He created?
16. What was Jesus' relationship to His Jewish nation?
- !17. What invitation has God given man?
18. How does a person become a child of God?
19. What does it mean to "receive Him and believe in His name" (v. 12)?
- !20. How is every man enlightened by Christ?
21. What does this tell us about mankind?

verses 14-18

22. What is meant by "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us"?
23. What can be learned about verse 14b by noting verse 17?
24. What is Christ's relationship to Moses?
25. What does John the Baptist's testimony tell us about Christ?
26. How does the law given through Moses differ from the grace and truth exhibited by Jesus?
27. What does verse 18 say about God and His Son Jesus Christ?

WRAP-UP

John the Baptist is careful to explain to the Jews who asked him that he was not Elijah come again or the prophet spoken of in Deuteronomy 18:15, 18. John repeats that his purpose is one to make preparation for the coming of the Lord, who is far greater than he is. John the Baptist's reference to Jesus as the Lamb of God certainly was an allusion to the Paschal lamb. It might have been difficult for an ordinary man to play second fiddle as John the Baptist did after Jesus' ministry began. Yet there is found no jealousy or competitiveness in John's attitude. In fact, what we find is perfect humility.

The most important thing about John 1:1-18 is that Christ is imminent and personal rather than far off and impersonal. Apostle John is careful to use "word" as a concept that would attract most people's attention in the known world. Christ was and is a man for all mankind. This section also points to Jesus' pre-existent nature and creation of the world. Jesus is completely God and completely man. Both natures are found in the one historical person of Jesus Christ. As man, He has empathy with mankind because He took upon Himself the self-imposed limitation of human form. As God, only He can settle man's indebtedness caused by sin.

John is careful to divide the world into light and darkness without any third alternative. The positive qualities are attributed to those whose spiritual enlightenment and lives place them in God's kingdom. Anyone not in God's kingdom is in darkness. It is important that although this spiritual distinction exists, it is sometimes outside human discernment.

The concept of "faith or to believe" runs throughout John's Gospel as a thread tying it together. This word is used 98 times in John; yet, it is used only 34 times in the other three gospels. John continually notes

many people's responses to Jesus as believing Him, yet John does not explain what he means until 20:27ff. This literary climactic movement would draw the reader to investigate what this belief in Christ means. It would also challenge him to place his faith in Jesus Christ.

The Signs, Witnesses, and Calling of Disciples 1:19-2:12

BEHIND THE SCENE

The Apostle John's neglect in identifying himself as in 1:35ff is very much in keeping with several passages in John. It certainly exhibits his humility.

It is significant that a dove is associated with the Noahic Covenant in Genesis 9:8-17 and 8:8-12. The Holy Spirit descending in the form of a dove will usher in a new dispensation and eventually the covenant of Christ's blood.

As the calling of the disciples is dealt with, it is important to keep the students in the life setting by relating the calling as a firsthand experience. Do not allow them to objectify the experience, but continually put them in the place of each disciple. Stress the fact that Christ can be just as real and personal to each one of us today.

Andrew and probably John were the two disciples of John the Baptist who heard John the Baptist's words of adoration about Christ and decided to investigate. Andrew in turn brings his brother Peter to Jesus. Nathanael was probably sitting under a fig tree reading and studying scripture. Fig trees' overhanging branches supplied shade and was a popular place to study scriptures. Jesus had miraculously seen Nathanael reading the very scripture which Christ fulfilled.

The original does not make it clear whether this is the third day of the wedding feast or if it is three days later. This does not make a significant difference as to the meaning of the passage. The thing which is important is that this is the first miracle that Jesus performs according to John. A wedding was a very joyous celebration in a world that was filled with hard work and oppression. A wedding feast could last for over a week with much banqueting, telling of riddles (Judges 14:15-18; Proverbs 30:15-31), games, and celebration. The drinking of wine was a natural part of this. Those who object to Jesus' drinking or miraculously creating wine would do well to remember that the wine was usually diluted with two parts wine to three parts water. Today's wine is much stronger because additional fermentation is encouraged. Since the Passover is near (v. 2:13) and this occurs in the spring, there would have been no way to preserve the grape juice except by fermentation or by allowing it to turn to vinegar. The context and word study also suggest that it must have been fermented wine.

In the Jewish wedding, the groom would bring his bride to his home after a short ceremony but without a marriage pronouncement as we know it. This procession would be by the longest route so that as many people as possible could wish the couple their blessings. This procession would be accompanied by the guests carrying lighted torches and a canopy over the couple. Upon reaching their new home, they would be treated like royalty and even would be addressed as "king" and "queen". The bridegroom would priorly appoint someone to be the steward of the banquet. It was his responsibility to make the arrangements for food and drink. To run out of wine would be seen as an embarrassment to the host and an insult to the guests. This background gives an opportunity for Jesus to perform His

first sign. The word "woman" in the sentence "woman, what have I to do with thee" has no sense of derision and was a common expression of courtesy and respect.

Since only the slaves (along with Mary and Jesus' disciples) were aware of the miracle, it can still be held that His public ministry had not begun. Slaves were expected to lie, so the miracle would either remain a secret or the slaves' stories would be discredited. Thus, Jesus' miracle was done in a manner that would not be publically seen. Whether the entire 120 gallons were changed or only the amount drawn off was changed to wine is not certain. However, since Jesus ordered them to fill the jars completely up, it would seem that His intent was to turn all of it to wine. This water would have been used by the Jews in religious purification by washing the feet upon entering the house, and washing hands before meals and between courses of meals.

GUIDED DISCOVERY

verses 19-23

1. Who does John the Baptist deny himself to be?
- ! 2. What does Deuteronomy 18:15 add to our understanding of verse 21?
3. Why did the priests and Levites ask John the Baptist if he is Elijah?
4. How does the practice of heralds clearing the way for a royal procession add to our understanding of verse 23?

verses 24-34

- ? 5. Why does John the Baptist use the redundant phrase "baptize with water"?
6. How does the Baptist answer the Jews' question of why he is baptizing people?
7. Since the untying of sandals and washing of feet was the job of a household slave, what is the Baptist saying about himself and Christ?

- ! 8. What was the purpose of the Passover Lamb?
9. How was the Passover Lamb able to save the life of the oldest Jewish son?
- !10. In what way does Jesus fulfill the role as Lamb of God?
11. How is it that John the Baptist can say he did not know Jesus if they were related as shown by Luke 1:36?
12. What caused the loss of contact between the families of John the Baptist and Jesus?
13. In what sense did Jesus come before the Baptist?
- ?14. What symbolism might be conveyed by the idea of a dove?
15. How does John's baptism differ from the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

verses 35-42

16. Jesus encounters two disciples. One is Andrew, who in turn brings his brother Peter to Jesus. Who could the other original disciple have been?
17. Why would the Apostle John not refer to himself by name?
18. Why did Andrew and the other apostle follow Jesus?
19. What could they have understood the Baptist to mean in his reference to Jesus?
20. Does the following of Andrew and possibly John the Apostle appear abrupt and unnatural?
- ?21. If you had been Andrew, what would have compelled you to follow Jesus?
22. What would have compelled Andrew to introduce his brother Peter to Jesus?
- ?23. If you had been a Jew during Jesus' day, how would you have reacted to still another man claiming to be the Messiah?
24. If you were Simon, how would you have felt at someone calling you by a name that meant rock?
25. What can be learned by the example of Andrew?

verses 43-51

- ?26. Is there any significance that Philip, Andrew, and Peter were all from the same town?
- 27. What would have compelled Philip to follow Jesus if all that was said was, "follow me"?
- !28. How does Philip document the claims of Jesus?
- !29. What can we get from verse 45b that would lead us to believe Philip was not making a blind leap without some factual information?
- 30. What was Nathanael's opinion of Nazareth?
- ?31. Nathanael's name literally means "given by God". How could he have responded to such a name?
- 32. If you had been Nathanael, how would you have related to Jesus' greeting in verse 47?
- 33. A fig tree provided cool shade under which a person sometimes could not even be seen due to the long, drooping branches. What is Jesus inferring in verse 48?
- 34. What attributes of God is Jesus revealing to Nathanael?
- !35. How does Matthew 24:31 and Genesis 28:10-17 help us understand Jesus' comment in verse 51?
- 36. How could Jesus' reference to himself as the Son of Man be variously understood?
- 37. Why was Jesus intentionally vague at this point?
- 38. What different "greater things" (v. 50) will Nathanael witness?
- !39. How would you have reacted to Jesus' display of supernatural power and astonishing claims?

verses 2:1-12

- 40. What clues would suggest this is genuine wine?
- 41. Why would a person be unwilling to accept this as alcoholic wine?
- !42. Does this passage promote a Christian to drink wine? (note Behind the Scene)
- !43. What does Romans 14:21 and I Corinthians 8:9-13 help us to understand about this question?

44. Why did Mary tell Jesus they had run out of wine?
45. Is Jesus' reply disrespectful? (See Behind the Scene)
46. What does this suggest about Mary's understanding of Jesus (see Luke 2:19)?
- ?47. If you had waited 30 years as Mary had, what would you feel at this moment?
- ?48. If you were a slave and told to draw plain water and deliver it to the steward of the feast, what would your reaction be?
49. How much water was involved?
50. What clue does verse 11 give us as to why only John records this miracle?
51. What does Jesus mean by "my hour has not yet come" (v. 4) (see 17:1f)?
52. How does this previous question relate to John 4:21,22; 5:25, 28; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23, 27; 17:1; 19:30?
53. If slaves were just a possession, with no way to improve his economic situation, how could he get ahead?
54. If slaves were characterized as lazy liars, what would have been the steward's reaction if one of the slaves told him where the wine came from?
55. If you had been one of the slaves, would you have told the steward where the wine really came from?
56. What would have been the reaction of the bridegroom (vs. 9, 10) to the words of the steward?
57. What might have happened the next morning when the Jews sought to ceremonially wash themselves?
58. How many knew about the miracle?
59. If Jesus' hour of public ministry had not yet come, is there a contradiction since Jesus performs this miracle at a wedding? Explain.
60. Who is not mentioned in v. 12?
61. Where is the last mention of Joseph?
62. What does tradition tell us about Joseph after the reference in Luke 2:41?

163. What kind of progression in thought is seen from 1:50 to 2:11?

64. How does this compare to 2:27,28? (See Chapter 2, page15, on "faith" or "to believe")

WRAP-UP

While it is most likely that we do not have the full conversations leading up to the calling of the disciples, John clearly intends to convey the idea that something supernatural occurred which motivated the disciples to follow Jesus. Whether it was Jesus' charisma, authority, or mannerisms, it is simply up for conjecture. The meaning of Nathanael's name (given by God) would either lead him to live up to his name or live it down. The seeing of Nathanael can only be understood to be of a supernatural nature simply because the context leaves no other alternative. Such fig trees were often the place of serious Bible reading and prayer in Jesus' time. The dense private shelter of solitude would be provided by the hanging limbs.

The wedding feast is important not only because it is Jesus' first miracle but because it demonstrates His benevolence by averting a socially embarrassing situation. It also indicates that Mary understood Jesus' nature. Some have suggested that if Jesus had turned the entire 120 gallons into wine, it would have provided a wedding gift of considerable value. It goes without saying that Christianity supercedes and supplants Judaism, but to see this as the intent of this passage goes beyond what is the intended meaning. Those who object to Jesus' creating wine will profit from Romans 14:21 to squelch their fears. This section reveals a different side of Christ than what was revealed in the cleansing of the temple and does well in balancing our image of Jesus.

His Death Foretold 2:13-25

BEHIND THE SCENE

The whip Jesus made was of reeds and often used to herd cattle. Whether Jesus used this on men also is up to conjecture. There is an obvious omission to any temple guards which is interesting, but no explanation is known. It is estimated that as many as 2½ million Jews were in Jerusalem during the Passover. All adult Jews who lived within 15 miles were required to attend.

The setting of the animals and money changers occurred in the outer court of the gentiles. The number of animals and moneychangers would have created a chaotic atmosphere to what was intended to be solemn reverence. Also, the smell of the animals would have been horrendous in itself. It can certainly be seen why Jesus objected to such irreverence. The animals were sold at exorbitant prices within the temple, and one must buy one of these animals to insure it was accepted by the priests. The priests received a kickback on the animals bought in the temple. A dove, according to Barclay, may have cost 20 times more in the temple than outside. The moneychangers would exchange foreign gentile currency, which was considered unclean for the temple tax of one-half shekel required of everyone over 19 years of age. This was roughly two days' wages.

GUIDED DISCOVERY

verses 13-22

- ! 1. What would Jesus' attendance at Passover indicate about His religious life?
2. With the number of Jews, different sacrificial animals, tables of moneychangers, what would have been the sights, sounds, and smells in the temple?

3. How do the different versions translate who Jesus drove out of the temple?
 4. Who do you think Jesus chased from the temple?
 5. What would have persuaded the people to abandon their wares?
 - ? 6. How do you envision Jesus' appearance as He cleared the temple?
 7. What does this cleansing of the temple tell us about Jesus' personality?
 8. What would describe the scene as Jesus cleared the temple?
 9. How would have the common man reacted to Jesus' action against those who were exploiting them through exhorbitant prices?
 10. How did the Jews react to Jesus' action?
 - !11. What kind of miracle might have they expected?
 12. What kind of miracle did Jesus offer?
 - !13. What do the Jews misunderstand Him to mean?
 - !14. How does a play on words figure into this misunderstanding (vs. 20,21)?
- verses 23-25
- !15. What does vs. 23-25 tell us about Jesus' understanding of mankind?
 16. What event would later prove Him correct?

WRAP-UP

The two main points of this section is that Jesus foretells His own death and the relationship of this account to the synoptics' cleansing of the temple. The other three gospels indicate that the cleansing occurs late in Jesus' ministry, while John holds it to be early. The best answer appears to be that there were two different cleansings. Leon Morris in his commentary deals fairly with this complex issue. The greatest point about this section is Jesus' foretelling His own death and more importantly His resurrection.

Early in His ministry Jesus knows what is ahead and determines His own destiny. He was not caught unaware in the political machinery. This cleansing of the temple most probably resulted in public acclaim among the populous who were tired of being fleeced by the hypocritical priests in the common man's spiritual worship. Jesus realized the superficiality of this acclaim and knew that these same people were only fairweather fellows who would turn on Him as soon as He did not fulfill their expectations.

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Chapter 3

PERSONAL DEMOGRAPHIC ENCOUNTERS 3:1-5:47

Nicodemus 3:1-21

BEHIND THE SCENE

Nicodemus was the exception to the rule. Most members of the Sanhedrin were afraid that Jesus might threaten their authority by rallying the masses against them or causing the Romans to step in, put down a rebellion, and take the power from the Sanhedrin. Nicodemus was genuinely interested in the validity of Jesus' spiritual claims. There is a tremendous amount of irony in the scene with Jesus and this spiritual leader. After all, he is struggling to understand these spiritual things from an untrained carpenter.

The Sanhedrin was the highest native authority in Judea. It has authority over the political, religious, and judicial life. It was accountable to Rome and the Roman authority. It was allowed to be self ruled as long as it did not balk at Rome's supreme authority and was successful at governing the people without a rebellion. The Sanhedrin could not impose a death sentence but had to petition the Romans in such a case. This point is not totally agreed on by scholarship. Leon Morris gives a fair discussion of this in his commentary of John.

The word "again" in verse 3 is translated variously by different translators. The word actually conveys all the ideas of again, anew, from above. The various versions seek to translate this complex word with only one word. Unfortunately, there is no single equivalent word in English so

they must decide which aspect to communicate. In verses 6-9 Jesus uses a play on words to emphasize His point. The Greek word translated "spirit" and "wind" is the same word and could be interchanged. Jesus is constantly talking on a spiritual level and Nicodemus' understanding of Jesus' comments is only of a physical nature. Jesus repeatedly attempts to get Nicodemus thinking spiritually, but Nicodemus seems unable to understand what Jesus means.

In verse 16 is found a word translated "only begotten." The word refers to Jesus' nature as being one of a kind. Jesus was indeed this in being completely man and completely God: two natures in one person.

The question as to how much of the chapter is the actual words of Jesus and how much is the editorial comment of John is uncertain. Most versions will include all of this section as the words of Jesus. The best commentaries indicate that verse 15 ends the words of Jesus and verse 16 begins the editorial comments of John. It appears from the words used, style, and verb tenses that these are the comments of John. This is of no real significance since it is all the product of the Holy Spirit's inspiration!

GUIDED DISCOVERY

verses 1-15

1. Why did Jesus' public ministry occur always in daylight?
- ! 2. Why did Nicodemus come to Jesus at night?
3. Over what various aspects of life did the Sanhedrin have jurisdiction?
- ! 4. What would be comparable today to the position as a member of the Sanhedrin?
5. Why would Nicodemus want a private audience with Jesus?
- ? 6. The title "rabbi" could be one of respect or denote real authority. What did Nicodemus mean?

- ! 7. What spiritual depth of understanding is demonstrated by this member of highest religious authority?
- ? 8. Does this lack of spiritual discernment among the religiously learned have application today?
9. With what type of statement did Nicodemus begin his conversation with Jesus?
10. What would you think of someone addressing you in such a manner?
11. What was his motive?
12. Jesus' reply indicates that He knew the question which was really on Nicodemus' mind. What does this reveal about Jesus?
113. In verse 3, different Bible translations differ as to how they translate "born again" or "anew". How does each of these add to our understanding of becoming a Christian?
14. What is the Kingdom of God?
15. Why can't a man enter heaven without being born again?
16. Jesus is clearly speaking on a spiritual level; how does Nicodemus misunderstand Jesus' statement (verses 3,4)?
17. How is the phrase in verse 5 "born of the water" variously understood?
18. What does the Living Bible footnote say about this verse 3?
19. What does Jesus mean in verse 6 by "flesh" and "spirit"?
- ?20. What characteristics do the wind and Holy Spirit have in common according to verse 8?
21. If we cannot see the wind or the Holy Spirit, how do we know they exist?
22. What point is Jesus illustrating by using the image of wind?
23. If natural man cannot understand the things of God regardless of how learned, how can man understand spiritual things (v.11)?
24. What does verse 12 teach us about the spiritual leadership in Jesus' day?
25. How do we know Christianity is not an elitist religion?
26. What is Jesus saying to Nicodemus and the other religious leaders in verse 12?

- !27. What is Jesus saying about Himself in verse 13?
- 28. Why does He speak of Moses lifting up the serpent?
- ?29. "Son of Man" is the title most often used by Jesus to refer to Himself. Read Daniel 7:9-14, specifically verse 13; Numbers 23:19; Ezekiel 2:1. What are the different shades of meaning and similarities?
- ?30. Why would Jesus use "Son of Man" if the concept was somewhat ambiguous?
- 31. Since Jesus used this ambiguity to prod people to decide for themselves who Jesus was, how does relate to John's use of "believe" or "believe in" 98 times?
- 32. What type of personality did Nicodemus exhibit?
- ?33. How would you characterize Jesus' dealing with Nicodemus? Was He chiding or lovingly reproving Nicodemus?

verses 16-21

- ?34. Where do different translations end the actual words of Jesus indicated by the quotation marks?
- 35. Does vs. 16-21 appear to be the words of Jesus to Nicodemus or explanatory comments of John?
- 36. What different things can be learned about the relationship between man and God from verse 16?
- !37. How do we answer those who say they do not believe that a loving God would condemn anyone to hell (v. 17)?
- !38. What was God's purpose in sending His Son?
- 39. According to verse 18, how is mankind spiritually divided?
- 40. What should this condition prompt Christians to do?
- 41. What or who is the light in verse 19?
- 42. What does verses 19 and 20 teach us about different human personalities and reaction to Christianity?
- !43. What does verse 21 teach us about Christians?
- 44. Where do we hear of Nicodemus again (19:38ff)?

