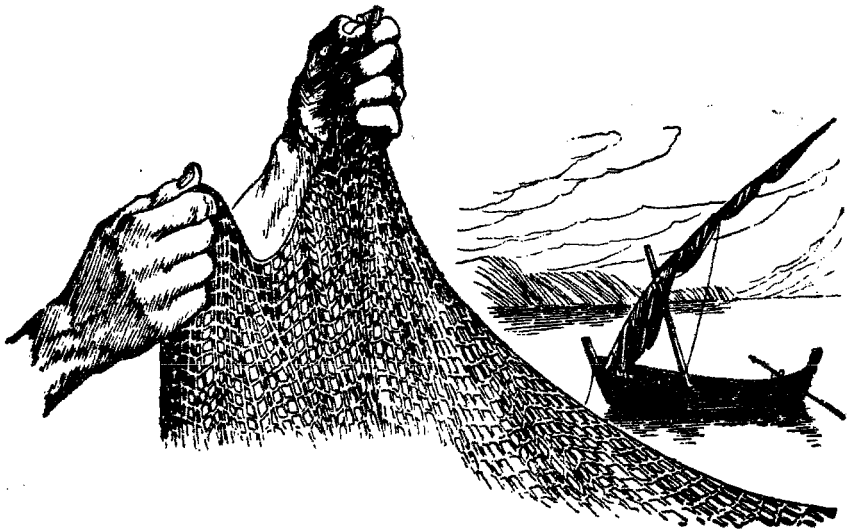


SIMPLE, STIMULATING STUDIES

IN THE

**GOSPEL
OF
JOHN**



By Donald G. Hunt

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GOSPEL OF JOHN

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Voice of Evangelism
P.O. Box 431, Ottumwa, Iowa 52501

FIRST PRINTING - 2001

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INTRODUCTION

The Gospel of John has been the favorite gospel account of many people. It is the inspired account of the “disciple whom Jesus loved” in a special way to merit that designation.

It alone of the four accounts of Jesus’ life mentions His preexistence, and it alone mentions His connection with the Creation.

Its twenty-one chapters contain reports of many events not covered by the other accounts, putting us greatly in debt to John’s account for such information.

This present work is not a commentary on the book of John but rather a set of interesting studies concerning this great New Testament book. As such it will contain much for the average reader and some challenges for the advanced Bible student.

As a study work it is designed for both individual use and for groups. May it be an enrichment to one and all!

THE AUTHOR JOHN HIMSELF

To enter on these studies in the Gospel of John is a great privilege. Let us begin with the author himself.

1. Everything points to John the apostle as the unnamed disciple who along with Andrew heard John the Baptist point out Jesus as "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29) and which two got to be the first to spend a day with Jesus (John 1:37-40). That unnamed one is the author of this fourth gospel account (John 21:20,24). Other times in the book he thus speaks of himself rather than by name (John 13:23; John 20:2). Early Christian writings attribute the book's authorship to John. Irenaeus (whose life spanned the century after the apostles) often mentioning Matt., Mark, and Luke wrote, "Afterwards John, the disciple of the Lord who had also leaned upon his breast, did himself publish a gospel during his residence of Ephesus."

2. We know more about his immediate family than we do most of the other apostles' families. Zebedee was his father (Luke 5:10). It is generally thought the Salome of Mark 15:40 and Mark 16:1 was his mother. His brother James was the first apostle whose death is recorded (Acts 12:2).

3. With his father, brother James, and Peter and Andrew he was a commercial fisherman on the Sea of Galilee (compare Matt. 4:18-21 and Luke 5:7).

4. He, Andrew, Simon Peter, Philip, and Nathanael were Jesus' first followers (John 1:35-50), were the "disciples" with Him at the wedding feast at Cana (John 2:1,2,11), were the "disciples" on Jesus' quick trip to Capernaum (John 2:12), were most likely the "disciples" with Jesus when He said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:22), when He taught and baptized in Judea (John 3:22; John 4:1,2), and when He stopped at Jacob's well on His way back to Galilee (John 4:8).

5. Early Christian writings indicate he was the youngest of the apostles, and this is reflected in religious art where one disciple is noticeably younger than the others. This may explain why he outran Peter to Jesus' tomb, and why he was hesitant to enter the

tomb until Peter arrived and went in ahead of him (John 20:1-8). Early Christian writings have John dying around 100 A.D., which would be 73 years after he began following Jesus, so he would necessarily have been young during Jesus' ministry years.

6. At the cross Jesus committed His mother to his care (John 19:26,27).

7. Early Christian writings say John spent his last years at Ephesus. Today the ruins of ancient Ephesus feature the large ruins of what is referred to as the Basilica of St. John, a mammoth church building built by Emperor Justinian in the late 500s to honor the beloved John.

8. In John's old age he was exiled to the rocky prison island Patmos in the Aegean Sea just off the coast from Ephesus where he received the visions recorded in the book of Revelation (Rev. 1:9).

9. Lest we forget that John also was human, let us recall that along with his brother James he once proposed calling down fire from heaven upon a Samaritan village unwilling to allow Jesus and His apostles a place of overnight lodging (Luke 9:52-54), he forbade a private disciple of Jesus to cast out demons in Jesus' name (Luke 9:49), and he and James requested the chief seats in Christ's coming kingdom (Mark 10:35-37). Probably from one or more of the above events he and James were given the nickname "Boanerges", meaning "sons of thunder" (Mark 3:17).

10. Other New Testament books written by John were I John, II John, III John, and Revelation. His writing five books makes him second only to Paul as the most voluminous writer of New Testament books!

QUESTIONS

1. What was John's personal introduction to Jesus?
2. Name John's known relatives.
3. What had been John's occupation?
4. What were some of the early events in the ministry of Jesus with which John was connected?
5. Where did John rank in age with the other apostles?

6. What unusual matter concerning John occurred at the crucifixion?
7. Where is it thought that John spent his final years?
8. To what island was John exiled?
9. Name at least two instances in which John acted out of order.
10. How voluminous a writer of New Testament books was John?

JOHN'S COVERAGE OF JESUS' LIFE

John's 21-chapter account of Jesus' life does not begin with His birth as do Matthew and Luke nor carry through to His ascension as do Mark and Luke. When John begins his coverage of Jesus' life, Jesus had recently been baptized and had suffered the temptations immediately following. John's account first picks up Jesus at Bethabara in Galilee where John the Baptist pointed Him out as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29) that led to Jesus' first followers who later became apostles (John 1:28-51). John's account closes its coverage with the seaside breakfast following the resurrection (John 21:1-24).

The Gospel of John's mention of numerous Jewish feasts is fortunate for us, for it helps us know just how long Jesus' earthly ministry was. Let's look at them. Assuming the feast referred to in John 5:1 was a Passover, John mentions four Passovers (John 2:13; 5:1; 6:4; and 12:1) which lets us know that Jesus' ministry included the three full years between them plus the time required for the material in John 2:1-12 and the time required for the material in John 20:6-21:24. Thus we are able to say Jesus' ministry was between three and three and a half years in length. Without John's account we would not know this. His account also breaks Jesus' third year down when it mentions the Feast of Tabernacles in John 7:2 (which was six months after the preceding Passover) and also the Feast of Dedication in John 10:22 (which was three months before the next Passover).

Matthew, Mark, and Luke cover so many of the same events in Jesus' life that scholars call them the "Synoptic" accounts (which means "seen together"). They were all written before the 70 A.D. destruction of Jerusalem which all three foretold (Matt. 24:1,2; Mark 13:1,2; and Luke 21:5,6). This accounts for the Synoptics using the Jewish method of time (the day beginning at sunset) while John, writing after Jerusalem's fall, employs the Roman method (like we use). Every time-notation in the Gospel of John is the same as our

time (John 1:39; 4:6; 20:1,19). Therefore, there is no contradiction between the Synoptics and John when Mark 15:25 says it was the "third hour" when they crucified Jesus (Jewish time) and John 19:14 says it was the "sixth hour" when Jesus was with Pilate before the crucifixion (Roman time).

Some Bibles in their study helps before the concordance contain a harmony of the life of Christ in which are listed the events of His life along with where the events are recorded. If you look at that harmony, you will see that John lists many events the other accounts don't and omits many events the others include. Why have three accounts covering so many of the same events? Early Christian literature says Matthew was written to convince the Jews about Jesus, Mark the Romans, and Luke the Greeks—the three groups of the enlightened world in Jesus' day, the three languages in which Pilate's inscription on Jesus' cross were written (John 19:19,20). John, writing some thirty or so years later, records many rich additions to the three earlier accounts for which we are deeply indebted.

Instead of charging the accounts with being contradictory, as critics of the Bible do, we see each of them recording various events not found in the others and yet from time to time touching here and there with the same events, making it possible to harmonize all four accounts. An example: John records numerous visits by Jesus to Jerusalem and time spent there in His early Judean ministry and in a later Judean ministry (which Matthew does not record), and yet when Matthew records Jesus' lamentation over Jerusalem's rejection of Him, Matt. 23:37 allows for numerous Jerusalem visits when it says, "O Jerusalem,...HOW OFT would I have gathered thy children together...but ye would not."

The following events are found only in the Gospel of John: turning the water to wine (John 2:1-11), the first cleansing of the temple (John 2:13-22), Jesus and Nicodemus (John 3:1-15), at Jacob's well (John 4:5-42), healing the nobleman's son (John 4:43-53), healing the lame man at the pool (John 5:2-47), sermon on the bread of life (John 6:25-71), healing the man born blind (John 9:1-41), the Good Shepherd material (John 10:1-20), farewell material

(chapters 14,15,16), Jesus' great prayer (John 17:1-26), appearance to the apostles with Thomas present (John 20:24-29), and the seaside appearance in Galilee (John 21:1-23).

As you study through the book of John, it is obvious his account records more of the teachings and discussions of Jesus than narrated events of His life.

John, the author, was truly overwhelmed with what all Jesus did and said during His brief life, for he closes his account with these words: "There are many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (John 21:25).

QUESTIONS

1. How many chapters are there in the book of John?
2. Where does John begin his coverage of Jesus' earthly life?
3. With what event does John close his account?
4. How does John help us know that Jesus' ministry was something over three years in length?
5. Does John use Jewish or Roman time in his account?
6. Name at least five events listed only in John.
7. How many volumes did John say could be written about all the things Jesus did while here on earth?

