

# **NOTES ON THE NEW TESTAMENT**

The Gospel According to

*John*

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As Jesus Christ prepared to send the disciples for the first time throughout Israel with His message, He included in their instructions this admonition: “*Freely you have received, freely give*” (Matthew 10:8). This six-word summary of grace explains the financial policy of the publications and audio ministries of Basic Training. All audio materials and publications are provided **without charge** to anyone who requests them. For a list of available material, visit our website.



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*“Endure hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.”*  
(2 Timothy 2:3)

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### **Preface**

While I was teaching in Myanmar/Burma in March 2019, some of my long-term, advanced students suggested that I go through the New Testament and provide basic notes, which they could then be able print as a study Bible. They specifically asked that I focus on issues that are a major area of confusion in the churches where they work. Therefore, the following commentary will focus on these five primary areas:

1. What is the nature of God's grace and how is it received?
2. What is God's plan of salvation and the clear message of the Gospel?
3. What is the Bible's teaching on the security and assurance of the believer?
4. How is the believer to live the Christian life and be effective in witness/service?
5. What does prophecy say about the last days and the order of end-times events?

### **Practical Suggestions**

These notes are purposely brief in nature. This work is not intended to be a complete commentary. All through the work I have kept in mind those who live in remote areas of our world, who labor to both understand and to teach others the Word of God. They do not have access to Bible school or seminary training. Neither are they able to afford the vast array of books available to pastors and teachers who live in more advanced countries.

I encourage all who utilize these notes to study them with an open Bible. Pray for the illumination of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:15–23; 3:14–21) as you study. Read the context of the passage carefully. Look up and compare the references that are provided. Above all, let the Word of God, and not these notes, guide your insight into God's Word. As I always tell my students: "Never take my word for anything; search the Scriptures and prove what is true" (Acts 17:10–12; 1 John 4:1).

Before you begin any study of the Word of God, take a few moments to make sure that you are in fellowship with God, filled by means of the Holy Spirit. Comprehension, like everything else in the Christian life, is a gift that can be appropriated only by faith. The Bible clearly lays out three requirements that must be met before we can expect to understand God's Word. All three require nothing from us but faith.

*We must be believers in Jesus Christ* (John 3:16).

It is impossible for unbelievers to understand the Word of God (1 Cor. 2:14). Jesus declared to the leading religious leader of His day that apart from spiritual birth man is blind to the things of God. "*That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit ... You must be born again*" (John 3:6).

*We must be filled by means of the Spirit* (1 Corinthians 2:12).

Only the Spirit of God knows the thoughts of God. As believers we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, but when we sin, we break fellowship with God and cease to function in the power of the Spirit. When "*we confess our sins,*" God is always "*faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*" (1 John 1:9). The moment we confess, we are restored to fellowship and are again under the control of the Holy Spirit and, therefore, able to learn.

*We must approach in faith* (Hebrews 11:6).

Only when we approach in humility, with child-like faith, will the Word of God make sense to us (Matt. 18:4; Heb. 11:3). Where we find Scripture at odds with our ideas or our desires, we must submit to the authority of the Word. Intimacy, understanding, and power are reserved for those who are willing to do God's will (John 7:17).

## **DEDICATION**

*“This will be written for the generation to come,  
that a people yet to be created may praise the Lord.”*  
Psalm 102:18

While it is my hope and prayer that these notes will be helpful to all current students of the Word of God, I send them forth with a special dedication to the 144,000 Jewish evangelists who are yet to come on the scene of world history (Rev. 7:1–8). They will be the heroes of the faith in the coming time of Tribulation following the soon coming Rapture of the Church (1 Thess. 4:13–18).

To these brothers and sisters of the future, I want you to know you have been thought of, prayed for, and loved—before you even knew your mission. We of the Church Age salute you for the sufferings you will endure and the victories you will win. We bid you to be strong in the Lord, for your victory is sure in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. May the labor put into these notes by many hands and through many prayers, be a help to you as you boldly proclaim the name of Jesus Christ in a dark and dangerous time!

## INTRODUCTION

The Gospel of Matthew was written primarily for the Jewish reader. The record in Mark had the Roman reader in mind. Luke was prepared for a wider audience—the Greek-speaking world. But the Gospel of John has a wider focus than all, as it was written for the whole world.

John explains his purpose for writing this book in John 20:30–31, “*And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.*” By his own admission, the purpose of this book is to tell the reader how to enter into eternal life: there is only one way—to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. So critical is this theme in the book that the word “believe” occurs about 99 times in this Gospel alone. I will be focusing on this theme of believing for eternal life as we go through the book.

Where the other Gospel writers focused on Jesus’ royal lineage, or His humanity, John presents Jesus in His deity. The Gospel of John presents the **signs** and the **sayings** of Jesus. Another way to put it is that John writes about the **works** and the **words** of Jesus (John 5:20, 24). He is presented as the second member of the trinity, who became man in order to die for us on the cross (Phil. 2:5–8). This is the central emphasis of the book. This of course ties into John’s point, that to believe in Him is to receive the gift of eternal life.

### **The Eight Signs:**

1. Water turned to wine (2:1–11),
2. Healing the nobleman’s son (4:46–54),
3. Healing the lame man (5:1–15),
4. Feeding the five thousand (6:1–14),
5. Walking on the sea (6:16–21),
6. Healing the blind man (9:1–7),
7. Raising Lazarus from the dead (11:1–45), and
8. The resurrection of Jesus (2:18–22; 20:1–31).

### **The Eight Sayings:**

1. “I Am *He*” (4:26).
2. “I Am the bread of life” (6:35, 41, 48, 51).
3. “I Am the light of the world” (8:12; 9:5).
4. “I Am the door” (10:7, 9).
5. “I Am the good shepherd” (10:11, 14).
6. “I Am the resurrection and the life” (11:25).
7. “I Am the way, the truth, and the life” (14:6).
8. “I Am the true vine” (15:1, 5).

Each “I Am” saying is Jesus’ claim to be God—the “*I AM*” (Exod. 3:14) of the Old Testament (O.T.).

# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

## **JOHN CHAPTER 1**

The deity of Jesus and the witness of John the Baptist.

### **Jesus The Eternal Word**

John 1:1–5

**1:1 “In the beginning was the Word.”** The beginning here refers to eternity past. As the Living Word, Jesus is both the expression of the mind of God, and the living example of all scriptural truth. In the Person and work of Jesus Christ, we have the expression of the will of God, that all men might believe and be saved (1 Tim. 2:3–4; 2 Pet. 3:9). **“And the Word was with God.”** This speaks of the eternal fellowship of the Father and the Son. **“And the Word was God.”** This is a declaration at the very beginning of the book of the deity of Jesus, which will be stressed throughout this gospel (John 5:17–24; 8:56–58; 10:31–33).

**1:2 “He was in the beginning with God.”** In Genesis 1:1, at the creation, Jesus was working with the Father (see John 1:3, 10).

**1:3 “All things were made through Him.”** Jesus was the active agent of all creation, performing the will of the Father (Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2).

**1:4 “In Him was life.”** Life was not created but existed “in Jesus” before the creation. **“The life was the light of men.”** The earthly life of Jesus was the highest form of revelation from God to men (John 8:12; 9:5; 2 Cor. 4:6–7; Heb. 1:1–3).

**1:5 “The light shines in the darkness.”** Jesus Christ came into the world to reveal God to men. **“The darkness did not comprehend it.”** This could mean either that the world did not understand Christ, or that the darkness could not overcome Him. Here, the darkness of the fallen world is seen to be hostile to the light of God.

### **The Commission of John**

John 1:6–13

**1:6 “A man sent from God, whose name was John.”** This is speaking of John the Baptist, not John the disciple and the author of this book. The following three reasons for his commission are given in this section: to be a witness, that men might believe, and that by believing they might have eternal life.

**1:7 “To bear witness.”** The mission of John the Baptist was to proclaim to men that Jesus was the promised Christ (see 1:23, 29, 32, 34, 36). **“That all through him might believe.”** Every member of the human race is included in the love of God, the saving work of Christ, and the opportunity to believe (John 12:32; Heb. 2:9; 1 John 2:2). Rejection of Jesus Christ is the only basis for eternal condemnation (John 3:16–19).

**1:8 “He ... was sent to bear witness of that Light.”** John pointed away from himself (see John 1:15, 26; 3:28–31) and to Jesus as the “Light” of the world” (Isa. 2:5; 9:2; 49:6; John 8:12).

**1:9 “The true Light which gives light to every man.”** The coming of Jesus Christ into the world has brought a “light” that is available to all and will never be extinguished (2 Cor. 4:6; 5:14–21).

**1:10–11 “He was in the world ... His own ... did not receive Him.”** The response of the world to the coming of Jesus has been mostly rejection. John places the blame for rejecting Him on each and every unbeliever (see 3:17–19).

**1:12** “*As many as received Him ... who believe in His name.*” John shows that we receive Him, and His gift of eternal life, simply by believing in His name, that is, His true identity as the Son of God. The “**right to become children of God.**” signifies both the power and the authority from God to become His children.

**1:13** “*Who were born ... of God.*” Here, John contrasts the new birth by faith with three common misconceptions:

1. “**Not of blood,**” not by lineage to Abraham (John 8:39; Matt. 3:9),
2. “**Not of the will of the flesh,**” that is, not by human effort (Mark 10:17; Luke 10:25; 18:18),
3. “**Nor of the will of man,**” that is, by the efforts of anyone else (Luke 16:27–31). Each person must choose to either receive or reject Jesus Christ.

### The Word Became Flesh

John 1:14–18

**1:14** “*The Word became flesh.*” This speaks of the physical birth of Jesus to Mary (Phil. 2:5–8). “**We beheld His glory.**” John begins his epistle with this truth (1 John 1:1–4). This glory seen in Jesus was the glory of God seen in the Tabernacle (Exod. 40:34–35; Matt. 17:1–2). “**Full of grace and truth.**” This brings to mind what God said to Moses when He appeared to him (Exod. 34:6).

**1:16** “*Of His fullness we have all received.*” All mankind has received good things from God (Acts 14:17; 17:25–28; James 1:17).

**1:17** “*The law ... grace and truth.*” The Law was a revelation of God’s righteousness and man’s sinfulness, but the full revelation of God’s grace and truth came through Jesus Christ alone (Rom. 3:19–31; 5:20–21; 6:14; Gal. 3:21–29).

**1:18** “*No one has seen God.*” God is Spirit and no man can behold Him (Exod. 33:18–23; John 4:24; Col. 1:15; 1 Tim. 1:17). “*In the bosom of the Father.*” Jesus Christ lives in perpetual intimacy and fellowship with the Father. “**He has declared Him.**” The word “*declared*” means “to fully expound or explain.”

### The Witness of John the Baptist

John 1:19–34 (Matt. 3:1–17; Mark 1:1–11; Luke 3:1–22)

**1:19–21** “*The Jews sent priests ... to ask him, Who are you?*” The religious authorities had heard of John and were alarmed: first, because many people in the first century were looking for the coming of the Messiah, second, because they wanted to keep peaceful relations with Rome. “**The Christ ... Elijah ... the Prophet?**” John immediately answered their first question—he denied being the Christ. The reference to Elijah refers to the prophecy in Malachi 4:5–6, which John partially fulfilled, but would not be totally fulfilled until the Second Coming. The reference to the “*Prophet*” is from Deuteronomy 18:15, which was a reference to the Messiah, though many in John’s day thought that the “*Prophet*” and the “*Messiah*” were two different people.

**1:23** “*The voice of one crying in the wilderness.*” This quote from Isaiah 40:3 should have alarmed the religious leaders, for it clearly declared that John was announcing the appearance of the Messiah. “**Make straight the way of the LORD.**” The word “*LORD*” in the Isaiah prophecy is *Jehovah*, again showing that Jesus is God.

**1:25–27** “*I baptize with water.*” John’s message and baptism required some form of authority. Later, Jesus would silence these very Pharisees by asking them where John’s authority came from (Matt. 21:23–27; Mark 11:28–33; Luke 20:1–8). The baptism of John was a symbolic baptism, but that of Jesus was spiritually transforming (Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8).

**1:29 “Behold! The Lamb of God.”** John identifies Jesus as God’s Passover lamb (Exod. 12:3–14). “**Who takes away the sin of the world!**” Jesus Christ died for every member of the human race and paid the penalty for all sins of all time (Rom. 5:6–10; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 2:9; 1 Pet. 2:24–25; 1 John 2:2). Because Jesus paid the penalty in full, only unbelief remains as a basis for eternal condemnation (John 3:17–19).

**1:31–33 “That He should be revealed to Israel ... I came baptizing.”** Though John and Jesus were cousins, and would have known each other, John did not realize that Jesus was the Messiah until the Word of God was fulfilled in the vision of the Holy Spirit coming upon Jesus at His baptism. Thus, John revealed that, in addition to a symbol of repentance, his baptism was designed to reveal the true Christ. This may be what Jesus was referring to when he said to John, “*Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.*” (Matt. 3:15).

**1:34 “This is the Son of God.”** This speaks of Jesus again as the uniquely born Son of God (v. 18; Psalm 2:7; Prov. 30:4).

### The First Disciples Called

John 1:35–51

**1:37 “The two disciples.”** One of these was Andrew (v. 40), who brought Peter to Jesus. The other was probably John, the author of this Gospel. We only see Andrew three times as a main character; in each of them, he is bringing someone to Jesus (here, and in John 6:8–9, and John 12:22).

**1:41 “We have found the Messiah ... the Christ.”** Whatever was discussed that afternoon and evening (v. 39) had convinced Andrew that Jesus was the Messiah.

**1:42 “You are Simon ... You shall be called Cephas.”** The word “Cephas” is Aramaic. We get “Peter” from the Greek word, *petros*, which also means a “rock” or “stone.” This “nick-name” from Jesus anticipates the prominent role Peter would play among the disciples.

**1:43 “The following day ... Jesus ... found Philip.”** This theme of the early disciples seems to be stressing that Jesus found some, but the early disciples then found others. It is a picture of how discipleship works.

**1:44 “Bethsaida ... the city of Andrew and Peter.”** Peter and Andrew knew James and John (Mark 1:16–20). They most likely would also have known Philip and Nathanael.

**1:45–46 “Philip found Nathanael.”** Nathanael is not mentioned in the other Gospels, and we believe he is the same as Bartholomew (Matt. 10:3; Mark 3:18). “**We have found Him of whom Moses ... wrote—Jesus of Nazareth.**” Here, Philip is referring to the prophecy of Deuteronomy 18:15 about the “Prophet” (see v. 21). This shows early on that the disciples believed in Jesus as the promised Messiah and Savior. “**Can anything good come out of Nazareth?**” The village of Nazareth was a small, out-of-the-way village in Galilee, also a scorned area. In Nathanael, He found a man like the one spoken of in Psalm 32:2. “**Before Philip called you ... I saw you.**” Jesus allows the disciples a glimpse into His ability to know all things.

**1:49 “Rabbi, You are the Son of God.”** Nathanael uses the Old Testament title for Messiah to proclaim his faith in Jesus (2 Sam. 7:14–16; Psalm 2:7; Dan. 7:13–14).

**1:50–51 “You will see greater things than these.”** The Gospel of John is composed around seven “signs” Jesus performs to demonstrate His identity and power. These “signs” culminate in the eighth great “sign,” which is Jesus’ resurrection from the dead (2:18–19). “**You shall see heaven open.**” This may refer back to the vision of Jacob (Gen. 28:12–17).

## **JOHN CHAPTER 2**

The first sign (miracle) of Jesus at the wedding at Cana and His first cleansing of the Temple—the first shows His joy among the common people, the second, His wrath at perverted religion.

### **Water Turned to Wine**

John 2:1–12

**2:1 “There was a wedding in Cana ... and the Mother of Jesus was there.”** The prominence of Mary in this story suggests her relationship to the family of the groom.

**2:3 “They ran out of wine.”** A wedding was one of the most joyous times among the people of Israel. To run out of wine would be a great humiliation. **“They have no wine.”** Mary takes the problem to Jesus. She had learned to rely on His wisdom. This embarrassing problem provides the opportunity for Jesus’ first great “sign” (see v. 11).

**2:4 “Woman.”** In English, Jesus’ response seems unnecessarily harsh. However, the term “woman” was a term of endearment (John 19:26). We might paraphrase: “Lady, in what way does this affect Me?” Jesus knew this was designed to reveal His glory. **“My hour has not yet come.”** This refers to His final hour of crucifixion (see John 7:6, 8, 30; 8:20; 12:23; 13:1). Jesus’ response suggests that the work of turning water into wine is a foreshadowing of the greater work of transforming lives that would result from His crucifixion.

**2:5 “Whatever He says ... do it.”** It is obvious that Mary took Jesus’ response far differently than we do, showing that she knew He would solve the problem, is simply leaving the matter in His hands.

**2:6 “Six waterpots.”** Because the number seven in Jewish thought is the number of perfection, six implies imperfection—as if something is missing. **“The manner of purification of the Jews.”** This reference to ceremonial cleansing hints that what is imperfect is the Jewish law. What is missing is the Person and Work of Jesus Christ.

**2:7 “Fill the waterpots ... to the brim.”** Jesus came into the world to bring fullness of life, and that in abundance (John 10:10; Eph. 3:19–20). In everything He does, we see the extravagance of His grace!

**2:8–9 “Draw some out now.”** This word “draw” is only used in John’s gospel, and only in chapters 2 and 4. Its use in 4:15 shows that 2:8–9 is illustrating the living water of eternal life. **“But the servants ... knew.”** Jesus’ first miracle was known by the servants but not the master of the house.

**2:10 “You have kept the good wine until now!”** Normally at a wedding, the best wine was set out first, then later, the common wine. Here again we see a parallel to the truth that the “old wine” of the Law could not compare to the “new wine” which Jesus brought into the world (Matt. 9:17; Mark 2:22; Luke 5:37–39). This anticipates the replacement of the “old” covenant by the “new covenant” (Matt. 26:26–29; Heb. 8:6–13; see also Jer. 31:31–34).

**2:11 “This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana ... and manifested His glory.”** The Gospel of John is built around eight “signs” that reveal Jesus to be God in the flesh (John 2:1–11; 2:18–22; 4:46–54; 5:1–15; 6:1–41; 11:1–45; 20:1–31). See Introduction on page 7 for a list of the eight signs. Mixed with these signs are “sayings” or teachings that make the same point. **“His disciples believed in Him.”** Many of them had already believed in Him as the Messiah (John 1:41, 45, 49). For some, this may have been the beginning of that belief, but for the others, it was a continuation in the progress of their faith (Rom. 1:17).

**2:12 “After this He went down to Capernaum.”** The town of Capernaum would become the center of Jesus’ ministry in Galilee. John’s family accompany Him and witness His miracles, but His brothers did not believe in Him until after His resurrection (John 5:7; 1 Cor. 15:7).