WRAP-UP

It is no accident that many people use this passage in witnessing or evangelism. The nature of a Christian, the manner in which one becomes a Christian, are explained in the simplest manner. One can empathize with Nicodemus' struggle and not feel ashamed at their inability to understand. The great miracle of salvation is revealed in that God loved mankind in spite of our rejection even though to send God in the flesh to make heaven available to all. This sending of God Himself was necessary since Man's sins were so great that no man could make restitution for himself, let alone the whole of mankind! Yet God realized that the only way He could express His imminence was by taking on the limitations of a man. Another thought pointed out by this passage is that God certainly condemns no person to hell; man condemns himself by his rejection of God's provisions. In this dialogue, Jesus lovingly reproves Nicodemus and is successful since we later see Nicodemus participate in Jesus' burial. The statistical odds were against such a conversion, but it is great to know that God is not willing to play the odds. Instead He offers salvation and accepts the possibility of rejection.

John the Baptist 3:22-4:3

BEHIND THE SCENE

Since water is in such short supply in Palestine, the places where there could be public baptisms were very few. It was inevitable that the Baptist and Jesus would set up shop close together. Just as the difference was never between Abraham and Lot, so the differences do not arise between Jesus and the Baptist but their disciples. The spirit which the Baptist shows is tremendous. It would be easy to feel bitter or envious playing

"second fiddle". Instead, John the Baptist is explicit in saying that "I must decrease so that He might increase." This is the Apostle John's last comment about John the Baptist.

GUIDED DISCOVERY

1. Why did John the Baptist continue baptizing?
2. What would a Jew be discussing with the disciples of the Baptist about purification?
3. How would the purification rite such as in John 2:6ff help us to understand the nature of the disagreement?
- ? 4. What was the motive of the Baptist's disciples in verse 26?
5. In your own words, what was the Baptist's answer to his disciples' question?
- ! 6. How does a wedding illustrate the Baptist's point?
7. What would have been your reaction to the Baptist's statement about Jesus?
8. What does the Baptist say about Jesus in verses 31-36?
9. What can we learn about the Trinity in verses 31-36?
10. Why did Jesus have His disciples baptizing people and not Himself?
- ! 11. What application does that give us for the work of the church?

WRAP-UP

The humility which the Baptist portrays is an inspiration for us all. It is easy to become prideful of our spiritual gifts. Yet the Baptist remained truly humble. This same spirit can be seen by John as he wrote this Gospel. The Apostle John may have indeed been a previous follower of the Baptist.

A great many people in the apostle's day would have known about the Baptist's teachings, and the Baptist's own testimony about Jesus would have sparked some interest in the person of Jesus Christ. Many false messiahs arose during this time, but only one was acclaimed by the Baptist!

The Samaritan Woman 4:4-42

BEHIND THE SCENE

To the Jewish mind of Jesus' time, there was no such thing as a good Samaritan. They were hated half-breed Jews. Contact with a Samaritan would cause a person to become ceremonially unclean. Jesus initiated a conversation with this Samaritan by asking to drink water which Jews would have considered unclean. Even more astounding is the fact that this Samaritan was a woman and, worse yet, an adulteress! The time of day which Jesus met her should have suggested that she might be a social outcast.

Most pious Jews journeying to Galilee would cross the Jordan and travel on the east side and then cross the Jordan once again when they were across from Galilee in order not to come in contact with the Samaritans. This was the more difficult and less direct route. Why Jesus felt compelled to go through Samaria is not certain. It is plausible that Jesus knew the spiritual condition of the woman and chose this route accordingly. It is also possible that the level of the Jordan River during the spring runoff made it impossible or unsafe to cross the river. This is less likely than the former. It is also possible that Jesus was fleeing the Jews, who may have been following Him because of His previous encounter.

This passage demonstrates Jesus' continually redirecting the conversation to a spiritual level while the woman speaks on a purely physical level. Finally, when Jesus gets too close for comfort and she realizes she cannot avoid the spiritual discussion (v. 18), she tries to direct the discussion to a more controversial subject or one that is impersonal and just about religion (v. 19). Jesus stops such idle speculation by claiming to be the Messiah, a claim that could not be avoided. One can only imagine why the villagers would listen to a woman of such a reputation, let alone give credence to her claims about Jesus. Something must have resulted from her contact with Jesus that would have aroused their curiosity enough to investigate this Jew who was willing to associate with despised Samaritans. It is interesting to note that this is the first mass conversion noted by John and it occurs among Samaritans. This certainly fulfills verse 44 and would make Jesus suspect in the eyes of the religious establishment.

Since this occurred after Passover, which occurs in the spring, it is possible that Jesus pointed out actual wheat fields when He spoke of the harvest being ready. Wheat is green in the spring and early summer and is ready for harvest as it turns color and becomes golden or "white". Jesus is saying that the harvest fields of the disciples are not green as they suppose but are actually past harvest time. Wheat that is in this condition is precarious since the heads are heavy with grain. It is susceptible to wind or rain blowing it over thus making harvest difficult and shedding much of the grain. The comparison to evangelism is obvious.

GUIDED DISCOVERY

verses 4-15

1. How do the different versions translate "He had to pass through Samaria"?

- ? 2. What is implied by the different translations?
- ! 3. Most Jews would cross the Jordan River rather than pass through the hated Samaria. What does Jesus' passing through Samaria tell us?
- ! 4. Jewish rabbis were forbidden to talk to women in public and men talking to women in general was frowned upon; what does this tell us about Jesus?
- ! 5. Jews would become ceremonially unclean if they came in contact with a Samaritan. What does this tell us about Jesus?
- 6. Most women drew their water in the early morning and used the time to socialize and gossip. Why did this woman come about noon?
- 7. What does the Samaritan woman think Jesus is speaking about in verse 10 (note v. 11)?
- 8. Jesus uses the symbol of water as an object lesson. Why is water such an appropriate object in an arid climate?
- ! 9. How are the characteristics of water applicable to our spiritual life?
- 10. Why does Jesus use the term "living" water?
- 11. What were the characteristics of this water about which Jesus is speaking?
- ! 12. What does the Samaritan woman understand Jesus to mean in verse 15?

verses 16-26

- 13. What does verse 16 reveal about Jesus?
- 14. Why would Jesus ask her such a morally embarrassing question if He already knew the answer?
- 15. After Jesus put the woman on the spot, why does she change the subject in verses 19 and 20?
- ? 16. Mt. Gerazim was the worship site of the Samaritans while Jews insisted that only Jerusalem was acceptable. Why would the woman ask such a controversial question?
- 17. How would you paraphrase Jesus' answer in verses 23 and 24?
- 18. Why did the woman call Jesus a prophet?
- 19. How does the Samaritan put Jesus off in verse 25?
- 20. What is the attitude of the woman in this dialogue with Jesus?
- ? 21. What is Jesus' motive in this discourse?

verses 27-42

22. How does the disciples' attitude toward this woman differ from Jesus'?
23. What caused the woman to leave her water jug?
24. With the woman's reputation, what would have caused the villagers to give her claims credence?
25. Who would the Samaritan woman be in our modern culture?
26. What clue does that give us about human personalities and evangelism?
27. How does the illustration of a harvest help us understand something about evangelism?
28. What counseling techniques can we learn from Jesus' discourse with the Samaritan woman?
29. How would a legalistic Jew react to this first mass evangelism among Samaritans?
30. What do verses 39-42 say as to the reason the Samaritans believed in Christ?
31. What is significant that these Samaritans are the first ones to call Jesus the Savior of the world?
32. What does it mean to believe Jesus to be Savior of the world (note also 20:30)?

WRAP-UP

Jesus was not a person to allow social barriers to deter Him from meeting spiritual needs, even if it meant coming into disfavor with those in religious authority. Once again Jesus exhibits attributes only exhibited by God. In His conversation He shows a singlemindedness of getting to the spiritual root of the woman's problem. It is too bad that His disciples didn't see this but instead were amazed that Jesus would break social standards. This discussion would probably have been impossible if the disciples had not been getting food. It appears that the disciples were at least in part responsible for her leaving. The application of this

section to our lives is that we should not allow socially-imposed barriers, especially racial barriers, from deterring us from sharing the gospel.

The history of missions which shows that Christians have been slow to send missionaries to Asian and African peoples would indicate a subtle form of bigotry. Surely that harvest is past due. Jesus is indeed a man for all mankind, regardless of their sex, race, or social standing.

Herodian's Son 4:43-54

BEHIND THE SCENE

In the previous section, Jesus converted many people of a Samaritan village. This would have made Him suspect to the Jewish religious community. This healing of an official's son, most likely a member of Herod's court, would have been looked down upon. Herodians were considered traitors who had sold out to the Romans and were helping exploit their countrymen. Some scholars have identified this as a parallel account of the Centurion of the same city who came to Jesus seeking his servant to be healed as seen in Matthew 8:5ff. Although the centurion may have identified his son as a slave fearing that Jesus would not heal a hated Roman, this appears less likely. Once again Jesus shows that social and racial barriers have no place in God's kingdom. Such an act would be unpopular with the masses, yet Jesus still heals the official's son. The act of benevolence is also seen as a sign of Jesus' divine nature. This supernatural miracle resulted in the conversion of not only the father but the whole household. It was quite common for the whole family and household, which would include slaves, to follow the religious affiliation of the head of the household.

GUIDED DISCOVERY

1. When and where did the Galilean see Jesus?
2. How would a Jew have reacted to a high-ranking traitor begging Jesus to heal his son?
- ! 3. How is the faith of this man demonstrated?
- ! 4. What is significant about this healing?
5. What would have been your reaction if this were your son whom Jesus healed?
6. What does John mean by "sign" in verse 54?
7. What was the first sign that Jesus performed (2:11)?
- ? 8. Why did Jesus perform this miracle and yet refuse to give a sign to the Jews when He cleansed the temple?
9. How is verse 44 born out in this passage?

WRAP-UP

The fact that the son was healed the same hour that Jesus told the official that his son would live leaves little possibility that it was a coincidence. John emphatically and explicitly declares it a sign of Jesus' divine nature. John prefers to use the term "sign" rather than miracle because it points more to His Messianic nature. Since Jesus was willing to heal a Herodian official's son, which would have been an unpopular action, Jesus once again demonstrates that popular opinion should not determine what is right. Jesus is once again shown to be the man for all mankind.

Healing the Invalid 5:1-47

BEHIND THE SCENE

Beggars were very numerous in Jerusalem in Jesus' day. The giving of money to the needy, called alms, was part of the Jewish faith. The giving

of alms in Jerusalem was especially important. It is for this reason that Jerusalem had more than its share of beggars. A beggar in Jerusalem could easily subsist on alms, so it was not strange that Jesus asked if he wanted to be healed. Some have suggested that a good paraphrasing of Jesus' words would be "are you earnestly wanting to be healed?" This suggests that some beggars would be unwilling to give up their present income as a beggar. Nevertheless, the beggar assumed that Jesus was volunteering to help him into the pool since the superstition held that the first one in the water after it agitated was healed. Bible versions will differ as to how much of verses 3 and 4 are included in the text. It appears that the comments were first placed as marginal notes and a later copyist added them to the actual text. The best and earliest manuscripts omit these comments in the text. The exact name of the pool is uncertain. There is quite a variety of names witnessed by Greek manuscripts. This appears to be scribal errors in hearing as the manuscript was read aloud and copied by several scribes. Also, some errors seem to be an intentional effort as scribes tried to translate it to mean "house of divine mercy" or "Bethesda". The exact name of the pool is very uncertain. Metzger's A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament outlines the basic problem on this and the tradition of an angel stirring the water.

It cannot be determined which feast of the Jews this was. The most popular suggestions is either Passover or Purim. The breaking of the Sabbath was looked on as a serious crime and was punishable according to the Old Testament by death. Nevertheless, the Jews were more interested in finding out who had advised him to carry his mat than rejoicing over his healing. It is not certain whether Jesus slipped away after the healing or

if the former invalid simply lost track of Him in the crowd. Whichever occurred, it is plain that it was Jesus that found the man a second time and not vice versa. Jesus could have told him to stop sinning so that he could avoid eternal punishment, or it could be interpreted to mean stop sinning so that the natural consequences of a life exemplified by sin does not overtake you. The original language support this suggestion. After this second confrontation with Jesus, this man is quick to report Christ's identity to the Jewish leaders.

The latter part of the section clearly shows Jesus' claims about Himself to be understood as claims of deity. John has finally allowed the reader an understanding of who Jesus is. The nature of Christ is not totally revealed, but the basic framework is laid. John not only answers the basic questions of who Jesus is but also the result of faith in Him; resurrection of life.

In a final slap in the Jews' face, Jesus says they do not know the Scriptures or God. They seek after self-admiration rather than seeking to please God. They do not believe Moses but supposedly they received the Baptist's testimony while ignoring the Baptist's testimony about Jesus. Such accusations would have infuriated any of the Jewish leaders.

GUIDED DISCOVERY

verses 1-9

1. How would an invalid financially support himself?
- ! 2. What would such a person correspond to today?
3. What would be his social standing?
4. What does that tell us about Jesus?

5. Since alms giving, especially in Jerusalem, had great importance to the Jewish faith, why would so many beggars live in Jerusalem?
6. Why would some beggars not want to be well?
7. How does this explain Jesus' question in verse 6?
8. How does Jesus know the man had been there a long time?
9. What does the invalid expect Jesus to do in order for him to be healed?
- ?10. How would you have reacted if Jesus told you to pick up your bed and walk after being unable to walk for 38 years?
- !11. What was Jesus' motive in healing this man?

verses 10-17

- !12. What was the reaction of the Jews to being told that the beggar was healed?
- !13. What should have been their reaction?
14. How is this man's answers in verse 11 similar to Adam's answer to God after eating the forbidden fruit?
15. How does Exodus 31:13-15 add to our understanding of this situation?
- ?16. How do various versions translate verse 13?
17. Why would Jesus slip away in the crowd or did the formerly crippled man just lose Jesus in the crowd?
- ?18. Why did Jesus seek out the man in verse 14?
19. Why does Jesus admonish him to stop sinning?
20. What is the physical result on the body of a life bent on sinning?
- ?21. Is Jesus alluding to divine punishment and/or natural consequences? Explain.
- !22. As has already been pointed out, working on the Sabbath was punishable by death and the Jews plotted to kill Him. What does this reveal about their understanding of religious matters in conjunction to this divine healing?

verses 17-29

23. What do the Jews understand Jesus to be claiming?

24. What is Jesus' reaction to their understanding?
- !25. What does Jesus' failing to correct them tell us about who He is?
26. What is the relationship between God the Father and Jesus Christ in verses 19 and 20?
- !27. What attributes of God the Father and Jesus Christ are parallel or comparable in verses 21-23?
- !28. What are the options of mankind in relation to the claims of Jesus?
29. What parallel thoughts are expressed in verses 21-23 and 25-27?
30. What promise and warning is found in verses 28 and 29?
31. What is "the hour" of verses 25 and 28 which Jesus speaks about?

verses 30-47

- !32. What does Deuteronomy 19:15 say about the number of witnesses needed to substantiate a legal claim?
- !33. What sources of authority does Jesus allude to in order to prove these claims (note: 5:32,37; 5:33; 5:36; 5:39; 5:46)?
- !34. How does Deuteronomy 18:17-19 add to our understanding of what Jesus is saying?
35. What charges is Jesus making against the Jews in 5:38-47?
36. What does Jesus say about the Baptist in verses 33-36a?
- ?37. How would you react to these charges if you had been one of the Jews?

WRAP-UP

It is hard to imagine the religious narrow-mindedness of anyone ignoring a miraculous headling and being ready to condemn a person because he healed on the Sabbath. Such legalism that ignores a divine act is hard to conceive. They apparently were totally blind to this event which had to be supernatural in origin. Jesus in exasperation confronts them with His claims of divinity in order to point out this was a divine act which should bring rejoicing, not accusations of Sabbath breaking.

The Jews answer Jesus' claims of being God with charges of blasphemy. Their minds were so entrenched in legalism that they could not see the obvious. The obvious conclusion is that since only God could have healed such an infirmity, Jesus must have divine powers and be who He claims to be.

How much attention would the normal Christian pay to a skid row bum? Yet Jesus not only healed this beggar but put His life at stake by healing him on the Sabbath. All human life is important and cannot be judged expendable or one human life placed at a higher value than another. Christ is interested in everyone, even the lowest social stature. Christ is truly a man for all mankind! This is the central theme of John 3:1-5:47.

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Chapter 4

PUBLIC MINISTRY 6:1-12:50

The Five Thousand 6:1-71

BEHIND THE SCENE

In this section Jesus is followed by a group of 5,000 men, plus uncounted women and children. It was customary in Jesus' day not to count women and children. This group was interested primarily in getting more food from Jesus, although some might have been sincerely searching for spiritual reality. The bread involved was an inexpensive, coarse barley type. The texts have no other possibility but that a miracle occurred. These people were immediately ready to make Jesus king even though He had no legitimate claim to the throne. The Romans would have immediately stepped in and put down any such rebellion. This popular acclaim would have proved a temptation for any ordinary man, but Jesus was not ordinary and knew that this was not God's purpose. The retreat into the mountain provides an escape from the crowd, a time of solitude and relaxation and a setting for the next miracle: the walking on water.

The journey across the Sea of Galilee would be approximately two and one-half to three miles in distance, yet the disciples rowed three to four miles. These disciples were fishermen by trade and accustomed to fishing by night. Such storms can quickly blow up and still do today. How to account for the discrepancy of the distance is difficult. It is possible that they

became disoriented or that the storm made it difficult to accurately judge the distance. Whatever the explanation, these superstitious men became frightened when the light of the full moon illuminated Jesus walking toward them on the water. At the sound of Jesus' voice their fears subsided. John notes that "immediately" they were on shore. This could imply some supernatural miracle. To suggest that Jesus had walked around the Sea and walked out to greet them on a sand bar ignores the fact that the Scriptures clearly portray this as a miracle.

Jesus uses the bread as a metaphor for Himself in illustrating that He nourishes spiritual life. This, of course, is the first of John's "I ams". The seven "I ams" provide a substantial backbone to the spiritual emphasis of the Gospel of John. This is not to say that the other gospels do not have a spiritual dimension. It simply means that this spiritual emphasis is more the focus of the Gospel rather than reciting the life of Christ. John's gospel interprets what Christ's life means rather than just a simple historical account. The seven "I ams" and an all-important eighth in 8:58 declare something about the spiritual nature of Christ and His relationship to His disciples. A good aid in determining the intended meaning of each "I am" is to determine the object's relationship to the physical world and then apply this to the relationship between Jesus and His disciples. Each of these will be dealt with individually.

Jesus continues to work with these people even after it is obvious that most of them are only interested in getting more food. Jesus finally tells them in the bluntest of terms that they must eat His flesh and drink His blood to be worthy of following Him. Such words would have separated

the curiosity seekers and those looking for a handout from those who were searching after spiritual truths. Most scholars do conclude that Jesus is speaking about discipleship, not communion. To become a Christian means a total identification of oneself with Christ and, if necessary, His suffering-servant role. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer has said, anything less would be cheap grace.

Throughout this discourse Jesus stresses that salvation is not so much a result of man's acceptance but rather God's provision. Both have a place in the understanding of salvation, but clearly the emphasis is upon God's initiative and provision.

Another emphasis is that Jesus was aware from the very beginning that one of His disciples would betray Him. This is a recurring theme in John's gospel.

GUIDED DISCOVERY

verses 1-14

- ? 1. Why did the crowds follow Jesus?
2. Why would He be concerned about feeding the crowd?
- ! 3. What was Jesus' purpose in testing Philip (Note II Kings 4:43)?
- ? 4. Why would Andrew suggest the boy's five loaves and two fishes if he knew it was not enough?
5. Does verse 14 indicate that the event was natural or supernatural?
- ? 6. How do you answer those who believe that the crowd felt ashamed when the boy shared his own meal and this caused the crowd to share the food they had brought?
7. What can be learned by Jesus' supplying more than needed?
- ? 8. Why did Jesus have the fragments picked up?
9. Why did Jesus give thanks for the food?

!10. What does Deuteronomy 18:15 tell us about the crowd's expectations?

!11. What does this section tell us about mankind?

12. What can we learn about Jesus from this event?

?13. How do people sometimes approach Jesus in a similar manner?

14. What can be learned from the generosity of the young boy?

verses 15-21

!15. What kind of a king did the crowd want?

16. In what way was Jesus mistakenly identified with Moses?

17. Why did Jesus retreat into the mountains?

!18. How might someone else have reacted to such acclaim?