JOHN'S FAMOUS 18-VERSE INTRODUCTION (John 1:1-18)

1. "In the beginning" (verse 1). Three other Bible books have the word "beginning" in their opening verses (Gen. 1:1; Mark 1:1; I John 1:1).

2. "Was the Word" (verse 1). "Word" is used here like in I Thess. 2:13—not as a single, individual word but as a message. The Word that was made flesh "declared" God (John 1:18).

3. "The Word was with God" (verse 1). As the time drew near for Jesus to return to the Father, He prayed, "O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory WHICH I HAD WITH THEE before the world was" (John 17:5).

4. "The Word was God" (verse 1). He was a part of the Godhead as reflected in the plural "us" and "our" in Gen. 1:26; Isa. 6:8; and elsewhere. The Godhead's plural personages are neither named nor explained anywhere in the Old Testament. That awaited Jesus' words in Matt. 28:19. See also II Cor. 13:14 and Rev. 1:4,5. We note that all three were present at Jesus' baptism: while JESUS came up out of the water, the SPIRIT descended in the form of a dove, and the FATHER spoke from heaven (Matt. 3:16,17). Consider also all three in John 14:26.

5. "The same was in the beginning with God" (verse 2). I John 1:1 speaks of Him as "from the beginning", and Rev. 1:8 calls Him the "Alpha" (the beginning).

6. "All things were made by him" (verse 3). This fact is also affirmed in Col. 1:16 and Heb. 1:2. For the "Word" creating all things, notice the creative expression, "God said," as in Gen. 1:3 ("And God said, Let there be light: and there was light"), and before each creative act it says, "And God SAID" (Gen. 1:6,9,11,14,20,24,26), and the daily creation took place! In writing of creation Psa. 33:6-9 says, "By the WORD of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of heaven by the BREATH of his

mouth..He SPAKE, and it was done; he COMMANDED, and it stood fast.” Just as Jesus by SPEAKING immediately brought calm to the storm-tossed Sea of Galilee (Luke 8:24,25) and resurrected life to the dead Lazarus (John 11:43,44), so did God SPEAK the world into existence.

7. “In him was life; and the life was the light of men” (verse 4). All “life” in the creation (vegetable, animal, and human) is traceable to life in the Divine Word. The theory of Evolution greatly fails here, for that theory has no source of “life”. In the creation, when man’s body had been formed out of dust, God breathed into his nostrils the breath of LIFE, and he became a LIVING soul” (Gen. 2:7). And it is said of all who have lived since, “In him we LIVE, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:28). When the Word became flesh (verse 14), He was “the light of man”—man’s spiritual light (John 8:12). Verse 4 is a transition verse between the Word in creation and the Word as man’s spiritual light.

8. “The light shineth in darkness” (verse 5). In Scripture, “darkness” is often used figuratively for sin (“the unfruitful works of darkness,” Eph. 5:11) and for ignorance (“Having the understanding darkened...through the ignorance that is in them,” Eph. 4:18). Jesus came as “the light” into a world of darkness to give light to all who would follow Him (John 8:12). Preaching is to open people’s eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God (Acts 26:18). How we should praise Him for calling us out of darkness into His marvelous light (I Pet. 2:9)!

9. “The darkness comprehended it not” (verse 5). Words often have two or more meanings—like our word “file” (an office “file”, a finger nail “file”, etc.)—so with the Greek word translated “comprehended” in the King James. If “comprehended” is correct, people in general did not grasp (fully receive) Jesus (various passages, like John 1:10; Luke 23:34; etc.). Many translations, though, use “overcome” instead, noting the strong opposition to Jesus but affirming the opposition did not put out the light of Christ and Christianity. Whichever meaning was the divine intention, both are true.

10. "A man sent from God, whose name was John" (verse 6). His coming was foretold in the Old Testament (Isa. 40:3-5; Mal. 3:1; Mal. 4:5,6). His birth was by special divine arrangement (Luke 1:7,13). Professional tour guides in the Holy Land today say John got his idea of baptizing from having lived among the Essences in the Dead Sea Caves area. If so, John's baptism would have been "of men" (Matt. 21:25). However, Jesus affirmed it was "of God" (Luke 7:29,30).

11. "The same came...to bear witness of the Light" (verse 7). John foretold of One coming after him who was mightier than he (Mark 1:7). After seeing the Holy Spirit descend upon Jesus and hearing God claim Him as His beloved Son at Jesus' baptism, John said, "I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God" (John 1:34).

12. "That all men through him might believe" (verse 7). When John baptized, he told those being baptized to "believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus" (Acts 19:4). Just as we who live today believe on Jesus through the word of His apostles (John 17:20), so people prior to His coming believed on Him through John the Baptist.

13. "He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light" (verse 8). John himself said the same thing: "I am not the Christ" (John 1:20).

14. "That was the true Light" (verse 9). Before Jesus came as the Messiah, there were false claimants to be the Messiah (John 10:8), and He predicted there would be more such after He left (Matt. 24:4,5). All such were false "lights"—Jesus was the "true Light"! Jesus is also the "true bread" (John 6:32,33), the "true vine" (John 15:1), and the "true witness" (Rev. 3:14). So true is Jesus that He is called "True" in Rev. 19:11.

15. "Which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (verse 9). Just how does this divine Light light every man who comes into the world? It is difficult to be dogmatic here. All can walk in the light if they will (John 8:12) and thus be lightened by Christ, but all don't. When Christ came, light came into the world, but John 3:19,20 says men loved darkness rather than light, and because they

hated the light they did not come to the light. Potentially, then, Christ would enlighten every person who is born. Notice what follows in the next verse.

16. "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not" (verse 10). The three statements in this verse state three important facts: (1) "He was in the world"—history declares that; (2) "The world was made by him"—this has already been discussed; (3) Now the sad fact: "The world knew him not."

17. "He came unto his own" (verse 11). In Greek "own" is neuter gender, referring to the universe He had created.

18. "And his own received him not" (verse 11). In Greek this "own" is masculine gender, indicating people. Nazareth rejected Him (Matt. 13:54-58), and the Jewish apostle Paul said Jesus' own people (Jews) killed Him—had Him killed (I Thess. 2:14,15).

19. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (vs. 12,13). Here is one of the many great statements in John. Jesus' rejection by His own people did not nullify others from receiving Him. Jesus knocks at the door of the human heart wanting to be let in (Rev. 3:20). Col. 2:6 also speaks of Christians' having "received Christ Jesus". Because people become willing to receive Jesus into their lives, He gives them the privilege of becoming children of God. What a privilege! We become God's children by a spiritual birth, several times referred to in I John (3:9; 5:1,4), very specifically in John 3:3-7, but also in Paul's writing (I Cor. 4:15), in James' (Jas. 1:18), and in Peter's (I Pet. 1:23). We are children of God not because we are born of a particular blood line like Jews trusting in their Abrahamic ancestry (Matt. 3:7-9 and John 8:32,33), not because our fleshly nature leads us to be Christians—it doesn't (Rom. 8:5,7), and not because humanity made it possible but because we have been born of God!

20. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (v. 14). Phil. 2:6,7 and Heb. 2:14 refer to Jesus' incarnation (being born into flesh). Though Jesus had

been gone sixty-five to seventy years when John wrote these words, he remembered Jesus' unique glory which he and others beheld, referring to Jesus as the "only begotten of the Father" and declaring He was full of grace and truth. Paul said by GRACE ye are saved (Eph. 2:8), and Jesus said the TRUTH shall make you free (John 8:32).

21. "John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me" (v. 15). John the Baptist had predicted the coming of Jesus (Matt. 3:11), and when Jesus came he pointed Him out (John 1:29,34). Jesus is greater than John in rank because He was before him in time.

22. "And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace" (v. 16). Jesus' being full of grace and truth was not merely something to be beheld and admired but was something all Christians have received from Him! Isn't this wonderful? "Grace for grace" is usually taken to mean we receive "grace upon grace" through Christ.

23. "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (v. 17). Here is an obvious reference to the two great covenants: the "old" by Moses, the "new" by Christ which covenant is greatly elaborated on in the book of Heb. but also in more limited coverage in Rom., II Cor., Gal., Phil., Col., etc.). The old covenant expressed God's will for His people (the "law"), but it provided no adequate sacrifice for the transgression of it. This verse does not mean Christ has no laws—He does (Matt. 28:20), but it is rejoicing in the mercy Christ brings! This is why Christ's message is called the "gospel" ("good news").

24. "No man hath seen God at any time" (v. 18). Moses who frequently heard God's voice wanted to see Him, but he was told that nobody could see God's face and live (Exo. 33:20). In writing to Timothy Paul said God dwells in light that no man can approach (I Tim. 6:16), a reason why no man has seen nor can see God while being in the flesh. In our glorified form we will get to see God (Rev. 20:3,4).

25. Since none of us has seen God, how do we know about Him? "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father,

he hath declared him" (v. 18). Jesus as the "Word of God" has "declared" Him!

Following this momentous Introduction, in the very next verse John begins his narration of Jesus and the ministry of John the Baptist preceding it.

QUESTIONS

1. With what words does the Gospel of John open?
2. What is meant by Christ being called the "Word"?
3. In what way do the opening verses of John imply a Godhead?
4. What in Gen. 1:1 shows that all things were created by the Word?
5. Christ is also called a _____ that came into a dark world.
6. Why did God send John the Baptist?
7. Did many recognize that Jesus Christ had been the Creator?
8. What privilege did Jesus make possible for those who receive Him?
9. What does the word "incarnation" mean?
10. What two great characteristics does John say Jesus was full of?
11. Why is the gospel "good news"?
12. Since no one has seen God, how do we know about Him?

MIRACLES IN JOHN - Part I

Because the gospel of John is more devoted to discourses and discussions than the other accounts and not as much to narration as they, it does not tell us about as many miracles as the others. John mentions this fact in John 20:30 ("Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book"), but he went on to state that those he did record are sufficient to show who Jesus was ("But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," John 20:31), and that that faith might point us to life through Him ("and that believing ye might have life through his name," John 20:31).

Let us notice the miracles John did record in two studies.

TURNING WATER TO WINE (John 2:1-11)

This was the first of Jesus' many miracles, and it was performed in Cana near Nazareth soon after He returned home after His baptism, temptations, and being introduced by John the Baptist at Bethabara where He secured His first known disciples (Andrew, John, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael) all of whom later became apostles.

The occasion was a wedding feast which His mother Mary was attending (that of a friend or a relative) and to which Jesus and His handful of disciples were also invited since they were in the area.