### **Jesus Cleanses the Temple the First Time**

John 2:13–25 (Matt. 21:12–17; Mark 11:15–19; Luke 19:45–48)

**2:13 “The Passover ... was at hand.”** This is the first of three Passovers in Jesus’ three-year ministry (John 2:13; 6:4; 11:55). Here, He will declare the purpose of His coming, and His greatest “sign.” The Passover spoke of the sacrifice of the lamb for the redemption of God’s people (Exod. 12:3–14).

**2:15–16 “He made a whip of cords, He drove them all out.”** Jesus was enraged at the perversion of true worship into a money-making business. “**Take these things away!**” By these actions, Jesus is showing that both the Temple and the sacrifices would soon pass away. He also demonstrates that He is the authority over the Temple.

**2:18–19 “What sign do You show us?”** The religious authorities demand a sign that would confirm His claim of authority. Jesus then predicts His eighth sign—the resurrection of His body from the dead in three days (Matt. 12:39–40; John 20).

**2:21 “He was speaking of the temple of His body.”** Although they accepted Him as the Messiah, the disciples did not understand this saying until after His resurrection (v. 22).

**2:23 “At the Passover ... many believed in His name.”** To believe in His name means to believe in who He claimed to be—the Messiah/Savior. Note the repetition of the word, “believe,” which is the theme of this gospel (John 20:30–31).

## **JOHN CHAPTER 3**

Jesus explains the new birth to Nicodemus; John the Baptist proclaims the superiority of Jesus Christ.

### **Jesus Instructs Nicodemus**

John 3:1–21

**3:1 “Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.”** This identifies Nicodemus as a member of the Jewish council, the Sanhedrin.

**3:2 “This man came to Jesus by night.”** Nicodemus did not want to be seen in his visit to Jesus. As the hatred of the council increased against Jesus, Nicodemus became increasingly convinced of His claims (John 7:47–51; 19:38–39). “**No one can do these signs ... unless God is with him.**” The signs of Jesus are beginning to lead this religious leader to believe in Him, again emphasizing John’s theme (John 20:30–31).

**3:3 “Born again.”** This can also be translated “born from above.” This is what the Bible calls “*regeneration*” (John 1:12–13; Titus 3:5). The work of regeneration creates a “*new man*” or a “*new creation*” (2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:23–24).

**3:5 “Born of water and the Spirit.”** This could be contrasting natural birth versus spiritual birth, or the “*water*” may refer to the Word of God (Eph. 5:26; 1 Pet. 1:23). In the Old Testament, water is often associated with the working of the Spirit of God in using the Word of God to bring about new birth (Jer. 31:31–33; Eze. 36:22–28).

**3:6 “That which is born of the flesh ... of the Spirit.”** This statement may explain v. 5, as distinguishing between natural birth versus spiritual birth. Nicodemus is confused regarding the difference between physical and spiritual birth (v. 4).

**3:7 “You must be born again.”** If one desires to “enter the kingdom of God,” there is no hope apart from the new birth by faith in Jesus Christ as the Savior.

**3:8 “The wind blows where it wishes.”** The word for “wind” and for “Spirit” in the Greek (*pneuma*) are the same. The Holy Spirit, like the wind, moves among men in such a way that we can only see the effects of His working. Those “born of the Spirit” will show the effects of His working.

**3:9 “How can these things be?”** This question is the key to all that follows. Nicodemus has asked how the Spirit can produce the new birth. In the following section, Jesus uses the word “**Believe**” seven times from v. 12 to v. 18. Seven is the number of perfection or completion in the Bible and believing is the perfect response to the truth about Jesus Christ.

**3:10 “Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?”** Nicodemus was considered the premier teacher of the Old Testament, yet he did not understand its message (Gen. 15:6; Job 19:25–27; Psalm 2:6–12; 106:12, 24; Isaiah 53).

**3:11–12 “You do not receive Our witness ... you do not believe.”** In v. 2, Nicodemus said, “**we know**,” including other Pharisees. In this verse, the word “you” is plural, speaking of Nicodemus and the other Pharisees.

**3:13–14 “The Son of Man ... so must the Son of Man be lifted up.”** Jesus compares His coming crucifixion to the serpent on the pole in the wilderness (Num. 21:7–9; John 8:28; 12:34; 19:18). The serpent in Numbers 21 represented sin and its judgment. On the cross, Jesus became sin for us and bore our judgment, that we might receive life and righteousness by faith in Him (2 Cor. 5:21).

**3:15 “Whoever believes in Him should not perish.”** In the wilderness incident (Numbers 21), all the people could do was look to the serpent on the pole. To do this, they had to believe what God had said (Num. 21:8). Deliverance from eternal death comes only by faith alone in Jesus Christ alone (Eph. 2:8–9). To add anything to Jesus’ message here is to refuse to believe in His Word.

**3:16 “For God so loved the world.”** This is often called the most loved verse in all the Bible. It is also one of the simplest. **“Whoever believes in Him should not perish.”** This is the message of the Gospel in brief. Faith alone in Jesus Christ as Savior delivers the soul from eternal judgment. **“But have everlasting life.”** The moment one believes, they possess eternal life (1 John 5:10–13). Since that which is eternal never ends, the gift of life can never end (John 11:25–26).

**3:17 “Not ... to condemn ... but that the world ... might be saved.”** The coming of Jesus into the world was a rescue mission from the Father to save the world (Luke 19:10; John 12:47). If His offer of deliverance is rejected, then men stand self-condemned.

**3:18 “He who believes in Him is not condemned.”** Faith in Jesus Christ delivers us from all condemnation. **“He who does not believe is condemned already.”** To live in unbelief is to live under the wrath of God (v. 36; 5:24).

**3:19 “This is the condemnation.”** The basis of judgment is the rejection of Jesus Christ. **“Men loved darkness rather than light.”** Darkness is the world of unbelief and sin. The light is Jesus Christ (John 1:4–5; 8:12; 9:5; see Rom. 13:12–14).

**3:20 “Everyone practicing evil hates the light.”** The ultimate act of evil is the rejection of Jesus Christ. Those who do not love Him, hate Him (Matt. 12:30; Luke 11:23). **“Lest his deeds should be exposed.”** Everyone who comes to Jesus Christ in faith is admitting that they are a sinner and that they have been living in the darkness of this world.

**3:21 “That his deeds ... have been done in God.”** No one can see faith in the soul of the believer. But once having believed in Jesus Christ, his deeds, like the effects of the wind of the Spirit, show that he has been born again.

## **John the Baptist Proclaims the Superiority of Jesus**

John 3:22–36

**3:22 “Jesus and His disciples ... baptized.”** In John 4:2, we are told that Jesus personally did not baptize. This was probably to avoid people claiming a superior baptism because they received it directly from Jesus. The disciples baptized under Jesus’ authority.

**3:23–26 “Now John was also baptizing ... then there arose a dispute.”** The increasing popularity of Jesus, and the fact that “*all are coming to Him!*” created some jealousy in the disciples of John. These “**Jews**” (v. 25) are the “*Pharisees*” of John 4:1, who started the debate, seek to create/stir up jealousy in John and his disciples.

**3:27–36** This is an astounding section, where John the Baptist demonstrates total submission to the will of God, and complete support of Jesus as the only source of eternal life. The following ten points about Jesus are made clear by John:

1. No one but God can truly exalt or promote someone (v. 27).
2. John identifies himself as the forerunner of Jesus, who is the Christ (v. 28).
3. Jesus is “*the bridegroom;*” John is only “*the friend of the bridegroom*” (v. 29).
4. Jesus will continue to “*increase,*” while John must continue to “*decrease*” (v. 30).
5. Because Jesus came “*from heaven,*” He is “*above all*” other men (v. 31).
6. What Jesus teaches is that which “*He has seen*” in the Father’s presence (v. 32).
7. Those who receive the message of Jesus declare “*that God is true*” (v. 33).
8. Jesus “spoke the word of God” by the unlimited power of the Holy Spirit (v. 34).
9. “God the Father uniquely loves the Son,” and has delivered everything into His hands (v. 35).
10. Those who believe in Jesus have eternal life now, those who do not believe in Him will never “*see life,*” but live under the “*wrath of God*” (v. 36).

**3:28–29 “You yourselves bear me witness.”** John calls on those who heard him to acknowledge three truths:

1. John sought no promotion that did not come from God (v. 27).
2. John had openly said that he was “*not the Christ*” (1:19–20).
3. As the friend of the Bridegroom, John’s job was to bring the Groom and the Bride together, and then to depart. This he had done, and his work was almost finished (v. 24).

**3:30–36 “He must increase ... He who comes from above.”** In these verses, John makes two clear contrasts:

1. between himself and Jesus (vv. 30–32), and
2. between those who believe and those who do not (vv. 33–36). Jesus was “**From above,**” but John was “**of the earth.**”

Therefore, Jesus’ message was infinitely superior to that of John’s message. Because of this, it is Jesus alone whose word can give “*everlasting life.*” Here, John reinforces the truth that runs throughout this Gospel—that eternal life is gained solely through faith in Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:8–9).

## **JOHN CHAPTER 4**

Jesus and the woman at the well; lessons to the disciples; healing the nobleman’s son.

### **Jesus and the Samaritan Woman**

John 4:1–26

**4:1–3 “When the Lord knew ... He left Judea.”** Jesus did not want to be drawn into the controversy over baptism, so He left for Galilee. We must learn that some things are not worth disputing and creating divisions.

**4:4 “He needed to go through Samaria.”** Normally, Jews crossed over the Jordan River and went north to avoid going through Samaria, but Jesus had a divine appointment.

**4:5 “He came to ... Sychar.”** This area was famous for the land bought by Jacob (Gen. 33:18–20), for Joseph’s burial ground (Gen. 50:24–25; Josh. 24:32), and for Jacob’s well (John 4:6).

**4:6 “It was about the sixth hour.”** The Jewish day was measured from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. This makes Jesus’ meeting with the woman about 12 noon.

**4:7–8 “A woman ... came to draw water.”** The well was about one-half mile from the village. Normally, the women would draw water in early morning or evening, in the cool of the day. However, this woman, because of her reputation, came when the other women were at home. **“Give Me a drink.”** It was forbidden for a Jewish Rabbi to even speak to a woman in public. **“His disciples had gone ... to buy food.”** Normally, Jews would not buy food from Samaritans. Jesus’ influence on the disciples, and His conversation with the woman, show He is breaking down barriers of legalism and prejudice.

**4:9 “How is it You ... a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman.”** Jesus surprised the woman by breaking two taboos: first, that He would even speak to a Samaritan, second, that He would stoop to speak to a woman. The Samaritans were a mixed race from remnants of the ten Northern tribes and the Assyrians. The Jews considered them to be “unclean.”

**4:10 “If you knew the gift of God.”** Jesus had come to bring the gift of eternal life to this Samaritan village. Salvation is a free gift that only needs to be received by simple, childlike faith (Matt. 18:3). **“And who it is who says to you.”** The power of Jesus to save is based on His identity as the Son of God. **“He would have given you living water.”** Jesus leads this woman from her physical need to see her spiritual need. Jesus is speaking in terms familiar to Old Testament readers (Psalm 1:3; 36:9; 42:1; Isa. 12:3; 44:3; 55:1; Jer. 2:13; 17:13; Zec. 13:1; 14:8). This same figure of the water of life is used in the New Testament (John 7:38; Rev. 7:17; 21:6).

**4:12 “Are You greater than our father Jacob?”** This is the ultimate question. Men tend to respect and honor those great men of history. Yet, Jesus Christ is in a class above all the great men of history combined. The Samaritans claimed their lineage came through Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph.

**4:14 “Whoever drinks ... I shall give ... will never thirst.”** One drink of faith in Jesus Christ satisfies the thirst for eternal life forever (Isa. 49:10; John 6:35). **“A fountain of water ... everlasting life.”** Jesus promised life in never-ending supply. He is speaking of life from the source of the Holy Spirit (John 7:37–39).

**4:15–16 “Sir, give me this water.”** The woman is still thinking in physical terms. **“Go, call your husband.”** Since the woman had been thinking only in terms of physical need, Jesus’ words force her to see her spiritual need for forgiveness. We will never come to the Savior until we see our need for salvation.

*“There are two revelations in Christianity; there is the revelation of God  
and the revelation of ourselves.”*  
— William Barclay

**4:17–18 “I have no husband.”** The woman tries to evade Jesus’ conviction by a half-truth. **“You have had five husbands ... in that you spoke truly.”** Jesus’ purpose here is not to shame or humiliate the woman, but to reveal both her spiritual need and His own true identity.

**4:19** “Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.” Little by little, her perception is growing that Jesus is no ordinary man. See the same process of growing awareness in the man born blind incident:

1. “A Man” (9:11),
2. “He is a prophet” (9:17),
3. “this Man ... from God” (9:33), and
4. “The Son of God” (9:35–38).

**4:20** “Our fathers worshiped on this mountain.” The mountain was Mt. Gerizim. Like many under conviction of sin, (John 16:8) the woman tries to change the subject to avoid her own situation. She refers to an ongoing theological debate (location of worship) to avoid her own condition.

**4:21–22** “Woman, believe Me ... salvation is of the Jews.” Jesus calls the woman to believe in Him, as the source of salvation promised to the Jewish nation through the coming Messiah (Gen. 15:6; 22:14–18; Rom. 3:1–2; 9:4–5; Gal. 3:16).

**4:23** “The hour is coming, and now is.” Jesus is telling the woman that the Messianic promise is now fulfilled in Him. “The Father is seeking such to worship Him.” Jesus is the human embodiment of the fact that God is seeking to bring all men to Himself (Luke 19:10; 1 Tim. 2:3–5; 2 Pet. 3:9).

**4:24** “Those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” True worship is not based on a geographical location. It is a matter of the human spirit receiving the truth of God’s Word by faith. True worship is when we believe and act on (obey) God’s Word.

**4:25–26** “I know that Messiah is coming ... I ... am He.” The woman shows a belief in the Old Testament promise. Jesus declares that He is the fulfillment. His actual words were, “I AM,” identifying Himself as the God who appeared to Moses (Exod. 3:14). In this Gospel, John gives us eight “I AM” sayings of Jesus:

1. “I am He” (4:26).
2. “I am the bread” (6:35, 41, 48, 51).
3. “I am the light” (8:12; 9:5).
4. “I am the door” (10:7, 9).
5. “I am the good shepherd” (10:11, 14).
6. “I am the resurrection and the life” (11:25).
7. “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (14:6).
8. “I am the true vine” (15:1, 5).

Each of these eight statements declares His deity!

### Jesus Instructs the Disciples on the Harvest John 4:27–38

**4:27** “No one said ... ‘Why are You talking to her?’” In speaking to the Samaritan woman, Jesus had violated social protocol for any man, much less a Rabbi. Yet, the disciples are learning that Jesus acted on His own authority. We also need to learn not to question His dealings in our lives. He always acts with eternal ends in mind.

**4:29** “Come see a Man ... Could this be the Christ?” The woman left her waterpot (v. 28), either in haste to tell her neighbors, or because she fully intended to return. Her witness in the form of a question implies a positive answer.

**4:32–34** “*I have food to eat ... to do the will of Him who sent Me.*” Jesus appears to be restored from His weariness (v. 6) by His ministry to the woman. Repeatedly, throughout John’s gospel, Jesus stresses that the Father sent Him, and that His delight is to do the Father’s will. To know God’s will and not do it is sin (Heb. 5:12–14; James 4:17).

**4:35** “*Lift up your eyes ... the fields ... are already white for harvest!*” Jesus urges the disciples to look at the white-robed people coming out of the city (v. 30). Under normal conditions, there were four months between sowing and harvesting. Jesus declares that in the spiritual realm, one can sow and harvest at the same time. This was also a prophetic picture of the glorious Kingdom Age (Lev. 26:3–5; Amos 9:13).

**4:36–38** “*He who reaps receives wages.*” In these verses, there are some vital truths for all disciples:

1. Every believer who wins others to Christ will be eternally rewarded (Prov. 11:30; Dan. 12:3; Matt. 19:29).
2. “**Both ... rejoice together.**” Both the sower (faithful witness) and the reaper (one who wins someone to Christ) will share in the eternal joy.
3. “**One sows and another reaps.**” Many who sow the Gospel-seed will not see the harvest. Still, they share in the reward.
4. “**Others have labored.**” When we are privileged to win a soul to Christ, we should remember others have labored for that soul in preparation for our spiritual harvest. The law of sowing and reaping especially applies in the spiritual realm (Gal. 6:6–9).

### **Christ, the Savior of the World**

John 4:39–42

**4:39–41** “*Many ... believed ... many more believed.*” Over the next two days, more and more people believed in Jesus. “*Because of His own word.*” Jesus spoke with convicting power and authority (Luke 4:32).

**4:42** “*The Christ, the Savior of the world.*” Only John uses this phrase (1 John 4:14). This is significant, in that the disciples were gaining their own insight from people’s reactions to Jesus. This statement shows that Jesus came for all mankind (John 3:16; 1 John 2:2) and reveals great insight on the part of these new Samaritan believers.

### **Jesus Heals the Nobleman’s Son**

John 4:43–54

**4:44** “*A prophet has no honor in his own country.*” Since Jesus had been rejected in Nazareth (Matt. 13:57), He went to Capernaum. While Jesus resided in Capernaum, “*Cana of Galilee*” (v. 46) is where He went after dealing with the Samaritan women.

**4:45** “*The Galileans received Him, having seen all the things He did ... at the feast.*” Those Galileans who went to the Passover (2:13–23) welcomed Him. Note again John’s two-fold emphasis on Jesus’ **words** and **works** (vv. 42, 45).

**4:46** “*A certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum.*” This royal officer would have served Herod Antipas, who had John the Baptist killed (Luke 9:7–9; 23:6–8).

**4:47** “*He ... implored Him to come down and heal his son ... at the point of death.*” Cana is up in the mountains, about 20 miles from Capernaum. The nobleman was determined to seek Jesus’ help—an act of faith.

**4:48** “*Unless you people see.*” This was addressed to the crowd, who would have followed Jesus to Capernaum to witness the miracle. It is a rebuke to those who need to see in order to believe.

**4:49–50** “*Sir, come down before my child dies!*” ... ‘*Go ... your son lives.*’” Here, John ties together the **words** of Jesus with His **works**. As in the first sign in Cana (John 2:11), the work was the result of Jesus’ word. This nobleman believed (had great faith) even before he saw (v. 53).

**4:51** “*Your son lives.*” The servants used the very same words Jesus used in v. 50. Jesus prophetically anticipated this good news.

**4:53** “*He himself believed, and his whole household.*” The inclusion of his household is similar to Acts 16:31–32. Faith often spreads from one family member to the rest of his/her household.