19. What would have been the Romans' reaction to Jesus being made king?

20. What does verse 4 indicate about how much moonlight there might have been?

21. What occupation of the disciples would have been useful at this time?

22. How could the disciples have expected Jesus to meet them?

23. According to John 21:3, when did fishing take place?

24. How do you explain that it was only two to three miles across the Sea of Galilee and the disciples had rowed three to four miles?

25. Why were they frightened when they saw Jesus?

26. What does the "immediately" of verse 21 add to the meaning of the verse?

?27. If "immediately" implies the idea of a miracle, how do we answer those who would say Jesus walked upon a sand bar?

28. What can we learn from the disciples when we are in danger or fear for our lives?

29. Why were they glad to take Jesus into the boat as verse 21 indicates?

30. Why did Jesus walk on the water? Did He do it to impress the disciples? What does this tell us about Christ?

verses 22-40

31. Was the crowd really interested in how Jesus got to Capernaum?
32. What quality of commitment did the crowd exhibit?
33. How does Jesus attempt to change their interest in verse 27?
- ?34. Why did He speak with such symbolism?
35. How do they answer Jesus' offer of eternal life?
- !36. Does their understanding of salvation by works meet with Jesus' approval? How does He correct their understanding?
37. What are they looking for in verses 30 and 31?
38. What does verse 30 indicate about their sincerity in the question which they have just asked?
- !39. In verse 28 the crowd over-emphasizes man's role in salvation by stressing human works. How does Jesus correct a similar error in verse 32?
- !40. Bread was a common part of almost every meal. It formed the dietary backbone of Jesus' day. What characteristics of this illustration apply to Jesus in a spiritual sense?
- !41. What assurance does this give Christians?
42. What differences exist between real bread and the spiritual nourishment of Christ according to verse 35?
43. In verse 30 the crowd asks for a sign to prove Christ's claims. How does verse 36 help us understand why Jesus did not accommodate them?
44. What is Jesus claiming about Himself in verse 38?
- !45. How does verse 38 indicate what Jesus' motive is?
46. What does Jesus mean by "raise him up" in verses 39 and 40?
47. What assurances can a Christian get from verse 35?
48. What promise is found in verse 37?
49. What does verse 40 mean to a Christian?
- !50. What does the crowd's interest tell us about human nature?
51. What truths are presented about salvation?

verses 41-51

- ?52. Jesus either overheard the crowd speaking or miraculously knew what they were speaking about. Which is more probable?
- 53. What does the crowd understand Jesus to mean when He says "I have come down from heaven"?
- 54. How does Jesus answer this understanding?
- 55. What would indicate that the crowd knew something about Jesus?
- 56. What important point does verse 44 make about God's part of salvation?
- 57. How does Jesus clarify His claims about His relationship with God the Father in verses 44-46?
- !58. What answer does verse 45 provide for those who claim to believe in God but do not believe in Christ?
- 59. What authority is Jesus claiming in verse 45?
- 60. What would be the reaction of the Jewish religious leaders to Jesus' comment in verse 45?
- 61. What is Jesus implying in verse 46 (note verse 38)?
- !62. What is the difference between the bread from heaven and the manna in the wilderness?

verses 52-65

- !63. How would a kosher Jew react to Jesus' statements in verses 52-57 (note Deuteronomy 12:20-25)?
- 64. What is Jesus stressing by using "live" or "living" repeatedly in verse 57?
- ?65. What does Jesus mean by eating His flesh and drinking His blood if scholars are correct that it does not mean communion?
- ?66. Why might Jesus use such inflammatory and offensive symbols to these fair-weather disciples who lacked real commitment (note verses 60, 61, and 66)?
- 67. How is verse 62 fulfilled by Acts 1:6-9?
- 68. What does verse 64 reveal about Jesus?

- 69. How does Jesus show that He is not primarily interested in numbers of disciples?
- !70. What is He primarily interested in if not numbers of disciples? How should this apply to our lives?
- 71. Who is He alluding to in verse 64?

verses 66-71

- !72. Why did many stop following Jesus after this time as verse 66 indicates?
- !73. Why did Peter decide to continue following Jesus?
- 74. Why was Jesus explicit in announcing that He knew of one of His disciples who would betray Him?
- ?75. How would you have reacted if Jesus had just spoken these words to you?
- 76. Why does John repeatedly record Jesus' statements which tell us that Jesus knew who would betray Him?
- ?77. What does Jesus mean when He says Judas was a "devil"?
- 78. What can we learn by the desertion of many of Jesus' followers at this time?
- !79. What was the difference between the disciples who stayed and those who left?
- !80. What examples of "fair-weather" disciples and totally committed disciples do we have today?
- 81. How do they differ?
- 82. What attributes of a true disciple does Peter illustrate by his statement in verses 68 and 69?
- 83. Many of those who turned their backs on Jesus were the same ones who saw the miraculous feeding of the five thousand. What does that tell us why Jesus did not provide them with additional signs?
- !84. How does this help us understand why God does not just perform some gigantic miracle which would prove His existence?
- 85. What promises for a Christian are enclosed in verses 35-40?
- 86. What provisions are offered for a non-Christian?
- 87. Should Christians seek persecution in order to identify with Christ?

- ?88. What should be a Christian's response to adversities in political or religious persecution?
89. How much should consideration of success or holding out affect our response to persecution?
- ?90. Is there any reason to hold out when there is no hope for success?

WRAP-UP

Jesus clearly exhibits signs of His divinity through the miraculous feeding of over 5,000, walking on water, knowledge that one of His disciples would betray Him, and knowing what the crowd was saying to each other. The popular knowledge about Jesus is growing and so is the reader's understanding of who Jesus is.

The fact that Jesus is willing to work with these people whose motive is not above reproach gives Christians confidence that God does not abandon us when we are not where we spiritually should be. It also says that Jesus does work with non-Christians.

In the feeding of the 5,000, Jesus not only exhibits compassion but also supplies more than is needed. He also exhibits a concern for waste-fulness by collecting the leftover bread fragments. These qualities certainly need to be emulated by the church today. Self denial is no more spiritual than idolatry of material gain. Christians must distinguish between needs and wants so that worldwide hunger and starvation can be lessened. Christians are stewards of the earth and must take seriously a reduction in pollution so that the world is no worse off at our death than at our birth.

A major emphasis is that our spiritual nourishment depends upon Christ. This promise bears a commitment to a life identified with Christ-

like character. We cannot accept the promise without the obligation since they are inseparable. It is important at this point to remember that salvation is God's gracious offer and not man's reward. No one deserves eternal life yet without emulating Christ's life we cannot receive it. This is the cost of discipleship as Bonhoeffer has shown.

Some would wish God to simply perform some gigantic miracle in order to evangelize the world. Yet many of those who witnessed this feeding of the 5,000 turned their backs on Jesus. Jesus recognized that just one more sign would never be enough. There will be those who deny God to the very instant of their judgment.

Feast of Tabernacles, Jerusalem 7:1-10:21

The Amazing Teacher 7:1-52

BEHIND THE SCENE

Much of John's gospel revolves around the various feasts of the Jews, and this passage is a good example. Jesus' half-brothers jeeringly suggest that He go up to Jerusalem. This would probably have caused His arrest. Most Jews would travel together with family and acquaintances from their home village. These people would be able to identify Jesus. He went to Jerusalem on the third day of a seven- or eight-day celebration in order to begin teaching in the temple without His identity being known. Such an arrival would allow Jesus to win their support on the basis of His teachings without preconceived ideas. Another factor is that the Jewish leaders would be reluctant to arrest Jesus in the midst of a crowd for fear of a public uprising. The Romans would have held the Jewish leaders responsible for such an uprising, so they would be very eager to nip any such uprising in the bud.

A good rule in debating is when you cannot refute the argument, question the debater's character. This is exactly what the crowd does in verse 20. Jesus argues that since the Jews were allowed to practice circumcision if the eighth day after birth occurred on the Sabbath, then surely it should be permissible for Him to completely restore a man on the Sabbath.

The feast of tabernacles itself occurred either in September or early October and lasted seven or eight days. Its observance is commanded in Exodus 23:16, 34:22, and numerous other passages. Its significance was twofold. First of all, it was a celebration of the harvest and consequently was also called the Feast of Ingathering. Secondly, it commemorated the journey in the wilderness where they dwelt in booths or temples. All adult males who were physically able were to dwell in temporary shelters at this time. The shelters were usually made of branches and leaves. This was a celebration of God's provisions and protection during the wandering in the wilderness. This feast was to be celebrated as the most joyous of all festivals.

On each of the seven days of the feast, a priest would draw water from the pool of Siloam in a golden flagon and bring it in a procession to the temple with a joyful sounding of trumpets. At the same time, there would be a second procession from the Kedron Valley. Water was poured into a bowl beside the altar from which a tube took it to the base of the altar. Simultaneously wine was poured through a similar bowl on the other side of the altar. These symbolic ceremonies were acts of thanksgiving for God's mercy in giving water for the past and in looking forward to the giving of rain in the years to come. Jesus probably spoke verse 37 as the water would be poured on the altar. Jesus changes the focus of the ceremony

from physical to spiritual needs which only He can fulfill. The passage which Jesus quotes in verse 38 is uncertain since there is no passage which translates as such. Some feel that Jesus may have been loosely translating Isaiah 12:3, 44:3, 58:11, or Zechariah 14:8.

The people are still divided as to Jesus' claims, but it appears that Jesus is gaining disciples. The Jewish leaders are plotting to kill Jesus without a trial, which would be a violation of the law. At the same time the Jews are seeking to kill Jesus partly because He broke the Mosaic Law by healing on the Sabbath. The irony of this is that in unlawfully seeking to kill Jesus without a proper trial, the Jews are genuinely guilty of breaking the Mosaic Law. The guilty are seeking the death of the innocent Jesus.

GUIDED DISCOVERY

verses 1-13

- ! 1. According to John 5:16-18, why did the Jews seek to kill Jesus?
- ? 2. Since Jesus' half-brothers did not believe in Him as verse 5 indicates, what did they mean by their comments in verses 4 and 5?
3. How would they have said verses 4 and 5?
4. What is Jesus saying in answer to their mocking comments?
- ! 5. What ulterior motives do Jesus' half-brothers have in suggesting He return to Judea?
6. Since the Jewish officials would be looking for Him, why would He be reluctant to go to Jerusalem with His family and other members of His village?
- ? 7. Is Jesus lying in verse 8 when He later goes to Jerusalem (note Behind the Scene)?
8. What does it mean that Jesus went to Jerusalem privately and not publically?

- ! 9. Who did the people fear when it says, "yet for fear of the Jews, no one spoke openly"?
- 10. Who did Jesus mean by "world" in verse 7?
- !11. Why did some people think Jesus was leading the people astray?
- 12. What similar charge is made against Christianity today?
- 13. How do you answer such a charge?

verses 14-24

- ?14. What would have been the advantage of Jesus' going up in the middle of the feast and teaching people unaware of who He is?
- 15. How does Jesus react to the favorable response to His teachings in verses 17 and 18?
- 16. Did the Jews deny Jesus' charge that they do not keep the Law?
- !17. Rather than to answer Jesus' charge in verse 19, what do they do?
- 18. What kind of escape maneuver is this?
- 19. What was the deed for which the Jews were seeking to kill Jesus (note John 5:18)?
- 20. How is Jesus comparing circumcision which could be done on the Sabbath to the healing which He miraculously performed on the Sabbath?
- !21. What kind of false judgments are the Jews guilty of in verse 24?
- 22. How do different versions translate verse 20?
- 23. How does this help understand what the Jews were saying about Jesus?
- ?24. How has the church today fallen into the same legalism as these Jews?
- !25. What is Jesus painstakingly careful to make clear about His teachings and authority?
- !26. If Jesus were careful to always credit God with the glory, what does that teach us about how we deal with praise?
- ?27. Were the Jewish leaders really interested in whether or not Jesus had broken the Sabbath? What was their real motive?
- 28. What does that say to those involved in power struggles in either the local church or denomination?

- 29. What can we learn from this passage about God's timing?
- 30. How can this be applied to Christian lives?
- 31. Are Christians ever guilty of labeling people as "crazy" rather than having to deal with them seriously?
- !32. Are there more subtle forms of pigeonholing people by either denomination or doctrinal groups? Why is this easily abused?

verses 25-36

- 33. Politically, why were the Jewish leaders fearful of challenging Jesus in public?
- !34. How would the Jewish people react if this self-taught carpenter could win a debate with these "learned" Jewish leaders?
- ?35. Why would the Jews avoid such confrontation?
- 36. According to Jewish tradition, the Messiah was expected to appear from an unexpected location. How does Jesus answer this tradition in verses 28 and 29?
- 37. What is Jesus claiming His relationship to be with God?
- 38. How would the Jews have understood this statement?
- !39. How did they react to His claims of equality with God?
- 40. What indicates in verse 30 that God was in control of what was occurring?
- 41. What change has occurred between verses 12 and 31?
- 42. What has caused the change of some to believe in Jesus as the Christ?
- 43. What public miracles had He done (note 6:19, 6:11-14; 5:8,9; 4:50)?
- 44. What happens to the soldiers sent to arrest Jesus according to John 7:45?
- 45. How do the Jews misunderstand Jesus' comment from verses 33 and 34?
- 46. What was Jesus really saying in verses 33 and 34?
- !47. What was Jesus inferring about the Jews when He said that "where I am going you cannot come"?
- 48. Why did the Jews not ask Jesus what He meant instead of asking each other?

49. What does this say about their personalities?
50. What examples of religious pride do we find in the churches today?
- !51. Some Christians have said that there is enough evidence to convince anyone who wants to find the truth that Christianity is true. Yet there will never be enough to convince those who do not want to accept Christianity. How is this illustrated by this passage?
- !52. How does this apply to our understanding of evangelism?
53. What were the Jews guilty of that would prohibit them from entering eternal life?
54. What does this teach us?
55. The Jews were unable to arrest Jesus because it was not according to God's timetable. What assurance does this provide for Christians in relationship to I Thessalonians 5:18 and Romans 8:28?

verses 37-52

56. Each day of the Feast of Tabernacles priests would pour water on the altar as acts of thanksgiving for God's provision of rain during the year and in expectation that God would send rain to this arid land in the years to come. Why were they so concerned about water?
- !57. How does Jesus use this physical need to illustrate a spiritual need?
58. Why would Jesus use this illustration during the Feast of Tabernacles?
59. What is Jesus saying about the Holy Spirit?
60. What does it mean that Jesus was not yet glorified?
- ?61. When was the Holy Spirit to be given?
62. What different opinions are expressed about who Jesus is?
63. What fact of Jesus' birth is not known by the multitudes in verses 41 and 42?
64. What was the reaction of the Jewish leaders when the officers reported back?
65. What would have been a more rational reaction as Nicodemus points out?
66. How do the Jewish leaders exhibit an elitist snobbishness in verses 48 and 49?

- !67. Who did they consider to know the truth?
68. What group did they represent?
69. What additional information do we learn about Nicodemus?
70. How do the Jews answer Nicodemus' questions about proper legal procedure?
71. Does that really answer the question?
72. What are the Jews willing to ignore in the name of expedience?
73. What do they accuse Jesus of in John 5:18?
- !74. One of the charges against Jesus is that He broke the Mosaic Law. If they follow through with their plans against Nicodemus' suggestion, of what will they be guilty? What is the irony of this?
75. What lesson can we learn from the error of the Jewish leaders' commitment to preconceived notions?
76. Were the Jews concerned about the spiritual claims of Jesus or the threat He posed to their authority?
77. What lesson should this provide for Christians in places of authority?
78. What promise does verse 39 hold for Christians?
79. What assurance does verses 37 and 38 give to the followers of Christ?

WRAP-UP

Jesus was clearly rejected by His half-brothers during His earthly ministry. It is not until after His resurrection that Jesus' half-brothers realize the authenticity of His claims and become leaders in the church. Again Jesus stresses that His teachings are not His own but from the Father. Jesus continually gives God the praise for His accomplishments and points to God as His authority, not Himself. This is certainly an example Christians need to emulate.

Those who believe that all men are saved and that there is no eternal punishment or separation from God find this a difficult passage. Jesus clearly says in verses 34 and 36 that after His death these Jewish leaders will not be able to find Jesus or be able to come where He is.

The Woman Caught in Adultery 7:53-8:11

BEHIND THE SCENE

This section is omitted in the oldest and most reliable manuscripts. This presents a problem as to its authenticity. It is found in some manuscripts in the Gospel of Luke. Its form and vocabulary are indeed very similar to Luke. Some manuscripts place it at different places in John, including as an appendage. Whatever the source of this account, its inclusion into the gospel texts would indicate its early acceptance. The story itself portrays Christ in a manner in harmony with the whole Scriptures' understanding of Jesus. It is for these various reasons that it is probably an authentic historical account.

The Jews wished to entrap Jesus in a situation where they could strip Him of His public appeal or turn Him over to the Romans as responsible for instituting the unauthorized stoning of a Jewish woman. If Jesus told the Jews to stone her, the Romans would have arrested and executed Him. If He said not to kill or stone her as the Mosaic Law provided, He would be charged with not upholding the Mosaic Law and of bending to Roman authority. The latter would have lost Him much popular appeal. Jesus places the decision back in their hands by saying, "you who is without sin cast the first stone." Those who had laid in wait to entrap this woman (surely they could not have found this woman engaged in adultery by coincidence) knew their guilt. They would be willing to allow the death of this woman, but they would not initiate her execution.

GUIDED DISCOVERY

- ! 1. The Romans would not allow the sentence of death to be imposed without their approval. What would have been the Romans' reaction to Jesus if He had approved the stoning of the adulteress?

- ! 2. If Jesus had told the Jews not to stone an adulteress as found in Deuteronomy 22:23, of what would the Jews have accused Jesus?
3. How does Deuteronomy 22:23 show that the Jews were not fulfilling the Law themselves?
4. What was the Jews' real motive in bringing the woman to Jesus for judgment?
5. How do you think Jesus felt at this time?
- ? 6. What does Jesus mean by "let him who is without sin cast the first stone"?
- ? 7. Why would the oldest men leave first?
8. Is Jesus condoning sexual sin by not punishing this woman? Why?
- ! 9. Is one sin greater than another? Is adultery worse than theft, for instance?
10. Is there a double standard of sexual sin demonstrated here? What is the Christian's reaction to double standards? (Note Deut. 22:23)

WRAP-UP

This passage offends all people who believe in any sense of human life or decency. These Jews were willing to allow the death of another human being in order to entrap Jesus! One can only imagine a hatred which would permit the taking of a life. For these Jews the end did justify the means, even if it meant the life of this woman and the breaking of the Mosaic Law. If they did catch this woman in the actual act of committing adultery, where is the man? This idea of double standard is still with us today. Make no mistake, Jesus is not condoning adultery; He tells the woman to sin no more. Those who have been involved in sexual immorality need to hear of God's forgiveness since many believe that sexual sin is greater than the other types. In God's sight, sin is sin. There is no qualitative difference in sin. However, sins of a sexual nature have much more lasting mental scars. People have a hard time forgiving themselves.

What did Jesus write in the dust? Perhaps it is not so much the words which were important but the time which allowed these Jews to reflect on what they were doing. Perhaps Jesus was so filled with indignation that He wrote in the dust in order to give Himself time to cool His holy anger. All this is mere speculation and certainly is not important, or the Holy Spirit would have preserved it for us.

The Testimony and the Sign of Light 8:12-9:12

BEHIND THE SCENE

During the Feast of Tabernacles in the court of women, four golden candlabras were erected with four golden bowls each. Worn-out garments of the priests were used as wicks. Young Levites would be responsible to keep the oil filled in each candlabra. These lamps put out enough light to illuminate the whole of Jerusalem. Jesus was referring to this custom when He declared Himself to be "the light of the world." His enlightenment would be spiritual, not physical, worldwide rather than regional.

The world can be divided into spiritual light (enlightenment and truth) and spiritual darkness. These two realms are mutually exclusive; that is, there is no gray area. However, because of man's fallen nature and limited knowledge, it may be impossible for him to determine what is good or evil, right or wrong. John's Gospel draws this dicotomy which truly does exist while not attempting to deal with the problem. He is only interested in drawing a line and noting the characteristics and eternal existance of those on each side of the line. Implicit in this is the question, "which side are you on?" There are no fence straddlers.