Let us look at Mary first since she involved herself in a circumstance that arose. She knew the story behind the births of Elizabeth's son John and her son Jesus. She knew her son was to be the Messiah. She knew He was thirty (the age of Jewish majority), that He was leaving home to embark on His ministry, that He had just been baptized by John, and that He already had some disciples with Him. With this knowledge her motherly desires for Him were running high when the wedding beverage gave out. Her thought must have been, "Wouldn't this be a great time and place for Him to perform a miracle in the presence of loved ones and friends?" While

Jesus was going to, He knew He was to manifest Himself at the promptings of “the One who sent Him” rather than at the promptings of a human being (even His mother).

The servants who did what He said could see what had happened to the water with which they had filled the stone water jars, but they let the one in charge of the feast find out for himself about this second supply of beverage. He could not believe such good tasting beverage had not been served earlier.

Because the word in our translations is “wine”, some conclude it is all right to drink alcoholic beverages. Some others oppose Jesus’ making an alcoholic beverage.

The Greek word translated “wine” is “oinos”, whether it is fresh grape juice as in Matt. 9:17 or fermented causing drunkenness as in Eph. 5:18 so that in each instance of the word the meaning must be determined by the setting as to which it is. Several considerations incline your writer to think it was fresh grape juice.

If “wine” here meant fermented drink, the guests had already consumed all on hand, and when Jesus provided a vast quantity of the best tasting drink for them, what would happen to some of them as a result of Jesus’ miracle? Drunkenness! Note the quantity that He provided. A firkin is nine gallons. Each waterpot held two or three firkins (18 to 27 gallons). Six waterpots would, therefore, have held 108 to 162 gallons!

Again, if this were fermented resulting in some people’s drunkenness, Jesus would have cast the stumbling block before them, violating what the Bible elsewhere teaches about stumbling blocks (Rom. 14:21).

HEALING A NOBLEMAN’S SON **(Read John 4:46-54)**

Jesus was at Cana, where He had performed His first miracle. When the nobleman came to Him, He performed this miracle. Cana was in the hills of Galilee and was an estimated twelve miles from Capernaum where the nobleman lived.

We wonder if the man had heard of Jesus' first miracle or of His miracles at the Passover in Jerusalem (John 2:23). Because of some informational source he sought Jesus' miraculous help with reference to his very sick son. The nobleman evidently did not hesitate to go back to Capernaum without Jesus when He told him, "Go thy way; thy son liveth." At the very moment Jesus so spoke, the boy was healed. Hurrying to break the good news to the nobleman his servants met him before he could get home. "When did he begin to get better?" the father wanted to know. The boy didn't begin to get better—the fever immediately left him at the seventh hour. The father's conclusion was correct: that was the very time Jesus spoke the healing word in Cana. The nobleman and his whole house believed! That was the divine purpose of Jesus' miracles. His miracles are called "signs"—signs of who Jesus was.

HEALING THE MAN AT THE POOL

(Read John 5:1-47)

While Jesus was attending a feast of the Jews in Jerusalem, He stopped by the Pool of Bethesda where many invalids lay. They were there supposedly to experience a healing by being first to get down into the pool after some agitation of the water took place. Among them was an invalid of thirty-eight years with nobody to help him get into the water. Jesus bypassed the pool superstition by telling him to take up his pallet and walk, which he did. Because this was a sabbath healing, it touched off heated controversy with some of the Jews. That controversy is discussed in another study in this booklet.

FEEDING THE 5,000

(Read John 6:5-13)

Even though thirty-two years of Jesus' life were past, this is the first event in His life recorded by all four gospel writers!

Jesus knew He was about to perform one of His greatest miracles, but His apostles didn't. Just to test Philip He asked him where they could obtain bread to feed such a multitude. Philip

thought only in terms of purchasing bread, telling what a large amount of money it would take so that each one could have only a little. From Mark's account we learn that Jesus sent them among the crowd to see what food was on hand. Andrew was the only one to find any food at all, a boy's lunch of five loaves (buns) and two small fish, which he recognized not to be much in view of such a crowd.

But Jesus proceeded to feed the multitude from them by having the people sit down and to sit in numbered groups. Knowing that this vast group would tell others about this miracle, He wanted them to sit down so as to be able to see His multiplication of the loaves and the fish. By numbering the people present the report of how many ate would be similarly reported by all. He gave thanks for the meal and proceeded to hand the food to the apostles who distributed it to the seated crowd. When everybody had eaten his fill, Jesus ordered all the uneaten broken pieces to be gathered up so there would be no waste. What a lesson in frugality by the One who could have made even more bread and fish! The leftovers amounted to twelve basketfuls. Yes, scoffers would say, "What a story!" while believers in Jesus say, "What a miracle!"

With Jesus' having preached the kingdom of God was at hand and now with such a miracle, this great crowd that looked upon Him as that Prophet Moses predicted would come (Deut. 18:15-18) and were ready to crown Him king. But knowing they would consider Him a political king for the Jews, He stopped it before it got started by sending the apostles away in a boat and the people away by foot.

WALKING ON THE WATER **(Read John 6:16-21)**

This event immediately followed the feeding of the 5,000.

The apostles obeyed Jesus' orders to get into a boat and return to the west side of the Sea of Galilee. The lake was about six miles wide. As they rowed in the dark of the night's early hours, a sudden storm not only whipped up big waves, but the wind was blowing against them so that terror possessed them.

Jesus, who had spent many hours in prayer, began crossing the lake on the surface of the water. It was the fourth watch of the night (between 3:00 and 6:00 A.M.), and the disciples still had not made it to the west side. Maybe by lightning or maybe by the early streaks of dawn they looked out upon the water to see what they took to be a spirit (a ghost). This but added to their fears, and they cried out. When Jesus said, "Be of good cheer, it is I; Be not afraid," Matthew's account said Peter asked permission to leave the boat and walk on the water to Jesus. As we know, Peter was a man of immediate words and action, often being the first of the apostles to speak or act and sometimes the only one (as here). Cite instances of this fact.

The Lord enabled him to walk on the water's surface just as He had done. But Peter's faith was not going to go untested. Matthew's account says, "When he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid: and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" By a flash of lightning or by dawn's early light Peter could see the rough water or likely a big wave threatening to swallow him. Faith gave way to fear, and as he began sinking he cried out for help. He was close enough that Jesus could reach out a hand and pull him to safety. We have a song based on this: "I was sinking deep in sin Far from the peaceful shore; Very deeply stained within Sinking to rise no more; But the Master of the sea Heard my despairing cry; From the waters lifted me Now safe am I."

As soon as Jesus got into the boat, the storm immediately stopped, and they were immediately to shore. So there were three miracles in this event: walking on the water, stopping the storm, and immediately being at shore. This is the second time Jesus miraculously calmed a Sea of Galilee storm (see Matt. 8:23-27).

Both times that Jesus calmed storms, the apostles were amazed at what He had done. Being personally involved in what looked like disastrous storms for them meant they were not merely spectators to the miracles but involved participants in the actual events.

QUESTIONS

1. Does the book of John record as many of Jesus' miracles as the other accounts?
2. What was John's stated purpose in writing?
3. What was Jesus' first miracle?
4. Who were some of those present on that occasion?
5. How did Jesus perform the miracle of healing the nobleman's son?
6. How long had the lame man at the pool been an invalid?
7. What about that healing that caused a furor?
8. From how many loaves and how many fish did Jesus feed the 5,000?
9. How many basketfuls of broken pieces were taken up afterwards?
10. What made rowing so hard for the apostles as they tried to cross the lake?
11. What did they think they were seeing when they first spotted Jesus walking on the water?
12. How well did Peter do in walking on the water?
13. Why were the apostles so amazed about the stilling of the storm?

MIRACLES IN JOHN – Part II

The last three miracles of Jesus recorded in John all took place in the Jerusalem area. Let us study them.

HEALING A MAN BORN BLIND

(John 9:1-41)

We are surprised to hear the disciples ask about a beggar blind from birth, “Who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?” To ask if one was born blind because of his own sin is nonsensical unless one subscribes to reincarnation. If the disciples even remotely conceded to reincarnation, it probably stemmed from those Jewish years of the Babylonian Captivity. If indeed they at all held to reincarnation, Jesus by-passed the thought at the time to get to the real reasons for his blind birth: “That the works of God should be made manifest in him.” This too is staggering—that the glory of God to be realized in this miracle was important enough to offset all the handicap and all the inconvenience and all the problems to himself and his parents of his many years of blindness. Maybe all of us, then, should take another look at how important it must be to give glory to God. The Psalms are filled with praise to God, and Christians are taught to “offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name” (Heb. 13:15). Moses and Aaron were denied entrance to Canaan for failing on one occasion to give glory to God. How else can we bring glory to God? Turn to these verses and consider what they say: Matt. 5:16; Phil. 1:11; I Cor. 10:31; John 15:8.

Jesus’ statement, “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work,” reflects the wisdom expressed in Eccl. 9:10 and also reflects Jesus’ commitment to the will of God that He expressed in John 8:29.

Jesus is the light of the world, and until He came, the world sat in spiritual darkness just as this blind man had sat in physical darkness all his life. But his years of physical blindness are about to end!

In performing miracles Jesus sometimes merely spoke (“Lazarus, come forth;” to the noblemen, “Go thy way; thy son liveth;” to the raging sea, “Peace, be still”; etc.) while at other times He utilized means (like here: moist clay). Sometimes the beneficiary did nothing to receive the blessing (like Malchus and his ear) while other times the recipient was told to do something (like here: “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam”). The man obeyed, and sight was his!

People recognized him as the lifelong, begging blind man, but Jesus’ Jerusalem enemies (the Pharisees) were not about to concede the case, for it was to Jesus’ great favor. He explained to both the people and the Pharisees what had taken place: “A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.”

Since this took place on the sabbath, the Pharisees said, “This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day.” Then they also tried to deny that he had been blind, so they consulted his parents who vouched for his being their son and that he had been born blind, but fear of losing their synagogue privilege caused them to say they did not know how he had gained his sight. They said, “He is of age; ask him.” When the Pharisees checked in with the healed man, an interesting exchange developed. The exchange showed the man really had a good mind, and when they could not answer his logic, they cast him out.

When Jesus found him, the grateful man acknowledged who Jesus was.