**4:54** “*This ... is the second sign.*” See John 2:1–11 for the first sign. John is recording Jesus’ signs in order to convince people to believe in Jesus Christ for eternal life (John 20:30–31).

## **JOHN CHAPTER 5**

Jesus heals on the Sabbath; is persecuted by the Jews; and declares His unity with the Father.

### **Healing the Lame Man**

John 5:1–18

**5:1** “*There was a feast.*” John does not specify this feast, but there were three feasts that every man was required to attend: Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles (Deut. 16:16).

**5:2** “*The Sheep Gate ... Bethesda.*” This gate was near the Temple, where the sheep were brought for sacrifices. Bethesda means “house of mercy.”

**5:3–4** “*An angel went down.*” This may have been mere superstition. The last half of v. 3 and all of v. 4 does not appear in many ancient Greek manuscripts.

**5:5–6** “*A certain man ... had an infirmity thirty-eight years ... ‘Do you want to be made well?’*” The Lord Jesus deals with people as individuals, and tailors His grace to their needs.

**5:7** “*Sir, I have no man.*” Jesus’ question in v. 6 reveals the helplessness and loneliness of this poor man, who had been hoping for a cure for 38 years (v. 5).

**5:8** “*Rise, take up your bed and walk.*” Jesus commands the man to do, what to him, must have seemed impossible (Luke 18:27). The man’s willingness to obey is the human key to the miracle.

**5:9** “*Immediately.*” There was no hesitation on the lame man’s part. “*That day was the Sabbath.*” Jesus often chose to do His healings on the Sabbath so as to demonstrate the hypocrisy of the Pharisees (Mark 3:1–4; Luke 6:6–10; John 7:23; 9:13–16).

**5:10–13** “*The Jews.*” This refers to Jewish leaders, members of the council. “*It is not lawful.*” Jewish oral traditions had amassed thousands of regulations about the Sabbath. Jeremiah did prohibit such activity (Jer. 17:21–22), but Jesus declared that He was the Lord of the Sabbath (Matt. 12:8), and that the Sabbath was made for man—not man for the Sabbath (Mark 2:27). People are more important than regulations, customs, and culture.

**5:14** “*Sin no more, lest a worse thing come.*” All suffering is the result of the sin of Adam (Gen. 3:16–19), but not all suffering is the result of personal sins (John 9:1–3). However, in this case, the man’s sins may have caused his condition and prompted Jesus’ warning (see John 8:11).

**5:15** “*The man ... told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.*” Many, who have been blessed by Jesus Christ, still seek to please the authorities of this world.

**5:16** “*For this reason.*” The first mention of hostility and persecution by John is in relation to this incident. The Jewish leaders valued religious ritual over the souls of men (Mark 7:8).

**5:17** “*My Father has been working ... and I have been working.*” The Jewish idea was that, once creation was finished, God continued to rest. Jesus declares that God was continually at work, and that His works and those of Jesus God the Father were the same. Jesus makes a direct claim of equality with the Father.

**5:18** “*Making Himself equal with God.*” These Jewish leaders clearly understood Jesus’ claim (see John 10:33).

### **Jesus Confronts the Leaders with His Identity** John 5:19–47

**5:19** “*Whatever He does, the Son also does.*” In this section, Jesus declares two great truths:

1. that He and the Father are united in person and work (vv. 19–23), and
2. that the only hope of eternal life is by faith in Him (vv. 24–47).

**5:21** “*The Son gives life to whom He will.*” The Jewish leaders would not deny that God raised the dead (1 Kings 17:17–23; 2 Kings 4:32–37). Here, Jesus claims the authority to give spiritual life, but only to those who believe in Him (vv. 24, 34, 40, 46–47).

**5:22** “*The Father ... has committed all judgment to the Son.*” Because Jesus bore the penalty of sin for all men on the cross (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 2:9), He has the right to judge all who reject His sacrifice on their behalf (John 3:19).

**5:23** “*That all should honor the Son ... as they honor the Father.*” Once again, Jesus is claiming the right to be worshiped equally to that of the Father (1 John 2:23).

**5:24** “*He who hears ... and believes ... has everlasting life.*” Faith comes by hearing God’s Word and receiving it in faith (Rom. 10:17). “**Believes in Him who sent Me.**” Jesus’ point is that if we believe in the Father, we will also believe in His Son. At the moment we believe two things occur:

1. We possess (“*has*” *everlasting life.*”), and
2. We pass from the realm of death into life. These effects of believing in Jesus Christ happen in an instant and can never be reversed (Col. 2:13).

**5:26** “*For as the Father ... so ... the Son.*” Jesus continues to declare His equality with the Father. Here, He states that He shares in the very life of the Father (John 10:30).

**5:29** “*Those who have done good.*” This could be translated, “those who have done the good thing,” referring to faith (see John 6:28–29; Rom. 2:6–7). The Bible makes it clear that no one is saved by good works (Rom. 3:10–12, 28; Eph. 2:8–9). “**The resurrection of life ... the resurrection of condemnation.**” These are the only options following death. Believers will live forever with Christ, but unbelievers will endure eternal punishment.

**5:30** “*The will of the Father.*” Jesus continues the theme of v. 19. He declares that His actions are righteous because they originate from the Father (John 8:29).

**5:31–39** “*If I bear witness of Myself.*” According to Jewish law, every fact must have at least two or three witnesses (Deut. 19:15; 2 Cor. 13:1). In this section, Jesus sets forth three witnesses to His identity:

1. John the Baptist (vv. 32–33),
2. His miracles (v. 36), and
3. The Father’s word in the Old Testament (vv. 37–39). To these can be added that of Moses (vv. 46–47).

**5:34 “That you may be saved.”** In spite of the hatred of these Jews, Jesus loved them and sought for their salvation (Luke 19:10).

**5:39 “You search the Scriptures ... these ... testify of Me.”** See Luke 24:27, 32, 44–45. All throughout the Old Testament, Jesus is the central figure—in types, pictures, and prophecies (Heb. 1:1–3).

**5:40 “You are not willing to come to Me.”** This verse reinforces v. 38. Their unbelief was due to their own unwillingness to receive the truth (lack of humility). Both faith and/or unbelief are a free-will decision.

**5:42 “You do not have the love of God in you.”** In this section, Jesus proves that God loves these leaders (v. 34), but because they do not love God, neither will they love the Son.

**5:43 “You do not receive Me ... him you will receive.”** Those who reject Jesus will always believe one false teacher or another (Matt. 24:5, 11). This statement is prophetic, because when “*the Antichrist*” comes, the majority of men will receive him (2 Thess. 2:8–12; 1 John 2:18, 22).

**5:44 “How can you believe?”** Those who crave the honor of men are unwilling to bear the reproach of Christ (1 Tim. 4:10; Heb. 11:26; 13:13). God honors those who are reproached for Christ’s sake (Matt. 5:10–12; 1 Pet. 4:14).

**5:46 “If you believed Moses.”** The Jewish religious leaders prided themselves on being disciples of Moses (John 9:28–29). However, the books of Moses (Genesis–Deuteronomy) are filled with references to the Lord Jesus Christ (Gen. 3:15; 49:10–11; Num. 21:9; 24:15–17; Deut. 18:15, 18). By rejecting the testimony of Moses, their hearts were hardened to the One greater than Moses (Heb. 3:3–19).

**5:47 “If you do not believe his writings.”** See the words of Abraham in Luke 16:29–31.

## **JOHN CHAPTER 6**

Jesus feeds the five thousand; walks on the sea; teaches on the Bread of life; is rejected by man.

### **Feeding the Five Thousand**

John 6:1–14 (Matt. 14:13–21; Mark 6:30–44; Luke 9:10–17)

**6:1–2 “Because they saw His signs which He performed.”** There are three words that are used for supernatural acts: miracles, wonders, and signs. John prefers to use the word “*signs*,” as it speaks of the spiritual lesson behind the work. The works that Jesus performed were designed to teach something about His Person. While Jesus and the disciples crossed “*the Sea of Galilee*,” “*a great multitude*” went around the north end—a journey of ten miles or so.

**6:4 “Now the Passover ... was near.”** This gives the context for the next sign. As “*the lamb of God*” (John 1:29, 36), Jesus is also the “*bread of life*” (John 6:33, 35, 41). Just as the Jews on Passover night ate of the lamb (Exod. 12:8), so we are to feed on the Lord Jesus Christ (John 6:54–58).

**6:5–7 “Where shall we buy bread?”** John tells us that Jesus was testing Philip’s faith. Moses was tested in much the same way (Num. 11:21–23). **“Two hundred denarii ... of bread ... is not sufficient.”** This was over a half-year’s wages. To Philip, it was hopeless to feed the people.

**6:8–9** “*Andrew ... said ... there is a lad here.*” Philip sees an impossible task. Andrew finds what little he can. The little boy gives all he has, and Jesus makes it more than sufficient (Luke 1:37). “**Barley loaves**” were the food of the very poor.

**6:10** “*The men sat down ... about five thousand.*” This did not include the number of women and children (Matt. 14:21).

**6:11–12** “*When He had given thanks He distributed.*” Here, Jesus acts as the father of a household. Though He had creative power to multiply the food, still He thanks the Father in Heaven for it. “**As much as they wanted ... they were filled.**” The people ate until they could hold no more. (See Elisha, in 2 Kings 4:42–44). “**Gather up ... so that nothing is lost.**” Again, even though He had creative power, He did not waste anything.

**6:13** “*They ... filled twelve baskets.*” Each of the disciples likely carried a woven bag. In the ancient Near East, it was common for guests to leave their fragments of food as a “tip” to those who served them. “*Little is much in the hands of Christ*” (William Barclay).

**6:14** “*This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.*” They are referring to Moses’ prophecy in Deuteronomy 18:15, 18–19. Although this Prophet and the Messiah are one and the same, the Jewish Rabbis thought they were two distinct persons (John 1:20–21).

### **Jesus Walks on the Sea**

John 6:15–21 (Matt. 14:22–33; Mark 6:45–52)

**6:15** “*Jesus perceived that they were about to come ... by force to make Him king.*” This crowd saw in Jesus one who could heal all their diseases and keep them fed. They wanted a king who would keep them all on welfare! “**He departed ... by Himself alone.**” Jesus withdraws both from the crowd and from the disciples. He will now test what the disciples had learned from the experience.

**6:16–17** “*His disciples ... went over the sea toward Capernaum.*” We are informed in Mark 6:45 that they did this at Jesus’ command.

**6:19** “*They saw Jesus walking on the sea ... they were afraid.*” This is Jesus’ fifth “sign” and demonstrated His authority over the natural realm. Each “sign” is but another evidence of His deity.

**6:20–21** “*It is I; do not be afraid.*” Jesus performed four mighty works here:

1. He walked on the sea.
2. He called Peter to come to Him on the water (Matt. 14:29).
3. He calmed the storm (Matt. 14:32).
4. They were immediately at the land (John 6:21).

### **Jesus Teaches About the Bread of Life**

John 6:22–40

**6:22–25** “*Rabbi, when did You come here?*” The multitude realized that Jesus had done something amazing but could not understand what it was.

**6:26** “*You seek Me ... because you ate ... and were filled.*” Note that Jesus says, “**Not because you saw the signs.**” They did not gain the spiritual insight that He desired. Instead, they simply wanted Him to keep feeding them.

**6:27 “Do not labor.”** People work for their daily food, but that is not life’s ultimate goal. Further, eternal life cannot be gained by works (Rom. 3:28; 4:1–5; Eph. 2:8–9). **“Which the Son of Man will give you.”** Eternal life is a free gift (John 4:10; Rom. 6:23), which only Jesus Christ can give. It is a gift that can only be received by faith (John 1:12–13; Heb.11:6).

**6:29 “This is the work of God, that you believe.”** Faith in Christ is not a “work,” but it allows God to work in us (Eph. 3:7, 20; Phil. 2:12–13). Faith is an acknowledgment of our sinfulness and helplessness, therefore, of total reliance on the grace and power of God to save us because of the work of Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:6–11).

**6:30 “What sign will You perform?”** These people, rebuked for their selfish motives (vv. 26–27), now begin to harden their hearts. They understand Jesus’ claim to be the Messiah, so they challenge Him to show them a sign, even after all the signs they had seen!

**6:31–34 “He gave them bread from heaven.”** They refer back to the manna in the wilderness (Exod. 16:4; Neh. 9:15; Psalm 78:24–25). **“The bread of God is He who … gives life to the world.”** Jesus declares that the manna in the wilderness pointed to Him—the true Bread of God. He corrects their thinking, by showing that it was God the Father, and not Moses, who provided for Israel in the wilderness.

**6:35–36 “I am the bread of life.”** This bread is “eaten” by faith (vv. 54–56) and gives eternal life to those who believe. **“Shall never hunger … shall never thirst.”** Those who believe in Him will never lack eternal life. **“Yet do not believe.”** After all they had witnessed, they still rejected Him.

**6:37 “All that the Father gives Me … I will by no means cast out.”** Three great truths are contained here: the sovereignty of God, the responsibility of the believer, and the security assured by Jesus Christ.

**6:38–40 “The will of the Father.”** Jesus summarizes the will of the Father in three areas:

1. That all who believe in Christ have eternal life (v. 40),
2. That all who believe would be eternally secure (v. 39a; 10:28–29), and
3. That all who believe would be resurrected (v. 39b).

### Jesus Rejected by the Religious Leaders John 6:41–59

**6:41–43 “The Jews then complained [murmured] … is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph.”** These religious leaders begin to turn the people against Jesus. They offered this as proof that He could not have come from Heaven because they knew His earthly family (see also Mark 6:3). Murmuring was the constant sin of the Exodus generation (Exod. 15:24; 16:2; 17:3; Num. 14:2; 16:41; Deut. 1:27; 1 Cor. 10:10).

**6:44 “No one can come to Me unless the Father … draws him.”** Both the Father and the Son draw all men to “come” (Jer. 31:3; John 12:32; 14:6), but men “resist” or reject the drawing power of God’s grace (John 3:19; Acts 7:51).

**6:45 “They shall all be taught by God.”** This roughly quotes Isaiah 54:13 (see Jer. 31:34).

**6:46 “He has seen the Father.”** No man has seen God (John 1:18), but He is revealed through His Son, Jesus Christ (John 14:7–9; Heb. 1:1–3).

**6:47 “He who believes in Me has everlasting life.”** This is the main message of the Gospel of John. We enter into eternal life the moment we believe in Him (John 14:6).

**6:48–51** “*Your fathers ... are dead.*” The physical manna could not provide spiritual life. “*If anyone eats this bread, he will live forever.*” Jesus gave His body on the cross for us so that by simple faith in Him, we could enter eternal life. Jesus uses eating and drinking as a picture of faith in His sacrifice. “*Which I shall give for the life of the world.*” Jesus Christ died for the whole human race (John 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:3–4; Heb. 2:9; 1 John 2:2).

**6:54–56** “*Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life ... abides in Me, and I in him.*” The figurative language of Jesus here was made clear to the disciples in the Upper Room (Matt. 26:26–29; Mark 14:22–25; Luke 22:17–20). The Lord’s table is a memorial of our faith in His death and resurrection. The phrase “*abides in Me*” sets the stage for John 15:1–8.

**6:58** “*He who eats this bread will live forever.*” Jesus has stated this truth in repetition for emphasis. His desire is that they would believe in Him for eternal life.

### Many Disciples Turn Away

John 6:60–71

**6:60** “*Many of His disciples.*” The word “disciple” simply means a learner or a follower. It does not necessarily indicate they had believed in Him. Jesus makes it plain that some, including Judas, had never believed in Him for eternal life (v. 64). At the same time, some who had believed “fell away” in the same way the eleven disciples would later do. (“made to stumble,” Matt. 26:31; Mark 14:27; see Zec. 13:7). How many believers have left the church because the pastor taught a “hard saying?”

**6:63** “*The Spirit ... gives life; the flesh profits nothing.*” Jesus is still trying to get them to think in spiritual terms, just as He did with Nicodemus (John 3:1–8) and the woman at the well (John 4:10–15). The Holy Spirit works through the Word of God to bring life to those who receive it (Rom. 10:17).

**6:64** “*There are some of you who do not believe.*” Among those who followed Jesus, there were unbelievers. “*For Jesus knew from the beginning ... who did not believe, and who would betray Him.*” This is a general statement but has specific meaning with regard to Judas (vv. 70–71). It is the turning point in this Gospel. From now on the hostility to Jesus will only increase.

**6:67** “*Do you also want to go away?*” Jesus asks the twelve to take a stand, or to go. We are all tested in this way many times in our Christian life (Matt. 12:30; Luke 11:23).

**6:68–69** “*You have the words of eternal life.*” How Peter’s confession must have cheered the heart of our Lord—Peter loved the Word of God! How could He forsake the source of it? “*You are the Christ.*” Here, Peter strikes on the theme of the Gospel of John (John 20:30–31).

**6:70–71** “*One of you is a devil.*” Jesus reveals the true character of Judas, who had never believed in Him (v. 64). “*Judas Iscariot*” had a flirting relationship with Satan himself. Like Satan, he was a thief (John 10:1, 10a; 12:6). Judas surrendered to Satan’s prompting (John 13:2) and was ultimately indwelt by him (John 13:27). Judas is called “*The son of perdition*” (John 17:12), as is the Antichrist (2 Thess. 2:3; Rev. 17:8, 11).

## JOHN CHAPTER 7

Jesus in Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles.

### Jesus’ Unbelieving Brothers

John 7:1–9

**7:1 “The Jews sought to kill Him.”** The religious leaders in Jerusalem had now committed to a plot to destroy Jesus. Jesus knew their plans, and ordered His actions accordingly, in preparation for His destined hour.

**7:2 “The Feast of Tabernacles.”** This is one of the three mandatory feasts the men of Israel were required to attend (Deut. 16:16–17). At this feast, seventy-one bulls were offered (Num. 29:12–32, 36)—one for Israel and 70 for the Gentile nations listed in the table of nations (Gen. 10). This was the one feast that Gentiles were welcome to and often attended.

**7:3–5 “Depart from here ... show Yourself to the world.”** This is a mocking challenge by Jesus’ brothers (Matt. 13:55), because “**His brothers did not believe in Him.**” Apparently, it was not until after the resurrection that James and Jude believed in Him (1 Cor. 15:7; James 1:1; Jude 1).

**7:6 “My time has not yet come.”** Here, Jesus used the word *kairos*. This is the only time He ever used this word, and it speaks of “an opportune or appropriate time.” His plan was to attend the feast, but He would wait for precisely the right time (v. 10–14, 37). However, many have been troubled by this section, assuming that Jesus lied to His brothers. He is not saying the same thing He said to Mary in John 2:4. There, when Jesus spoke of His “*hour*,” He used the word *hora* to refer to His coming crucifixion—a time ordained by the Father (John 2:4; 7:30; 8:20; 12:27). Here, He is speaking of the appropriate time for His arrival at the feast.