Jesus states that not only is He the only one who is qualified to speak about Himself, but also God His Father validates His claims by working through Him. This passage shows that many of those who are the most hostile toward Christianity and Christ are the same ones who have the most information to make the right decision. This certainly was true in the case of these Jews. The legalism they have imposed upon themselves has become a strait-jacket on their spiritual growth. Their pride in being a descendant of Abraham blinded them to the truth which Jesus tries to impart to them. The Jews believed they deserved a portion of what Abraham had been promised by God. They ignored God's conditions to receive His promises. Jesus points out that they are a slave to sin and as such have no claim to Abraham's promise. At this point the Jews insult Jesus by suggesting that He was born in fornication (v. 41). This is still a stumbling block to Jews today.

Jesus' statement in 8:58 clearly brings a charge of blasphemy and the penalty for blasphemy was death by stoning. Jesus' statement, "before Abraham was, I am," was considered blasphemy because the Jews' personal name for God is translated "I am" (note Exodus 3:13,14), and is God's name for Himself.

Many of Jesus' seven "I ams" have a corresponding sign. Jesus demonstrates that He is the light of the world by healing a blind man so that light had come into his dark world. It is not surprising that people were divided as to the identity of the formerly blind man. A blind begger would scarcely be noticed among the multitude of beggars that lived in Jerusalem. Alms giving was an important part of Judaism and especially if they were

given in Jerusalem. It is not surprising that there is a problem with identifying the man, considering the change of mannerism due to receiving his sight and not having been noticed before as a begger.

It is curious why Jesus used clay made from spittle in this miracle. Surely Jesus did not need the clay in order to accomplish the miracle. Some possibilities are that the clay was simply a placebo used either to encourage the blind man or to draw the Jews' attention to this second miracle done on the Sabbath. Another possibility is that tradition held that spittle had certain healing qualities. Any definitive answer is not feasible at this time.

GUIDED DISCOVERY

verses 12-20

1. What are the characteristics of light?
- ! 2. What background information would add understanding to Jesus' statement "I am the light of the world"? (Note Behind the Scene)
3. What is this light Jesus speaks about (note 1:17)?
4. What is the darkness of verse 12?
5. What two realms are the world divided into?
- ? 6. Why are Christians unable to distinguish the dividing line between the two realms?
- ? 7. What does this say about mankind's limitations?
8. Since it is sometimes hard to distinguish the dividing line, should we give up trying to divide what is right or wrong? Why not?
- ! 9. What is the "light of life" or "the light which gives life" in verse 12? (Note: different versions differ in how to translate this phrase. Both are grammatically proper.)
- !10. How could Jesus be the source of light?

111. How could Jesus provide truth for our life?
12. Rabbinic law of evidence would not allow Jesus to testify in His own behalf. How does Jesus answer this charge in verses 14-18?
13. Is the Jews' question in verse 19 asking about Joseph, his claim that God is his father (5:17,18), or suggesting that he was born out of wedlock (8:41)?
14. How would a righteous Jew react to being told he did not know God?
15. The light of the world, Jesus, personally illuminates each Christian by giving direction and truth. What is the Christian's responsibility?
- ?16. What might keep a Christian from fulfilling his responsibility?
17. In what way is this a privilege?

verses 21-30

18. How do the Jews misunderstand His comments in verses 21 and 22?
19. What did Jesus really mean?
- !20. What does Jesus mean when He says He is from above?
21. How does this contrast with the Jews?
22. What warning does Jesus give them?
23. What kind of death is Jesus speaking about?
24. What is the result of such a death?
- ?25. In verse 25 the Jews again ask Jesus who He is. Why would they ask Him repeatedly who He was?
26. How does Jesus answer them?
27. What signs will occur at Jesus' crucifixion which will make known who Jesus is?
28. What did Jesus say that caused these people to believe in Him?
- !29. What warning does Jesus give in this section?
30. How does one react to people who see Jesus as only good "fire insurance"?
31. What kinds of motives do people have for becoming a Christian?

verses 31-47

32. What does Jesus admonish those who have just believed in Him?
33. In what way were these Jews enslaved?
- !34. How does sin enslave?
35. How does the Jewish law enslave?
- ?36. Some have said that Christ has set us free to be all that God intends us to be. What does this mean?
37. How does it apply to this passage?
38. What kind of bondage do these Jews understand Jesus to mean?
39. What does it mean that they sought to kill Him "because my word finds no place in you"?
- ?40. How does this passage explain why some people are so hostile toward Christianity?
41. What part did Abraham have in Judaism?
42. Why did the Jews refer to Abraham as their father?
- !43. If the Jews had followed Abraham's example, what would have been their response to Christ?
44. What are the Jews suggesting about Jesus' birth in verse 41?
45. Who does Jesus say is the Jews' spiritual father?
46. What characteristics does Jesus insinuate these Jews share with the devil?
47. What is the contrast between Jesus and Satan in verses 42-47?
48. Who are the true descendants of Abraham?
49. How does a person become a slave to sin?
- !50. Why is slavery a good analogy for sin?
51. How does a person lose sin as a master?
52. What contrast is there from one life to another?
53. How did the Jews' pride of being a descendant of Abraham interfere with their understanding Jesus?

- ?54. Is one conscious of the fact that they are not a child of God?
- 55. Is it enough to just accept Christ as our Savior (note 8:31)?
- 56. What admonition does that give us today?
- 57. What promises were made to Abraham (Genesis 12:13)?
- !58. What assurances can we receive since Christians are heirs of Abraham by common spiritual parentage?
- 59. What can be drawn from no one disputing His claim of sinlessness in verse 45?

verses 48-59

- 60. Where had Jesus been accused of being a demon before (note 7:20)?
- 61. What did the Jews think of Samaritans?
- 62. Why would they call Jesus a Samaritan?
- !63. Since the Jews considered the Samaritans as heretics, what were they implying about Jesus' teachings?
- 64. What caused the misunderstanding the Jews had about never seeing death?
- 65. What did Jesus mean?
- !66. How is Jesus careful not to give anyone the idea He was just "beating His own drum"?
- ?67. If you were a Jew, how would you react to being told you don't know God?
- 68. What else does Jesus accuse these Jews of in verse 55?
- 69. What do the Jews understand Jesus to be saying in verse 46?
- 70. What is Jesus saying if Exodus 3:13,14 is taken into consideration?
- 71. What crime was Jesus guilty of in these Jews' minds when they sought to stone Him?
- 72. What promise is in verse 41?
- 73. Jesus sought to glorify God with all He did. What does this teach Christians who accomplish admirable goals?
- !74. What does Christ's claim of pre-existence (8:58) indicate about Jesus' nature?

verses 9:1-12

175. Why did the disciples think this man was blind?
176. How does Jesus answer this misconception?
77. How does Jesus demonstrate that He is the light of the world through this healing?
78. Did Jesus really need to use clay in order to heal this man?
79. Why did He use this clay if He didn't need to heal the man?
80. What play on words is found in verse 7 (note Behind the Scene, John 5:1)?
81. What would be the social standing of a blind begger?
82. Since alms giving was very popular in Jerusalem, how many beggers would be found there?
83. How do these above questions explain why people might not recognize the begger?
84. What does this section say about those who suffer from a severe ailment? Do such things find their source in some sin?

WRAP-UP

Light not only is a blessing to illuminate and make activities possible, but it is only functional as we use it. It is not enough to seek spiritual truth for truth's sake or to praise God for its provision. Spiritual enlightenment demands our obedience. Early Friends personified the light to the point that it demanded an answer. Truth demanded to be followed regardless of the cost or consequences. Sadly enough, this is not the fad which captivates Christianity.

One of William Shakespeare's characters once quipped, "Methinks thou doth protest too much." This certainly is true in regard to these Jews. They knew the truth of Jesus' claims yet refused to accept their validity. Presuppositions, emotions, and volition play a far greater

role in evangelism than we would like to give them credit. Jesus dishes out some very strong medicine to these Jews; yet His motive was not malicious but redemptive. He warns them of their course and the consequences of that course; yet they refuse to turn back. Today the medium has changed but the message is the same.

Christians are adopted into God's family in place of the rebellious Jews. The promises, duties, and privileges once due the Jews are now our inheritance. Ancestral heritage is no obstacle for God. We are now heirs through our faith in Christ. This is both a blessing and an obligation.

The book of Job deals with the question of why righteous men suffer. This stems from an improper understanding of the Deuteronomic principle. In the book of Deuteronomy is stressed that if one obeys God he will prosper, have many children and die at an old age (Deuteronomy 30:15-20). This is a truthful generality, but the reverse is not always true. Suffering is not a sure sign of sinfulness. Phil Yancey's book, Where is God When it Hurts? deals with this problem in layman's language.

Healing the Blind 9:13-41

BEHIND THE SCENE

As the Jews are unable to determine among themselves who Jesus is, they turn to the formerly blind man to decide this for them. The blind man becomes bolder as he is questioned by these Jews. This boldness reaches a climactic moment in his joyous exclamation in verses 30-33! There is a sense of irony that this formerly blind man was teaching these spiritually blind Jewish leaders. The words in verse 34 "they cast him out" is

translated either as excommunication or being physically removed from the synagogue. It would appear that the latter is more probable. It may be that the man actually lay prostrate before Jesus in worship.

GUIDED DISCOVERY

verses 13-23

1. Why did the Pharisees object to Jesus' healing on the Sabbath?
- ! 2. What two opinions did the Pharisees hold regarding Jesus' healing this man on the Sabbath?
3. Why did the Jews turn to the blind man when they could not come to a decision?
4. How does the blind man's comment in verse 17 resemble John 4:19?
5. Why did they use such a vague and ambiguous term as prophet?
6. How does this show that they feared the Jews?
- ! 7. The Jews could not decide whether Jesus was from God or a sinner. man credits Jesus as being a prophet. How do the Jews attempt to discredit Him?

verses 24-34

8. Had the Pharisees made a decision as to the nature of Jesus?
9. What would indicate that the Jews had intensified their efforts to get a pronouncement from the formerly blind man.
10. Why did the Jews repeatedly ask the blind man to tell his story of being healed?
11. How does the man decide about Jesus by using his common sense?
12. How would the Jews react to this man's pointed remarks?
13. Why did they bodily throw him out of the synagogue?
14. What same error do these Jews make which Jesus' disciples made in 9:3,4?

15. What can be learned about who the formerly blind man believed Jesus to be by noting 9:22?
16. What is ironic about this formerly physically blind man's spiritual insight and the Jewish leaders' spiritual blindness?
- !17. What assurance can common mankind receive from the spiritual insight exhibited by the formerly blind man compared to the religious leaders?

verses 35-41

- ?18. Why did Jesus seek this man out?
- ?19. How would this man have worshipped Jesus?
20. How did Jesus' statement in verse 39 prove true by this encounter with the Jews?
- !21. What does Jesus mean, "If you were blind, you would have no guilt"?
22. In what sense do they now see (note 15:22, 24)?
23. What is the result of this knowledge of their sins?
- !24. What does this passage indicate about accountability for sin?
25. How is Jesus to judge the world?
26. What assurance is there since Jesus sought this man after he was cast out?

WRAP-UP

Jesus is the light of the world who brought light to the man born blind. Jesus also brought spiritual light to this man as His great exclamation in verses 30-34. The common sense of this statement is undeniable, yet these Pharisees deny the unavoidable facts. If mankind was only a mental being, evangelism would be much easier. Man is not only made up of intelligence, but also of volition, and social condition. In this case these latter two took precedence over what was rationally obvious. This section also reveals that it was this formerly blind begger who understands who Jesus is through

common sense. These trained theologians and Jewish leaders failed to understand what Jesus meant while this untrained beggar perceived God's truth. This certainly gives all Christians the assurance that God does work through the untrained and common man.

This passage may lead one to believe that a person becomes accountable for his sins when he becomes aware that what is done is sinful. The distinction between denominations lies in that some believe people are accountable for their sins from birth and therefore need infant baptism to cleanse the child from sin. It would appear that this passage more clearly supports the former.

The Good Shepherd 10:1-21

BEHIND THE SCENE

In Palestine the method of keeping sheep differs sharply from that of Australia or America. In Palestine sheep are kept in pens at night. They are usually made of stone four to five feet high with a gatekeeper watching over the sheep. Usually several herds of sheep are kept in the same pen. Those who are thieves would naturally steal sheep by scaling the walls rather than entering by the gate where the gatekeeper often slept. The owners of the sheep would naturally come to the gate. In the morning the shepherds would come to this enclosure and call out to his sheep. The sheep would then separate and follow their own shepherd. With this cultural background, Jesus draws a comparison between Himself and being the door of the sheep and the good shepherd. This illustration of a shepherd is used quite often in the Old Testament, such as in the Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. This idea often carried Messianic connotations. The Jews of the preceding chapter may well be listening to what Jesus is saying.

Jesus insinuates that they are the thieves and wolves who scatter God's flock and kill the Messiah. This would enrage the Jews to be classified as the bad guys who are opposed to God's will since they saw themselves as the protectors of God's law and God's people.

It is easy to see why the Jews would call Jesus insane. After all, who in their right mind would insult those who have power over your life? But then again, Jesus was the only one who actually had such power.

In this section lies two more of John's seven "I ams": "I am the door of the sheep" and "I am the good shepherd". These two add to Jesus' spiritual claims.

GUIDED DISCOVERY

(Note the manner of keeping sheep found in Behind the Scene)

- ! 1. What things about keeping sheep would offer insights into what Jesus meant?
- ! 2. In what way is Jesus a spiritual door?
3. Who are the thieves and robbers Jesus is speaking about?
- ! 4. How is the safety of the sheep pen parallel with the safety in Christ?
5. What does Jesus do to qualify as the good shepherd?
6. Would a shepherd actually die to save one sheep?
7. What does this tell us about Jesus' commitment to Christians?
8. What does verses 17 and 18 say about Jesus' death?
9. What charges against Jesus are repeated again in verses 20 and 21 (note 7:20; 8:48; 8:52; 9:16)?

WRAP-UP

This passage provides tremendous encouragement and assurance for Christians. Jesus will protect, lead, and provide for His flock. He is

also the only one who can provide eternal life and admit us into the safety of the fold. Christ cares for His people as no hireling would. Jesus' commitment was to His very life. He gave His life--it was not taken from Him--and He rose again as testimony that those who believe in Him shall achieve a like resurrection. These great promises are the Christian's hallmark and treasure!

Once again, the Jews remain divided as to who Jesus is. Many resort to name calling rather than dealing with the authenticity of His claims. Today Christians are often depicted as simple-minded fanatics or bigots and hypocrites whose religion does not deserve investigating. Mankind really has not changed that much.

The Feast of Dedication 10:22-42

BEHIND THE SCENE

This holiday is now called Hanukkah. The Feast of Dedication occurred in the latter part of December and lasted eight days. It was also called the Feast of Lights. Jews were not required to attend, but it was a very popular and joyful celebration commemorating the purification of the temple, removal of the defiled altar, and the restoration of worship by Judas Maccabees in 164 B.C. Antiochus Epiphanes had defiled the temple by sacrificing a pig on the altar. The entire furnishing of the temple had to be replaced. This process was completed on the 25th of Chislew. Three years earlier to the very day, the temple was rededicated. The most miraculous thing which occurred was that the oil used for the candelabra was desecrated except for one flagon of oil bearing the high priest's seal. This normally would have been only enough for one day. By a miracle, the flagon produced oil for eight days until more kosher oil could be procured. Consequently, the festival lasted eight days in remembrance of this miracle.

Jewish homes lighted additional candle each night of the feast. Some homes even lit a candle for every member of the household each night of the celebration. Jews gathered together in their place of worship carrying palm branches and singing. Fasting and mourning were prohibited since this was a time of celebration.

Jesus' claims are clearly that of equality with God. Such statements of blasphemy were punishable by death, which is what the Jews sought to do. In verse 34 is a reference to Psalms 82:6 in which God Himself calls certain men gods. This reference seems to be one of respect or authority rather than deity. Jesus clearly points not only to His teachings but also to the miracles which He has performed as proof of His claims. The disbelief and rejection which Jesus receives in Jerusalem is in sharp contrast to the acceptance which is found across the Jordan.

GUIDED DISCOVERY

- ! 1. Had Jesus not given these Jews enough information about Himself for them to understand His claims?
2. What kind of Messiah were they hoping for in their Roman-occupied land?
- ? 3. Since they clearly did have enough testimony and signs of who Jesus is, why did they ask Him again (note v. 26)?
4. What does Jesus point to as signs and witnesses of His nature?
- ! 5. What did these Jews understand Jesus to be saying? Does He deny it?
- ? 6. How does one answer those who believe Jesus was only a good teacher or prophet?
7. Why did Jesus go across the Jordan?
8. What do the common people believe about Jesus?
9. What do 7:30, 8:59, and 10:39 have in common?

10. How would it be possible for Jesus to get away from the Jews each time? Consider the crowds, Jesus' knowledge of human nature, and divine power.

WRAP-UP

As several scholars have noted, either Jesus was a liar, a fraud, a maniac, or He was God Himself. It cannot be held that Jesus was just a good teacher or prophet considering the claims He made about Himself. His statements are clearly understood as claims of deity and equality with God. Jesus does nothing to dispel these concepts. One cannot be only a good teacher or a true prophet if these claims about Jesus are correct. If they are in error, then Jesus certainly is not a good teacher or a true prophet of God. Jesus clearly is either the incarnate God or a liar, a fraud, and a madman. His miracles, prophet fulfillment, and teachings leave no alternative but to worship Him as the Incarnate Christ. For this He deserves our unequivocal allegiance.

The Raising of Lazarus 11:1-12:11

BEHIND THE SCENE

The raising of Lazarus is the event which makes it clear to the Jews that they must act immediately and kill Jesus. By comparing John with the synoptics, it can be learned that the cumulative effect of the raising of Lazarus and the second cleansing of the temple caused the Jews to intensify their efforts to kill Jesus.

Jesus was very aware that Lazarus was already dead two days when He received word of Lazarus' illness. This delay would provide an opportunity to perform a climactic miracle. The Pharisees were embarrassed because this would be a sign to validate his claims. The Sadducees did not believe

in an afterlife, so the raising of Lazarus would be a theological embarrassment to them. Thomas' statement reveals an understanding of what lay in the future yet a misunderstanding of what Jesus meant. His commitment is noble but does not bear fruition.

Evidently, news of Jesus' coming preceded Him so that Martha went to meet Him. Martha believed that Jesus did have the power of resurrection, but her hopes are in a future resurrection. Jesus helps her realize that He is the life and the resurrection today and that He can raise Lazarus on that very day. This is the setting for another of the seven "I am" statements and a corresponding miracle, which is the resurrection of Lazarus. Martha's statement concerning Jesus in verse 27 is a much fuller understanding of the person of Jesus than has been expressed thus far in this Gospel.

It was customary for people to mourn several days at the death of a loved one with friends weeping with the family. When Mary arises and leaves, her friends assume she is going to the tomb to weep more. They evidently decided to go with her.

The Jews theorized that this climactic miracle would cause a political uprising which would cause a revolt that would lead to the Romans establishing martial law, the destruction of the temple, and the killing of thousands of people. Their central concern was that all this would lead to their loss of power, prestige, and possibly their lives. The Jews rationalized that the killing of Jesus would be the only thing which would avoid this disaster; in short, the end justified the means. It is ironic that these Jews broke the Mosaic Law of judicial proceeding in their attempt to uphold the Mosaic Law against blasphemy.

The intensification of the Jews' efforts is demonstrated since those who believed in Jesus no longer must worry only about being temporarily removed from the synagogue. Now they must disclose the location of Jesus so He may be arrested.

Judas did not care for the poor but saw it as an opportunity to steal more money. Judas' protest came too late to salvage a majority of the ointment which was used. Such a statement would have surely hurt Mary. Her only motive was to demonstrate her appreciation for the resurrection of Lazarus. Jesus' reproof to Judas would certainly reassure Mary in her display of appreciation.