When Jesus stated in v. 39 why He had come in to the world, the Pharisees asked, “Are we blind also?” probably meaning, “Are you implying that we are blind?” Jesus said if they really were blind and could not see (which they weren’t—see John 15:22,24), they would not be accountable, but since they had the capability of seeing, He said, “Your sin remaineth.”

RESURRECTION OF LAZARUS **(John 11:17-54)**

This is one of the greatest miracles Jesus performed. It was for a family He much loved, caused many to believe on Him, and stirred His enemies in the Jewish Sanhedrin to determine to get rid of both Him and Lazarus.

When Lazarus's sisters sent word to Jesus that their brother was seriously sick, they expected Him to come to Bethany immediately. Instead He delayed leaving for two days. Jesus evidently preferred a resurrection miracle at that time, especially for the benefit of the apostles, over a mere healing miracle even though this necessary delay caused great grief to Mary and Martha. Later the grief this caused possibly caused Jesus to weep. The sister's duplicate remark to Him at His arrival, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died," carried the spirit of complaint. Another complaint was expressed by those who said, "Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?"

Jesus knew what He was going to do as He, His disciples, the sisters, and the sorrowing friends went to the tomb. When He said, "Take away the stone," Martha objected because by four days decomposition had set in. With the stone rolled back, Jesus cried, "Lazarus, come forth," loud enough for all to hear. To the amazement and joy of all there stood Lazarus alive!

Jesus did not use miracle power to remove the stone nor Lazarus's grave clothes (human hands could do those)—only to raise Lazarus which human power could not do.

RIDING AN UNBROKEN COLT **(John 12:12-19)**

The ride from Bethany over the ridge of the Mt. of Olives into Jerusalem was less than two miles. Some from Bethany accompanied Jesus all the way while some in Jerusalem came out to join Him when they heard the throng coming. The crowd was jubilant as the people shouted exclamations of praise concerning "the

King that cometh in the name of the Lord". They cut off palm branches and waved them, and they spread their garments in the way.

You might ask, "But where is the miracle in this event?" For Jesus to ride an unbroken colt is itself a marvel, but to ride an unbroken colt through a crowd of people, to ride an unbroken colt through a crowd waving palm branches, and to ride an unbroken colt through a boisterous, hollering crowd is in no way a natural accomplishment but indeed a miracle. Ask any horse owner or horse trainer. But Jesus did it! This miracle seems to be overlooked by traditional listings of Jesus' miracles, but it was indeed a miracle beyond a doubt.

QUESTIONS

1. Where did the last 4 miracles recorded in John take place?
2. What 2 possibilities did the disciples give for the man being born blind?
3. What did Jesus give as the real reason?
4. What did Jesus tell the blind man to do?
5. What about this miracle of healing did the Pharisees attack?
6. Why did the healed man's parents not say Jesus had healed their son?
7. When Jesus arrived in Bethany, what criticism did Lazarus's sisters give Jesus?
8. With what words did Jesus raise Lazarus?
9. What about the "Triumphal Entry" do we classify as a miracle?

JESUS' DESCRIPTIVE AND DOCTRINAL "I AMs"

Part I

Several times Jesus told who He was in various figurative terms. Because He was all He claimed to be, His "I AMs" do not sound boastful or egotistical. It is interesting that all of them are in the Gospel of John. We will devote two studies to them.

"THE BREAD OF LIFE" **(John 6:35)**

Just the day before, Jesus had performed the great miracle of feeding the five thousand. Miraculously multiplying five loaves and two small fish to feed such a multitude after which twelve basketfuls of fragments were taken up was so remarkable a miracle that not only John but all the other three gospel accounts record it--the first miracle recorded by all four writers!

Just prior Jesus and the Twelve had come in from their very successful third tour of Galilee. Kingdom-spirit was at an all-time high--so much so that the multitude wanted to crown Jesus king. But the kingdom of God was something God Himself would set up (Dan. 2:44), and it would be the kind of kingdom He had planned--a spiritual kingdom "not of this world" (John 18:36), one that would come without outward observation (Luke 17:20) like an earthly coronation, and one that would be entered by being born again, of water and the Spirit (John 3:5).

The double problem Jesus faced after this feeding was the misconception zeal of the multitude and the probable hurt feelings of the apostles. Both the Jewish people and the apostles were thinking in terms of an earthly kingdom, the kingdom to be a powerful Jewish kingdom headed by the Messiah with the apostles as the highest officials in it.

Let us look at the apostles' problem first. They no doubt felt good as they were prominent in the miracle--having the multitude sit

down in numbered groups, serving the bread and fish to them, and gathering up the fragments afterwards. But Jesus' refusal to set up the kingdom must have changed that spirit. Normally they would have remained with Jesus after He had sent the multitude away, but not on this occasion. According to Mark's account (6:45) He sent the twelve away in a boat as He sent the multitude to Capernaum by foot. Notice the statement, "He **CONSTRAINED** (made) His disciples to get into the ship, and go to the other side"—it wasn't their idea nor desire to be sent away. What was the matter? Presumably they were put out at Jesus over refusing the crown when they had been preaching the coming of the kingdom, and the people were ready for it.

Now Jesus was going to perform another mighty miracle principally for their sakes—walking on the water and calming the fierce storm on the sea. When He miraculously stopped the storm, Mark 6:51,52 says, "They were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure and wondered. For they considered not the miracle of the loaves"—why not?—"for their heart was hardened." It was important in view of what would come up the next day that they recognize that Jesus, the Messiah, was right in refusing the crown offered Him.

Next He must correct the multitudes' concept. The next morning they looked for Jesus on the east side of the sea where they had left Him. He wasn't there. They returned to Capernaum, and there He was. "How did you get here?" they wanted to know. He never told them, for He abruptly analyzed them when He said, "Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled." In other words, for earthly rather than spiritual reasons. So He told them, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you." How could they obtain this? By believing on Him whom God had sent—accepting Him just as He was, accepting what He taught, accepting His plans whatever they were.

Jesus' ultimate mission was not to feed them physical bread, whose benefits would not last, but to feed them spiritual bread that would satisfy their souls' hunger and would give them eternal life. Christ has always proven to satisfy: "Blessed are they which do

hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5:6); "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst" (John 4:14); "He that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (John 6:35).

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD **(John 8:12)**

As one reads the Bible, passage after passage uses "darkness" to apply to sin and the world of sin. Darkness and doom prevailed until Christ came. Mal. 4:2 called the Coming One the "Sun of righteousness". After Jesus came, John wrote, "In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness" (1:4,5); "That was the true light" (1:9). Matt. 4:16 says, "The people which sat in darkness saw a great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up."

Contrast Jesus' statement that He is the light of the world with any person now living. Who can truthfully say, "I am the light of my city," or, "I am the light of my county," or, "I am the light of the WORLD," and it is true—He has made such a difference! Christ has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light (I Pet. 2:9). Just as God is light (I John 1:5), and Jesus is the light of the world, so those who follow Christ will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life!

THE DOOR OF THE SHEEPFOLD **(John 10:9)**

Sheep were an important possession in Bible days. Shepherding was a way of life for many. Sheep might be in the pasture, or they might be in the sheepfold with stone walls. The walls protected them from predators, making the fold a place of safety. But there had to be a door by which they could enter. But when day came, and it was time for them to go out to pasture, that same door enabled them to go forth to graze. Thus, the sheepfold door admitted them to safety

and also allowed them to go forth for pasture and water. Jesus is the door to our safety (salvation) and also to our blessings here.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

(John 10:11)

In the same chapter of John Jesus declared Himself to be the "good shepherd". What makes Him "good"? He was going to lay down His life for the sheep! Was David a good shepherd to his sheep? Yes, he told Saul of his having killed a lion and a bear that tried to get his sheep. But in so doing it could have been otherwise—David could have been killed by either the lion or the bear. He wasn't, but Jesus gave His life for us (I Pet. 2:24,25).

QUESTIONS

1. Do Jesus' "I Am's" sound boastful?
2. Why did Jesus say after feeding the 5,000 that they were seeking Him?
3. What did Jesus say about Himself and "bread"?
4. What does it mean to you that Jesus is the light of the world?
5. As the door of the sheepfold, what blessing came to the sheep when the door was shut? When the door was open?
6. What did Jesus say a good shepherd does in behalf of his sheep?
7. Did Jesus do that for us?

JESUS' DESCRIPTIVE AND DOCTRINAL "I AMs"

Part II

THE TRUE VINE

(John 15:1-8)

Palestine was a land of grapes, especially from Jerusalem south. Individual homes not only had grapevines, but there were whole fields of grapes just as Kansas has fields of wheat and Iowa fields of corn. Grapes were an income crop and not merely a family fruit. Obviously they wanted and made their grapevines productive by pruning and care. Unfruitfulness was not tolerated.

Jesus not only spoke of Himself as the "vine" but characterized Himself as the "true vine". He was also the "true light" (1:9) and the "true bread" (6:32). There have always been fakes and impostors. Jesus spoke of some who had come before Him: "All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers" (10:8), not entering by the door but climbing up some other way (10:1). And He spoke of some who would come after He left: "Many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many" (Matt. 24:5). Jesus was no fake nor impostor but was true.

Back to the figure of the vine. Jesus spoke of Himself as the vine, of His followers as the branches, and of God as the husbandman (John 15:1,5). Grapes are borne on the branches, so He spoke of His pleasure over fruitful branches and of His displeasure over unfruitful branches. In our verses He spoke of "fruit" (v. 16), "more fruit" (v. 2), and "much fruit" (v. 8). As you can see, from His followers He wants fruit, then in time more fruit, and in the totality much fruit! We can do this by staying in close relationship with Christ (v. 5). A fruitless branch is one who does not stay in this close relationship (vs. 5,6).

What is the fruit we are to bear? The fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (Gal. 5:21,22) and also the fruit of souls converted or

harvested (John 4:35,36). Before conversion people's lives were unfruitful, for they gave themselves to the "unfruitful works of darkness" (Eph. 5:11). Notice the difference conversion to Christ makes. To Christians Paul wrote, "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now being free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" (Rom. 6:21,22). These statements precede the well known explanatory verse, Rom. 6:23: "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE **(John 14:6)**

Up to this time Jesus' "I AMs" have each involved only one comparison, and each has been a figure of speech, but with this "I AM", there are three things instead of one, and they are doctrinal as well as descriptive.