**7:7 “The world ... hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil.”** Jesus’ brothers were under no danger. Jesus was hated by this world because of the light He shined on its evil (John 3:19).

### Jesus Teaches in the Temple John 7:10–36

**7:10 “He also went up to the feast ... in secret.”** Jesus is acting according to the plan of the Father—the timing of which was crucial (see v. 14 note).

**7:11–12 “The Jews sought Him.”** This shows that the religious leaders were hoping to trap Him at the feast. “**He is good ... He deceives the people.**” Once again, there were many views of who Jesus was among the multitude (John 9:16; 10:19–21).

**7:13 “For fear of the Jews.”** The religious authorities threatened or punished those who openly spoke in favor of Jesus (John 9:22; 12:42; 19:38).

**7:14 “Jesus went up into the temple and taught.”** This was the “opportune time” (see note in 7:6) Jesus had been waiting for in order to fulfill prophecy: “*The Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to His temple.*” (Mal. 3:1, see also Psalm 22:22).

**7:15 “The Jews marveled.”** Jesus had not been formally trained by a great Rabbi such as Gamaliel (Acts 5:34; 22:3). His insight into the Scriptures and His authority always amazed people (Matt. 7:28–29; John 7:46).

**7:17 “If anyone wills [desires] to do His will, he shall know.”** Here, Jesus makes it clear that the condition of the heart is the key to biblical understanding. The desire to know is not enough; there must be a desire to do His will (John 13:17; James 1:21–25; 2:14–17).

**7:19 “Why do you seek to kill Me?”** Jesus reveals the secret plot of the religious leaders to put Him to death (vv. 11, 13).

**7:20 “Who is seeking to kill You?”** Though they act offended at His revelation of their plot, it was well known in Jerusalem (v. 25). One of the Pharisees’ favorite charges against Jesus was that He was demon-possessed (John 8:48, 52).

**7:21 “I did one work.”** Here, Jesus refers to the healing of the lame man at the pool of Bethesda (John 5:1–8). Up to this time, almost all of His miracles had been done in Galilee.

**7:22–24 “You circumcise a man on the Sabbath.”** The male child was circumcised on the eighth day after birth (Gen. 17:9–14; Lev. 12:3). If that day fell on a Sabbath, the ritual was still performed, although technically, it was a violation of the Sabbath prohibition of all work. **“I made a man completely well on the Sabbath.”** Jesus’ act of mercy involved no work, but simply His word (John 5:8). They could not deny His miracle, so they attacked Him for violating their petty rules and regulations. Jesus revealed the hypocrisy and totally corrupt nature of their phony religion (Matt. 6:1–2, 5, 7, 16; 23:13–33).

**7:25–26 “Do the rulers know ... this is truly the Christ?”** (John 4:26). The reluctance of the leaders to seize Jesus appeared to be evidence to the people that He was indeed the Christ.

**7:27 “We know where this Man is from.”** At this time, He was known as “Jesus of Nazareth” (Matt. 21:11; Mark 1:24; 10:47; 14:67; Luke 18:37; 24:19). However, many would not know that He was born in Bethlehem, in fulfillment of prophecy (Micah 5:2; Matt. 2:1–6; John 7:42).

**7:28–29 “Jesus cried out ... you know where I am from ... He who sent Me ... you do not know.”** This was a loud cry of rebuke at the assumptions of the crowd (v. 27). He declares that they do not know God, who sent Him. He is claiming that they could only know God through believing in Him (1 Tim. 2:5).

**7:30–32 “They sought to take Him ... His hour had not yet come.”** The plan of God would be fulfilled according to His perfect timing, on the Passover (John 13:1). **“Many ... believed in Him.”** Jesus’ sudden appearance and teaching had convinced many of His identity. **“The Pharisees heard ... and ... sent officers to take Him.”** The speculations of the crowd that (maybe) Jesus was the Messiah drove the religious leaders to desperation.

**7:33–34 “I shall be with you a little while longer.”** Here, Jesus addresses those who have believed in Him. **“You will seek Me and not find Me.”** His crucifixion and resurrection would remove Him from Earth. This was again a fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies (Hosea 5:6; Matt. 5:20).

**7:36 “You will seek Me and not find Me.”** While those who seek the Lord in humility and faith will always find Him (Jer. 29:13), those who seek Him out of mere curiosity will never find Him!

### Jesus Again Offers Living Water John 7:37–53

**7:37 “On ... that great day of the feast.”** This was a special Sabbath that concluded the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:36). On each day of the feast, water was carried by the high priest from the Pool of Siloam and was poured out on the altar. This was done to recall the miracle of the water from the rock in the wilderness (Exod. 17:5–7; 1 Cor. 10:4). On the eighth day, no water was carried, making Jesus’ offer of water, where there was none, more powerful. **“If anyone thirsts.”** This again, like v. 17, shows the need for personal appropriation of the gift of life (John 4:14; 6:35).

**7:38 “He who believes in Me.”** Jesus repeatedly emphasizes this one and only condition for entering into eternal life. **“As the Scripture has said.”** Many passages are suggestive of Jesus’ words here (Deut. 18:15; Isa. 12:3; 55:1; 58:11; Jer. 2:13; Zec. 14:8). **“Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.”** This represents the never-ending supply of life from the Holy Spirit (Psalm 1:3; Jer. 17:8).

**7:39 “This He spoke concerning the Spirit.”** John explains here, in a parenthetic verse, that the Spirit could not come until Jesus was glorified (John 14:16–18; 25–26; 15:26; 16:7–14).

**7:40 “Truly this is the Prophet ... this is the Christ.”** Again, the people show the confusion of the Rabbis, who believed that the “Prophet” (Deut. 18:15) and the “Christ” were two different people (John 1:20–21).

**7:42 “The Christ comes from the seed of David and from ... Bethlehem.”** The majority of this crowd is ignorant of Jesus’ lineage (Matt. 1:1–17) and of the place of His birth (Micah 5:2; Matt. 2:1–6). See the note on v. 27.

**7:44–45 “Some of them wanted to take Him.”** This refers to the Temple officers (guards) who had been sent by the Pharisees and chief priests to seize Jesus (v. 32).

**7:46 “No man ever spoke like this Man!”** The very power and authority of Jesus’ words caused these Temple guards to cower (John 18:4–6).

**7:48–49 “Have any of the rulers ... believed in Him?”** Actually, there were two secret believers in their ranks—Joseph and Nicodemus (John 19:38–40). **“This crowd ... is accursed.”** The Pharisees despised the common people, calling them “people of the land,” which is the Greek term used here.

**7:50–51 “Nicodemus said ... does our law judge a man before it hears him?”** Here, Nicodemus speaks in Jesus’ defense. He refers to the law that judges must be impartial, and only judge based on evidence from witnesses (Deut. 1:16–17; 19:15–20). Scripture demanded that judges show no partiality, because this reflects the justice of God (Deut. 10:17–18; Acts 10:34–35; Rom. 2:11; Col. 3:25).

**7:52 “No prophet has arisen out of Galilee.”** In this they were wrong. Jonah, Hosea, and Nahum, all came from Galilee. It is also possible that Elijah and Elisha were from there. Further, the Scripture prophesied that Messiah would minister there and bless the people of Galilee (Isa. 9:1–2; Matt. 4:15–16).

## **JOHN CHAPTER 8**

Jesus disputes with the Pharisees; again, declares His deity.

### **Jesus and the Woman Taken in Adultery**

John 8:1–12

**8:1 “Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.”** By ignoring the break between the end of Chapter 7 and this verse, we see the contrast. Everyone else went home, but Jesus, who had nowhere to lay His head (Matt. 8:20; Luke 9:58), spent the night out under the stars, wrapped in His cloak.

**8:2–5 “A woman caught in adultery ... what do You say?”** According to the Law of Moses, both the man and the woman were to be stoned (Exod. 20:14; Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22). If the woman was **“caught ... in the very act,”** the escape of the man was inexcusable, and therefore, the case was unjust from the start.

**8:6 “Testing Him ... to accuse Him.”** The Pharisee’s thought they had Jesus in a trap. If He said to stone her, He could be accused of partiality. If He showed mercy, then they would accuse Him of violating Moses’ Law. **“Jesus stooped down and wrote ... with His finger.”** The Scriptures declared that the Law of Moses, written on the stone tablets was written by the finger of God (Exod. 31:18; Deut. 9:10). That same finger now writes in the dust (see also Dan. 5:5, 24–28). Perhaps it was a reference to Deuteronomy 19:16–19, which declared that a false witness should bear the very punishment they sought to bring on another.

**8:7–9 “He who is without sin ... being convicted by their conscience.”** Whatever Jesus wrote, that and His words convicted even these hard-hearted religious hypocrites, causing them to leave.

**8:10–11 “Has no one condemned you? ... Neither do I.”** Here, Jesus fulfills His own words in John 3:17, stating that God did not send Him to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. **“Go and sin no more.”** The compassion and mercy of Jesus does not condone sin. Jesus is not referring to all kinds of sin but is specifically telling her not to commit adultery again.

**8:12 “I am the light of the world.”** This is another one of the “I Am” sayings of Jesus (see the note on 4:25–26). This is clearly a claim to be the Messiah (Psalm 27:1; Isa. 60:19; Micah 7:8). **“He who follows Me.”** Jesus is speaking here of a believing disciple (Luke 9:23; John 9:5; 11:9–10; 12:35–36). **“Shall not walk in darkness.”** Believers have the light of God’s Word, and the inner illumination of the Holy Spirit to guide their lives (Matt. 5:14–16; 2 Cor. 4:6; Eph. 1:17–18; 5:8; 1 Thess. 5:5; 1 Pet. 2:9; 1 John 1:7). **“Shall ... have the light of life.”** That is the light that comes from the life of Jesus Christ (Gen. 1:3; John 1:4–9).

### **Jesus Defends His Claims** John 8:13–29

**8:13 “Your witness is not true.”** The Pharisees declare Jesus’ witness invalid, due to the legal requirement to have two or three witnesses (see notes on John 5:31–47).

**8:14 “My witness is true.”** Jesus knew the Father who sent Him. The Pharisees did not know God, and therefore rejected Jesus’ witness (John 5:19–23, 37–39; 7:28–29).

**8:16–18 “My judgment is true, for I am not alone.”** Jesus declares that the witness of the Father, through the mighty works that He did, was His co-witness (John 5:19–21).

**8:19 “You know neither Me nor My Father.”** Jesus makes it clear that those who reject Him could never know the Father in Heaven (John 14:6).

**8:20 “His hour had not yet come.”** The Father’s plan for the crucifixion of Jesus would be carried out with perfect timing (John 13:1, 3).

**8:21–24 “You will seek Me, and will die in your sin.”** Even after Jesus’ resurrection, these hard-hearted Pharisees would continue to seek for the Messiah, but they would die in the sin of unbelief (John 3:18–19). **“If you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.”** Jesus paid the penalty for the sins of the whole world (John 1:29; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 John 2:2). Anyone who dies in the sin of unbelief (v. 21), rejects His payment, and therefore stands guilty of all their sins. The penalty is eternal condemnation and separation from God (Rom. 4:7–8).

**8:25 “Who are You?”** Jesus had just identified Himself as the “I Am” in v. 24. This was the designation that God gave to Moses of Himself (Exod. 3:14).

**8:28 “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He.”** Jesus is speaking in the treasury—a very busy part of the Temple. Many of the people hearing His message would come to believe after the crucifixion. The words “lift up” implies not just crucifixion, but also glorification (John 3:14; 12:16, 23; 13:31–32; see Num. 21:9).

**8:29 “I always do those things that please Him [the Father].”** Jesus’ sinless life was the strongest witness to His unity with the Father (John 10:30).

## **Jesus Deals with Believers and Unbelievers**

John 8:30–47

**8:30–32 “Many believed in Him.”** Many in the crowd believed in Jesus at this point in the discussion. **“If you abide in My word.”** It is one thing to believe in Jesus Christ and to receive eternal life. However, a life of discipleship requires dedication to the learning and doing (obedience) of the Word of God (Ezra 7:10; Luke 11:28; John 13:17; James 1:22–25). **“The truth shall make you free.”** Here, Jesus refers to the truth of God’s Word, which has an ongoing effect of liberating the believer from the snares and pitfalls of this world.

**8:33 “They answered Him.”** This refers back to the “they” in vv. 13, 19, 25, 27, who were unbelieving Pharisees. It is not speaking of those who had believed. **“We are Abraham’s descendants.”** A favorite idea of the Jews was that descent from Abraham would save them (Matt. 3:9; Luke 3:8). **“Have never been in bondage.”** Historically, the Jews had been slaves of Pharaoh, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, and were now subjects of Rome. More than this, they were always enslaved by sin.

**8:34–36 “A slave of sin.”** All men are born enslaved to sin (Rom. 5:12). **“A son abides forever.”** This was a proverb: slaves come and go, but the son remains. **“If the Son makes you free.”** Jesus is the Son of the Father, and the only one who can set us free from sin and death. **“You shall be free indeed.”** True discipleship brings spiritual freedom (Gal. 5:1), not slavery to a dead religious system of rules and regulations!

**8:38 “You do what you have seen with your father.”** Here, Jesus begins to turn the argument away from their physical lineage (vv. 33, 37) to their spiritual lineage from the devil (v. 44; Eph. 2:2–3; 1 John 3:8–10).

**8:39–40 “If you were Abraham’s children ... do the works of Abraham.”** The greatest work of Abraham was to believe in the Lord (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3; Gal. 3:6; Heb. 11:6, 8).

**8:41 “We were not born of fornication.”** They are referring to Jesus’ unusual birth, suggesting that He was conceived outside of marriage.

**8:44 “You are of your father the devil ... he was a murderer.”** Their desire to kill Jesus was a reflection of the murderous intent of the devil (see Matt. 23:15).

**8:46 “Which of you convicts Me of sin?”** No one but the Lord Jesus Christ could throw out such a challenge (1 Pet. 2:22). Even His enemies could not find any sin in Him!

**8:47 “He who is of God hears God’s words.”** To reject the Gospel message about Jesus Christ is to deny the whole of God’s Word (John 3:33; Eph. 1:13–14; 1 John 2:5; 4:6).

## **The Hope of Abraham**

John 8:48–59

**8:48 “You are a Samaritan and have a demon.”** In addition to the charge of being illegitimate (v. 41), they accuse Him of being a demon-possessed Samaritan. Their hatred of Him moved them to slander Him in every way possible.

**8:51 “If anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.”** In spite of their hatred, Jesus continues to offer life to them. Here, “My word” refers to His testimony regarding His true identity as the Son of God and Savior of the world (John 4:42).

**8:53 “Are You greater than our father Abraham?”** Jesus will answer this question in v. 56. **“Who do you make Yourself out to be?”** These Pharisees understood Jesus to be claiming superiority to all of the Old Testament saints and prophets (Matt. 12:6, 41, 42; Luke 11:31–32).

**8:56** “*Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day.*” Jesus refers to their physical ancestor, though not their spiritual father (v. 39–40). When Abraham offered up Isaac, he saw a preview of the sacrifice the Father would make of His Son and of His resurrection (Gen. 22:1–18; Gal. 3:16; Heb. 11:17–19).

**8:58–59** “*Before Abraham was, I AM.*” This is a clear declaration of His deity (see Exod. 3:14; John 1:1–4, 14–18). “*Then they took up stones.*” Because they understood His message clearly, they sought to stone Him for claiming to be God. “*Jesus hid Himself ... and so passed by.*” Our Lord had supernatural power to conceal Himself from their sight and pass by them unnoticed.

## **JOHN CHAPTER 9**

Jesus heals a man born blind on the Sabbath.

### **The Man Born Blind Receives Sight**

John 9:1–12

**9:2** “*Who sinned, this man or his parents?*” It was a common teaching in Jesus’ time that all suffering was connected to sin. Jesus refutes this teaching. This was based on faulty interpretations of Exodus 20:5; 34:7; and Numbers 14:18. These passages teach that when the sins of the fathers are perpetuated by the sons, they will suffer judgment for them. See Ezekiel 18:1–19.

**9:3–4** “*Neither ... but that the works of God ... be revealed.*” Jesus instructs the disciples in a totally new way of thinking about suffering. God can use our trials and afflictions for His glory (Romans 5:3–5; James 1:2). “*I must work ... while it is day.*” Jesus knows that His time is near. He must finish the work the Father gave Him to do (John 5:16–17; John 19:30).

**9:6–7** “*He spat ... and made clay.*” Only here and in Mark 7:33 did Jesus spit and make clay. Both the act of making clay and the act of healing were considered work by the Pharisees. This day was the Sabbath (v. 14). “*Go, wash in ... Siloam.*” This would also be considered work. Jesus is provoking the Jewish authorities intentionally. His time is near. “*Which is translated, Sent.*” Jesus had just claimed to be sent by God (John 8:29). Also, Jesus sent the blind man. God is about to glorify Himself.

**9:9** “*Some said, ‘This is he.’ Others said, ‘He is like him.’*” Their difficulty was in accepting that a man born blind could be given sight.

**9:11** “*A Man called Jesus.*” The blind man’s estimate of Jesus develops through the passage:

1. “*A Man*” (v. 11),
2. “*a prophet*” (v. 17),
3. “*Man ... from God*” (v. 33), and
4. “*the Son of God*” (v. 35–38).

This process occurs for many people who come to Jesus Christ in faith.

**9:13–14** “*They brought him ... to the Pharisees.*” The people probably did this to get the Pharisees’ judgment about healing on the Sabbath. “*It was the Sabbath.*” John introduces this fact in connection with the Pharisees, as it sets the stage for what follows.

**9:16** “*This Man is not from God.*” Some of these Pharisees may have been in the crowd in the Temple (John 8:13–59). “*How can ... a sinner do such signs?*” This was the conclusion that brought Nicodemus to faith (John 3:2). This was Jesus’ sixth sign in this Gospel (John 20:30–31).

**9:17 “He is a prophet.”** The man born blind concludes that only a true prophet could affect such a miracle.

**9:18–23 “The Jews did not believe.”** Rejecting the supernatural sign, they sought the man’s parents. **“This is our son, and ... he was born blind.”** The parents identify the man as their son. **“He will speak for himself ... because they feared the Jews.”** Having identified their son, the parents, out of fear of religious reprisal, let the man speak for himself.

**9:24–25 “We know this Man is a sinner.”** They say this because He healed on the Sabbath. **“One thing I know ... now I see.”** The man refuses to be intimidated by these religious tyrants.

**9:27–28 “Do you also want to become His disciples?”** This indicates that the man now considers himself a follower of Jesus, though he does not yet know His true identity. **“We are Moses’ disciples.”** In fact, they were not (John 5:46–47).

**9:30–33 “If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing.”** The healed man now gives the Pharisees a short course on sanctified logic. Using their own teaching that God did not hear sinners, he forces the point that Jesus must be from God. Healing the blind was a predicted sign of Messiah (Isa. 29:18; 35:5; 42:7; Matt. 11:1–6).