GUIDED DISCOVERY

verses 11:1-16

- ! 1. Why did Jesus delay in His departure to Lazarus?
2. Was Lazarus dead or alive when the Messiah reached him (compare verse 6 to verse 39)?
3. Why were the disciples reluctant to return to Judea?
4. What incident are they referring to when they express their fear that Jesus will be killed by the Jews (note 10:31)?
5. What does Jesus mean by His comments in verses 9 and 10?
6. What knowledge does Jesus possess?
- ! 7. Why were Jesus' disciples unconcerned when Jesus told them that Lazarus slept?
- ! 8. What does Thomas expect to happen in Judea? What does this indicate about Thomas?

verses 17-27

9. What power does Martha already believe that Jesus possesses in verse 21?
10. When does Martha believe Lazarus will live again in verse 24?

11. What is significant that Jesus is both the resurrection and the life?
- !12. What kind of life and death is Jesus talking about in verse 26?
13. What does Martha understand Jesus to be from His claims?
- !14. What does Martha reveal about what it means to believe in Jesus?
15. How do different versions translate "He who is coming into the World" in verse 27?
16. How is Jesus "coming into the world"?

verses 28-37

17. Why did Martha whisper to her sister that Jesus had arrived?
- ?18. What power did Mary believe Jesus possessed?
19. What does verse 33 tell about Jesus' concern for others? How should this be applied to a Christian's life?
- !20. What things would lead these Jews to think that Jesus could have kept Lazarus from dying?

verses 38-44

- ?21. What does verse 39 indicate about mourning of a loved one?
22. What does Martha expect to find in Lazarus' tomb?
23. What does Jesus remind her of at this point?
24. What is the reason for the change in Martha's comments in verses 25-27 and 39?
- !25. What is significant about Jesus' prayer in verse 41? Why would Jesus want God to receive the credit?
- ?26. Why is it unlikely that Lazarus was in a coma if he emerged at the moment Jesus spoke in verses 43 and 44?
27. What can be learned about Jesus from His ability to raise Lazarus from the grave?
28. What assurance does a Christian have because of Jesus' raising Lazarus?
- ?29. What would have been your reaction at the raising of Lazarus?

30. What indicates Jesus' compassion for Lazarus and his family?

verses 45-57

31. How could people be divided about Jesus after raising Lazarus from the grave?
32. What was the motive of the chief priests and Pharisees in plotting Jesus' death?
33. What should have been the Jewish leaders' response to Jesus' claims and miracles?
34. What should be your response to Christ's claims and miracles?
35. How does John 6:15 show that this fear of Jesus' promoting a political uprising was unfounded?
36. What would have happened to the Jewish leaders' political position if the Romans had to put down an uprising?
37. How would this fear of loss of power and possibly life have influenced their response to Jesus?
38. What should have been their response to Jesus' claims?
39. What did Caiaphas mean politically in his comment of verse 50?
40. How did this statement have a double meaning?
41. What does the fact that Caiaphas was high priest have to do with the understanding of Caiaphas' statement?
42. What does John's editorial comment in verses 51 and 52 add to Caiaphas' statement?
43. How does this suggest the end justified the means?
44. What promise does this passage hold for gentiles, as most Christians are?
45. How do verses 53 and 54 indicate that the Jews' efforts to kill Jesus had intensified compared to 10:39 (compare 11:57 to 9:22 also)?
46. What is said in verses 55 and 56 that indicates Jesus' popularity was increasing?

verses 12:1-11

47. What edict is Lazarus and his family breaking by inviting Jesus to their home (note John 11:57)?
48. How does each person demonstrate their gratitude to Jesus?
49. Why did Judas object to the wasteful use of the ointment?
50. What was Judas' true motive?
51. When did he voice his objection, before or after its use? What does this say about Judas' personality?
52. How does this passage reveal that Jesus did not want to deny Mary a blessing?
53. Does verse 8 indicate that Jesus was not concerned about the poor (note Galatians 2:1-10 and James 1:27)?
54. Since Jesus is concerned about the poor, what did He mean by His reply to Judas?
55. Since a denarii was about a man's wages for one day, how much would this ointment be worth today?
56. Since the washing of a person's feet was considered a job of a slave, what does this event reveal about Mary and her respect for Jesus?
57. What should be our response to Jesus?
58. Was all the ointment used according to verse 7?
59. Does John 19:39-41 suggest that this ointment was used in His burial?
60. Where might the ointment have gone considering Judas' rebuke and John's comments?
61. Why was there a "great" crowd of Jews (note 12:1)?
62. What can be gathered from the crowd's interest in Jesus and especially Lazarus?
63. What can be gathered from the Jews' willingness to kill Lazarus as well (note similar questions concerning plotting Jesus' death, 11:45-57)?
64. What does this section indicate about the sinfulness of mankind by noting the Jews' behavior and Judas' motive?

- !65. What measure of commitment had Lazarus and his family made by defying the edict of 11:57?
- ?66. How would you have felt is Mary had anointed your feet and wiped it off with her hair?
67. What Christian virtues does Mary exhibit by her actions?

WRAP-UP

This is Jesus' miracle par excellence. The others may be denounced by collusion between the receiver and Jesus. This miracle was performed in the very backyard of Jerusalem and under the Jewish leaders' noses. The stature of this miracle made it apparent that Jesus must be dealt with immediately. This miracle would seemingly convince anyone who was uncertain about Jesus' claims. Yet there were those who still did not believe in Jesus after seeing the miracle and instead informed the Jews of Jesus' action. Certainly this would indicate that even the greatest miracle is insufficient to convince everyone. The resurrection also gives each Christian the assurance that Christ does hold power and authority over death. Our hope in eternal life is not in vain.

The comment that Jesus wept is the shortest Bible verse. It importantly demonstrates Jesus' empathy and compassion. Too often Jesus is portrayed as stoic or wooden rather than having regard for others' difficulties. This portrait certainly gives Christians an assurance that Jesus truly does care about our plight.

Martha's statement concerning Jesus in verse 27 is a much fuller understanding of the person of Jesus than has been expressed thus far in John. John continually bombards the reader with various people believing in Jesus. John uses this as a catalyst to stimulate people to decide for

themselves who Jesus is. This question still deserves an answer today and is of the utmost importance. Is Jesus God Incarnate or a maniac? No one can make the claims Jesus does unless he falls into one of these two categories. Who is Jesus?

Triumphal Entry and Passover 12:12-50

BEHIND THE SCENE

The waving of palm branches in the air was a sign of victory such as welcoming a returning conqueror. The mode of transportation for the common man was walking. The horse was largely a military animal, and the fact that Jesus rode upon a colt of an ass finds prophetic fulfillment in Zechariah 9:9. The crowd thought that they were hailing a political messiah. They were looking for a conquering hero rather than a suffering servant. This type of fanaticism would have naturally frightened the Jewish leaders who saw in it a potential for a political uprising with the thousands of additional Jews in Jerusalem. Their fear would naturally be that Jesus would use the Passover feast to declare Himself Messiah. These fears of the Jews were unfounded and could have been resolved if they had investigated Jesus' response to the multitude that was miraculously fed. Jesus fled from them when they attempted to make Him king.

There is no certainty who these Greeks were that wanted an audience with Jesus. Some scholars believe that they were proselyte Greeks who had fully surrendered to this Jewish faith. Equally competent scholars feel that these people were Greeks who were attracted by the monotheism of Judaism and its high moral standard. This second group had not actually become

Jews and therefore would be treated as gentiles. The reaction of the disciples and Jesus' comments about the Mosaic Law would seem to suggest that the latter possibility is more probable.

Several times this gospel depicts a supernatural event occurring which is known by the public. The reaction to these miracles is usually a divided response. Some believe that it witnesses to the truth of Jesus' claims while others deny the obvious. (Note the Wrap-Up concerning the feeding of the five thousand and question 51 of 7:25-36.) Christians must realize that all data is interpreted by each person's own presuppositions, and what Christians see as a miracle (and genuinely is a miracle) will be interpreted by another person who may deny the existence of anything supernatural. Thus the conclusion will be completely opposite that of the Christian's. For instance, C. S. Lewis states the only person he knows of who has seen a ghost denies the reality of her experience because she denies the existence of the supernatural. This explains why different people heard the voice from heaven yet came to different conclusions as to its nature.

The scriptures present two images of the Christ: that of the reigning king and that of the suffering servant. Since the Jews found themselves under foreign dominion, it was easy for them to want and expect the reigning king. Their hope for this political liberator indicates just how difficult it is to remain objective in the interpretation of scripture.

In this section Jesus refers to the ointment as being for His burial. Also, Jesus indicates twice that His hour has come; He will be lifted up; the grain of wheat must fall; the light is with you only a little while. All these references not only indicate that He was fully aware of what awaited Him but also sought to prepare His disciples for His death.

GUIDED DISCOVERY

verses 12-19

- ! 1. "Hosanna" means "save us we pray". Considering they called Jesus "the King of Israel", from what were they asking to be saved?
- ! 2. A common man would have walked into Jerusalem, a military hero would have ridden a horse. How does Zechariah 9:9 explain why Jesus rode upon an unbroken animal?
- 3. How did Jesus attempt to correct their understanding by how He entered Jerusalem?
- 4. What level of commitment does this crowd exhibit?
- 5. What does John state to be the motive of this crowd?
- 6. Why did the Pharisees now believe that they would not be able to stop Jesus?
- ? 7. Does verse 19 indicate whether or not Judas had made his plans evident to the Jews?
- ! 8. How would one contrast Jesus' plans to the schemes and hopes of the crowd?

verses 20-26

- 9. What preparation was necessary before the Jews could take part in one of the Jewish feasts (note 11:55)?
- 10. What would happen to a Jew who came in contact with a gentile in regard to ceremonial purification (note 18:18,19)?
- 11. Why did these gentiles contact Philip, who had a Greek name, as opposed to Matthew?
- 12. Why did the disciples discuss this appeal by these Greeks to talk to Jesus?
- 13. Who is Jesus answering in verse 23, considering verses 34 and 35?
- 14. What does this contact with the gentiles indicate about Jesus?
- 15. How does verse 33 answer the gentiles' request to see Jesus?
- ! 16. Does a grain of wheat appear to be dead or alive before it is planted? How does this illustrate Jesus' death and purpose?
- ? 17. What are the characteristics of someone who loves his life and someone who hates his life?

18. What is a paradox?

19. What paradox does verse 25 contain?

20. How would verse 25 be received by those who hailed Him King of Israel?

verses 27-36

21. What is "this hour" which Jesus refers to in verse 23 and 27?

!22. The crowd which was present and heard the voice from heaven was divided as to its nature. What other events have occurred from supernatural origin that were likewise received with divided opinion (note 7:31; 9:16, 31; 10:21, 41; 11:45, 46)?

!23. What application does this have in evangelism or our understanding of man's receptiveness to the gospel or the existence of the supernatural?

?24. How has God glorified His name through Jesus in the past and will glorify it in the future?

25. What was the purpose of this voice from heaven?

26. Who is the ruler of this earth in verse 31?

27. In what sense is Satan to be cast out (note 14:30, 16:11)?

28. How will Jesus draw all man to Himself by His death?

29. Why does this give Christians a right to celebrate?

30. The term "light" was sometimes associated with the Messiah. How does this help understand Jesus' statement?

31. What does darkness have to do with the ruler of this age in verse 31?

?32. Did Jesus hide in order to avoid being captured by the Jews, to invest His few remaining hours with His disciples, or both? Why?

verses 37-50

33. What is significant that Isaiah would prophesy concerning Jesus hundreds of years prior to Jesus' birth?

?34. Does verse 40 indicate that God intended for some people not to be saved? What is another alternative?

35. Is there a contradiction between verses 37 and 42?

36. What authorities had thus far expressed faith in Christ (note 7:48, 40)?

- !37. What judgment does John level at these silent believers (note 19:38,39)?
- 38. What does this tell us about Christians who do not publically verbalize their faith?
- !39. What does Jesus claim about belief in Him, spiritual enlightenment, Jesus' judging the world, Jesus' purpose, His authority, and God's commandments?
- !40. What should be the response to each of Jesus' claims?

WRAP-UP

Jesus clearly understood His Messianic role and attempted to convey it to the crowd by the animal He chose to ride on to enter Jerusalem. Not only was the crowd guilty of misunderstanding Jesus' Messianic role, but they had allowed this to influence their interpretation of scriptures. This is not just the problem of these Jews, but it is a 20th century problem. Rudolf Bultmann is correct that there is no such thing as a presuppositional-less thinking. A good example of presuppositions dictating our theology is the evangelical's acceptance of pre-tribulation theology simply because they don't want to go through the tribulation themselves. Is our doctrine based on what we want the Bible to say or what the Bible wants us to say?

Jesus had done many miracles which we would consider enough to convince the most ardent skeptic. The raising of Lazarus and the voice from heaven are certainly among the most noticeable. Yet the witnesses remain divided as to what really happened. A spiritual life must begin in faith, not a blind faith or a faith with credibility. There are sufficient facts to convince anyone of the authenticity of Christianity. Yet to those who will not believe either by volition, unwillingness to change, ad infinitum, there will never be enough facts to satisfy them. Some people are simply hard hearted. The point with which to prod ourselves is: are

we responding according to the facts that Christ has made known to us?

Are we willing to surrender ourselves to the claims of lordship which

Christ puts forth? Jesus did fall to the earth as a seed and die.

Because He died now we may live.

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Chapter 5

PRIVATE MINISTRY 13:1-17:26

Answer to Who is Greatest 13:1-17

BEHIND THE SCENE

As the Passover drew closer, Jesus prepared His disciples by spending the last hours in private ministry and assurance. Considering that all the gospels contain a rather large portion of these teachings, it would indicate that the Holy Spirit enabled the disciples to recall a majority of Jesus' passion narrative. The Gospel of Luke aids in understanding this footwashing by noting the disciples' controversy as to who is the greatest. The washing of feet was a menial task often performed by a household slave. The disciples would have been uncomfortable, to say the least, when Jesus performed this menial task after their discussion as to who was greatest in God's Kingdom.

GUIDED DISCOVERY

verses 1-11

- ! 1. What events did Jesus know would occur in the near future according to verses 1-3?
2. Whom did Jesus love in verse 1?
3. How did Jesus display that He "loved them to the end"?
- ? 4. What did Satan hope to happen by Judas' betrayal?
5. What parallel thought is found in verses 1 and 3?
6. Why did John repeat that Jesus was to return to the Father?

7. Since the washing of feet was the task of a slave, why did Jesus undertake this menial task?
- ! 8. How does the dispute found in Luke 22:24-27 add to our understanding of Jesus' action?
9. Why does Peter resist when Jesus wishes to wash his feet?
10. How does Peter overreact to Jesus' response?
11. What does this indicate about Peter's personality?
- ?12. How would you feel if Christ were to wash your feet?
- !13. What lesson is Jesus teaching these disciples?
14. How can this be applied to a Christian's daily life?
15. What did Jesus mean by His response in verse 8?
16. What does it mean that Judas is not clean?
17. In what sense are Jesus' disciples "clean all over"?
18. What assurance does this give Christians?

verses 12-17

19. In modern language, what was Jesus trying to teach the disciples?
20. What obligation does this provide to those who are in authority positions in the Christian community?
- !21. Is anyone in too high a position to be a servant of all? Why not?
- ?22. Is verse 14 to be taken literally or figuratively (note verse 15)?
23. How do some churches who take this literally implement verse 14?
24. Who is the master and servant in verse 16?
25. Who is the one sent and the one sending?
26. How do these last two questions apply to Jesus' comments on servanthood?

WRAP-UP

Jesus clearly demonstrates that the master should be the servant of all. Positions of Christian authority do not place one above the demands of others but actually represents greater accountability. A pastor is not

above reproach but rather is responsible to all members of the congregation. This example of servanthood is applicable to all Christians. Those who hold this to be a sacrament of footwashing run into a problem. The context does not fit and the early church did not understand these words of Jesus to be a literal commandment.

Jesus' Predictions of Betrayal and Denial 13:18-38

BEHIND THE SCENE

It appears most likely that this was the Passover meal or the dinner immediately prior to the Passover. The harmonization of the synoptics' calendar and the Johannine account is a complicated problem. Leon Morris does an excellent job of handling this complex problem.

As has already been stipulated, it appears that this was most likely the Passover meal. This room in which the Passover was eaten most probably was a second-story room which was built on a roof. During this pilgrimage thousands of Jews would come to Jerusalem and eat the Passover in a similar fashion. This most likely is the upper room that will be spoken of later. The Passover meal was eaten in a reclining position on a U-shaped table. The people ate with their heads toward the table at such an angle that they would lean on their left elbow leaving their right hand free to reach the food. The host would be seated in the center of the chief couch, which lay at the intersection between the two secondary tables. Jesus most likely sat in the host's seat. John 13:23 would lead one to believe that the phrase "John lay on his master's breast" would mean John was reclining one seat counter-clockwise from Jesus. This phrase indicates the mode of

reclining at the Passover and is not to be taken literally.

Jesus' being able to offer the sop to Judas without the other disciples being aware of it would indicate that Judas would have been seated clockwise from Jesus. This was the seat of honor. There is a sense of irony that Judas would take this seat of honor after Jesus had demonstrated servanthood when the disciples argued concerning who would be greatest in God's Kingdom.

The morsel which Jesus handed to Judas was flesh of a Passover lamb, a piece of unleavened bread, and bitter herbs. The mutton commemorated the Passover lamb, the bread commemorated the hasty preparations in leaving Egypt, and the herbs were reminiscent of the bitter treatment under the Egyptians. According to some, the sauce was beaten to a consistency of mortar to commemorate the toils of the Israelites laying brick in Egypt. The sop did not belong to the original institution but had been introduced before the days of Christ. According to one authority it consisted of only vinegar and water. Others describe it as a mixture of vinegar, figs, dates, almonds, and spices. The flour used to thicken the sauce on ordinary occasions was forbidden at the Passover by the rabbis since it might ferment.

GUIDED DISCOVERY

verses 18-30

1. What parallel thought is found in verses 11 and 18?
- ! 2. How does verse 20 apply to Christians today?
3. Do the disciples appear surprised at Jesus' comment in verse 22?

(Note the diagram on page 93 to understand the following questions.)

4. Who would occupy the seat of the host?

5. Since Jesus reclined at the place of the host and most scholars indicate that John is the "disciple whom Jesus loved", where is John reclining (note 13:23)?
6. Does verse 28 indicate that the other disciples heard Peter's question to John (verse 24) and Jesus' response with the sop (verse 26)?
- ? 7. How much control did Satan have over Judas?
8. Where must Peter have been reclining in order to converse with John without being overheard?
9. Where must Judas have been seated in order for Jesus to give the sop to him without getting up (Note Matthew 26:25)?
10. What is ironic about Judas taking the place of honor since Jesus had just demonstrated servanthood to His disciples (note verses 12-16)?
- !11. What is significant that Judas would betray Jesus during Passover and Jesus would point out the one to betray him by giving him a morsel of the Passover lamb?
12. What is pointed out symbolically when Judas left as night came?

verses 31-38

13. How will Peter later follow Jesus?
14. How will God be glorified?
- !15. Why would Jesus announce His departure beforehand to His disciples?
16. How does Jesus amplify the importance of loving one another from the non-commandment found in Leviticus 19:18?
- ?17. How do Christians show their love for one another in a practical way?
18. In what way is Jesus bracing Peter for the future?
19. What might have been your response in Peter's place?
- ?20. How does Peter futilely attempt to defend Jesus in a short while (note 18:10)?