What "way" was Jesus talking about? Since the first of the chapter He had been talking about leaving them to return to the Father to prepare a heavenly place for them. When in v. 4 He said, "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know," Thomas did not understand and said, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?" (v. 5). It was in answer that Jesus said, "I am the way!" Jesus is the way to God and heaven, and in confirmation of this conclusion v. 6 ends, "No man cometh unto the Father, BUT BY ME." Similarly did Paul write, "There is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus" (I Tim. 2:5). This explains Christians' unique allegiance to and faith in Jesus. They believe as I John 5:11,12 says, "This is the record, that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

The "way" leads to "life" and the "truth" is related to both, for looking forward to the Gospel Age Jesus promised His followers, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). The Gospel is the truth that brings freedom from sin and its

guilt. Christianity began from Jesus' telling His apostles, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15,16). Paul said "the word of truth" is the "gospel of your salvation" (Eph. 1:13), and Peter wrote to Christians in Asia Minor, "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth...being born again...by the word of God" (I Pet. 1:22,23).

So Jesus is the "way" that leads to God, the "life" that we receive through Jesus, and the "truth" that gets us on that way.

THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE **(John 11:25,26)**

Here is another multiple claim by Jesus, and it is doctrinal rather than descriptive. It was uttered when He was at Bethany to raise Lazarus.

Do you have trouble with the statement, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die," when believers do die? It is a statement whose truth cannot be realized until we get to a specific point in time—the second coming of Christ (what is referred to as the "last day" several times in John: 6:39,40,44,54; 11:24; 12:48). Jesus will prove to be both "the resurrection and the life" at that same point in time. When He comes back, believers will be in two classes: the dead who will be raised (to this group Jesus will be "the resurrection") and the living believers who will never die (to this group He will be "the life"). These two groups of believers are also discussed in I Cor. 15:42-52 and I Thess. 4:13-17.

QUESTIONS

1. How familiar were the people of Palestine with grape-growing?
2. In Jesus' vineyard comparisons He said He was the _____, His disciples were the _____, and His Father was the _____.
3. In Jesus' teaching what makes a branch fruitful?

4. What makes a branch unfruitful?
5. What does God do to fruitful branches? Why?
6. What does He do to unfruitful branches?
7. List six of the nine characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit.
8. What other fruit are we to bear?
9. To where is Jesus "the way"?
10. What particular "truth" is He?
11. Satan and sin bring death, but Christ brings
12. When Jesus returns, to what group of believers will He be the "resurrection"?
13. To what group of believers will He be the "life"?

JESUS AND NAMED PEOPLE

Part I

Jesus' life was a ministry, and ministering involves people. Wherever Jesus went, there were people—multitudes of them! The Gospel of John tells us of Jesus and various ones of them. We will devote two studies to them.

HIS FIRST FOLLOWERS WHO LATER BECAME APOSTLES

Read John 1:35-51.

John the Baptist not only prepared the way for Jesus but ended up providing some of His first disciples. The first mentioned by name was Andrew. Andrew's companion on that occasion was not named, but there are good reasons for thinking it was John.

Andrew and John(?) were quietly trailing Jesus when He suddenly turned and asked what they were seeking. Their on-the-spot answer: "Where dwellest thou?" He showed them, and they spent a happy day with Him. During that day Andrew hurried off to find his brother Simon, telling him whom they had found. When he brought his brother to Jesus, He said to Simon, "Thou shalt be called Cephas" (meaning a "stone"). We know him more by his Greek name Peter than by his Aramaic name Cephas.

As Jesus was leaving Bethsaida for Galilee the next day, he called Philip to follow Him. Philip was from Bethsaida, Peter and Andrew's town. Thus that town provided the world with 1/4 of the original 12 apostles. However, that town's reception of Jesus was not generally good (Matt. 11:20,21). Philip has the distinction of being the first whose call to follow Jesus is recorded.

Before leaving with Jesus, Philip found Nathanael and told him he had found the Messiah. When he said, "Jesus of Nazareth," Nathanael being of Nazareth's neighbor town Cana (John 21:2) exclaimed, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?"

Philip said, "Come and see." As the two men approached Jesus, He spoke of Nathanael's fine character. "How do you know me?" Nathanael asked. Jesus' superhuman knowledge of Nathanael's being under a fig tree and of Philip's call of him there convinced Nathanael that Philip was correct. Jesus' reference to angels ascending and descending upon Him like upon a ladder has led scholars to think He was utilizing Jacob's ladder as a background (Gen. 28:12). This Philip is to be distinguished from the Philip of Acts 6:5. Nathanael later wore the surname Bartholomew as an apostle.

NICODEMUS

Read John 3:1-15.

Nicodemus is not mentioned in the Synoptics but appears three times in the book of John (chapters 3,7,19). He was a ruler or leader among the Jews, actually being of the Sanhedrin (John 7:45-51). The fact that he came to Jesus by night must have had some significance since it was mentioned in all three instances. It is usually thought it indicated his timidity at that time in believing what he did about Jesus. He was convinced of who Jesus was by His miracles.

When Nicodemus did not recognize Jesus' figurative language about being "born again", this was the first of such misunderstandings of Jesus' later uses of figurative language: the woman at the well concerning *the water* Jesus said He would give (John 4:10-15) and when He spoke of people eating His flesh and drinking His blood (John 6:51-56).

In Jesus' saying, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," He was speaking of New Testament conversion's entrance into the kingdom of God. The Great Commission and the conversion reports in the book of Acts explain to us what Jesus said to Nicodemus. Being "born of the Spirit" involves our hearing the Gospel, believing in and on Jesus for salvation, repenting of sin, and confessing our faith in Jesus. In baptism we are actually "born

of water” as a necessary part of the process of being “born of the Spirit”. Have you ever wondered why Nicodemus did not understand what Jesus was talking about? Because Jesus was giving him what we might call “preliminary teaching” since the Spirit had not yet been given (John 7:39), the baptism that brings a person into the kingdom had not yet been ordained, and the kingdom itself had not yet come.

Next read John 7:31-52.

When officers returned to the Pharisees and chief priests without arresting Jesus, the council members were upset and said so. When they said, “Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?” that was too much for the up-to-then silent Nicodemus, who spoke up, “Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?” We don’t know Nicodemus’s final reaction that day, but we do know that when a fellow Jewish leader (Joseph of Arimathea) abandoned the secrecy of his allegiance to Jesus to ask Pilate to release Jesus’ body to him for burial (John 19:38) that Nicodemus joined him in the entombment (John 19:39,40). This is the last Biblical mention of either of them, but it seems likely they would both have been among those baptized on the Day of Pentecost.

THE SAMARITAN WOMAN AND HER TOWNSPEOPLE

Read John 4:5-42.

In Jesus and the disciples going from Judea to Galilee He made it a point to travel through Samaria. The Samaritans would ultimately be included in the Great Commission (“all nations” of Matt. 28:19 and specifically by name in Acts 1:8). But right now the Jews had no dealings with Samaritans. Their isolation began more than 500 years before when the Jews refused the Samaritans’ offer to help rebuild their temple at Jerusalem (Ezra 4:2-4). Since Jesus’ future apostles were themselves Jews, He no doubt wanted their existing attitude broken down, for He was designed to become the “Savior of the world” (I John 4:14). His

disciples must have gotten the idea, for though they were forbidden to go to the Samaritans in the early commission before the crucifixion (Matt. 10:5,6), when the church at Jerusalem was scattered by persecution, Philip went to Samaria and preached (Acts 8:1,5) without needing the special vision and instructions necessary before Peter went to the Gentiles (Acts 10:9-20) and the rest of apostles to be convinced (Acts 11:1-18).

The woman had come to the ancient Jacob's Well to draw water for home use. Being weary at evening from the day's journeying Jesus asked her for a drink and in so doing opened the way for Him to talk with her about His having living water. In so doing He has taught us the possible use of a conversational topic to open the door for a spiritual topic in soul winning.

What Jesus said in John 7:37-39 ("If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified" helps us understand that in both instances He was talking about the indwelling Spirit to be enjoyed by converts later in the Christian dispensation. The indwelling Spirit is like a bubbling spring within us (a constant refreshing source) that results in such abundance that there is a great overflow out of our lives into the lives of others. What a great double-truth to those able to comprehend it!

What Jesus said about water was sufficient for the occasion, so He purposely next said something that would lead to great things for her townspeople: "Go call thy husband." When Jesus then gave her a read-out on her marital history (which was not complimentary), she was convinced this traveler whom she had earlier referred to as a "Jew" (verse 9) and later as "Sir" (verse 15) was indeed somebody special: a "prophet" (verse 19) and even "the Christ" (verse 29). Yes, they had the writings of Moses referred to as the Samaritan Pentateuch, probably obtained by them when a priest of the exiled Israelites was brought back to teach them about the God Jehovah (II Kings 17:23-28). On a later

occasion Jesus said, "Moses wrote of me" (John 5:46). See these predictions about the Christ in Moses' writings: Numb. 24:12-19; Gen. 49:10; and Deut. 18:18,19.

She was aware of the dispute existing between her people and the Jews concerning the correct place of worship, and she presented the problem to Jesus who flatly settled it for that time in favor of the Jews but went on to say that in the future the place of worship would not be important, but worshiping "in spirit and in truth" would be. We worship in "spirit" when we worship from our hearts and not just formally and in "truth" when we worship according to God's Word.

When the Samaritan woman said she knew the Messiah was coming, Jesus responded by saying He was the Messiah. Why did He come out and tell her when with His own people He merely demonstrated His deity and left them to draw their own conclusions—even John the Baptist (Matt. 11:2-6)? Because He was not staying in Samaria for any length of time by which she could draw such a conclusion, so He told her outrightly.

Her report to her townspeople assembled a great group around Jesus to see and hear Him. Liking what they were seeing and hearing they urged Him to stay some time with them. In His haste to get to Galilee He consented to remain with them two meaningful days that resulted in convincing many more concerning Him.

Though Jesus was physically weary when He arrived at the well, He became so rejuvenated from what was spiritually happening that He was not hungry when the disciples came back with food. Here was an example of "mind over matter", particularly a spiritual mind over even the normal needs of the physical body.

When Jesus called the fishermen, He said they would become "fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19). Here at Jacob's Well He envisioned them as future reapers of the ripe harvest fields of evangelism. Some who had sown the seed in the minds of people that the apostles would later reap were Moses and the prophets and more lately John the Baptist. One person sowing and another person

reaping is still taking place in evangelism today, and whether we have sown and another reaps or vice versa, both rejoice! How Jesus sought to encourage the coming labors of the disciples by assuring them with the words, "He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal!"