**9:34 “You were completely born in sins.”** Here, the Pharisees fall back on the doctrine that Jesus had refuted (v. 2).

**9:35 “Do you believe in the Son of God?”** As with the woman at the well (John 4:26), Jesus slowly reveals Himself to this man. This again is the key theme of John (John 20:30–31).

**9:37–38 “It is He who is talking with you ... Lord, I believe!”** In that very moment, this man entered eternal life (John 3:16, 36; 5:24; 1 John 5:10–13).

**9:39 “That those who do not see may see.”** Much greater than the healing of the blind man was the work of Christ giving spiritual sight to blind souls. **“That those who see may be made blind.”** The Pharisees claimed to have spiritual vision (Rom. 2:19), but their rejection of Jesus blinded them to the truth (see John 11:37; 2 Pet. 1:9).

**9:41 “Therefore your sin remains.”** Their spiritual blindness to the light of Jesus Christ, and their persistent unbelief, have kept them in a state of sin (John 8:24; Rom. 5:12, 1 Cor. 15:22).

## **JOHN CHAPTER 10**

Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

### **The Shepherd and His Sheep**

John 10:1–30

**10:1–2 “A thief”** Represents the Pharisees (John 9:40–41), as well as all false teachers (Jer. 23:1–2; Eze. 34:1–16; Matt. 7:15–23). Anyone who **“Climbs up some other [another] way,”** shows by their actions that they are false pretenders and/or deceivers. But Jesus **“enters by the door,”** showing that His true identity is known to both the **“doorkeeper”** (v. 3) and to **“the sheep.”** In the Old Testament, God is often pictured as the Shepherd of His people, Israel (Psalm 23:1; 77:20; 79:13; 80:1; 95:7; 100:3). This was also the picture of the promised Messiah (Isa. 40:11). Jesus uses both figures of **“the door”** and **“the shepherd”** for Himself (v. 7, 9, 11, 14, see Matt. 9:36; 18:10–14; Luke 15:4–7).

**10:3–4 “To him the doorkeeper opens.”** The **“doorkeeper”** may be a reference to God the Father, who is the guardian of the flock, or God the Holy Spirit, since the doorkeeper is the **“under shepherd.”** **“The sheep hear his**

*voice ... he calls his own sheep by name.*" The relationship of the Good Shepherd to His sheep is intimate—He knows each one by name (3 John 14; Rev. 3:5, 12).

**10:5 "They will by no means follow a stranger."** In Israel at this time, the shepherd lived with the sheep. They would develop special calls and songs that only their sheep knew. The sheep would flee from any other shepherd.

**10:7–9 "I am the door of the sheep."** Here, the Lord Jesus presents Himself as the only way to enter into eternal life (John 14:6; Eph. 2:18; Heb. 10:20). This is Jesus' fourth "*I AM*" figure used in this Gospel (see John 4:26; 6:35, 41, 48, 51; 8:12, 9:5; 10:7, 9). **"If any one enters by Me, he will be saved."** Entrance into eternal life comes only by faith in Jesus Christ (John 3:16, 36; 5:24; 6:40).

**10:10 "That they may have life ... more abundantly."** Eternal life is received by faith once and for all. Abundant life is experienced by those who abide in Christ (John 6:56; 8:31–32; 15:1–5; Gal. 2:20; 1 John 2:24–29).

**10:11–15 "I am the good shepherd."** Where the false shepherd comes "*to steal and to kill*" (v. 10), Jesus comes to give life. **"Gives His life."** Here, Jesus is looking forward to the cross. **"The hireling."** This is one who has no love for the sheep, but only works for wages. Any pastor who enters the ministry for personal gain is a hireling. **"A hireling does not care about the sheep."** In time of danger, the man who works for gain will forsake the flock. Every flock faces danger from the outside (the "*wolves*"), and from within the fold ("*the hireling*"). (See Acts 20:28–31).

**10:16 "Other sheep I have."** This is a reference to the Gentile church (Matt. 16:18—the first use of "church" in the New Testament; Eph. 2:14–22). **"There will be one flock and one shepherd."** Ultimately, Israel and the Church will be united into one flock (Rom. 11:25–31).

**10:17–18 "I lay down My life ... No one takes it from Me."** The cross did not kill Jesus. When the penalty for sin was paid, He released His spirit into the Father's hands (Matt. 27:50; Luke 23:46; John 19:30).

**10:19–21 "There was a division ... among the Jews."** Here, the words of Jesus are fulfilled—that He came to bring division (Luke 12:51–53). This division is between those who hate Him, and those who believe in and love Him.

**10:22 "The Feast of Dedication."** This feast was not given by Moses but was an eight-day feast celebrating the cleansing of the Temple after it was desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes. Today, this feast is called Hanukkah and is celebrated in December.

**10:24 "If You are the Christ, tell us plainly."** Jesus had already made His claims clear and **"the Jews [who] surrounded Him"** rejected those claims (John 4:25–26; 9:37; 10:11 with Psalm 23:1).

**10:25–29 "I told you, and you do not believe."** Rejection of the truth blinds the soul (Eph. 4:17–19; John 12:40; 2 Cor. 4:4). **"My sheep hear My voice ... I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish."** Here, Jesus uses the strongest negative possible, *ou me*, in the original language. This is one of the "Never" passages in John, where this absolute negative is used (John 4:14; 6:35; 8:51–52; 10:28; 11:26). This is also the strongest possible declaration of our security in Christ once we believe. **"My hand ... My Father's hand."** Our security is based on the faithfulness of God, not our faithfulness (2 Tim. 2:13).

**10:30 "I and My Father are one."** This is an undeniable claim of deity. To the Jews, there was no greater statement about the nature of God than, "*The Lord is one!*" (Deut. 6:4; James 2:19). The Jewish leaders could not have misunderstood Jesus' claim here. This theme has run from John 5:17–18 through 10:33.

### Jesus' Claim Rejected Again John 10:31–41

**10:31–33** “*The Jews took up stones.*” They had just recently tried to stone Him (John 8:59). As before, their attempt to kill Him failed. “**For a good work we do not stone You, but ... because You, being a man, make Yourself God.**” They had asked Him to identify Himself (v. 24). Now He has, and they are outraged.

**10:34–36** “*I said, ‘You are gods?’*” Here, Jesus quotes Psalm 82:6, which refers to human judges (Psalm 82:6), who were like God’s council of angels in Heaven (Psalm 82:1). Both are called “*gods*” because they are to represent God before men (2 Sam. 14:17; 19:27). “**The Scripture cannot be broken.**” This would be an irrefutable argument to a Jewish Rabbi. The unity and authority of God’s Word was absolute. “**Him whom the Father sanctified.**” The idea is that God set the Son apart from all other men for His unique task. This uniqueness was shown by His mighty signs (vv. 32, 37–38).

**10:38** “*Believe the works ... that the Father is in Me, and I in Him.*” Jesus continues to appeal to them to judge His claims based on His works. Were they of God or not?

**10:39** “*They sought again to seize Him.*” The hardness of heart they displayed was both willful and against all evidence. Like all who reject Jesus Christ, they are “*without excuse*” (Rom. 1:20; 2:1).

**10:40** “*He went away ... beyond the Jordan.*” Jesus has aroused such hatred among the religious leaders that He goes away to await the hour ordained for Him.

**10:41–42** “*Many came to Him ... and many believed in Him.*” The ministry of John the Baptist now bears much fruit in this area (see Matt. 19:1–2; Mark 10:1). Even in the very shadow of the cross, Jesus continues to bring many into eternal life.

## **JOHN CHAPTER 11**

Jesus raises Lazarus; the Jewish authorities finalize plans to kill Him; the Passover draws near.

### **The Death of Lazarus** John 11:1–16

**11:1** “*Lazarus of Bethany.*” The name “Lazarus” is related to “Eleazar” and means “God is my help.” Jesus comes out of seclusion to raise Lazarus in Bethany—just two miles from Jerusalem. The raising of Lazarus is Jesus’ last sign before the crucifixion and stimulates the religious leaders to put the plot to murder Him in action (vv. 47–53).

**11:2** “*Mary who anointed the Lord.*” Here, John identifies the unnamed woman of Luke 7:37–38.

**11:3** “*Lord ... he whom you love is sick.*” There was no need to request Him to come. His love for them gave assurance that He would. His plan however was greater than they could imagine.

**11:4** “*This sickness is ... that the Son of God may be glorified through it.*” Jesus often spoke of being glorified, and He always tied it to the cross (John 7:39; 12:16, 23; 13:31–32). In going to raise Lazarus, Jesus was assuring the Passover plot that led to His crucifixion (John 13:1–3).

**11:5–6** “*Now Jesus loved ... He stayed two more days.*” Jesus’ actions must have seemed to the disciples as the opposite of love. In fact, it was due to His love that He delayed His coming. God so often has a higher purpose in our sufferings (Romans 5:3–5; James 1:12; 1 Pet. 4:12–14). Jesus always acts according to His own initiative and for His own ends.

**11:8** “*Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You.*” The disciples may have concluded Jesus’ delay was for the sake of safety. Now they are alarmed that He would return. The danger to Him was very real.

**11:9–10 “Are there not twelve hours in the day?”** This is the same concept found in John 9:3–4. Jesus is secure while He walks in the light of His Father’s will, as we are taught to do (1 John 1:7). Jesus worked during the day; Judas did his work at night (John 13:30).

**11:11–14 “Lazarus sleeps ... Lazarus is dead.”** Throughout the Gospel of John, Jesus used language that His hearers took in physical terms, but which He intended in spiritual terms:

1. **Birth** (3:3, 7),
2. **Water** (4:10, 13–14),
3. **Food** (4:30–34; 6:26–27), and
4. **Flesh and blood** (6:54–58).

Here, Jesus uses “sleep” to refer to the death of a believer—one who would awaken again (Matt. 9:24; Acts 7:60; 1 Cor. 15:6, 51; 1 Thess. 4:13–15).

**11:15–16 “I am glad for your sakes.”** The raising of Lazarus would be a final strengthening of the disciples’ faith. **“Thomas, who is called the Twin [Didymus].”** The second name means “Twin.” Some suggest he was a twin of Matthew, as their names are often linked (Matt. 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15). Others suggest it referred to his nature, which wrestled between faith and unbelief (John 20:24–25; James 1:8). **“Let us also go, that we may die with Him.”** Thomas was willing to die with Jesus at this point.

### **Jesus Meets Martha and Mary**

John 11:17–37

**11:20 “Martha ... went and met Him.”** As we see in Luke 10:38–42, Martha was a woman of action; Mary was more reserved.

**11:21–22 “Lord, if You had been here.”** This may have been a mild rebuke. It was obvious that Jesus had delayed His coming. **“But even now.”** Here, Martha appears to show faith that Jesus could raise Lazarus if He so desired.

**11:23 “Your brother will rise again.”** Jesus is speaking about today; Martha thinks He is speaking of the final resurrection (Job 19:25–27; John 5:28–29).

**11:25–26 “I am the resurrection and the life.”** The idea, based on what He says next, is that He is the resurrection for those believers who have died, and the life for those on this earth who believe in Him (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 3:10). **“Though he may die ... whoever lives.”** The body may die, but the soul of the one who believes will never die. **“Do you believe this?”** Jesus challenges the faith of Martha.

**11:27 “I believe that You are the Christ.”** This affirmation is in keeping with the theme of this Gospel (John 20:30–31) and with Peter’s great confession (Matt. 16:16).

**11:28 “The Teacher has come.”** Every time we see Mary, she is seated at Jesus’ feet—the posture of a student (v. 32; Luke 7:38; 10:39; John 12:3). **“Lord, if You had been here.”** (v. 21) She makes the same statement as Martha but does not show the same faith.

**11:33–35 “Jesus saw her weeping ... Jesus wept.”** Jesus was not weeping for Lazarus but entered into the sorrow of those present. It is also possible that He wept due to their general unbelief (v. 37; Matt. 23:37).

**11:37 “This Man, who opened the eyes of the blind.”** They remember the miracle of the healing of the blind man in John 9.

## The Raising of Lazarus

John 11:39–44

**11:39 “Take away the stone.”** This would have been a shocking violation of both custom and law, for to have contact with a dead body was cause for defilement (Lev. 21:11; Num. 6:6; 9:6; 19:11). **“He has been dead four days.”** Martha, as always, is thinking in the most practical of terms.

**11:40 “Did I not say ... if you would believe.”** What Jesus had said earlier (vv. 23–26) was meant for that day. **“The glory of God.”** God’s glory is shown in His power over sin and death (Rom. 5:2; 6:4; 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:17).

**11:41–42 “Father, I thank You ... that they may believe.”** Jesus’ great concern was always that men might come to faith in Him (2 Pet. 3:9; 1 Tim. 2:3–5).

**11:43 “Lazarus, come forth!”** If Jesus had not called Lazarus by name, other believers in nearby graves would have come forth!

**11:44 “Loose him, and let him go.”** This recalls Jesus’ teaching on the “Son setting us free” (John 8:36). The dead were wrapped in a shroud. Lazarus came forth alive, but not yet free. Many have believed in Christ and have life, but they remain bound by entangling sins (Gal. 5:1, 13; Heb. 12:1).

## The Plot to Kill Jesus

John 11:45–57

**11:45–46 “Then many ... believed in Him. But some ... went away to the Pharisees.”** There is always the division between those who believe and those who resist the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here, the unbelievers, in the face of absolute proof of His power over death, go to inform the religious leaders of His presence nearby.

**11:48 “If we let Him alone ... everyone will believe ... and the Romans will come.”** The members of the Jewish council were mostly of the aristocratic, priestly class and were collaborators with Roman authority. In the end, the Romans did precisely this in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

**11:50–52 “It is expedient for us that one man should die for the people.”** Caiaphas’ intent was that it was better for one man to die than for the nation to be destroyed. However, in the sovereign design of God, his words take on a much greater meaning: “that Jesus would die not only for the nation, but also to **gather together** God’s believing children all over the world” (see 1 John 2:2). The high priest was to speak for the nation (Num. 27:18–21). Caiaphas spoke the truth, but from an unbelieving heart (Matt. 7:21–23).

**11:53 “Then ... they plotted to put Him to death.”** They have now cast off all restraint and are determined to kill the Messiah of Israel and the Savior of the world (John 4:42).

**11:54 “Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews.”** Again, this was not due to fear. Jesus was working according to plan, awaiting the Passover (v. 55).

**11:55 “The Passover of the Jews was near.”** This was the third Passover of Jesus’ ministry. **“To purify themselves.”** True purification could come only by faith in Jesus Christ (Mal. 3:1–3; Titus 2:14; James 4:7–10).

**11:56 “Then they sought Jesus ... what do you think—that He will not come to the feast?”** The common people wondered if Jesus would come. This was His hour—His crucifixion was near.

**11:57 “The chief priests and the Pharisees had given a command ... that they might seize Him.”** The time had come for the “Son of Man to be betrayed into the hands of sinful men” (Matt. 17:22–23).

## **JOHN CHAPTER 12**

Jesus in Bethany; the Triumphal Entry; Jesus' final messages.

### **Jesus Comes to Bethany**

John 12:1–11 (Matt. 26:6–13; Mark 14:3–9)

**12:1 “Six days before the Passover.”** The final week of Jesus' earthly life begins here. This is the third Passover during His ministry (John 2:13; 6:4; 12:1). Four events lead to the climax of the Upper Room (Chapters 13–17) and the crucifixion:

1. The anointing in Bethany (vv. 10–11),
2. The Triumphal Entry (vv. 12–19),
3. The coming of the Greeks (vv. 20–36), and
4. In the face of mass rejection, many of the rulers believe in Him (vv. 37–50).

**12:2 “Martha served.”** Perhaps, in light of Luke 10:38–42, she now served joyfully and without distraction. **“Lazarus ... sat at the table with Him.”** Lazarus is a living example of Jesus' power over death and the grave.

**12:3 “Mary ... anointed the feet of Jesus.”** Both Matthew and Mark tell us that she anointed His head. The only logical conclusion is that she did both, thus anointing Jesus for His burial (v. 7). **“The house was filled with the fragrance.”** Just as her sacrificial act filled the house with fragrance, so it has blessed the history of all who believe (Matt. 26:13; Mark 14:9).

**12:4–6 “Judas Iscariot ... who would betray Him.”** Where Martha and Mary are transformed by the love of Christ, the character of Judas remains the same. **“Three hundred denarii.”** This was the equivalent of one year's wages. Judas wondered how Mary, a poor village woman, who labored over three years of Jesus' ministry could earn this gift? **“Because he was a thief.”** Jesus' was aware of Judas' treachery and unbelief (John 6:64, 70–71). His love sought to win Judas; His commitment to the Father's plan tolerated him (John 13:21–30).

**12:7–8 “She has kept this for ... My burial.”** The word “kept” means to “guard or protect.” It implies that Mary had this moment in mind as she saved up this large amount, and that she was probably the only disciple who understood what was about to happen.

**12:9–11 “That they might also see Lazarus.”** He was a living “sign” of Jesus' power over death (vv. 17–18). **“Put Lazarus to death also.”** Their hatred of Jesus now includes Lazarus, whose living witness led many to believe in Jesus. In their unbelief, they were willing to “suppress the truth” (Rom. 1:18).

### **The Triumphal Entry**

John 12:12–19 (Matt. 21:1–11; Mark 11:1–11; Luke 19:28–40)

**12:12–15 “A great multitude ... went out to meet Him.”** This was five days before Passover. It was on this day that Israel was to set aside the Passover lamb (Exod. 12:3–8). During these five days, the lamb was examined to be sure there was no blemish on it. **“Hosanna!”** This word means “Lord, save us!” and is from Psalm 118:25–26. **“Your King is coming.”** This quote is from the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9.

**12:16 “His disciples did not understand.”** Not until after the resurrection did these events make sense to the disciples (Luke 18:34; John 14:26).

**12:17–18 “Therefore the people ... bore witness.”** The story of Lazarus' raising had spread far and wide. **“The world has gone after Him!”** The Pharisees are in a panic because they feel the growing number of believers is out of their control.

## The Greeks Come Seeking Jesus

John 12:20–36

**12:20–22 “Certain Greeks ... came up to worship.”** These were most likely Jewish proselytes, who had heard the stories of Jesus’ signs. This is an indication of the coming spread of the faith to the Gentiles. **“Sir, we wish to see Jesus.”** This humble request prompted Jesus to exult in His coming glorification (see John 17:1–5). Only John, who wrote his Gospel to the whole world, tells us of this incident.