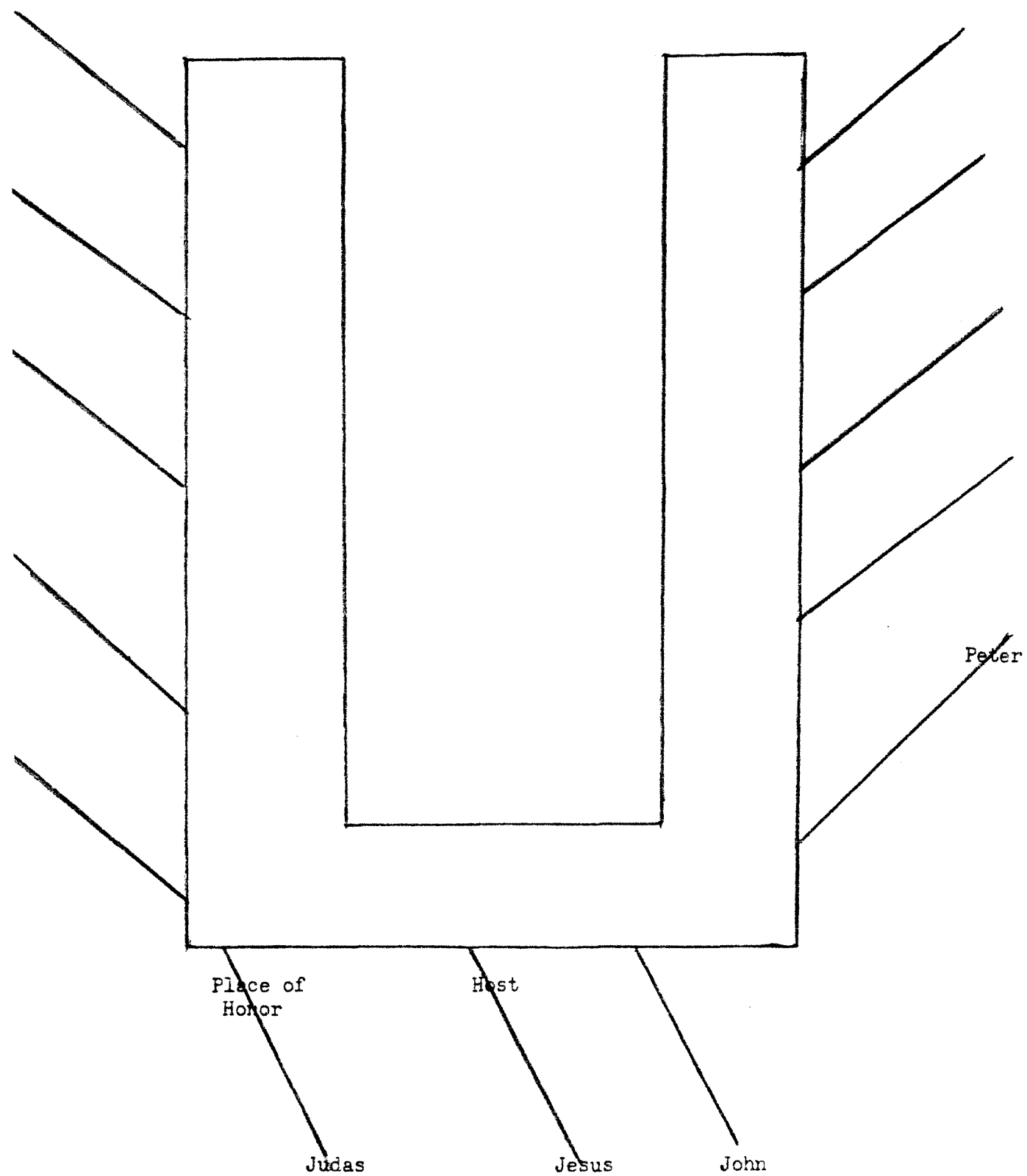
WRAP-UP

Judas' betrayal is done with Jesus' total awareness. The motive of Judas' betrayal is difficult to know. It seems unlikely that Satanic control provides an answer, although this would provide an ironic twist: Satan

attempts to foil God's plan of salvation and ends up facilitating it. Perhaps the best answer is that since Judas was the only disciple from Judea, which would be home for a strong political Messianic hope, he may have accepted the Messianic hope. He may have decided to force Jesus' hand and perhaps hope to profit from holding one of the 12 highest positions in Jesus' earthly kingdom. This approach is more in keeping with Satan's subtle tactics. Satan's prime attack is to take an excellent motive, such as ushering in God's earthly kingdom, and work out his purpose. This certainly gives an example of Satan's attack, and we can therefore know what to watch for.

This command to love one another will be repeated several times before Jesus' arrest. The central command to love one another is peculiar to Christianity. While other religions hold to brotherly love, only Christianity holds it as a central aspect and universal in scope. The earmark of Christianity will be their love for one another. This attribute will be displayed in visible actions. The admonition to love one another is found in Leviticus 19:18. While this particular saying is not new to them He elevated it to the position of a commandment.

Jesus shows genuine empathy in bracing Peter for his impending denial. Jesus was not only concerned about Peter's eternal destiny but also about his immediate anguish. Impetuous Peter's reply that he would lay down his life is tragic since he would deny Jesus three times before morning. Peter did produce a sword and attempt to defend his Lord. Jesus' comment was not a reprimand to Peter, but Jesus was actually preparing Peter for his denial and subsequent guilt.



Jesus Comforts His Disciples 14:1-15:17

BEHIND THE SCENE

This passage deals largely with Jesus comforting His disciples immediately after announcing Peter's impending desertion and Jesus' departure. These announcements could have devastated the disciples. It is for this reason that these words of encouragement comforted and reassured the disciples. What a portrait of Christ's love for His fickle disciples and an assurance for Christians today!

Not only does Christ reassure the disciples that He is the way, the truth, and the life, but He also promises them several things which depend on His departure. The disciples, and indeed all Christians, are promised that they will be able to do greater works, receive the Holy Spirit, and divine peace. All these are contingent upon His departure.

Up to this time Jesus had been with the 11 disciples in the place of the Passover supper, probably the upper room. (Judas had been dismissed with Jesus' earlier admonition of "whatever you do, do quickly.") Chapter 14 ends with Jesus and His disciples leaving for the Garden of Gethsemane. The words of chapters 15-17 were probably spoken by Jesus on the way to Gethsemane (note 18:1).

Jesus most likely ate the Passover in the lower city which contained the residences of the common people. To travel to Gethsemane He most likely would have passed through the city walls and across the Kedron valley. This was a journey of approximately 1,000 yards from the city walls to Gethsemane. For this reason it is interesting to note Jesus' analogy of

His disciples and a grape branch. The vine was a common Biblical symbol for Israel (note Isaiah 5:1ff; Jeremiah 2:21; Ezekiel 15:1ff, 19:10; Hosea 10:1; Psalms 80:8). The coins of the Maccabean era depicted a vine on one side to symbolize God's people. The Holy Place of the temple exhibited a golden vine. The road to Gethsemane probably passed by vineyards. Thus this object lesson with its already significant meaning was very rich in meaning to these disciples. To be kept to their maximum yield, vineyards must be pruned each winter. This pruning appears to be so drastic that someone not familiar with the practice would assume that the vine would surely die. The result of such radical pruning has one of two results: the healthy vines bear even larger and better fruit while the unhealthy plant would either grow stronger or die. This provides a good illustration of the effect which discipline has upon a Christian. Stronger Christians become stronger and weak either become stronger or die altogether.

Jesus again admonishes the disciples to love one another and offers them an example of true love: His vicarious death. His love is not only exhibited by His death but also by the relationship which exists between Jesus and His disciples. The disciples are not uninformed and distant slaves but friends who confide in one another and exhibit an intimate personal relationship.

Jesus does not deny man's free will but simply points out that it is God who initiates and provides salvation, not man. It is God who provides the fruit, man is only the willing channel. The success of a Christian's life and his salvation are not grounds for self-exaltation but thanksgiving for God's provision.

GUIDED DISCOVERY

verses 14:1-7

- ! 1. What encouragement is Jesus offering His disciples after His comment in 13:36-38?
2. In what way are Christians to trust in Christ?
3. What does it mean to trust in Christ?
4. What three things does Jesus command His disciples in John 14:1?
- ? 5. Does Jesus literally mean that heaven will be an actual house with rooms? Why did He use such symbolism?
6. What encouragement does Jesus give His disciples in verse 3 after He previously announced His departure?
7. Thomas' question hints that he understood Jesus to be talking about an earthly destination. How does Jesus correct this misunderstanding?
- ! 8. How is Jesus the "way", and the "way" to what?
- ! 9. How is Jesus the "truth" and what does this imply about those not aligned with Him?
- ! 10. How is Jesus the "life"?
- ! 11. Why is Jesus the way and the truth and the life rather than just a way, a truth, and a life?
12. How is the concept implied by the definite article "the" conveyed by the last half of verse 6?
13. What parallel thoughts in verse 7 are also found in verse 1?
14. What alternative does this section declare about one's eternal destiny?
15. What promise does a Christian have about his eternal destiny?
16. What exclusive claims does Jesus make? What should be our reaction?

verses 8-14

17. The Jewish authorities demanded that Jesus produce some supernatural sign to authenticate His claims. How does this relate to Philip's request?

18. How does Jesus answer Philip's request to see God the Father?
19. What does Jesus claim about His relationship to God the Father?
- !20. What two things prove Jesus' claims?
21. What promise does this section hold? Are these greater works in quality or quantity?

verses 15-24

- !22. What connection is there between loving God and obedience to Him (note verses 15, 21)?
23. What command does Jesus repeat in 13:34; 14:21; and 15:9, 12, 17? Why does Jesus repeat this command several times?
24. How is the Holy Spirit variously described? What do these descriptions teach about the Holy Spirit?
25. How will the disciples finally become aware that Jesus is in the Father according to verses 19 and 20?
- ?26. How does Jesus manifest himself in Christians and not to the world?
27. What promises are found in this section?
28. What obligations are related to these promises?
29. How does one know if a person loves God according to verse 24?

verses 25-31

30. What indicates that this Gospel of John is an accurate record of Jesus' life and teaching according to verse 26?
- !31. Why is this assurance of the Holy Spirit's help in remembering all that Jesus did important?
32. What similar promise is found in verse 27 and 14:1?
33. How is the peace which Christ gives radically different from any other peace?
34. What assurance does Jesus give His disciples about His departure?
35. Who is the ruler of the world?
- !36. What does Jesus mean that the ruler of this world is coming?
37. What does it mean that Satan has no power over Christ? What does this mean to a Christian?

verses 15:1-11

38. Why is Jesus the true vine? What is Jesus implying?
39. Who are the branches? What is the relationship between the main vine and the branches?
40. What is the duty of the vinedresser or husbandman (gardner)?
41. What relationship exists between the Christian, Christ, and God the Father?
42. What two types of pruning does the gardener perform? What happens as a result of these types of pruning?
- !43. What is the immediate appearance of a grapevine which is pruned back properly?
- !44. How does this relate to how a Christian feels after they are spiritually pruned?
45. What is the relationship between the fruit a branch bears and the main vine? What is the application to Christianity?
46. What happens to a branch that does not produce any fruit? What is the application to Christianity?
- !47. What is the three-way relationship between loving Christ, keeping His commandments, and abiding in Christ's love for us (note verses 7-10)?
48. What common thought is found in verse 11 and 14:27?

verses 12-17

49. What model of love does Jesus leave His disciples?
- !50. What is the difference between a slave and a friend? What does this mean to Christians since Jesus called them a friend?
51. What promise does Jesus offer in verses 7 and 16? What conditions are placed on prayer?
- ?52. What does verse 16 say about God's sovereignty and man's free will?
53. How does God intervene into mankind's efforts to perform Christian duties?
54. What assurance is found in God's intervention?

WRAP-UP

Jesus truly loved His disciples and was concerned that they be braced for His departure and understand the necessity and significance of His death. Because of this, many promises and words of encouragement are found in this section. These not only brought comfort to the disciples but provide joy for Christians today. Along with these promises are commands to love one another, keep God's commandments, and abide in God's love. Christians cannot accept these promises without also heeding the commands. Receiving God's blessings are contingent upon following God's admonitions. The object lesson of the vineyards points this out graphically. This illustration also answers the question of why adversities occur in a Christian's life. They strengthen the strong and bring the weak back to Christ or destroys their spiritual pretext altogether.

The World Hatred 15:18-16:4

BEHIND THE SCENE

Jesus spoke these words to the disciples on their way from the Passover supper to Gethsemane in an effort to brace the disciples for the impending persecution. Jesus stresses that if someone persecutes a free man, surely his slave can expect only equal treatment at best. The root cause of the disciples' rejection of Christ is not based upon any rational decision but rather not knowing either Jesus or God through personal experience. Jesus means that the Jews did know God but only as a mental concept rather than a personal encounter with God that includes cognitive and relational knowledge. Jesus' words of warning of persecution were born out in literal fulfillment through Saul of Tarsus' life before his conversion.

The following concept of sin is certainly not agreed upon by all Christians but finds the widest acceptance. Before Christ all men were guilty of sin, yet judgment was withheld until the coming of Christ. Those who rejected Christ are not only guilty but now sentenced to their judgment. Those who accept Christ were still guilty of sin but differ from those who rejected Christ. The latter has their sentence commuted because of Christ's vicarious death. A child becomes accountable to make a decision to either accept or reject Christ when they become mentally aware of their sinfulness through God's general revelation (see John 1:9, 16:8; Romans 1:18-23). This view will differ from that held by the more liturgical churches; i.e., Catholic, Episcopal, Lutheran, etc. These churches would hold to the accountability of children and thereby need infant baptism. Those who reject the need for infant baptism would note that although all mankind is guilty of sin one is not held to answer or bear the penalty for that sin until there is awareness that sin exists in that life. Study leaders must be very careful in handling this issue since it can be very volatile.

GUIDED DISCOVERY

verses 15:18-23

1. Who or what is the world which Jesus speaks about here?
2. How did mankind demonstrate its hatred for Jesus?
- ? 3. How did mankind demonstrate its hatred for the disciples according to the book of Acts?
- ! 4. According to verse 19, why does the world hate Christians?

5. How are Christians "not of this world" spiritually (note 1:12,13)?
6. What is the meaning of the illustration Jesus is using in verse 20?
- ? 7. What kind of knowledge is meant in verse 21 that they "do not know" God?
8. Why is Jesus telling these disciples of the future persecution (note 16:1, 4)?
- ? 9. What are some modern examples of persecution?
10. What should be the Christian's response to persecution?

verses 15:24-16:4

11. What works had Jesus done among the Jews that should have validated His claims?
12. Since they had witnessed Jesus' miracles, how does this change their accountability regarding sin?
- ?13. Since the Jews were not accountable for their sins yet still guilty, what principle can be seen that would apply today to children?
14. How does John 1:9 and 15:26 add to the understanding of enlightenment and accountability to mankind?
15. Who are the two witnesses that will testify concerning Christ?
- !16. What is the meaning and significance of the various names given the Holy Spirit?
17. How has verse 2 already been fulfilled and will be fulfilled by Saul of Tarsus (note Acts 9:1,2; 26:9-11; John 9:34)?
18. Since the Roman emperor claimed to be a god, what does this add to the meaning of this text?
- !19. What is the root cause of persecution of Christians?

WRAP-UP

When Christians encounter rejection and persecution they should be reminded that a very small part of the confrontation is on a personal level. The greater part is actually a cosmic struggle between God and His kingdom

against Satan. A person's faith in Christ or rejection of Christ's offer of salvation shapes the basic world views of each person. Persecution results from Satan's direct and indirect control and non-Christians' world view which rejects all supernatural events, the existence of God, and the sinful nature of mankind's life. Thus the real struggle exists upon a cosmic realm. In the midst of this persecution Christians are expected to be a witness for Christ and, if need be, follow Christ's example of laying down one's life.

Jews witnessing Jesus' works left no rational explanation except that Jesus was the Messiah. This knowledge may be rejected by their presuppositions, yet they provide the basis which anyone who is truly seeking can discover. These Jews were not accountable for their sins until they faced punishment upon their death until they repent. The Scriptures provide an accurate record of these same miracles and provide enough information for anyone to make an informed decision (20:30,31) and place one's trust in Christ as the incarnate God. All who have access to this knowledge have no excuse but are accountable for their belief. All who have read these verses surely have the same choice as these Jews. Not that they know of Jesus' works they are accountable for their sins bearing the eternal reward or consequences of their reaction.

The Coming Counselor 16:5-15

BEHIND THE SCENE

Apparently the preceding encouragement had not assured the disciples of the necessity or benefit of Jesus' departure. Jesus tells them that if

He does not leave the Holy Spirit cannot come to them. The Holy Spirit is mentioned throughout Jesus' private ministry in the last hours before Jesus' glorification (14:15ff), but this section deals exclusively with the third person of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit deals with mankind concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment. This is in contrast to the illumination He provides to Christians. The former general revelation is also available to Christians but in no way is this personal illumination available to non-Christians.

In verse 13 is found "and he will guide you into all the truth." This certainly is not intended to be exhaustive truth but all that is needed. Tasker suggests that this refers to the specific truth about the person of Jesus Christ. The context of this passage dictates that the Holy Spirit would inform the disciples of the meaning of Christ's crucifixion, trial, and death.

GUIDED DISCOVERY

1. What would indicate that Jesus knew the disciples expected him to leave them?
2. What were the advantages of the Holy Spirit coming?
3. What does the title of counselor tell us about the Holy Spirit?
4. How does the Holy Spirit convince the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (note the Holy Spirit's complementary role to Christ)?
5. What is the significance of the Holy Spirit being called the "Spirit of truth" in his role of illumination?
6. How do verses 4 and 12 demonstrate that God's illumination is progressive rather than all at once?

7. What role does the Holy Spirit play in progressive illumination?
- ? 8. Why would God choose to reveal truth this way rather than all at once?
9. What are the benefits that result from the coming of the Holy Spirit?
- !10. What promises and assurances are found concerning the Holy Spirit in this section?

WRAP-UP

It was to the advantage of Jesus' disciples that He leave in order that the Holy Spirit may come. This is an event by which Christians today receive a subsequent blessing. The coming of the Holy Spirit is a tangible manifestation of a loving and imminent God. It would be difficult to imagine the Christian life without the Holy Spirit's illumination.

It is important to note that God's illumination is progressive. He reveals to Christians as much as they are able to assimilate and subsequently reveals more to Christians as they have need thus allowing Christians to grow. Yet the Scriptures are fully inspired by God. This method reveals God's love for Christians and human limitations. Not one can drink out of a fire hydrant.

Jesus' Farewell and Summary 16:16-33

BEHIND THE SCENE

Another characteristic of Jesus' final words to His disciples before His arrest is the mixture of good news and bad news. Jesus is careful to lighten the shock of His departure by declaring that unless He leaves, the Holy Spirit cannot come. More pertinent to this section, they will mourn His death in the same way as a woman in labor is pained and yet her sorrow is turned to joy at the birth of the child: so the disciples' sorrow will turn to joy at the sight of the risen Lord.

The word which is found in verses 25ff and is translated "sayings" or "figures" is without an exact English equivalent. It means a saying that is not understandable to the unattentive. The meaning can be discovered only through careful study and thought. Man is capable of understanding Christ's intended meaning, but it requires some effort and study.

Jesus had first disclosed Peter's betrayal, but now He foretells the desertion of all His disciples. Jesus then reassures His disciples that they shall receive peace from Him that the world does not possess for He has overcome the world. Once again, this mixture of good and bad news prepared the disciples for the immediate future.

GUIDED DISCOVERY

verses 16-24

- ? 1. What would have been your reaction to Jesus' comment in verse 16?
2. When is Jesus speaking of when He says "a little while and you will not see me" (note 19:40)?
3. When is Jesus speaking of when He says "a little while and you will see me" (note 20:14)?
- ! 4. How does a woman's labor illustrate the disciples' reaction to Jesus' death and resurrection?
5. What does it mean, "her hour had come"?
6. How does this apply to Jesus' impending crucifixion?
7. Why will the disciples' sorrow turn to joy?
- ! 8. What two things will provide joy in verses 22 and 24?
9. What day is Jesus referring to in verse 23?
- ? 10. Why won't the disciples ask anything of Jesus when they see Him risen?
- ! 11. What does it mean to ask something in Jesus' name?

verses 25-33

12. What change does Jesus foresee in regard to prayer and the Father?
13. Why does God the Father love Jesus' disciples?
14. What new insight did the disciples discover about Jesus?
- !15. How did Jesus offset the bad news which He shared with the disciples?
- !16. What good news does Jesus offer after He announces that the disciples will desert him?
- ?17. What would have been your reaction as one of Jesus' disciples when He announces that they would all desert Him?
18. How can a Christian have peace in the midst of tribulation in a world?
19. How has Jesus overcome the world?
- !20. What assurance does this offer Christians?