When Jewish pilgrims went to the annual Passover, it was field harvest time (Lev. 23:5,10,11). In John 2:13 Jesus and the disciples had gone to the previous Passover after which they went out into Judea for Jesus' Early Judean Ministry. Since here at the well it was only four months until the next harvest, they must have been in Jerusalem and Judea around eight months.

QUESTIONS

1. Jesus' first two disciples had been disciples of _____.
2. Who were they?
3. Which of them brought his brother to Jesus?
4. After Jesus called Philip, Philip brought _____ to Jesus.
5. Who was Nicodemus in everyday life?
6. At what time of day did he first come to Jesus?
7. What opening compliment did he pay Jesus?
8. What did Jesus say was necessary for entering God's kingdom?
9. What two other times does Nicodemus show up in the book of John?
10. At what famous well did Jesus sit and rest?
11. What surprised the Samaritan woman?
12. What did Jesus say about that well's water and the water He could give?
13. What did Jesus tell the woman about her marital history?

JESUS AND NAMED PEOPLE

Part II

HIS HALF-BROTHERS

Read John 7:2-8.

When Matt. 1:25 says Joseph knew not Mary till she had brought forth her firstborn son (Jesus), everything suggests that together they had later sons, which they did—James, Joses, Simon, and Judas (Matt. 13:55). These, of course, would be half-brothers to Jesus.

It appears that after Jesus' confrontation with Jerusalem Jews over healing the lame man at the pool on a sabbath and then claiming to be the Son of God (John 5:16-18) that Jesus purposely absented Himself from Jerusalem for the next 18 months—until it was a Feast of Tabernacle time.

We might wonder why His brothers would speak to Him as they did in our reading until the author John tells us they did not believe in Jesus. Now that raises an even greater occasion of wondering on our part: why didn't Jesus' own brothers believe in Him? We are not told, but there might be some very plausible reasons. First, their mother had probably not told them of His divine begetting because she hadn't even told her husband about it (Matt. 1:18-20). Second, since Jesus was a sinless child both in actions and attitude while they were normal children with occasional misconduct, several times Joseph and Mary may have said to them in some of their childhood misbehaviors and attitudes, "Why can't you be like Jesus?" or, "I wish you boys would be like Jesus." If so, just guess their resulting attitude. It would be like school boys' attitude toward a boy who always gets his lessons and always behaves and who gets called "Teacher's Pet". Another factor in their unbelieving attitude toward Jesus might be the result of the day they and their mother went to see Jesus but couldn't get into the house where He was teaching because of the crowd. When told that His mother and brothers

were without seeking Him, He said, "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?" And He said of His listeners, "Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Matt. 12:48-50). He may not have been disowning them, as His brothers may have taken it, but was using the occasion to point out that we have two families: our spiritual family as well as our physical family.

Not only would Jesus have a special desire for His brothers' salvation, but He no doubt realized the necessity of their getting straightened out before Pentecost, or they would be a stumbling block to others' believing. Well, before Pentecost notice what Acts 1:13,14 records: "And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with HIS BRETHREN." When did this important change take place in His brothers, and what brought it about?

This change had not yet taken place at the time of the crucifixion, for it would have been natural for them to have taken care of their mother instead of Jesus' committing her to the care of the apostle John (John 19:25-27). It seems their unbelief and ridicule of Jesus may have caused a rift between Mary and them.

There is a lone Biblical statement that sheds light on the matter. When listing some of the witnesses of the resurrected Christ, Paul said, "After that, he was seen of James" (I Cor. 15:7). Which "James"? Since it was necessary for an apostle to have seen Jesus after His resurrection (Acts 1:21,22; I Cor. 15:8; I Cor. 9:1), and since Jesus' brother James was a later addition to the apostles (Gal. 1:18,19)—even a leading apostle (Acts 15:13-22)—the I Cor. 15:7 appearance to James must have been the convincing time to him. Since Paul in I Cor. 15 was merely listing some of the resurrection witnesses, the brief account does not include the details which we would naturally like to know.

Evidently James went on to convince his three brothers about Jesus.

It is interesting that most Bible scholars consider the New Testament books of James and Jude to have been written by Jesus' brothers James and Jude.

MARY, MARTHA, AND LAZARUS

Read John 11:1-50 and John 12:9-16.

Our introduction to Mary and Martha is not in the book of John but in Luke 10:38-42 when Jesus was a guest in their home. John first mentions Lazarus in chapter 11 when he was critically ill. When the sisters sent word to Jesus, "He whom thou lovest is sick," it recognizes Jesus' previous friendship with Lazarus.

In the final weeks before Jesus' death He realized the need for an outstanding miracle for the ultimate faith of His apostles. Not to go to Bethany while Lazarus was so ill but to wait until he had died gave Him the opportunity to resurrect him rather than merely heal him. This possibly explains Jesus' statement to the apostles before going to Bethany to raise Lazarus, "Lazarus is dead, and I am glad FOR YOUR SAKES that I was not there, to the intent you may believe." When Jesus decided not to go to his sick friend in order to let him die, He knew that was going to result in a terrible grief for Mary and Martha.

When Jesus spoke to His disciples about going to Bethany, they reminded Him of the danger of returning to Judea after they had gotten out of there some time ago for safety reasons. When it became evident Jesus was returning, Thomas demonstrated some of the same cynical spirit for which is best noted as "doubting Thomas" when he said, "Let us go, that we may die with him."

Upon Jesus' arrival at Bethany both sisters individually said to Him, "If thou hadst been here, my brother had not died," obviously showing they were both critical of Jesus' delay in coming and that they had voiced their criticism of Jesus to one another before He arrived.

When Martha said, "But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee," you would think she was expecting Jesus to resurrect her brother now that He had arrived. But when she responded to Jesus' saying, "Thy brother shall rise again," by saying, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day," it seems she was not expecting an immediate resurrection. How do you account for this seeming contradiction? By the confused mind resulting from the emotional stress she had been under, causing her one moment to "hope" and another moment to "doubt".

The statement about Jesus' being the resurrection and the life has been considered in an earlier study.

"Jesus wept" is the shortest verse in the English Bible. But why did He weep? Was it because He was groaning in His spirit over their manifest unbelief (see both vs. 37,38 and v. 33)? Was it weeping with those who weep like we are taught to do in Rom. 12:15? Or was it because of the sorrow brought to them because of His decision to let Lazarus die so He could resurrect him instead of heal him? It may be either of them or a combination of all of them.

The resurrection of Lazarus presents a good lesson that God does not do for us what we can do for ourselves, reserving those things that He does for what we cannot do. They could roll the stone back, so He did not do that miraculously but said, "Take ye away the stone." But they could not raise Lazarus, so He said, "Lazarus, come forth," and he did. They could remove his graveclothes, so He did not do that miraculously but said, "Loose him, and let him go." In the same way, in prayer we should realize we are asking God's help for those things beyond us to accomplish and for which we will praise Him for doing.

This was the third recorded resurrection performed by Jesus, and they were all progressive in nature: Jairus's daughter had just died (Luke 8:41,42,49,54,55); the widow of Nain's son was being carried out for burial (Luke 7:11-15); Lazarus had been dead four days.

The raising of Lazarus was such an impressive miracle that it gained Jesus many additional followers so that the Jewish leaders decided that not only Jesus should be put to death (vs. 46-50) but Lazarus also (John 12:9-11).

Read John 12:1-8.

In a few days before the Passover when Jesus would be killed, a special meal was given for Him at Bethany (Mary, Martha, and Lazarus's town) in the home of a man called "Simon the Leper" (Matt. 26:6)—likely one who had been a leper but had been healed by Jesus. Lazarus is mentioned as being there, and Martha was helping serve, but the account's focus is on Mary and her anointing of Jesus.

Mary had prepared for the occasion by bringing a flask of very expensive ointment to anoint Jesus. John's account talks of anointing His "feet" while Matt. 26:7 talks of anointing His "head". No wonder Jesus called it anointing His "body" for its burial (Matt. 26:12).

John's account tells of Judas Iscariot's criticizing the woman for "this waste", noting how much it could have been sold for, with the money going to the poor. Our author John throws in why Judas raised this criticism—not because he was thinking of the poor but because he carried the group's bag and at times helped himself to what was in it. How expensive was this ointment? A day's wages for a common worker in those times was a "penny" (Greek: "denarius") (Matt. 20:2). Mary's ointment was valued at "300 pence" (Greek: "denarii")—equal to a common worker's wages for a whole year, triggering Judas's criticism and causing the apostles to join in his criticism (Matt. 26:8). The apostles were sincere in their criticism, but Judas wasn't, showing that good people can sometimes be drawn into bad people's plots. The expensiveness of this ointment suggests that Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were not poor. If they were rich, then Jesus had friends among the rich as well as among the poor.

QUESTIONS

1. What were the names of Jesus' four half-brothers?
2. What surprising attitude did they have about Jesus?
3. How do we know they later had a different attitude?
4. What recorded event may have accounted for the change in them?
5. Why did the apostles think it unwise to return to Judea about the Lazarus situation?
6. What was the attitude toward Jesus by Martha and Mary upon His arrival at Bethany?
7. What is the shortest verse in the English Bible?
8. What two earlier resurrections had Jesus performed?
9. Which of Lazarus's sisters anointed Jesus in the house of Simon the leper?
10. Why did Judas lead out in criticizing her for this?

GREAT DISCOURSES AND DISPUTATIONS

Jesus was indeed a teacher come from God as Nicodemus said (John 3:2), and He did bring the words of eternal life as Peter said (John 6:68). This made Him the great teacher He was, and at the same time it brought Him into direct conflict with certain leaders who did not accept Him.

READ JOHN 5:1-47

Jesus' healing the man on the sabbath brought the oft-expressed criticism, "He broke the sabbath." His reply that He worked just as His Father worked all days of the week (probably meaning God keeps the universe operating, listens to and works to answer prayers, takes account of the deeds of people in view of the Judgment Day, etc.) brought the more serious objection: "You make yourself equal to God!" The rest of the chapter presents Jesus' most extended recorded defense of His deity! He called various witnesses to "testify" concerning Him. But first He gave His own testimony.

From v. 19 through v. 30, over and over He did two things: (1) He made many statements in which God was the "Father", and He was the Father's "Son"; and (2) He affirmed statements reflecting His close connection with the Father in which the Son does what He sees the Father doing; because the Father loves the Son, He shows Him all things He does; the Father has committed all things to the Son; all who honor the Father should also honor the Son; the Son has life in Himself even as the Father has in Him; the Son will raise both the spiritually and physically dead; and the Son is obedient to the will of the Father.