**12:23–24 “The hour has come.”** Jesus uses the spiritual hunger of the Greeks to predict His crucifixion for the world. His whole life was lived in anticipation of this hour (Matt 26:18, 45; Luke 2:49; John 2:4). **“The Son of Man”** was an Old Testament figure for the promised Messiah (Dan. 7:13–14). In that passage, Daniel predicts His victory and dominion over all nations. However, to Jesus, to **“be glorified”** meant crucifixion followed by resurrection (John 13:31–32). **“If it dies, it produces much grain.”** Jesus looked at His death as the planting of a seed that would bear a rich harvest (1 Cor. 15:36; Heb. 2:10).

**12:25–26 “He who loves his life will lose it.”** Those who love and serve themselves will waste their lives. **“He who hates his life ... will keep it for eternal life.”** Here, Jesus addresses a life of discipleship, where one surrenders his life to the plan and purpose of God (Mark 8:35; Luke 9:23; 14:26–33). A life lived in service to Christ will have eternal ramifications (1 John 2:15–17; 1 Cor. 3:9–15). **“If anyone serves Me ... him My Father will honor.”** This honor will be in the form of eternal rewards (1 Cor. 9:24–27; 2 Cor. 5:9–10; 2 Tim. 4:6–8; James 1:12; Rev. 3:10).

**12:27–31 “Now My soul is troubled.”** From exultation over the effect of His crucifixion, Jesus goes to mental agony at what is to come. **“For this purpose I came ... Father, glorify Your name.”** In the face of extreme inner struggle, Jesus’ humble submission to the Father’s will is evident. **“I have glorified ... and will glorify.”** The voice of the Father was great encouragement to Jesus and witness to the people with Him. Three times, the voice of the Father spoke to Christ:

1. at His baptism, (Matt. 3:17; Mark 1:11),
2. at the transfiguration, (Matt. 17:5; Mark 9:7), and
3. at His surrender to the cross, (John 12:28).

**12:31–32 “Now the ruler of this world will be cast out ... if I am lifted up ... will draw all peoples to Myself.”** The two major effects of the cross will be the judgment of Satan (2 Cor. 4:3–4) along with the unbelieving world, and the drawing of all men to come to Him in faith (John 3:14–16). This drawing effect is a cooperative effort between faithful disciples and the Holy Spirit, using the Word of God (John 15:26–27; 16:7–15).

**12:35–36 “Believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.”** Jesus Christ is **“the light of the world”** (John 1:4–9; 8:12; 9:5). Those who believe in Him are to walk (live) in the light of His Word (Psalm 27:1; Matt. 5:16; Eph. 5:8–10; 1 Pet. 2:9; 1 John 1:7).

## Hardened Hearts and Opened Eyes

John 12:37–50

**12:37 “Many signs ... they did not believe in Him.”** This again confirms John’s theme (John 20:30–31), but in the negative. With so much evidence, many refused to believe. This mass unbelief by the nation of Israel did not take God by surprise (Isa. 42:8–9; Rom. 1:18–23).

**12:38 “Lord, who has believed our report?”** This quote is from Isaiah 53:1. In the most detailed passage on the crucifixion in the Old Testament, Isaiah had pointed to **“the LORD”** who would die for His people, yet they rejected His message (see Rom. 10:16).

**12:39–41** “*He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart.*” This was not predestination, but rather God’s response to continued unbelief and rejection. Rather than promoting the idea of predestination, Romans 9–11 shows that God had given Israel every spiritual privilege (Rom. 9:1–5) and opportunity to believe (Rom. 9:6–10:18), and yet they refused to believe (Rom. 9:30–33; 10:1–4; 11:1–21; 11:7–10). Rejection of revealed truth results in the blinding of the eyes, hardening of the heart, and closing of the ears (Prov. 29:1; Jer. 7:23–26; 2 Cor. 3:14–16; 4:3–4; Eph. 4:17–19; Heb. 3:12–13; 5:11; 2 Pet. 2:21).

**12:42** “*Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him.*” We know of Joseph and Nicodemus (John 19:31–42), but here John says “many” of the rulers believed.

**12:43** “*They loved the praise of men.*” Here, John plainly declares that it is possible to believe, but due to fear of men, some fail to become obedient disciples. Such believers have eternal life (John 3:16, 36; 5:24), but fail to have the effective and abundant life that is available, and thus will lose much in eternal rewards (1 Cor. 9:24–27; 1 John 2:28; Rev. 3:11).

**12:44–46** “*He who believes in Me.*” Here, Jesus gives three results of faith:

1. By faith, we come through Jesus to the Father (John 14:6).
2. By faith, we see the Father revealed in Jesus (John 14:9).
3. By faith, we leave the darkness and enter into the light (Col. 1:13).

**12:47–50** “*If anyone ... does not believe ... I do not judge him.*” Jesus Christ did not come “*into the world to condemn [judge] the world*” (John 3:17–18; 8:15). Isn’t it amazing that the only perfect man who ever lived did not judge others! “*The word that I have spoken will judge.*” All who have rejected Christ will be judged by the Gospel that they rejected. “*His command is everlasting life.*” This is the ultimate command we must obey to have eternal life (Rom. 1:5; 16:26). This command can only be obeyed by faith.

## **JOHN CHAPTER 13**

From Chapters 13 to 17, we have the Upper Room Discourse. In this section, Jesus teaches the disciples in preparation for the coming Church Age.

### **Jesus Washes the Disciples’ Feet** John 13:1–20

**13:1–3** “*Jesus knew that His hour had come.*” John relates four things Jesus knew:

1. that He would depart to the Father,
2. that Judas would betray Him,
3. that all things were given into His hands, and
4. that He had come from God and was going to God.

As Dr. Radmacher used to say, “*Jesus did what He did because He knew what He knew.*”

**13:1b** “*Having loved His own ... He loved them to the end.*” Though Judas would betray Him, Peter would deny Him, and all would forsake Him.

**13:4–5** “[Jesus] took a towel ... poured water ... and began to wash the disciples’ feet.” Here, Jesus takes the place of the lowliest servant (Mark 10:45; Luke 22:26). The disciples would not do this humble task, for when they entered the Upper Room, they were arguing over which of them would be greatest (Luke 22:24).

**13:6–9 “Lord, are You washing my feet?”** At first, Peter questioned Jesus’ action, then he resisted outright (v. 8). Jesus apparently saved Peter until last so as to teach the spiritual truth behind His actions. **“You will know after this.”** Before the night was over, Peter would understand his great need for spiritual cleansing and forgiveness (v. 7). **“If I do not ... you have no part with Me.”** The word “part” does not signify relationship to Christ, but rather fellowship with Him. Believers who do not receive the daily cleansing of Christ do not have ongoing fellowship with Him (1 John 1:7–9; 2 Tim. 2:20–21).

**13:10 “He who is bathed ... is completely clean.”** The word “bathed” speaks of our overall cleansing from sin at salvation (John 15:3; Eph. 5:26; Titus 3:5). The washing of the feet represents our walk and daily cleansing by confession and correction (Psalm 51:3–7, 10; 1 John 1:7–9). Being spiritually bathed by faith in Christ establishes our eternal relationship with God. Daily “foot washing” (Psalm 51:3–4, 7; 1 John 1:9) maintains our fellowship with Him day-by-day.

**13:10b–11 “Not all of you. For He knew who would betray Him.”** In the case of Judas, this washing was merely a ritual without reality (John 6:64, 70–71). It is the same as when unbelievers get baptized or partake in communion; it is nothing but a religious show that has no real meaning.

**13:12–15 “You also ought to wash one another’s feet.”** Jesus was not only teaching our need to seek forgiveness and cleansing from God for our daily sins, but also that we need to be forgiving of the sins of fellow believers (Matt. 6:14–15; Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13). **“I have given you an example.”** Though the disciples were called to be leaders (Luke 6:13), He wanted them to serve in an attitude of humility (1 Pet. 5:1–6).

**13:17 “If you know ... blessed [happy] are you if you do them.”** To know God’s will is not enough. There must be a willingness to do it (Luke 11:28; John 7:17; James 1:21–25).

**13:18 “That the Scripture may be fulfilled.”** Jesus quotes Psalm 41:9 as a prophecy of Judas’ coming betrayal.

**13:19 “I tell you ... that ... you may believe.”** Jesus wanted the disciples to see that all that led to His crucifixion was part of the perfect plan of God.

**13:20 “He who receives Me.”** Just as Jesus represented the Father in Heaven, even so, the disciples would go out to represent Him to the world (Matt. 10:40). Those who receive the message of His messengers receives it as His Word.

### The Traitor Identified

John 13:21–30 (Matt. 26:21–25; Mark 14:18–21; Luke 22:21–23)

**13:21 “Jesus ... was troubled ... one of you will betray Me.”** Judas’ treachery in the face of the love and mercy of Jesus toward him was like a thorn in Jesus’ heart. This was the beginning of His agony.

**13:23 “One of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.”** This is how John, the author of this Gospel, identifies himself (John 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20).

**13:26 “He gave it to Judas Iscariot.”** In ancient Israel it was an honor for the host to offer the dipped bread to a guest. In the very act of showing His love for Judas, and Judas’ rejection of that love, Satan now fully enters into Judas (John 13:2; Luke 22:3).

**13:30 “He then went out ... And it was night.”** At the first Passover, God warned the people not to go out after dark to avoid the death-angel (Exod. 12:12–13). Judas going out into the darkness is symbolic of the eternal destiny of those who reject Jesus Christ (Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30; Luke 13:28, John 3:19).

## **Glory, Love, and Denial**

John 13:31–38

**13:31–32 “Now the Son of Man is glorified.”** Jesus always saw the cross as the path to glory (John 12:23). The obedience of the Son would also bring glory to the Father. We glorify Jesus Christ by our obedience to His Word (1 Pet. 4:11).

**13:33–35 “A new commandment I give to you.”** This has often been called the eleventh commandment. In reality, the love produced by the indwelling Holy Spirit brings the fulfillment of all commandments (Gal. 5:22–23; Matt. 22:37–40; Rom. 13:9–10). **“By this all [men] will know.”** Our greatest witness to the world is the love of Christ in us (2 Cor. 5:14–21; 1 John 2:5; 3:11, 16; 4:11–12, 16–19).

**13:36–38 “I will lay down my life.”** Peter had the desire to be faithful. Unfortunately, he underestimated the strength of his own faith. Later, tradition tells us that Peter did indeed lay down his life for His Lord. We can only be strong when we are in step with the plan of God. Peter’s timing was off. **“Till you have denied Me three times.”** Even believers who desire to be faithful will often fail (James 3:1–2). Yet God works through our failures—to bring humility and further growth (Psalm 119:67, 71, 75). It may be that Peter’s later faithfulness was in some way the result of his failure here. Three times he denies Jesus, and three times he will be restored (John 21:15–17). God does not change His plan for us because we fail. He calls us to rise up and finish the race (Prov. 24:16; Heb. 12:1–3).

## **JOHN CHAPTER 14**

Jesus is the way, the truth, the life; promise of the Holy Spirit.

### **Jesus, the Way to the Father**

John 14:1–15

**14:1 “Let not your heart be troubled.”** Just after warning Peter of his coming denials, Jesus offers comfort for the troubled disciples (Psalm 27:13). **“Believe also in Me.”** The disciples’ conception of who Jesus really is continues to develop.

**14:2–3 “Many mansions.”** Our Lord is preparing eternal dwelling places for all who believe in Him (Rev. 21:1–4). **“I go to prepare a place.”** Jesus goes before us as “*the forerunner*” (Heb. 6:20). **“That where I am, there you may be also.”** The sacrifice of Jesus Christ on our behalf has the ultimate goal of us being eternally united with Him (John 12:26; Rom. 8:32; Acts 1:11; 1 Thess. 4:17).

**14:6 “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”** This is the seventh of Jesus’ “*I Am*” sayings in this Gospel. He is “*the way*” to God, “*the truth*” about salvation, and “*the life*” that is eternal (Psalm 86:11; 16:11; Isa. 30:21; John 10:7–9; 1 Tim. 2:5–6; Acts 4:12).

**14:8–11 “Lord, show us the Father.”** Just like Thomas later (John 20:24–25), Philip wants a visual revelation of the Father. This is contrary to true faith (2 Cor. 4:18; 5:7; 1 Pet. 1:8). **“He who has seen Me.”** All we need to know about the Father is revealed to us in the Person of Jesus Christ. Both the words and the works of the Father are seen in the Son (John 5:24, 36).

**14:12 “He who believes … greater works … he will do.”** These humble disciples were soon to be empowered by the Holy Spirit—which would affect/change the whole world. Consider the impact of these disciples’ prayers on the Day of Pentecost alone (Acts 1:12–14; 2:1–2, 41)! Jesus gave sight to the blind and raised the dead. We can open the eyes of the soul (2 Cor. 4:4–6; Gal. 3:1; Eph. 1:18).

**14:13–15 “Whatever you ask in My name.”** This is not a promise that all prayers ending with “In Jesus’ name” will be answered. Four conditions are laid down by Jesus for prevailing power in prayer:

1. It must be in keeping with His character (“*In My name*”).
2. It must be such that it will glorify the Father.
3. It must be offered in love.
4. This love must result in a faithful, obedient believer (Matt. 7:7; John 15:16; 16:23, 24; Luke 10:17; 11:9; 1 John 2:5–6; 3:22; 5:3–4).

### The Promise of the Coming of the Spirit

John 14:16–31

**14:16 “Another Helper.”** The word “*another*” means “another of the same kind.” The Holy Spirit is just like Jesus Christ. In this verse, all three members of the Trinity are mentioned (see Isa. 61:1). The word “*helper*” speaks of one who works to comfort, guide, and strengthen. “***That He may abide with you forever.***” The Holy Spirit will indwell us throughout eternity!

**14:17 “The Spirit of truth.”** This phrase is used three times in the Upper Room discourse, revealing three great truths:

1. In Old Testament times, the Spirit worked upon believers—now He would indwell them (14:17; 1 John 2:27).
2. His work in believers is to testify about Jesus Christ (15:26–27).
3. He works to guide believers into the truth of God’s Word (16:13) and, specifically, to guide the disciples in the writing of Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:16–21). Every believer today is indwelt by the Spirit (Rom. 8:9).

**14:19 “You will see Me.”** Here, Jesus refers to His appearances after the resurrection (Luke 24:15, 34, 36; 1 Cor. 15:4–8).

**14:21–23 “He who loves Me.”** Jesus indicates that love for Him is shown by obedience. “***I will ... manifest Myself to him.***” The obedient believer will experience the Father’s love and the presence of Jesus Christ in their lives. “***We will ... make Our home with him.***” This promise not only answers Philip’s request (v. 8), but also anticipates Jesus’ teaching on “abiding” in Him (John 15:1–8). The word “*abide*” is a key to this Gospel (John 8:31, 35; 12:46; 14:16; 15:4, 6, 7, 9, 10) and is used extensively in 1 John, which is in essence John’s commentary on the Upper Room discourse. The word suggests active fellowship.

**14:24 “He who does not love Me.”** Lack of love for the Lord is demonstrated by disobedience to His Word (1 John 3:18–19, 23–24; 4:20–21).

**14:26–27 “The Helper, the Holy Spirit ... He will teach you ... Peace I leave with you.”** In these verses, Jesus again presents three works of the coming Holy Spirit:

1. He is our teacher.
2. He brings God’s Word to our memory.
3. He brings us peace (Rom. 5:1–5; Phil. 4:7).

In the highest sense, these promises were made to the apostles, who would write the New Testament Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16–17; 2 Pet. 1:16–21).

**14:28** “*My Father is greater than I.*” Jesus is no less God than the Father, but even in the Godhead, there is order and authority (1 Cor. 11:3). In resurrection, Jesus is given greater authority by the Father (Psalm 110:1–4). God the Father is the Author of the plan of salvation. God the Son is the Executer of this plan, and God the Holy Spirit is the Agent who empowers the believer (Zec. 4:6; Gal. 5:16; Eph. 5:18).

**14:30** “*The ruler of this world is coming.*” Satan was actively working to bring about the crucifixion (John 13:2; 27). His judgment was drawing near (John 12:31). The battle of the ages was about to reach its climax. “*And he has nothing in Me.*” Throughout His entire life, Jesus had overcome all the temptations of the devil (Matt. 4:1–11; Luke 4:1–13; Heb. 2:18; 4:15).

**14:31** “*That the world may know that I love the Father.*” Jesus’ submission to the plan of God to go to the cross was the greatest display of His love for the Father (Phil. 2:8). “*Arise, let us go.*” They did not actually leave the Upper Room until John 18:1. It may be that one of the disciples asked another question, which led to Jesus’ teaching and prayer in Chapters 15–17.

## **JOHN CHAPTER 15**

The vine and the branches; purified in Christ and persecuted by the world.

### **The Vine and the Branches**

John 15:1–17

**15:1** “*I am the true vine.*” Israel had become a false vine (Isa. 5:1–7; Jer. 2:21). The sacrifice of Christ would create a new vine (the Church). Compare this with the olive tree analogy in Romans 11:11–25. “*My Father is the vinedresser.*” The Father works to bring the branches to fruitfulness.

**15:2** “*He takes away.*” The verb here would better be translated “He lifts up.” While the vine is touching the ground, it cannot produce. It must be lifted up—away from the earth—to become fruitful. “*He prunes.*” The second action taken by the Father is to prune the branch, removing hindrances to fruitfulness. The word translated “*prunes*” literally means “to cleanse or purify.”

**15:3** “*You are already clean.*” This refers to the once-for-all cleansing resulting from saving faith (John 13:10; 17:17; Eph. 5:26; Titus 3:5).

**15:4** “*Abide in Me.*” The command here is to maintain daily fellowship with Jesus Christ. This involves both daily cleansing (John 13:8; 2 Tim. 2:20–21; 1 John 1:9) and daily obedience (John 8:31; 12:46; 13:34–35; 14:21, 23; 1 John 1:7). “*The branch cannot bear fruit of itself.*” The fruit of the Spirit is the character of Christ (Gal. 5:16; 22–23; Rom. 8:29; 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18). The secret to an effective spiritual life is intimate connection to Jesus through His Word (v. 7) and His Spirit (v. 26).

**15:5** “*He who abides ... bears much fruit.*” The progression is fruit, more fruit, much fruit, and fruit that remains (vv. 2, 5, 16; Matt. 13:8). “*Without Me you can do nothing.*” Human effort cannot bear spiritual fruit (2 Cor. 3:5; Gal. 5:22–23). Fruit is dependent on abiding/fellowship (1 John 1:7).

**15:6** “*If anyone does not abide.*” This refers to any believer who does not maintain fellowship with God. There are four consequences of failing to maintain fellowship with God:

1. “*Cast out as a branch.*” They are cut off from the Source (Holy Spirit) of fruit (Gal. 5:4, 16, 22–23).
2. They are “*withered.*” Their spiritual life dries up.

3. “**They gather them.**” The world (“they”) rejects “them” as useless. They are salt without flavor and lamps without light (Matt. 5:13–17).
4. “**They are burned.**” This refers to loss of reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ (1 Cor. 3:11–15). In no way does this verse imply loss of salvation. Abiding is always about fellowship and fruitfulness.