WRAP-UP

This section deals with Jesus' farewell to His disciples and summary of coming events and promises. In a few moments Jesus will cross the Kedron Valley to His place of betrayal. These are Jesus' last admonitions to His disciples. In a few hours He will be taken from their sight and placed in a tomb. A couple of days later they shall see their risen Lord. They were sorrowful at His departure and gave no thought to the joy of His return, yet He painstakingly informs them of the advantages to His departure. How typical of so many Christian's lives! It is easy to be so caught up in our immediate problem that we cannot see God's design that will manifest His wisdom in the end.

Jesus also portrays His love and concern for them by not only explaining the benefits of His departure but also prepares them for their

own desertion. Even in the face of their desertion they are reassured that God is in control and has overcome the world. These loving words will certainly provide consolation in the coming hours.

Finally, the disciples' understanding of Jesus became fuller as they realize that He came from God and knows all things. Jesus slowly reveals more of His nature and purpose to His disciples as they were able to assimilate it. This certainly demonstrates God's loving patience in dealing with mankind.

Intercessory Prayer 17:1-26

BEHIND THE SCENE

This section has been called the Holy of Holies of John. This is certainly a fitting description of Jesus' prayer (1) to glorify God by His own death, (2) for His disciples' safety and their steadfastness in the faith, (3) for the church at large which includes Christians today. The subject of His prayer has led some to title this as Christ's Intercessory Prayer. This is certainly a fitting description. An equally fitting description is that of Christ's high priestly prayer. The Jewish high priest interceded in the nation's behalf in religious matters. Jesus' prayer follows this high priest typology. Regardless of how one titles this prayer, an important point is to note that Jesus' prayer was totally unselfish. Even seconds before His own arrest, His concern was not for Himself but to do God's will, ask for protection of His disciples, and pray for the church.

The phrase "Son of Perdition" refers to Judas, but just how much influence Satan had upon Judas is debatable. Some scholars hold that Satan

had simply tricked Judas. Others believe that he became possessed. Still others think that Judas knowingly and of his own volition obeyed Satan. The extent of Satan's influence is not ascertainable from the vague reference.

The word "glory" is used seven times in this chapter of John. It has various shades of meaning. It can mean (1) the exhibition of a perfect character, (2) divine approval of God, (3) heaven itself, (4) raised to a stature of honor or respect, (5) honoring another by one's actions. These different shades of meaning are important in order to understand the intent of a passage.

The phrase "in your name" is another important concept. Some Christians use this phrase as a secret word that causes God to answer prayer. This is certainly not a proper understanding. It can mean (1) praying in accordance with God's will, (2) as a true disciple of Christ as opposed to praying in some other god's name, (3) living in a personal relationship with God. Rather than seeing a symbol or representation of the word "name", it is beneficial to substitute the actual person meant by "name".

GUIDED DISCOVERY

verses 1-5

- ! 1. What hour has come?
2. What does "glorify" mean?
3. Why does Jesus pray that God should glorify Him?
- ! 4. What two things does Jesus reveal as within His power in this prayer?

- ! 5. How has Jesus glorified the Father while on earth?
- 6. According to verse 4, what is a purpose of eternal life?
- 7. What does verse 5 indicate about Jesus before He came to earth as a man?
- 8. What promise is there in that Christians will know God in heaven? What does it mean to know God (note Behind the Scene, 15:18ff)?
- ! 9. What assurance is there for Christians today since Jesus' disciples are described as given to Jesus by the Father (John 17:2, 26, 6b, 8, 9, 11, 12, and 24)?
- 10. What is Jesus praying for in this section?

verses 6-12

- 11. What is disclosed in this section about Jesus' disciples?
- 12. What does Jesus pray that validates the disciples' comment in 16:30?
- 13. What does Jesus' comments in this prayer declare about His relationship to the Father?
- 14. What words and phrases indicate Jesus' protection of His disciples?
- ?15. Who is the son of perdition? What does Jesus mean by this title?
- !16. Who is Jesus praying for in this section?

verses 13-19

- 17. What three characteristics does Jesus hold in common with the disciples?
- 18. What does Jesus mean, "I (or they) are not of this world"?
- 19. What does Jesus mean, "as you sent me into the world, so I have sent them"?
- 20. What does Jesus mean "I consecrate myself that they also may be consecrated in truth"?
- !21. How do different versions translate "evil one" in verse 15? How does this affect the meaning?
- !22. What type of oneness is meant by Christ in 17:11, 21, 22, and 23? What does this mean to Christians?

23. How does the disciples' reaction to Jesus' words differ from the reaction of mankind to the disciples (note 13, 14)?

verses 20-26

24. How many times is the word "one" used? How many times is this expressed in some other way?
- !25. What is Jesus stressing by the repetition of this word and the idea of "one"?
26. What new and special privileges are available as spoken by Christ in this prayer?
- !27. What does verse 20 hold for Christians today?
28. What is revealed about Christ's relationship to the Father?
29. Who is Jesus praying in behalf of in this section?
- !30. What model can be drawn from Jesus' prayers to glorify the Father through His death, His prayer for the disciples and the church?
- ?31. Why is this chapter of John so special to many Christians?

WRAP-UP

Jesus loved His disciples and future church enough to spend His last minutes with His disciples praying for them and us! Jesus' unselfish example gives a model for the prayer life of all Christians and joy through the promises and gifts of Christ. Christians are not left deserted in the midst of persecution: we are Christ's and Satan has no hold over us. Our unity with Christ is similar to the unity God has with Christ. These name only a few.

Just as remarkable as the benefits offered to Christians is Jesus' relationship to the Father. Few passages rival the intimate insight into Jesus' relationship to the Father. Jesus' will was not to bring honor to Himself but to honor the Father through His death.

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Chapter 6

CHRIST'S PASSION AND RESURRECTION 18:1-21:25

Arrest and Appearance Before Jews 18:1-27

BEHIND THE SCENE

Jesus probably left the city through the eastern gate, which was south of the temple. He then crossed the ravine known as the Kedron valley. Although John's gospel does not mention the name of the specific garden, the synoptics add the name "Gethsemane", which means "olive press". On this opposite side of the Kedron valley were many private gardens and orchards. This area was called the Mount of Olives. Some have suggested that a friend of Jesus' had offered Him the use of his garden whenever Jesus was in Jerusalem. John omits much of what transpires at Gethsemane and the trial before the Sanhedrin.

Judas knew from the past visits to Jerusalem with Jesus that He would probably go to Gethsemane that night. Away from the crowds Jesus could be arrested without fear of an uprising. The many soldiers and officials carried weapons and torches, both of which were unnecessary since Passover is always celebrated during a full moon. The light of the full moon would have sufficiently illuminated the landscape. Evidently, the soldiers expected Jesus and His disciples to resist arrest or hide out in the garden's shadows.

Peter's defense of Jesus proved that he was no swordsman. If he were right handed and facing Malchus as he swung the sword, it would have been difficult to cut off the right ear. An early church father, Tertullian, remarked that "Christ in disarming Peter ungirds every soldier." In his apology, Tertullian said that Christians were sufficiently numerous to offer successful resistance to persecuting emperors would they not count it better to be slain than to slay. This attitude dominated the church for the first 350 years of its existence.

This band of soldiers were probably Roman auxiliary rather than Jewish temple guards. The temple guards had failed once (7:45ff) and the Romans would be willing to loan soldiers to the Jewish leaders. A possible political uprising with the thousands of Jews in Jerusalem during the Passover would have caused the Romans grave concern.

Annas was not the high priest that year, although he had previously served in that capacity. Under Jewish law the high priest held his office for life, but under Roman occupancy the high priest changed every year. In Jesus' day, Annas was always known as the power behind the high priest. Four of his sons became high priests and Caiaphas was his son-in-law. Annas extorted exorbitant prices from temple worshipers in temple tributes and sacrifices which eventually ended up in his pocket. This power and authority of Annas' explains why Jesus was first brought to Annas rather than Caiaphas. It appears that the bringing of Jesus before Annas and Caiaphas was in order to gather damaging evidence to present to the Sanhedrin.

The author of the Gospel switches from the scene of Peter's denial to Jesus' questioning and then back to Peter. This literary technique gives us a vivid impression of an eyewitness account. Because of the difficulty this poses to a thematic study, the guided discovery section will be divided into verses 12-14, 19-24 as one study section, followed by 15-18, 25-27.

It is impossible to know who the disciple was that accompanied Peter definitely. However, most scholars believe that it must have been John, although it is unusual that the High Priest would know a fisherman from Galilee. The account in this gospel bears unmistakable marks of an eyewitness account. Obscure people are mentioned by name, the fire is mentioned as a charcoal fire, etc.

These Jewish leaders use a pretext of upholding Jewish law in order to protect themselves from Jesus whom they saw as a threat to their authority and power. These leaders broke the Jewish law in attempting to punish Jesus for blasphemy and Sabbath breaking. They falsely convict Jesus of breaking the law which they themselves break repeatedly during the trial.

GUIDED DISCOVERY

verses 1-11

1. What was the name of the garden where Jesus went (note Matt. 26:36)?
2. Why would Jesus have met often with His disciples at this quiet garden (note Matt. 26:36, Luke 22:39,40)?
3. Since the Passover was always held during a full moon according to a lunar calendar, how much light would normally be available?

4. What did the soldiers expect since they carried weapons and torches?
5. How does Jesus react to the approach of the soldiers?
- ! 6. How does one explain the soldiers' reaction in verse 6 to Jesus' words?
- ! 7. What was Jesus' concern in verse 8? How does this help understand His voluntary surrender?
8. Why did the Jews arrest Jesus at night in this isolated location rather than when He taught in public?
- ? 9. Why would it be more probable that these soldiers sent to arrest Jesus were Roman auxiliary rather than the temple guards from noting 7:44?
10. What indicates that Jesus knew beforehand about His arrest (note v. 4)?
11. How does Peter try to prove Jesus wrong when Jesus declared Peter would deny Him three times (note v. 10)?
- !12. If Peter was right handed and the slave's right ear was cut off, what does this indicate about Peter's swordsmanship? Note: have two people face each other and act this out.
13. How does Jesus react to Peter's attempt to protect Jesus? What does Matthew 26:52 add?

verses 12-14, 19-24

- ?14. Was there a need to tie Jesus up? Why did they bind him?
15. Were the Jews ignorant of Jesus' teachings (note 7:45-52)?
16. Why did one of the officers strike Jesus?
- !17. It was against Mosaic Law to punish a man before sentencing. What does this indicate about the Jews' regard for the Law?
18. How would one paraphrase Jesus' reply in verse 23?
- ?19. Have you ever seen a prisoner bound by shackles? What were your feelings about the prisoners?
- ?20. How do you think Jesus felt and why did He allow Himself to be so humiliated?

verses 15-18, 25-27

21. Who was the other disciple with Peter (note that it appears as an eyewitness account)?
22. Why did the maid assume that Peter was a disciple of Jesus?
23. Peter attempted to kill a slave to defend Jesus. How does one explain his reaction to the maid in verse 17?
24. Why did Peter deny that he was associated with Jesus in the presence of the soldiers and servants of the high priest?
25. Why was the other disciple, probably John, allowed into the high priest's home?
26. Would the high priest and his household have known that John was a disciple of Jesus? What does this reveal about the difference between John and Peter? How would you describe their personalities?
- !27. What is significant about the phrase "at once" in verse 27?
- ?28. How would you feel if you were Peter? Where are the other disciples and what does this add to our criticism of Peter?

verses 19-24

- !29. It was illegal to hold these Jewish trials at night. Jewish Law also stipulated that the defendant had no responsibility to prove his innocence. It was the responsibility of the prosecution to provide witnesses in order to convict a man. It was also illegal to strike someone before sentencing. How are these points of law procedure violated?
30. How does this explain Jesus' reply to the high priest in verses 20, 21?
31. What irony does this point out in the Jewish authorities' charges that Jesus broke Mosaic Law?
32. What is the meaning of the phrase "the end justifies the means"?
- !33. How does that phrase apply to the Jews' actions (note 11:50)?
34. Why did one of the Jewish officers wrongly strike Jesus?
35. What is revealed about Jesus' temperament in His answer?

WRAP-UP

Jesus' behavior during His arrest is beyond reproach. He goes forward to intercept the soldiers that might have arrested His disciples as well. He intercedes in their behalf to protect their lives. Jesus properly questions the procedure which is used in His appearance before Caiaphas. It was Caiaphas' responsibility to provide evidence, not Jesus'. Oftentimes Jesus is characterized as effeminate, but here He displays anger and the courage to step forward and face death rather than threaten His disciples' lives. He also suffered the humiliation of being bound and treated as a common criminal when He is in fact God incarnate.

Peter moves from one extreme of attempting to kill a man in defense of Jesus to denying Him three times. He certainly was caught off guard when the female gatekeeper asked him if he were a disciple of Jesus. While there is grounds to criticize Peter, only Peter and probably John even had courage enough to follow Jesus after His arrest. This arrest and questioning by the Jewish authorities demonstrated the fallenness of man, the protecting nature and humility of Christ, and a disciple's denial.

Appearance Before Pilate 18:28-19:15

BEHIND THE SCENE

The Praetorium was the official quarters of Pontius Pilate, Roman Praetorium guards, and court officials. It was located in the west part of the city in Herod's old palace. Pontius Pilate was a Roman governor appointed at the request of the Jews after one of Herod the Great's sons failed to govern Judea properly. After Herod the Great's death, his reign was divided between his three sons. A Roman governor or Procurator had full

control of the military forces and overseeing the judicial system. He supervised the gathering of taxes, but the people could appeal to Caesar at any time. Pilate controlled a force of approximately 3,000 soldiers scattered between Cesarea, Samaria, and Jerusalem. The Passover brought a shift of some troops to Jerusalem, but even 3,000 would not have been sufficient to prevent an uprising.

Pontius Pilate was guilty of finally giving in to what was politically expedient after attempting to release Jesus. Pilate had made three large mistakes in his dealing with the Jews. First his troops had carried a bust of Caesar into Jerusalem in the form of a military standard. The Jews regarded this as idolatry. Later he took money from the temple in order to finance an aqueduct. The third incident involved Pilate's putting shields inscribed with Tiberius' name in Herod's palace. The Jews appealed to Caesar and the shields were removed. Because of this mistake, his political career was shaky. Pilate finally bends to the pressure when the Jewish authorities threaten to tell Rome that he released a man who claimed to be king of the Jews.

The Jewish leaders brought Jesus before Pilate according to the synoptics with the charge of perverting the nation and forbidding them to pay taxes. John adds to this the charge of claiming to be king of the Jews. The appearance before Caiaphas and Annas result in charges of blasphemy. The Jews know that the charge of blasphemy will not bring the death penalty in a Roman court, so they manufactured charges. This is why the charges before Caiaphas and Annas, the Sanhedrin, and Pilate change.

The Jews led Jesus to the Praetorium early in the morning but were unwilling to enter Pilate's residence, a gentile's home. This exposure would render them unclean and unable to participate in the Passover. It is for this reason that Pilate had to go out and meet them. The Jews wished to place the blame of Christ's death on the Romans. The Jews wished to make an example of Jesus and felt that stoning would not be a severe enough death.

Jesus is in control throughout His questioning by Pilate. Pilate appeals to the Jews, then Jesus, and finally the crowd in order to get himself out of his problem. Upon Pilate's questioning of Jesus, he discovers that Jesus' kingship is not political and certainly provides no threat to the Roman occupation. What is a kingdom of truth compared to a kingdom of Roman legions? The Greeks and Romans speculated about what is truth. Pilate's reply simply pushed Jesus' comment aside as philosophic speculation, the same way he had when he answered "Am I a Jew?" Pilate insinuates that only a superstitious and barbaric Jew would be interested in such a question when Jesus asks Pilate if he believed that Jesus was king of the Jews or if Pilate was only repeating what he had previously heard. Even facing His crucifixion Jesus was concerned about Pilate's spiritual life.

Pilate hopes to sidestep the issue and appeal directly to the crowd which had probably gathered to shout the name of the prisoner they wished released. This was the custom during the Passover. Pilate did not count on the Jewish authorities circulating in the crowd and prodding them to ask for the release of Barabbas and Jesus' crucifixion. The Jews had Pilate

over a barrel and were going to make the most of an opportunity to take advantage of the Romans. Barabbas was probably a zealot insurrectionist who had killed a Roman soldier. This would cause him to be something of a folk hero to the nationalistic or extremely conservative Jews. The Roman legions would be reluctant to release a "cop-killer". It is ironic that the Romans would release one man whose name means son of the father and crucify the real Son of God and that Jesus should die taking the place of a thief.

Greek and Roman mythology had situations where a god came to earth as a mortal to tempt or trick a human. When the Jews declared that Jesus claimed to be God, Pilate's fears grew. Jesus comments that Caiaphas had the greater sin in placing Jesus before Pilate. This insinuates that Pilate was guilty of misconduct and sin.

A scourging was an awesome punishment. A man would be stripped to the waist with his hands tied to a post above his head. The whip consisted of leather thongs with pieces of metal or bone affixed to the end. A man who was flogged would often pass out as his back was torn to pieces. Some men died as a result of the beating, others went mad. Pilate hoped that the flogging of Jesus would satisfy the crowd's thirst for blood. Instead of satisfying them, they demanded more. The purple garment which was placed upon Jesus was probably the type of cloak worn by a military officer. Pilate would have had no problem securing this robe. The thorns were probably two to four inches in length.

Finally Pilate plays to the crowd and stirs them up by asking, "shall I crucify your king?" The chief priests answer back, "we have no king but

Caesar." These words of the chief priests' are blasphemous and bear a sense of irony that these Jewish leaders are willing to declare their allegiance to Caesar, who claimed to be divine, in order to procure Jesus' death. The Jews also sought to kill Jesus because He claimed equality with God. This resulted in charges of blasphemy. These Jewish leaders were willing to commit blasphemy in order to achieve Jesus' death when He was actually who He claimed to be.

GUIDED DISCOVERY

verses 28-32

1. Why did the Jews refuse to enter Pilate's official quarters?
- ! 2. How would he have responded to being awakened early in the morning to solve a Jewish religious dispute?
- ? 3. How would you have reacted if you were asked to come out of your quarters in order to hear these charges because the Jews considered your home "religiously unclean"?
4. What answer do the Jews give when Pilate asks for the charges against Jesus?
5. Does this answer Pilate's question? Why not?
6. What does verse 31 reveal about the Jews' true motive?
7. What was the normal method of Jewish capital punishment?
8. What words of Jesus' are referred to in his predicting His method of death (note 12:32,33)?
- ! 9. How does Jesus' prediction of His method of death demonstrate that He had divine power?

verses 33-38

10. The Jews would not enter Pilate's quarters since that would cause them to become ceremonially defiled and unable to observe the Passover. Why did Pilate take Jesus into the Praetorium?

11. What is Jesus asking Pilate in verse 34?
12. What does Pilate mean in his rhetorical question, "Am I a Jew"?
- !13. Does Jesus admit to being king of the Jews in verses 36 and 37? What are the characteristics of Jesus' kingship?
14. Could Jesus' kingship be politically threatening to the Roman Legion? What does Pilate's response to the Jews in verse 38 indicate what he understood Jesus to be saying?
- !15. What does Jesus say about truth and His relationship to it?
16. How does Pilate respond to Jesus' claim of a kingdom of truth?

verses 39-40

17. What was the motive of Pilate in suggesting that Jesus be the person released?
- !18. Barabbas literally means "son of the father". What significance does the meaning of Barabbas have in relationship to Jesus' nature?
19. What is ironic about the release of Barabbas and the death of Jesus?

verses 19:1-11

20. Why did Pilate have Jesus whipped after the Jews would not accept Jesus' release (note Luke 23:16)?
21. Why did the soldiers place a crown of thorns and a purple robe on Jesus?
- !22. How would a crowd react to Jesus being clothed in a crown and purple robe?
- !23. Why would the Jewish leaders want Jesus crucified rather than stoning him which was according to Mosaic Law (note Matt. 27:18, Deut. 21:23)?
24. How did the Jewish leaders manage to get the crowd to ask for Jesus' crucifixion (note Matt. 27:20)?
25. What was the Jews' real charge against Jesus according to verse 7?
- ?26. Roman mythology had several instances in which a god came to earth in the form of man in order to test a human's character or just trick someone. How does this explain Pilate's reaction in verse 8? Why does he ask Jesus where He is from?