But after the above self-testimony Jesus began summoning other witnesses. He first called on John the Baptist. They were aware that John had testified concerning Jesus.

He next called on the miracles God had empowered Him to do—just as Peter would preach on Pentecost (Acts 2:22). In referring to the Father’s testimony, Jesus could have been referring to His miracles performed by the power of God, or He could have been referring to God’s testimony at His baptism.

Jesus next referred to the testimony of their Old Testament Scriptures in which they erroneously thought they had eternal life. But Jesus affirmed that those Scriptures testified of Him who came to bring that eternal life. We know that both Old Testament types and Old Testament prophecies pointed to Jesus for their fulfilment as Paul wrote, “Christ is the end of the law” (Rom. 10:4). Jesus came to fulfill the law and the prophets (Matt. 5:17). No wonder on this occasion Jesus said, “Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.”

READ JOHN 8:21-59

According to v. 20 Jesus was in the temple. He told His critics He was going away, and where He was going they could not go. Puzzled, they wondered if maybe He was going to kill Himself. He went on to tell them He was from above and they from beneath, and that He was not of this world but they were. He also told them that since they did not believe on Him, they would die in their sins. On hearing this they asked, “Who art thou?”

Jesus spoke in veiled language of His coming crucifixion (“When ye have lifted up the Son of man...”). See John 12: 32, 33 for similar language and its meaning. As He continued speaking, “many believed on him”—probably not His critics. Those who believed on Him, He urged to continue in His teaching, promising that they would be His disciples indeed and would know the truth that would make them free.

Why they said they had never been in bondage to any man, it is hard to tell, for even though they were Abraham’s offspring they were then under Rome, at one time the nation had been in Babylonian Captivity, and before the Exodus had been slaves in Egypt.

But the freedom Jesus was talking about was freedom from sin, explaining that whoever commits sin (which they all had) was in slavery to sin. He explained that a servant might not always belong to his existing household (he could be sold), but that the son was permanent to the household. If Jesus (the Son) set them free, they would indeed be free!

From what He said beginning in v. 37 it would seem He went back to talking to His critics. With that verse He initiated one of the hottest word-exchanges in the Bible when He spoke of His Father and of their father. When they retorted that Abraham was their father, He showed they were not acting like Abraham in seeking to kill Him. They further claimed God to be their Father, they not being idolatrous (figurative language: "fornication"). Jesus cast further doubt on God being their Father and then finally came right out and told them, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of our father ye will do." Their father was a "murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth...He is a liar, and the father of it." This and later accusations against them caused them to accuse Jesus of being a "Samaritan" and possessing a "demon" (about the lowest names they could call Him).

When Jesus went on to say that if a person kept His saying, he would never die (eternal death), they took it as physical death and argued against His statement in view of Abraham and the prophets having died. When Jesus said Abraham rejoiced to see His day, this called for another denial on their part. Finally they took up stones to kill Jesus, but again He delivered Himself from them.

READ JOHN 10:22-39

At the last Feast of Dedication in Jesus' life a group of Jews gathered around Him in the temple demanding that if He was the Christ to come out and say so. He had said (like John 5:19-26), but they could use a direct statement, "I am the Christ," better against Him. Jesus contrasted them with His true followers who not only hear Him and follow Him and to whom He will give

eternal life. People who believe in “once saved always saved” try to use what Jesus said about no one being able to snatch them out of His hand to prove their concept. Any follower of Jesus determined to be His is safe in the Divine hand, but if one himself leaves that hand, He is no longer safe and divinely preserved. Yes, we can depart from the living God (Heb. 3:12). But in refuting the false, let us not overlook this precious promise concerning those who are devoted followers of Jesus. Since Jesus had just spoken of the safety of those in His hand and in the Father’s hand, it presented the opportunity to say, “I and my Father are one.” So infuriated were they at that statement that they were ready to stone Him when He presented a matter that stumped them: if Psa. 82:1 called Israel’s judges “gods”, why was Jesus guilty of blasphemy because He said He was the Son of God? When they could not answer Him, again they sought to take Him and again were unsuccessful in the attempt.

READ JOHN 7:10-39

At the Feast of Tabernacles there was much discussion concerning Jesus, some saying He was a good man and some that He was a deceiver. When He arrived about the middle of the feast, He went to the temple and taught. When some wondered how He could teach, having not been taught in their rabbinical schools, He told them His teaching came from God who sent Him, and that they should know whether His teaching was of God or of His own making.

It appears Jesus had not been in Jerusalem since they tried to stone Him eighteen months earlier at the Passover for healing the man at the Pool of Bethesda and claiming to be the Son of God. When He charged them with not keeping the law of Moses for going about to kill him, they didn’t realize He was referring to that incident a year and a half before and said He had a demon to make such a statement.

Referring to that healing on the sabbath, He showed that what He had done was no more a violation of the law than when a child

is circumcised on the eighth day when that day fell on the sabbath. He called on them to judge righteous judgment.

Then some did recall that the rulers had sought to kill Jesus and wondered why nobody was taking Him now. They said surely the rulers have not come to believe on Him because it was known where Jesus was from, but their concept was that when the Messiah came, nobody would know where He came from.

Those who did believe on Jesus asked a good question, "When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?" On hearing things like this the Jewish leaders sent officers to arrest Jesus. Later when the soldiers came back without Jesus, the leaders asked them, "Why have ye not brought him?" (v. 45). They answered, "Never man spake like this man" (v. 46). Among other things the soldiers heard was, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water," referring to the indwelling gift of the Holy Spirit that in the Christian dispensation would be given those who accepted Jesus.

QUESTIONS

1. What heavier accusation than healing the man at pool on the sabbath did Jesus' critics bring against Him?
2. How did Jesus answer their heavier criticism?
3. What did Jesus mean by "when ye have lifted up the Son of man"?
4. What did Jesus tell His believers would make them free?
5. Who did Jesus say His critics' father was?
6. What did Jesus say about their father?
7. What did Jesus say about the security of those in His and the Father's hand?
8. Why did the soldiers who were sent to arrest Jesus come back without Him?

PROMINENT WORDS IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Some words stand out in various Bible books because of their frequent use in them. That is true of the Gospel of John. Let us notice several of them.

BELIEF

Historically Jews believed in God. Jesus came with the idea of being believed on just as they believed in God: "Ye believe in God, believe also in me" (John 14:1). Jews likewise believed in Moses' writings. Jesus wanted them to believe on Him, because Moses "wrote of me" He said (John 5:46).

John was an eye witness and a fellow-companion of Jesus, and he wrote so that we might believe (John 20:30,31). We who live today believe on Jesus because of the word of John and the other apostles (John 17:20,21), and we are specially blessed for it (John 20:29).

As we follow the account of Jesus and His ministerial labors, we observe He was really pleased when people believed on Him. To blind Bartimaeus He said, "Thy faith hath made thee whole" (Mark 10:52). He said the same to the woman who touched His garment in order to be healed (Matt. 9:22). To the woman with the demonized daughter He said, "O woman, great is thy faith" (Matt. 15:28). Concerning the Capernaum centurion Jesus said, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel" (Matt. 8:10). Since He is the unchanging Christ (Heb. 13:8), He still notices faith and is pleased with it.

Faith in Jesus is not only a good thing but a necessary thing (John 8:24; Mark 16:16). Unbelief of the Divine has always been serious with God, and you can see why. Notice, for instance, in Num. 13:1,2,15-28, 31:14:2-11,26-35 God's reaction to unbelief.

By way of contrast, notice what the Gospel of John says about those who do believe (John 1:12; 3:16,18,36; 5:24). Jesus is the

Savior of the world in whom we are to believe and by whom we enjoy a saved relationship with God now and in the world to come, so let us have a strong faith in Him.

The four gospel accounts cover the earthly life of Jesus, but it is for the book of Acts that follows them to show how believers express their faith in Jesus in order to be added by Him. In Acts 2:37,38 we see what convicted believers were told to do to be saved. Salvation was possible to them by responding to the Lord's requirements (Acts 2:40,41). Most translations other than the King James bring out the Greek in John 3:36 when they show that obedience is involved in Biblical faith.

LOVE

Love is another great word in John's writings, both in his gospel account and in his epistles.

John tells us that it was God's love that caused Him to give His only begotten Son for our salvation (John 3:16), that He sent Him into the world to save the world (John 3:17). Several times in John it also speaks of the love of the Father for His Son (10:17; 15:9), which made it difficult for Him to have Jesus die on the cross for us.

Then John 13:1 speaks of Jesus' love for His disciples, and He demonstrated the greatest love possible when He gave His life for us (John 15:13). In turn He wants us to love one another as He loved us (John 13:34; 15:12,17). Such love for one another is an indication to the world that we are indeed Jesus' disciples (John 13:35).

It is one thing to profess to love Jesus and another thing to show it. The real indication that we love Him is shown in our keeping His commandments (John 14:15,21,23).

Finally John 15:9,10 speaks of the Father loving Jesus, of Jesus loving us, and that we abide in Christ's love by keeping His commandments. And John 16:27 tells us that the Father loves us because we love His Son Jesus.

Actually, as you may have noticed, the statements about love in the gospel of John are for the most part very simple statements, but they contain a world of meaning. As Christians, God's commandment to us in I John 3:23 is that "we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another."

TRUTH

The dictionary defines "truth" as "agreement with fact, actuality." It is the opposite of "false, falsehood, unreal".

In a study of the Gospel of John it appears that the "truth" it talks about is the specialized truth of the Gospel. Keep this in mind as we proceed.

Jesus said to those who then believed on Him that if they would continue in His word, they would know the truth, and that that truth would make them free—free from sin (John 8:31-36). Obviously Jesus was not talking about truth in just any field but the truth of the Gospel, for it alone would bring salvation (Rom. 1:16). Now we can see why Jesus spoke of that truth as then being future when He said, "Ye SHALL know the truth," and, "the truth SHALL make you free."

We see this further brought out in the contrast stated in John 1:17: "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Jesus was "full of grace and truth" (John 1:14), and it is from His fulness that we have all received grace upon grace (John 1:16).

Jesus was telling the truth, even though Pilate did not understand what He was talking about, when He said, "For this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth" (John 18:37). All of Jesus' ministerial teachings had in some way to do with man's need, God's coming provision, and what would be expected of His followers. In the then coming dispensation Jesus would be "the way" to God, "the truth" that would set people free, and "the life" they would receive through Him (John 14:6).