**15:7 “If you abide ... My words abide in you ... it shall be done.”** Jesus declares the secret to effective prayer is simply to live and pray according to His Word. His Word living in us will guide us to pray according to His will (John 14:13–14; 1 John 5:14–15).

**15:8 “By this My Father is glorified.”** Effective prayer from faithful and obedient believers is one of the greatest ways that the “*Father is glorified*” (James 5:16b; Rev. 5:8b; 8:3).

**15:9–10 “Abide in My love.”** The love of Christ for each believer is total and unconditional (John 13:1). However, that love will not be felt or experienced by the believer who breaks fellowship through disobedience. Rather, they will experience the severe discipline of God (Heb. 12:3–11). **“If you keep My commandments.”** Any love relationship demands reciprocal love, that is, love in return (John 13:17, 34; 14:15). Jesus Christ reveals Himself in the lives of obedient disciples (John 14:21–23; Gal. 2:20; Col. 3:3).

**15:11 “That your joy may be full.”** Obedience to Christ’s Word brings fullness and abundance to life (John 10:10; 16:24; 17:13; 1 John 1:4).

**15:12–13 “Love one another.”** This is the command that fulfills all other commands (John 13:34–35; 1 John 3:11, 18, 23–24; 4:7–11). **“Lay down one’s life.”** This is to imitate Christ to the fullest degree (Eph. 5:1; 1 John 3:16).

**15:14–15 “You are My friends.”** Obedience to His Word brings us to a point of maturity where we can be called “*friend of God*” (Exod. 33:11; 2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; James 2:23). Jesus’ change from calling the disciples “*servants*” (John 12:26; 13:13–16) to “*friends*” is based on their deepening understanding of His plans (Gen. 18:17–19).

**15:16 “I chose you and appointed you.”** Here, Jesus is speaking specifically to the eleven remaining disciples, who after the resurrection would begin their apostolic ministry (Matt. 10:2; Mark 6:30; Luke 6:13). In much the same, way we who believe today are called “*ambassadors for Christ*” (2 Cor. 5:20).

### Meeting the Hatred of the World with the Witness of the Spirit

John 15:18–27

**15:18–19 “If the world hates you.”** The indication here is that the world will indeed hate the growing and obedient believer. **“Because you are not of the world.”** We are aliens and strangers in this world (Phil. 3:20; Heb. 11:8–10; 1 Pet. 2:11; 1 John 4:4–6).

**15:20–21 “If they persecuted Me.”** The Lord Jesus Christ was sinless, and yet was accused of being demon-possessed (John 7:20; 8:48). **“They will do to you for My name’s sake.”** Though the world attacks any real or perceived faults of believers, they do it out of hatred for Jesus Christ (John 15:18; 17:12–16).

**15:22–25 “They have no excuse for their sin.”** God revealed Himself to men through His Son. He brought the light of God into this world, and this world for the most part rejected Him. For this there is no excuse (John 1:9–12; 3:16–19; 14:9–11; Rom. 1:18–21; 2:1). **“They hated Me without a cause.”** This quote contains references from Psalm 35:19; 69:4; 109:3.

**15:26–27** “*The Helper … the Spirit of truth … He will testify of Me.*” Both the Father and the Son are active in sending the Holy Spirit (John 14:16; 15:26). The trinity of Father, Son, and Spirit are all active in the work of redemption. “*He will testify of Me.*” Just as Jesus Christ testified of the Father (John 5:19–23, 36–37; 8:18–19), so the Spirit would testify of Christ. “*You also will bear witness.*” The Holy Spirit would speak through the apostles to bring us His completed Word (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:16–21). “*From the beginning.*” This is referring to the beginning of His public ministry, not the beginning of John 1:1.

## **JOHN CHAPTER 16**

Further instructions on the Ministry of the Holy Spirit.

### **Persecution and Sorrow**

John 16:1–6

**16:1** “*That you should not … stumble.*” Jesus used this very word (*skandalizo*) of the disciples’ conduct that night (Matt. 26:31; Mark 14:27). Here, He uses it to speak of a permanent “falling away,” such as many of the disciples in John 6:60, 66. Many believers fall, only to rise again stronger. Tragically, others fall and never recover (2 Tim. 4:10). See Ephesians 4:17–19; James 4:6–10; 2 Peter 1:5–7.

**16:2–3** “*Whoever kills you will think … he offers God service.*” Jesus never hid the dangers of discipleship (Matt. 5:10–12; Mark 13:9–13; Luke 21:12–19). Saul of Tarsus thought he was serving God by persecuting the Church (Acts 26:9–11).

**16:6** “*Sorrow has filled your heart.*” The gravity of what was coming begins to dawn on the disciples. Jesus seeks to strengthen them for the night.

### **The Ministry of the Holy Spirit**

John 16:7–15

**16:7–8** “*It is to your advantage that I go away.*” How strange this must have sounded to the disciples! While Jesus was on the Earth, He could only be in one place at a time. After His death, burial and resurrection, the Holy Spirit would indwell each believer. “*The Helper … I will send Him to you.*” Some of the many advantages of the coming Holy Spirit were:

1. His convicting power (v. 8),
2. His revelation of New Testament truth (v. 13),
3. His continued glorification of Christ (v. 14),
4. His power to bring joy out of sorrow (vv. 20–22), and
5. His empowering in prayer (vv. 23–24).

**16:8–11** “*He will convict the world.*” The word “*convict*” is a legal term that means “to bring conviction through cross-examination.” Working first through these disciples—and now through all believers—the Holy Spirit brings conviction in three areas:

1. “*Sin,*” specifically the sin of unbelief (John 3:17–19),
2. “*Righteousness,*” the reality of Christ’s victory over sin, and
3. “*Judgment,*” of all who reject Christ—because they will share the judgment of Satan and his angels (Matt. 25:41).

**16:13–15** “*The Spirit of truth.*” Three times this designation is used of the Holy Spirit (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13). In all His works, He uses the Word of God. “*He will guide you … He will tell you … He will … declare it to you.*”

These words specifically apply to the apostles regarding the revelation of New Testament truth. In a general sense, they also apply to the ministry of the Holy Spirit in opening our eyes to the truths of Scripture (2 Cor. 3:16–18; Eph. 1:17–20; 3:16–19).

### The Promise of His Return

John 16:16–24

**16:16–18 “A little while ... because I go to the Father.”** Here, Jesus begins to reveal the plan of God for the future. He must go to the Father before final victory could be gained (Psalm 110:1–4). What may seem to the disciples—and to us—as a long time, was only “*a little while*” compared to eternity (2 Pet. 3:8). This refers to the time between the First and the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**16:20–22 “A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow.”** This idea of travail, or birth pangs, is a common Old Testament figure, brought over into the New Testament, for the convulsions of Earth prior to the final coming of the Messiah to reign (Isa. 13:8–9; Jer. 4:31; Joel 2:1–2; Micah 4:9–10; 1 Thess. 5:2–3; 2 Pet. 3:10). **“I will see you again ... your heart will rejoice.”** The joy of the disciples upon seeing Jesus after His resurrection, is a preview of our joy at His coming (1 Thess. 4:13–18; Titus 2:13; 2 Pet. 3:13).

**16:23 “Whatever you ask the Father in My name.”** The order of prayer that is most honoring to God is to pray to the Father, in the name of the Son, through the power of the Holy Spirit (Zec. 4:6; John 14:13–14, 16; Eph. 1:16–17; 3:14; 6:18). Again, to pray “in Jesus name” means to ask for those things that are glorifying to Him.

**16:24 “Ask ... that your joy may be made full.”** One of the great joys of the Christian life is that, when we pray according to God’s Word and will, He answers us in mighty ways.

### Power and Peace Through Christ’s Victory

John 16:25–33

**16:25 “I have spoken to you in figurative language.”** Jesus refers to the figure of the vine and branches (John 15:1–8), and that of birth-pangs (John 16:20–22). **“I will tell you plainly.”** Through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, new and clearer revelation will be given (John 14:21; 15:26–27; 16:13–15).

**16:26–27 “I do not say ... I shall pray the Father for you.”** Jesus wants the disciples to know that after His crucifixion and resurrection, they can go directly to the Father for their needs (Matt 27:51). Our Lord, however, does indeed intercede for us before the Father (Rom. 8:26, 34; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 7:24–25). **“The Father Himself loves you.”** Every believer in Christ is loved by the Father just as He loves Jesus (Eph. 1:6).

**16:30 “Now we are sure ... we believe.”** Comforted by His words, the disciples declare their assurance and faith. However, their confidence will be short-lived. They do declare three great truths for us to remember:

1. Jesus knows all things.
2. We do not need to question Him.
3. He came to us from God.

**16:32 “The hour is coming ... you will be scattered.”** The fact that they would desert Him in no way diminished His love for them. **“Yet I am not alone.”** On the cross, Jesus was forsaken by all men (Isa. 53:3–6), yet His strength was in the Father’s faithfulness to Him (Heb. 12:2).

**16:33 “In Me ... peace ... In the world ... tribulation.”** This is the seeming contradiction of the Christian life. We can have inner peace in the midst of outer persecution (2 Cor. 4:7–11; 6:4–10; Phil. 4:6–9). **“I have overcome the world.”** It is due to our trust in the total victory of Jesus Christ that we are able to **“be of good cheer.”** If we rely on

our own experience, we will often be discouraged. It is only as we rely on His finished victory (John 19:30) that we are also enabled to be overcomers (1 John 5:4–5; Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21; 12:11).

## **JOHN CHAPTER 17**

This is the High Priestly Prayer of Jesus Christ.

### **Jesus Prays for Himself**

John 17:1–5

**17:1 “Father, the hour has come.”** In the Gospel of John, this “hour” refers to the cross (John 2:4; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23; 13:1). **“Glorify Your Son, that Your Son may glorify You.”** The Son is glorified by His sacrificial death, burial, and resurrection (Rom. 1:4). The Father is glorified in that His will is done (v. 4, Matt. 26:39, 42); and His love for the world is displayed through the cross (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8).

**17:2 “As many as You have given Him.”** Four things the Father gives to His Son:

1. The work to do (v. 4),
2. “All things” (v. 7),
3. God’s Word (v. 8), and
4. Those who believe (vv. 6, 9, 11, 12).

**17:3 “This is eternal life.”** Eternal life in its simplest form is to know the Father through faith in the Son (John 3:33–34; 6:29, 40; 14:6).

**17:4–5 “I have finished the work.”** This speaks of the crucifixion as a completed work (John 19:30). By Jesus’ obedience, the Father is glorified as the Author of the plan of salvation, and the Son is glorified by His humble submission (Phil. 2:5–11). **“The glory which I had ... before the world was.”** Jesus anticipates His resurrection and ascension back to the Father (John 1:1–4). While the cross showed the world’s rejection of Christ, the resurrection showed the Father’s approval.

### **Jesus Prays for His Disciples**

John 17:6–19

**17:6 “I have manifested Your name.”** The use of the word “name” indicates the nature, character, and reputation of the Father, in the same way that it is used of the name of Christ (Psalm 101:2; John 14:13–14; 1 Pet. 4:14; 1 John 5:13; Rev. 2:13). **“They have kept your word.”** God’s Word is “kept” through “faith” and obedience (2 Tim. 4:7; Rev. 3:8, 10). It means to “guard” and “treasure up” God’s Word in the soul (Prov. 4:23; Psalm 119:11; Luke 2:19).

**17:8 “They have believed.”** Faith in Jesus Christ as He is revealed in the Word of God is the only criteria for entering eternal life. Continued faith in His Word after we have believed in Him is the key to spiritual growth (Rom. 1:17; Col. 2:6–7; 2 Pet. 1:5–11).

**17:9 “I pray for them ... not ... for the world.”** In this portion of His prayer, Jesus is specifically praying for His immediate disciples. Later (vv. 20–21), His prayer will include the whole world.

**17:10 “Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine.”** All believers are the joint possession of the Father and the Son (John 10:28–29).

**17:11–12 “Keep ... those You have given Me.”** All believers are secure because of the faithful character of the Father (2 Tim. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:5). **“I kept them in Your name.”** Jesus Christ had secured the disciples in the faith, with the exception of Judas, who never believed (John 6:64, 70–71). **“The son of perdition.”** This term means “destruction” and is used only of Judas and the Antichrist (2 Thess. 2:3; Rev. 17:8, 11).

**17:13 “That they may have My joy fulfilled.”** The joy of Christ is an essential part of the life of faith and obedience, even in the face of trials (Neh. 8:10; Rom. 5:11; Gal. 5:22; 1 Thess. 1:6; Heb. 12:2; James 1:2; 1 Pet. 1:8). This joy is based on the assurance of ultimate victory through Christ.

**17:14–16 “they are not of the world ... I am not of the world.”** Being united with Christ, we are now children of God and “citizens of heaven” (John 8:23; 15:19; Phil. 3:20; Col. 1:13). This is why we are not to love the world (1 John 2:15–17).

**17:17 “Sanctify them by Your truth.”** The word “sanctify” means “to purify, to set apart.” In following v. 16, “sanctify” implies being set apart from the world to God for His plan and purpose. Only continued growth in the Word of God can achieve this goal (Rom. 12:1–2; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 5:26; 1 Thess. 5:23).

**17:18 “As You sent Me ... I also have sent them.”** Just as Jesus came to represent the Father to the world, so His disciples are to represent Him to the world (Luke 9:23; 2 Cor. 5:20; 1 Pet. 3:15).

**17:19 “For their sakes I sanctify Myself.”** By the dedication of Jesus to fulfill the plan of the Father, we are set apart to God (Heb. 10:10, 12, 14).

### **Jesus Prays for All Future Believers**

John 17:20–26

**17:20 “For those who will believe in Me.”** The witness of the early apostles, recorded for us in the New Testament, would lead multitudes to faith in Christ. By this prayer, He includes each of us who believe in Him today. He continues to pray for us from the right hand of the Father (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25).

**17:21–23 “That they all may be one.”** All who believe in Jesus are united into one heavenly family (Eph. 3:15; 4:3–6). This essential spiritual unity should be reflected in our love for one another. **“That the world may know that You have sent Me.”** The greatest witness to the world is the love that displays this essential unity (John 13:34–35; Eph. 4:4–6; Col. 3:14). Division and hostility among believers are the greatest hindrance to ministry and missions.

**17:24 “Father, I desire that they ... may be with Me where I am.”** This request anticipates our final union with Christ in eternity (John 14:3). Once we depart from this world, we will always be with Him (1 Thess. 4:17).

**17:25–26 “O righteous Father!”** In v. 11, Jesus speaks of the Father as “Holy,” referring to His perfect, sinless nature. Here, “righteous” speaks of His works, which bear witness to His character (Rom. 1:17). **“The world has not known You.”** The world is actively hostile to God (John 1:10; Rom. 1:18–23). **“These have known that You sent Me.”** Only by the faithful witness of those who know Christ can those who are in the world be won (1 Cor. 9:18–23).

## **JOHN CHAPTER 18**

The betrayal and arrest of Jesus.

### **Jesus Betrayed and Arrested**

John 18:1–14 (Matt. 26:47–56; Mark 14:43–52; Luke 22:47–53)

**18:1–3** “*There was a garden ... Jesus often met there with his disciples.*” Even though John does not report Jesus’ agony in the garden, Matthew, Mark, and Luke did document these events. “***Then Judas ... came there.***” Both Temple officers and a Roman cohort, which could include 200 to 600 men, accompany Judas!

**18:4** “*Jesus ... knowing all things ... went forward.*” Knowing that His hour had come, Jesus boldly goes out to meet His destined end.

**18:5–6** “*I am He.*” This phrase, used repeatedly by Jesus in this Gospel, is a declaration of His deity. “***They ... fell to the ground.***” Simply by stating His true identity (Exod. 3:14), Jesus’ enemies are completely overwhelmed! This displays, once again, that He willingly went to the cross to die for our sins (Matt. 26:53–54).

**18:8** “*Let these go.*” Even as He surrenders to the cross, Jesus defends His disciples (John 13:1; 17:12).

**18:10** “*Then Simon Peter ... struck.*” Jesus would later declare that, because His kingdom was not of this world, it could not be established by force of arms (John 18:36). Luke tells us that Jesus healed the servant of his severed ear (Luke 22:51).

**18:11** “*The cup which My Father has given Me.*” This was the cup of wrath for the sins of the world (Matt. 20:22; Rom. 5:6–10). Jesus wanted the disciples to know that the cross was the Father’s plan for Him (Isa. 50:7).

**18:12–13** “*The captain ... led Him away to Annas.*” Although Annas was the previous high priest, he was granted honorary status by the Jews, as a priest emeritus with Caiaphas (Luke 3:2), sharing both his office and his authority.

#### Peter’s Denies Knowing Jesus

John 18:15–27 (Matt. 26:69–75; Mark 14:66–72; Luke 22:54–62)

**18:15** “*Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple.*” The unnamed disciple is no doubt John—the author of this Gospel.

**18:17** “*I am not.*” The three denials of Peter come in quick succession (vv. 17, 25, 27).

**18:19–24** “*I spoke openly ... Ask those who have heard Me.*” Here, Jesus appeals to well-known Jewish law, which forbade the conviction of anyone without competent witnesses (Num. 35:30; Deut. 17:6–7; 19:15; 2Cor. 13:1). “***Bear witness of the evil.***” Jesus calmly demands that the officer who slapped Him bring forth evidence. If a witness was found to be giving false testimony, they were to suffer the fate of the one they were accusing (Deut. 19:16–19).

**18:27** “*Immediately a rooster crowed.*” Here, John confirms the prophecy of Jesus regarding Peter’s denials (John 13:38). Where John refers only to the final “*rooster*” crowing, there were actually two rooster crows (Matt. 26:34, 74b–75; Mark 14:66–72; Luke 22:34, 60–61).

#### Jesus in the Court of Pilate

John 18:28–40 (Matt. 27:11–26; Mark 15:1–15; Luke 23:1–25)

**18:28** “*They led Jesus ... to the Praetorium.*” This was the residence of Pilate in Jerusalem. “***It was early morning.***” A Roman court could not sit until after 6 a.m. The Jewish court before Annas and Caiaphas were illegal by Jewish law, having occurred at night. “***That they might eat the Passover.***” These religious Jews, in the act of condemning their true Messiah, were concerned about ritual purity. There were many ceremonial feasts during the week of Pentecost and Unleavened Bread (Lev. 23:4–14).

**18:29–30** “*What accusation do you bring?*” Pilate is requesting them to lodge a formal charge against Jesus. “*If He were not an evil doer, we would not have delivered Him up to you.*” The religious leaders are evasive, having no real case against Jesus.