- 127. From reading verses 8-11, who was in command of the situation?
- 28. Who is greater at fault according to verse 11, the Jews or Pilate?
- 29. Does this mean that Pilate is incorrect?
- 30. What does this mean about a Christian's relationship to Jews?
- 31. Why does Pilate suggest the Jews themselves crucify Jesus?

verses 12-16

- !32. How are the Jews blackmailing Pilate in verse 12?
- 33. What would have happened to Pilate if he did not crucify Jesus?
- 34. According to verse 12, what had been Pilate's goal in dealing with Jesus?
- 35. How does Matthew 27:24 help us understand Pilate's changing his goal concerning Jesus?
- 36. What would suggest that Pilate had decided it was not expedient to crucify Jesus in verses 13ff?
- 38. Who did the Roman emperor claim to be?
- !39. What crimes are the chief priests guilty of when they acclaim, "We have no king but Caesar"?
- 40. How does this relate to the Jews' charges against Jesus (note 10:33)?

WRAP-UP

This section reveals many startling facts. Jesus is clearly in command of the situation even to the point of asking Pilate if he believes Jesus to be the King of the Jews. Jesus not only withstood the humiliation of arrest but the soldiers' mocking, the severe beating, and being put on public exhibition during the trial.

While irony plays a big part in the entire Gospel of John, this particular section is especially rich, notably the meaning of Barabbas' name and Christ's death in the place of this criminal. Jesus is literally the Son of the Father and has died a vicarious death in order that Christians might have salvation.

Pilate was guilty of proceeding with what was politically expedient by allowing and participating in the death of an innocent man. Pilate did attempt, at first, to free Jesus; but when he realized that his own career was in jeopardy, he succumbed to temptation. The greater blame does rest upon Caiaphas and Annas who fabricated and engineered this trial of Jesus. This does not give Christians an excuse to persecute Jews for this breach of justice.

Crucifixion 19:16-37

BEHIND THE SCENE

Golgotha most likely got its name from its skull-like shape.

Crucifixion was the form of capital punishment used by the Romans exclusively for their most despised criminals and slaves. Crucifixion was a Persian method of execution which was borrowed by the Carthaginians of Northern Africa, which was in turn borrowed by the Romans.

The punishment was always carried out immediately after sentencing. The victim was first flogged and then the crossbeam was tied across his shoulders and arms. The longest possible route from the Praetorium to Golgotha was taken in order to provide an example of Roman justice. A Roman soldier preceded the victim with a sign that listed the crime of which the victim had been convicted. This also provided an opportunity for anyone who had information that might exonerate him to come forward and stop the execution. The procession usually consisted of five soldiers. Once Jesus arrived at the crucifixion site, he was probably laid down and His hands nailed to the crossbeam which He had carried. Then He would have been hoisted up to the cross, His feet would be nailed to the upright post

and the crossbeam fastened to the upright post. The other alternative is that the upright post would be laid on the ground and Jesus' hands would be nailed to the crossbeam. At the same time the crossbeam would be fastened to the upright post as well as His feet nailed in place. The whole cross would then be raised up and dropped into place. Along with the nailing of the hands and feet, there was a saddle which rested in the crotch of the crucified victim thus enabling him some support. The victim was stripped naked at the cross and the clothes were usually divided among the soldiers who carried out the crucifixion. Death resulted from exposure to the elements or from suffocation. Since the upright post ran up the back past the head, the victim would not be able to hold his head balanced upright but would constantly have to hold his head against the pillar. As the muscles in the neck tired, the head would drop forward. Exposure to the elements would cause the tongue, throat, and nasal passages to swell. When the head dropped forward the tongue would drop against the back of the throat and cause the victim to suffocate.

Since the Jewish Passover was approaching, the Jews asked Pilate to break the legs of the victims to cause a speedier death. This was accomplished by prohibiting the victims from pushing themselves up and allowing them to fill their lungs. Usually the Romans allowed the victims to simply hang on the cross and decompose as a spectacle to Roman authority. But they would not desecrate the Jewish holiday since the Mosaic Law declared "cursed is he who hangeth on a tree" (Deut. 21:23).

The Jews were disturbed by the sign which listed the crime for which the person was being punished. The sign was carried through the city in front of the victim and then either hung from the neck of the victim or

nailed to the cross. In Jesus' case it appears that the sign was placed on the upright post just above His head. The Jews wanted it to read that Jesus claimed to be the king of the Jews, while the signs simply stated "The King of the Jews." Pilate had been blackmailed and insulted and was in no humor for these Jews to make further demands. The sign was written in the official Roman language, the common language of the time, and the native language of the people. These different translations explain the slight variations of the inscriptions found in the different gospels.

It was customary for the soldiers to receive the clothes of the victim whom they crucified. What is interesting is that Jesus' tunic was without seams and very reminiscent of the high priest's tunic. This was the ultimate humiliation, to be stripped naked and nailed to a cross as a public spectacle of Roman justice and the Jewish authorities' vengeance.

Jesus gave John charge of His mother's care. The consolation of Jesus' mother and the disciple whom Jesus loved would be mutually supporting until Jesus' half-brothers would later be convinced of the authenticity of Jesus' claims and become pillars in the early church.

John leads the reader to believe that Jesus' death was a Messianic fulfillment of Scripture. These passages were written hundreds of years prior to His life and many were beyond His control. The chances of this being mere coincidence is next to impossible.

GUIDED DISCOVERY

verses 16-27

- ? 1. Why would Pilate be unwilling to make another concession and change the charge for which He was punished?
- 2. Why did the Jews want the sign changed?
- ? 3. Why was the sign written in Hebrew (probably Aramaic), Latin, and Greek?
- 4. What passage does Jesus fulfill in John 19:24 (note Psalms 22:18)?
- ! 5. What is significant about the manner of the tunic's construction compared to Exodus 28:32?
- 6. Who was present at Jesus' crucifixion?
- 7. What does this indicate about their level of commitment?
- 8. Why did Jesus not turn his mother's care over to one of His brothers?
- ? 9. How would Mary have felt as she saw her son crucified?

verses 28-37

- ! 10. What is significant that Jesus "gave up his spirit" (note Jesus' premature death compared to other disciples)?
- 11. How is this same thought carried out in verse 28?
- 12. Why did the Jews want the crucified victims' legs broken and thus speed up their deaths?
- 13. Where are the passages found that are referred to in verses 36 and 37 (note Ex. 12:46; Zech. 12:10; Ps. 34:20; Num. 9:12)?
- 14. Whose testimony is found in verse 35?
- ! 15. What does John want the reader to believe about Jesus' death?
- ! 16. How does one explain the fulfillment of Jesus' death as prophesied in the Bible considering that many of them were beyond His control and written hundreds of years before His birth?

WRAP-UP

The crucifixion of Jesus has always been a "stumbling block to the Jews and folly to the Gentiles" (I Cor. 1:23). The Jewish law declared that anyone who was crucified was accursed. How could the Messiah be accursed? The only answer which makes sense is that Jesus took upon Himself the curse which mankind deserved because of its sinfulness. To explain how Christ's death achieved a Christian's forgiveness for sin is beyond complete human comprehension. Yet Christ's death that fulfilled the Scriptures leave no other alternative. If mankind could answer and fathom all or just most of the mysteries of God, we would indeed worship a small God.

The humiliation and pain which Jesus endured could have caused God to tear apart the very foundations of the universe in order to stop this. Yet God's love for mankind was so great that He allowed all this to occur so that an avenue of reconciliation might be provided. Christ's sacrificial death does give us a model for Christian conduct, but this role is so insignificant compared to the price which Christ paid to bring mankind back into the fold with fellowship and the debt of sin paid in full.

Burial 19:38-42

BEHIND THE SCENE

Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea secured the body of Jesus from Pilate and immediately began preparations for His burial. It was not unusual for a Jew to make arrangements for the proper burial of another Jew. Indeed, the Old Testament commanded it. However, two things do stand

out. First, the quantity of ointment is reminiscent of a royal burial, as in II Chronicles 16:14. Second, since a tomb was usually used repeatedly, it is unusual that someone would go to the additional expense of providing a new tomb. Usually the body would be left in a carved-out shelf in a cave until the remains were reduced to bones. Then the bones would be cremated. The same site could then be used repeatedly. The Jewish mode of burial usually had to take place before sundown with a religious ceremony which involved the washing of the body. The deceased would then be wrapped in strips of linen with the 100 pounds of ointment being spread between the overlapping of the linen. The body would be wrapped from neck to foot and the head would be covered with a shroud. All these preparations had to be completed quickly since the Jewish Sabbath began at sundown on Friday. To fail to complete these preparations would have made it impossible for them to partake of the Passover.

GUIDED DISCOVERY

- ! 1. What does John 12:10 and 9:22 say about disciples such as Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus?
2. Why did these disciples go to such expense in preparing Jesus' body?
3. How is the large quantity of ointment explained in II Chron. 16:14?
- ? 4. Which would have been more costly, a tomb which had been used repeatedly or an unused tomb? What does this reveal about those preparing Jesus' burial?
5. Why were they so busy to finish preparations before Friday evening?

WRAP-UP

Joseph and Nicodemus were both attempting to make restitution for the silence which they were guilty of during Jesus' life. This open display

of kindness would not be accepted kindly by the Jewish authorities. Although their public witness came late, at least it did come in the face of adversity.

Christ's Glory, Our Hope 20:1-31

BEHIND THE SCENE

Mary Magdalene had gone to the garden tomb early in the morning and, finding the tomb empty, returned quickly to the disciples. Evidently Mary Magdalene and the other Marys passed in the early morning dark. It was after this that John and Peter ran to the tomb and found it empty. John outran Peter but stopped to survey the tomb. Peter, on the other hand, barged into the tomb. John saw that the manner in which the grave cloths lay left no alternative but that Jesus had been taken up through the burial wrappings. The previous section describes the manner of burial.

Evidently Mary Magdalene remained at the tomb after the coming of the two apostles. She stood weeping at the doorway when the angel suddenly appeared to her. The fact that Mary did not recognize Jesus can be explained by several things: the early morning lack of light; morning fog; tears obscured her vision; perhaps she did not look at Jesus until He spoke to her in verse 16; Mary's not expecting to see Jesus; or her eyes may not have adjusted to the light after looking inside the dark tomb. Some have suggested that Jesus' post-resurrection body differed substantially from the way He looked previously. Whatever His appearance, Mary quickly recognized His voice. The Greek verb in verse 17 indicates that Jesus' meaning, "Do not continue to touch or cling to me, I must leave and return to God." This verse does not indicate anything about the nature of His post-resurrection body.

Jesus' disciples had probably retreated to the upper room in fear that the Jews would also seek their death. Jesus suddenly appeared among them when the door was barred from the inside. Jesus greeted them with a common greeting of "peace be with you", which is ironic. John used a very traditional greeting, "shalom", but conveys more meaning in it than had ever been expressed before. His resurrection demonstrates that all mankind may have a like resurrection and also substantiates Jesus' claims about Himself. This provides peace beyond any expectation.

Verse 23 has enjoyed much speculation. The most acceptable view is that when the body of Christ is following the Holy Spirit's leading, it may correctly speak as God's spokesman. The authority of the pronouncement is based upon God and not the church.

The church's tradition of worshipping on Sunday is based primarily upon Christ's two appearances on Sunday. The resurrection of Christ was seen as primary to the Christian message. I Corinthians 15 declares that the resurrection of Christ is essential to the Christian message. Some have suggested that the resurrection is a fabrication of the early church. This falls upon several difficulties. Would a person be willing to die for a self-fabricated lie? If the stories were fictitious, one would expect the stories to be similar. If the stories were fabrications, why were the disciples pictured as making so many obvious mistakes? The various theories to explain the empty tomb and deny the resurrection are less plausible than the truth.

Thomas' great affirmation is climactic in John's gospel. As different people express an understanding of who Jesus is, progressively more and more is revealed through them as to who Jesus is. Thomas' acclamation

reveals the most complete revelation of who Jesus is. Thomas accords Jesus' sovereignty and complete deity. Jesus' reply in verse 29 is a great promise which applies to all Christians today. John adds to Thomas' affirmation and states his purpose for writing the story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. He also testifies that his gospel is an eyewitness account.

GUIDED DISCOVERY

verses 1-9

1. What is the first day of the week? How many days have passed since Jesus' burial?
2. Who was the other apostle with Peter?
3. Who did Mary think took Jesus' body (note 20:15, Matt. 27:62ff)?
4. Why did Mary go to the tomb early in the morning (note Luke 24:1, Matt. 27:65,66)?
- ? 5. What can be learned about John and Peter from their entrance into the tomb?
- ! 6. What did John believe about Jesus when he saw the way the grave cloths lay?
7. Compare John 20:9 and Matthew 27:63. What do these passages mean?
- ! 8. What did John see that caused him to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead?
9. How do you account for this ignorance about a subject that Jesus spoke on several times?
10. What does this tell us about the disciples?
11. What would be the case if Jesus had not risen from the grave (note I Cor. 15:12-19)?
- !12. What are the benefits since Christ did rise from the grave (note I Cor. 15:20-27)?

verses 10-18

13. What would indicate in verse 10 that there might have been more disciples than the 11 present at this time?
14. Where was Mary standing and where and when did she see the two angels?
15. How does this help explain why Mary did not immediately recognize Jesus since she previously was looking into the dark tomb?
16. What might have obscured her vision (note 20:11)?
17. What physical conditions sometimes make it hard to see at dawn?
- !18. What is significant about the different titles Mary uses concerning Jesus?
19. What was the role and importance of women in New Testament times?
20. Were women allowed to perform religious services?
21. What task does Jesus give Mary?
22. What is significant about this task?
23. What can be learned about Mary since she remained at the tomb while the other disciples went home?
24. What would have been your reaction to seeing the risen Lord?

verses 19-23

25. How does Jesus enter the house where the disciples were staying?
26. What do the disciples fear and why?
27. "Shalom" is a traditional greeting much like our "hi" or "hello". "Shalom" means peace. How many times does Jesus say "shalom"?
- !28. What news does Jesus bear that brings real peace?
29. Why did Jesus show them his hands and side?
- ?30. What does it mean to receive the Holy Spirit?

verses 24-29

31. "Eight days later" is equivalent to one week. Which day of the week was it (note 20:1)?

32. What type of evidence was Thomas demanding?
33. How does Thomas' statement of faith compare with those that other people made earlier?
- !34. What does Thomas mean by acclaiming Jesus to be both Lord and God?
35. What promise does verse 29 hold for Christians today?
36. What kind of person would Thomas be today?
- !37. How do you approach a modern-day doubting Thomas?

verses 30-31

38. How does John reassure the reader that the other gospels are also authorized?
- !39. What is the central purpose of the Gospel of John?
40. What things can be learned about Christ from studying verses 28-31?
41. What two reactions are possible to the claims of Jesus Christ?
- !42. What are the consequences of acceptance or rejection of Jesus as the Son of God?

WRAP-UP

It is a poor motive to accept Christ just as "fire insurance" or to see Christianity as only "pie in the sky by and by". But the promise of the resurrection is clearly the Christian's hope and without it we would be above all people most to be pitied. The Christian's motive should be a vital relationship with Christ and an obedient disciple. The promise of eternal life assures Christians of Christ's victory over the world and death. The battles may wage on around Christians, but they have the privilege of looking through the smoke and seeing that the war is won.

This determining factor of one's eternal destiny is the answer of refusal to give an answer to who is Jesus Christ. Christianity holds that Jesus is the Son of God and the source of truth. Jesus Christ calls all

mankind to re-establish a personal relationship with the incarnate God who existed before the fall of man. To ignore Christ's claims result in the same end as outright rejection. To accept Christ's claims and allow Him to transform one's life ends in eternal life in heaven. This is the single most important decision any human being can make and cannot be ignored.

Epilogue 21:1-25

BEHIND THE SCENE

John included these events to correct misunderstandings that were present as he wrote his Gospel. John sought to set the record straight in stating that Peter's death was prophesied by Jesus, that John may die before the coming of Christ, and that Jesus was not a ghost or spirit without a physical body.

The disciples had traveled to Galilee as Jesus instructed and were waiting for Christ to appear to them. Peter evidently decided to do some fishing to pass the time or earn some money to meet their expenses. The gospels indicate that they got into "the" boat, using a definite article. This would indicate it was a boat familiar to them, perhaps one of their own boats. It was customary to fish at night but it was unusual not to catch any fish. Tradition and history states that fish were plentiful. As morning approached, Jesus called from shore and directed their casting of the net. Immediately, their net was so full they could not bring the catch aboard for fear of ripping the net as they lifted it out of the water. The number of fish would indicate an eyewitness account.

It was John who first identified the figure in the early morning light as Jesus. The word "naked" in verse 7 is an idiomatic expression that

simply indicates that Peter was stripped only from the waist up. If a tunic was worn while fishing it would get wet, so the tunic was removed. This way he would have a dry shirt when he was through fishing. It is the other disciples who had to bring in the catch while impetuous Peter jumped overboard and swam to the Lord.

Some scholars have tried to draw significance of John's interchanging the two different words for the word "love". This does not appear likely. First, it alludes to different words which are used in the Greek. The different words are "philo" meaning brotherly love and "agape" meaning a higher form of love. This distinction is correct in classic Greek, but New Testament Koine Greek use of these words bears little difference and definitely not enough difference to warrant such an interpretation. A second point is that it assumes that they spoke Greek. It appears more likely that they spoke Aramaic, so it can be said with a high degree of certainty that there is no significance about the changes in the word for love. The point of this passage is that Peter is reinstated by Jesus after his three-fold denial.

The Gospel of John ends with the apostle's pledge to the authenticity and reliability of his account. John states in his Gospel that he could not be exhaustive in all that Jesus did because Jesus said and did so much.

GUIDED DISCOVERY

verses 1-14

1. What was another name for the Sea of Tiberias (note 6:1)?
2. Who were the sons of Zebedee (note Matt. 4:21)?
- ! 3. How does Matthew 28:7 explain why they had returned to Galilee?

4. Previously, what was the occupation of Peter, James, and John?
5. Why did they go fishing?
6. Why did the disciples not know it was Jesus standing at the beach?
- ? 7. Why does Jesus call them children?
8. How does Jesus help them?
9. What would have been these fishermen's natural reaction to catching so many fish?
10. What insights are gained about Peter and John in this incident?
11. What would substantiate Peter's impetuous nature? Who suggested they go fishing? Who brought the boat to shore? Who volunteered to get the fish from the boat?
12. What would indicate John's more reflective and discerning nature?
- !13. How would this section provide an answer to those people who think that Jesus was just a spirit without a material body?

verses 15-19

- ?14. The word "these" could gramatically refer to the disciples, the fisherman's way of life, or do you love me more than you love these disciples. Which do you feel is more likely?
15. What other threefold statement by Peter does scripture contain?
16. Since Peter denies Jesus three times, what could be Jesus' intent?
- ?17. Is Peter concerned with the use of the word "love" or that He asked him three times (note verse 17)?
18. How was Peter to demonstrate his love for Jesus?
19. What responsibility was Jesus giving Peter?
20. How would this responsibility make Peter feel after he had denied Christ three times?
- !21. What can be learned about Jesus from this recommissioning?
22. How does this apply to Christians today?

23. How did Peter die according to church tradition?

24. How would this fulfill verse 18?

verses 20-25

25. Who was the disciple who was following Peter and Jesus?

26. What misunderstanding had developed about John's death and Christ's return?

27. What was Peter's intent when he asked Jesus about John?

28. What pledge does John make about his Gospel? What does that mean to Christians?

29. What claims are John making in verse 25?

WRAP-UP

Jesus forgave Peter after he had denied his Lord three times. Jesus reinstated Peter by a threefold commissioning "to feed his sheep". Jesus reinstated Peter to his former position of responsibility. This gives all Christians a great assurance that God's forgiveness is certain upon our repentance and that God will help us pick up where we had left off. According to church tradition Peter was crucified upside down because he did not consider himself worthy to be crucified in a manner similar to Christ.

John assures each Christian of the authority of his Gospel, which is very important. Scripture is reliable so we can have confidence that Jesus and His claims are portrayed accurately. Christians marvel and rejoice in all that the gospels reveal; yet John declares that he could not record all that Jesus said and did, heaven will reveal this!

FOR FURTHER STUDY

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