**18:31–32** “*It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death.*” Only the Roman authority had the power of execution. Here, the Jewish leaders reveal their goal—the crucifixion of Jesus. “*That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled.*” Jesus repeatedly told the disciples that He would be crucified (Matt. 16:21; 17:22–23; 20:18–19; John 3:14).

**18:33–36** “*Are You the King of the Jews?*” The Jews charged Jesus with claiming to be a king (Matt. 27:11; Mark 15:2; Luke 23:1–2). This was the only charge that would stand in a Roman court, for to claim to be a king was an act of treason against Caesar. “*My kingdom is not of this world.*” Jesus acknowledges that earthly kingdoms often have to fight for their survival. His kingdom needs no defense, because it is assured by the authority of God (Psalm 2:4–12; 110:1–4; Dan. 2:44–45; 4:34–35; 7:27).

**18:37** “*You say rightly that I am a king.*” Here, Jesus acknowledges that He is the long-awaited Messiah—King of Israel (Psalm 45:6; 1 Tim. 6:13). So impressive was His claim and conduct before Pilate that this was the charge placed over His head on the cross (Matt. 27:37; Mark 15:26; Luke 23:38; John 19:19). “*Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.*” All those who honestly seek the truth will find it in Jesus Christ (Jer. 29:13; John 3:21).

**18:38** “*What is truth?*” Pilate was standing in the very presence of the Living Truth (John 14:6). Yet he did not wait for Jesus to give an answer. “*I find no fault in Him.*” Here, Pilate formally declares Jesus to be innocent.

**18:40** “*Not this Man, but Barabbas.*” The religious leaders stirred up the crowd to request a murderer be released instead of Jesus (Luke 23:18–19; Acts 3:13–15). By this act, the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled, and Jesus died in the place of sinners (Isa. 53:1–12).

## **JOHN CHAPTER 19**

Jesus is crucified and buried.

### **The Condemnation of Jesus**

John 19:1–16 (Matt. 27:15–31; Mark 15:6–20; Luke 23:13–25)

**19:1** “*Pilate ... scourged Him.*” Contrary to both Jewish and Roman law, Pilate had Jesus scourged before He was accused of any crime. A whip with nine lashes tipped with bone and metal was used. This punishment was to be used only for those convicted of a capital crime, like murder.

**19:2–3** “*The soldiers twisted a crown of thorns.*” These soldiers mocked Jesus’ claim to be King of the Jews with a thorny crown and a purple robe. The curse of sin brought sorrow, thorns, and death (Gen. 3:16–19). Jesus bore the penalty for the whole world (John 3:16–17; Rom. 3:23–25; 6:23; Heb. 2:9; 9:22; 1 John 2:2).

**19:5** “*Behold, the Man!*” Perhaps Pilate still hoped the scourging would appease the crowd and make the crucifixion unnecessary. However, his statement sets Jesus before the eyes of all mankind to consider His claims and His later victory over sin, Satan, and death (Col. 2:13–15).

**19:6–7** “*Crucify Him!*” The chief priests would be satisfied with nothing less than His death. “*He made Himself the Son of God.*” To the chief priests, this was a charge of blasphemy (Lev. 24:16; Matt. 26:63–66). This charge relates to His claim to be equal with God (John 5:18; 10:30–33).

**19:9** “*Jesus gave him no answer.*” Here again is a fulfillment of prophecy (Isa. 53:7). Pilate declared Jesus innocent three times (John 18:38; 19:4, 6). Pilate was fearful to hear of Jesus’ claim to deity, possibly in light of his wife’s dream (Matt. 27:19).

**19:11** “*You could have no power ... unless it had been given you from above.*” Pilate had authority from Rome, but this “*power*” was ultimately given by God (Rom. 13:1). “*The one who delivered Me.*” This most likely refers to Caiaphas (John 18:24, 28).

**19:12** “*You are not Caesar’s friend.*” The Jewish leaders shift from the religious charge of blasphemy (v. 7) to the political charge of treason against Caesar. They suggest that Pilate would be an accomplice of Jesus if he failed to crucify Him.

**19:14** “*Behold your King!*” Though stated sarcastically, Pilate spoke the truth. “*We have no king but Caesar!*” With this statement, the religious leaders claim allegiance to an earthly king, rather than to the King of Glory (Psalm 24:7–10).

**19:16** “*Then he delivered Him ... to be crucified.*” Against his own sense of justice, Pilate caved into the demands of the mob.

### The Crucifixion of the Lamb of God

John 19:17–30 (Matt. 27:32–50; Mark 15:21–41; Luke 23:26–49)

**19:17–18** “*He, bearing His cross, went out.*” The place of crucifixion was outside the city walls (Heb. 13:11–14). According to Jewish law, any execution must take place outside the camp (Num. 15:35–36). “*Golgotha,*” also called “Calvary” in Latin, was a skull-shaped, rocky hill outside Jerusalem. “*They crucified ... two others with Him.*” His crucifixion with criminals (Luke 23:32–33) was also a fulfillment of Scripture (Isa. 53:9, 12).

**19:19–20** “*Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.*” It was common practice to place a sign above the head of the crucified person proclaiming their crime (Matt. 27:37; Mark 15:26). Pilate put up the sign, “*In Hebrew, Greek, and Latin*” declaring to the whole world the true identity of Jesus as the promised Messiah of Israel.

**19:23–24** “*That the Scripture might be fulfilled.*” John is referring to Psalm 22:16–18. Mary most likely wove the “*tunic without seam*” for Jesus. It was the custom of Jewish mothers to give this as a gift when their son went out into the world.

**19:25–27** “*Woman, behold your son! ... Behold your mother!*” One of the last earthly acts of Jesus was to commit His mother into the care and safekeeping of His beloved disciple John. The term “*woman*” as used by Jesus was a term of endearment (John 2:4).

**19:28–29** “*Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished.*” John has been stressing the foreknowledge of Jesus since the Upper Room (John 13:1, 3, 11; 18:4). “*That the Scripture might be fulfilled.*” This was another fulfillment of prophecy (Psalm 22:15; 69:21; Matt. 27:48).

**19:30** “*It is finished!*” Here, Jesus is referring to the work of redemption. The payment for the penalty—for the sins of the world—was “paid in full.” This was the “loud cry” recorded in Matthew 27:50; Mark 15:37; Luke 23:46. “*He gave up His spirit.*” Jesus died voluntarily because His work was finished (John 10:15, 18).

### The Burial of the Savior

John 19:31–42 (Matt. 27:57–61; Mark 15:42–47; Luke 23:50–56)

**19:31** “*The Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken.*” Sometimes those who were crucified could linger in agony for days. But because it was the “**Preparation**” for the Sabbath, and because Jewish law demanded that the bodies of those executed be removed before sunset (Deut. 21:23), they asked this to be done.

**19:33–36** “*They did not break His legs.*” This was another fulfillment of Scripture (Exod. 12:46; Psalm 34:20). “*Blood and water came out.*” If He were still alive, only blood would come forth. Blood and water showed that death had occurred.

**19:37** “*They shall look on Him whom they pierced.*” John draws attention to another prophecy in Zechariah 12:10.

**19:38–40** “*After this, Joseph of Arimathea ... and Nicodemus.*” Both of these men were members of the Jewish council (Mark 15:43; John 3:1). Both had become “*a disciple ... but secretly.*” In John 12:42–43, we are told that many among the rulers believed in Jesus, but would not confess Him, because “*they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.*” “[Joseph] **asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus ... Pilate gave ... permission.**” This shame was now removed from these two men. “*Nicodemus ... bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds.*” Myrrh was a very expensive gift and was usually reserved for the burial of kings. “*They ... bound the body of Jesus in strips of linen with the spices.*”

**19:41–42** “*A new tomb.*” This was the personal tomb of Joseph (Matt. 27:60). “**There they laid Jesus.**” Here again, is another prophecy fulfilled (Isa. 53:9).

## **JOHN CHAPTER 20**

The empty tomb and Jesus’ appearances to His disciples.

### **The Empty Tomb**

John 20:1–10 (Matt. 28:1–8; Mark 16:1–8; Luke 24:1–12)

**20:1–2** “*Mary Magdalene went to the tomb.*” She arrived early and was soon joined by other women (Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:1; Luke 23:55–24:1). Remember that the tomb had been under Roman seal with soldiers posted to guard it. (Matt. 28:1–4, 11–15).

**20:2** “*Simon Peter, and ... the disciple, whom Jesus loved.*” No doubt Mary went to Peter because of his role as leader, in spite of his denials. John had spent the three days and nights with Peter. See Matthew 12:38–40.

**20:4–7** “*So they both ran.*” John outruns Peter in his eagerness to see. Perhaps it was beginning to dawn on him what had occurred. “*He ... saw the linen cloths lying there.*” If the body had been taken, the winding/wrapping cloths would have also been taken. “*The handkerchief ... folded together in a place by itself.*” This indicated some care and attention that no thief would have shown.

**20:8–10** “*Then the other disciple ... saw and believed.*” John had already believed in Jesus as Messiah and Savior, but he now believed that Jesus had risen from the dead. “*They did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.*” Though Jesus had told the disciples repeatedly, they did not understand the prophecy (Psalm 16:9–11; Matt. 16:21; 17:22–23; Luke 24:26–27, 32, 44–45; Acts 2:24–31). “*Then the disciples went away again to their own homes.*”

### **Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene**

John 20:11–18

**20:11–13** “*Mary stood outside ... weeping.*” Peter left the tomb confused. John left the tomb believing. Mary, back at the tomb, cannot bring herself to leave and continues weeping. She sees the two angels,

**“one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain”** who ask her, “**Woman, why are you weeping?**” One moment Mary looks in and the tomb is empty. The next moment she sees the angels. She still wonders where the body has been taken and is obviously overcome with grief—not thinking clearly.

**20:14–15 “Woman, why are you weeping?”** Now Jesus appears and asks the same question, perhaps a mild rebuke at her unwillingness to believe. Like Mary, in times of great trial or grief, we have also refused to believe all that the Scriptures have told us.

**20:16 “‘Mary!’ ... ‘Rabboni!’ (... Teacher)**” The personal address of Jesus opens her eyes, and she responds joyfully. In Hebrew/Aramaic, the “*i*” at the end of *Rabbon*, is possessive and means “My.” The response of Thomas in v. 28 may be more exalted, but Mary’s response is much more personal. Truly, His sheep hear His voice (John 10:3, 16, 27–28). This is the eighth and the greatest sign recorded by John (John 2:19). See the Introduction to this Gospel, “Eight Signs.”

**20:17 “Do not cling to Me.”** Mary, in her joy, clung to the Lord. But there were other things both He and she must attend to. **“I have not yet ascended to My Father.”** The suggestion is that Jesus ascended to the Father, and then descended again to appear to the disciples. Either this, or He spoke of His future ascension (Luke 24:50–53; Acts 1:9–11) and the new spiritual relationship that would exist between Him and those who believe in Him. **“Go to My brethren.”** To Mary was given the privilege of being first to proclaim the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ (v. 18).

#### **Jesus’ Appearances and Commission** John 20:19–29 (Luke 24:36–43; 1 Cor. 15:4–5).

**20:19–20 “Jesus came and stood ... He showed them His hands and side.”** Jesus’ resurrection body could pass through locked doors and walls. Also, His body retained the marks of His crucifixion. **“The disciples were glad”** (John 16:20).

**20:21–23 “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.”** In Matthew, we have the commission to “*Make disciples*” (Matt. 28:18–20). In Mark, we have the commission to “*Preach the gospel*” (Mark 16:15). Here, Jesus includes four vital factors in His commission:

1. Our relationship of peace with God (vv. 19, 21; Rom. 5:1),
2. Our commission continues His ministry (v. 21),
3. This commission can only be effective through the work of the coming Holy Spirit (v. 22; Zec. 4:6; Luke 24:49; Acts 2:1–4), and
4. We are to offer to the world the only means of forgiveness—the Gospel of Jesus Christ (v. 23; Matt. 18:15–20; Acts 13:38–39; 26:18; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14). This is not personal power, either in individuals or in the Church, to forgive personal sins. It is the offer of forgiveness to those who believe, and the withholding of forgiveness to those who reject Jesus Christ. The fact that **“He breathed on them”** was a reminder of the original creation (Gen. 2:7) and the idea of being “born again” (John 3:3–8). However, here, our Lord anticipates His new creation—not only the individual believer but, collectively, the Church (Matt. 16:18–19; 2 Cor. 5:17).

**20:24–25 “Thomas ... said ... unless I see ... I will not believe.”** Although he is often called “doubting Thomas,” he was no more doubtful than all the others (Mark 16:11, 13–14).

**20:27 “Do not be unbelieving, but believing.”** These disciples all demonstrate that it is possible to believe in Jesus as Savior, and then to later fail to believe/obey new information. Such “unbelief” does not affect our initial salvation, but surely hinders our spiritual growth and effectiveness as witnesses (Luke 11:28, 12:48; John 13:17; James 4:17).

**20:28 “My Lord and my God!”** If Jesus were not God, He would have rebuked Thomas (Isa. 42:8). Here, Thomas confesses the deity that Jesus had repeatedly claimed (John 5:17–18; 10:30–33).

**20:29 “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”** These disciples witnessed Jesus’ miracles, heard His lessons and parables, and witnessed His bodily resurrection. Here, Jesus declares a special blessedness to all who, without sight, believe in Him—by faith alone (2 Cor. 5:7; Heb. 11:1; 1 Pet. 1:7–9; 2 Pet. 1:16–21).

### The Theme of John’s Gospel Summarized

John 20:30–31

**20:30 “Truly Jesus did many other signs.”** John focused on eight signs to show the identity and power of the Lord Jesus (see the Introduction to this Gospel, “Eight Signs”). Also note his closing reference to these signs (John 21:25).

**20:31 “These are written that you may believe.”** The Gospel of John is primarily evangelistic in nature. **“That Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.”** The power of faith is in its object. Because Jesus is indeed the promised Savior (Job 19:25–27; Isa. 42:1–9; 61:1–3) and the Son of God (Dan. 7:13–14), He alone is *“able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him”* (Heb. 7:25). **“That believing you may have life in His name,”** that is, by His authority (Matt. 28:18). The life that He gives is eternal life (John 3:15–16; 10:28; 17:2–3).

## **JOHN CHAPTER 21**

Jesus appears in Galilee; Peter is restored.

### **Jesus Appears in Galilee**

John 21:1–14

**21:1–2 “Jesus showed Himself again.”** This was His third appearance to the disciples as a group (v. 14). **“The sons of Zebedee.”** These were James and John—the author of this Gospel (Matt. 4:21; 10:2; Mark 1:19; 3:17; Luke 5:10). Matthew, Mark, and John all purposely minimize their part in telling their stories.

**21:4–6 “The disciples did not know that it was Jesus.”** Perhaps Jesus concealed His identity as before (Luke 24:15–16; John 20:14–15). **“Children, have you any food?”** They might have assumed he was a local man, looking to buy fish (see Luke 24:41; Psalm 33:9). **“Children”** could mean “young men.” **“They answered Him, ‘No.’ ... Cast the net on the right side ... and you will find some.”** This is similar to what Jesus had said to Peter when He called him to be a disciple (Luke 5:4–10).

**21:7 “That disciple whom Jesus loved.”** This again refers to John—this Gospel’s author. He does not refer to himself in this way because Jesus did not love the other disciples. Rather, it is because he was always amazed that Jesus loved him. **“Simon Peter ... put on his outer garment.”** Peter is the focal point of this chapter. While fishing, they wore only a loin cloth. To us, it seems strange that Peter would put on his outer garment. However, in ancient Israel, it would have been a sign of disrespect to greet Jesus “unclothed.”

**21:8 “About two hundred cubits.”** This is approximately one hundred yards.

**21:9–10 “They saw a fire ... and fish ... and bread.”** Jesus demonstrates, once again, His ability to provide for every need. **“Bring some of the fish which you have caught.”** Our Lord’s supernatural provision is never such that it excludes our own contribution. The disciples’ labor adds to the Lord’s providential supply.

**21:11 “One hundred and fifty-three ... the net was not broken.”** Many suggestions have been offered regarding John’s precise count here. In this Gospel, John does not give details without having a purpose. Perhaps the best

meaning is that, in the Sea of Galilee, it is said that there are 153 kinds of fish. The catch of so many, without breaking the net, might suggest the future work of the disciples, and the Church—drawing men of all nations into the fold, which is capable of holding them all.

**21:14 “The third time.”** Again, this refers to His appearances to the disciples as a group (John 20:19, 26). This does not include His appearance to the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13–32), or to Mary (John 20:11–18).

### The Restoration of Peter

John 21:15–19

**21:15–17 “Simon ... do you love Me more than these?”** Peter had boasted that his devotion to Jesus was greater than that of the other disciples (Matt. 26:31–35; Mark 14:29–31). **“Lord, You know that I love You.”** While Jesus uses the word *agapao* for “love,” Peter uses *phileo*. In Scripture, the first is used for the love of God for us, while the second generally refers to the affection of kinship, such as the Father’s love for the Son (John 5:20), and Jesus’ love for Martha, Mary, and Lazarus (John 11:3). It may be Peter’s way of showing awareness of his failure in denying the Lord, in spite of his devotion. **“Feed My lambs ... tend My sheep.”** Peter’s three affirmations of his love countered his three denials of Jesus. Jesus confirms His original commission to Peter to be an under-shepherd to the flock (1 Pet. 5:1–4), which involves care for both new believers and for the more mature. The practical point here is that our failures do not change the plan of God for our service to Him.

**21:18–19 “You will stretch out your hands ... where you do not wish.”** Here, Jesus shows the difference between the young and impetuous Peter, and the older and more submissive man. In 2 Peter 1:13–14, Peter anticipates his martyrdom, as Jesus predicted. Tradition tells us that Peter was crucified upside down at his own request, as he did not think he deserved to die like his Lord. **“Follow Me.”** Though we all fail in a multitude of ways (James 3:1–2), the solution for every failure is confession, correction, and commitment to rise up and follow our Lord (Rom. 8:31–39; 1 John 1:7, 9; 2:2; Heb. 4:14–16; 7:22–27).

### To Each His Own Work

John 21:20–25

**21:20–21 “What about this man?”** In light of vv. 18–19 and v. 23, Peter’s question must have implied whether John would also be martyred. It is easy for us to get distracted by the plan and purpose of God for others. We need to remember that each and every believer has a different work to accomplish (Matt. 25:15; Mark 13:34; Rom. 12:6; 1 Pet. 4:10–11).

**21:24–25 “This is the disciple.”** John is referring to himself as the author of this Gospel. **“We know ... his testimony is true.”** John includes the other apostles as witnesses to his truth (1 John 1:1–4). **“Many other things that Jesus did.”** Each of the Gospel authors under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Tim. 3:16), selected those events of the life of Christ that most supported their main theme. It is exciting to think that we may hear the whole story when we are with our Lord!