The Holy Spirit who would come and during the gospel age reveal this truth through Christ's apostles and their helpers (the New Testament prophets) was repeatedly called the "Spirit of truth" by Jesus (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13). Jesus said that when He would come, He would guide them into "all truth" (John 16:13).

We Christians now worship the Father "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24), and we are being sanctified "through the truth", God's Word (John 17:17).

LIFE

Life is another prominent word in the book of John.

One of Jesus' own statements as to why He came into the world was "that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). That life would consist of spiritual life while we are here and eternal life in the future! Our faith in Christ will lead to the life through Him (John 20:31).

Several of Jesus' "I AM's" connect Him with "life": "I am the bread of life" (John 6:35); "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12); "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:25,26); "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6).

Jesus promised that those who drank of the water He would give them would have in themselves a well of water springing up into everlasting life (John 4:14). Many other passages in John speak of eternal life being through Christ (John 3:16,36; 5:24; 6:27,33,40,47; 6:33,40,47,51; 10:29). In fact, Jesus said that eternal life is to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom God sent (John 17:3).

It is a sad fact that many expect to gain eternal life through other sources than Jesus. For instance, the Jews of His time thought that in the Old Testament system they had eternal life (John 5:39), and for that reason they did not accept Jesus that

they might really have life (v. 40). Jesus stated it like this: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you" (John 6:53).

In I John 5:11,12 John also wrote, "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

These four words (belief, love, truth, and life) are not the only prominent words in the Gospel of John, but they are very important, and they are all doctrinally related.

QUESTIONS

1. Why, according to John 20:31, did John write his gospel account?
2. Cite instances where people's faith really pleased Jesus?
3. What does John 3:16 say about God's love for humanity?
4. How does the world know we are Christ's disciples?
5. What specialized truth does John have in mind by "truth"?
6. What great blessing did Jesus say would come from knowing this truth?
7. What word does the gospel of John closely ally with truth? Fill in the blanks: "_____ and truth came by Jesus Christ;" Jesus was full of _____ and truth."
8. Acceptable worship must be in _____ as well as in truth?
9. Jesus came that we might have _____ and have it more _____.
10. In whom does John say life is to be found?

FOUR RESURRECTION APPEARANCES IN JOHN

After Jesus arose from the dead, He spent forty more days on earth before returning to heaven (Acts 1:3). During this period He made around a dozen recorded appearances, "not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God" (Acts 10:41). There may have been some appearances not recorded, but here are eleven of them found in various New Testament books:

1. Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9; John 20:1-18) in the garden the first day of the week.

2. The other women (Matt. 28:2-10) on their way to break the good news to the apostles the day of the resurrection.

3. Peter (I Cor. 15:5) the day of the resurrection.

4. Two men going to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-15) the day of the resurrection.

5. The apostles in the upper room with Thomas absent (John 20:19-24) the day of the resurrection.

6. Five hundred (I Cor. 15:6) before the next Sunday.

7. James (I Cor. 15:7) before the next Sunday.

8. The apostles with Thomas present (John 20:26-28) a week after the resurrection.

9. The apostles at the Sea of Galilee (John 21:1-23) sometime later.

10. The apostles on a mountain in Galilee (Matt. 28:16-20) sometime later.

11. The apostles the day of the ascension (Luke 24:50,51).

Four of the above appearances are recorded by John—all at Jerusalem except the seaside appearance. Let us look at John's four.

TO MARY MAGDALENE

(Read John 20:1-18)

From a study of all the gospel accounts it appears that Mary Magdalene (so-called because she was from Magdala to distinguish her from the other Marys) was only one of the women who went to the tomb with spices early that first day of the week. They were no doubt stunned to find the stone rolled back from the door of the tomb. It further appears that Mary immediately left the tomb and the other women to run to tell Peter and John about it. In haste Peter and John leave the upper room and race to the tomb, John arriving first and waiting for Peter before entering the empty tomb. After seeing the grave clothes they departed not knowing what had happened. After running to tell Peter and John no doubt she couldn't keep up with their foot race and so got back to the tomb after they had left.

When she got back to the tomb and was alone, she cried because of what she thought had happened to the body of Jesus. When she looked into the open tomb and saw two angels, one at where Jesus' head been and the other where His feet had been, she had to be stunned. This was different than she had expected. When they asked her why she was weeping, she said, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." When she turned, she saw Jesus but did not recognize Him, maybe because of her tears but more probably because, like the two men going to Emmaus, His identity was momentarily withheld from her. Jesus also asked her why she was weeping. This time her answer reflected that she thought Him to be the gardener who had probably removed the body to another place. Her offer to take the body off his hands and entomb it elsewhere implies she would purchase a sepulcher, reflecting her great devotion to Jesus. At that moment Jesus called her name, and she immediately recognized Him. She was actually the first person to see the resurrected Christ (Mark 16:9)!

Since Jesus in later appearances invited the doubting Thomas to touch His wound (John 20:27), and the Galilean women did

touch Him (Matt. 28:9), to conclude from the words, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father," to mean He could not be touched before His ascension is not correct. Since He told her instead of remaining with Him to go report His resurrection to the apostles offers an explanation for her not to touch Him at that time.

She did leave and did report to the apostles, but they did not believe her report (Mark 16:10,11).

TO THE APOSTLES (Read John 20:19-25)

Jesus' appearance to the two men of Emmaus, reported in detail in Luke 24:13-31, had taken place, and they had returned to the upper room in Jerusalem to tell the apostles about it (Luke 24:32-35), who didn't believe them either (Mark 16:12,13). It was actually when those two men were making their report that Jesus made this appearance (Luke 24:36). What a moment for Jesus to make His first appearance to the apostles—when again they were expressing their disbelief!

John's account of His appearance is more gracious to the apostles than Mark's account (Mark 16:10-14). In John Jesus pronounced, "Peace," to them, and they were "glad". Interspersed but not reported in John is what is reported in Luke 24:37-43. After His second pronouncement of "Peace", He began speaking to them about their coming role: "As the Father hath sent me, so send I you...Whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." V. 21 coincides with the double work of Jesus and His messengers in II Cor. 5:19,20: God was IN CHRIST reconciling the world unto Himself, and God beseeches the lost BY HIS MESSENGERS.

Since the apostles were to tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high (Luke 24:49), and the Holy Spirit came upon them on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4), the statement in John ("receive ye the Holy Spirit") has spawned several possible explanations. Your writer's conclusion is that the

remitting and retaining sins would not be based on their judgment but on their being inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Don't overlook the importance of the inspired apostles' place in our forgiveness. Forgiveness of sin is not based on how we feel, not on the conflicting teachings of denominations and cults, but on the New Testament teachings of the apostles! Be sure, therefore, that your claim to be forgiven rests solidly on their teaching. Be convinced as Christians that much of your personal work will be with religious people whose hope of salvation is not a Bible-based hope.

We do not know how it happened that Thomas was absent on this momentous occasion. His singular absence robbed him of what took place—like people who miss whatever is said or done when they miss a church service. Don't ever miss!

Thomas must have first-hand proof of Jesus' resurrection just like the others. On one hand we should regret they were so hard-hearted while on the other hand we should be glad they had to have real proof since our belief in Jesus is based on their testimony (John 17:20).

TO THOMAS WITH THE APOSTLES **(Read John 20:26-29)**

A week after the above appearance Jesus checked back with the apostles. Again He entered through closed doors. Some teach that even before He ascended He had a glorified body that permitted Him to pass through closed doors. But did He have a celestial body when he ate fish and honeycomb (Luke 24:41-43), when He invited Thomas to feel His wounds, and when He spoke of having flesh and bones (Luke 24:39)? Passing through closed doors was a miracle which He was always capable of doing whenever He chose.

Jesus' superhuman knowledge manifested itself again as He spoke first, saying to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing." The account never says

whether Thomas carried out his avowed statement, but whether he did or didn't, he exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!"

Yes, it would be great to have seen Jesus, to have beheld His miracles, to have heard Him teach, and even to have seen Him after He arose, but Jesus did not leave us out when He said to Thomas, "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Like us, many to whom Peter wrote I Pet. had not seen Jesus, and notice what he wrote them: "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (I Pet. 1:8).

TO SEVEN APOSTLES AT THE SEA OF GALILEE (Read John 21:1-24)

From the beginning Jesus had planned to appear to the apostles in Galilee (Matt. 28:7). So far, though, His appearances to them had been in Jerusalem. He had evidently sent them to Galilee, and while they were waiting, seven of them went night fishing on the Sea of Galilee. No, the veteran fisherman Peter and the others with him were not giving up following Jesus to return to the fishing business—they needed food and money.

Their night of fishing had produced no positive results. The stage was set thereby for Jesus to make an early morning appearance. Again He was not immediately recognized. Why would they cast their net at the direction of a total "stranger"? Because "the movements of large bodies of fish in the waters of Galilee are frequently visible to one standing on the shore. Supposing that the stranger thus saw fish upon the right side of the boat, the disciples readily obeyed his command without suspecting who it was that gave it" (Fourfold Gospel, page 754). Their cast netted 153 large fish by count. John, ("the disciple whom Jesus loved") sensed it was Jesus and said so. Immediately Peter swam to shore, and when the others moored to shore, he helped them drag the full net in. Jesus had a fire going and fish

frying and invited them to bring some of their fish for a breakfast meal.

Peter having earlier denied Jesus three times, Jesus three times questioned him concerning his love for Him. Each time Peter affirmed his love, and each time Jesus assigned him a job—to feed His sheep and lambs. Jesus then foretold the ultimate death Peter would die for Him (Peter never forgot it—II Pet. 1:13,14). Christian tradition said he did die a martyr's death.

Seldom was Peter left with nothing to say. When Jesus told him what he was to do, he wanted to know what John was to do. In contrast, when we know what we are to do, we should do it regardless of what others are to do or not do. Jesus said as much: "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me." The other apostles thought Jesus had said John would never die, which the gospel writer notes was not true. But when John outlived all the others, they probably felt their conclusion had been correct.

In conclusion, just why at the prompting of the Spirit these specific appearances and not any of the others are recorded in the Gospel of John, is left to our wonderment.

QUESTIONS

1. Name the four resurrection appearances recorded by John.
2. On what day of the week and where did Jesus appear to the first person who saw Him after He arose?
3. Why did Jesus' statement, "Touch me not," not indicate that He had an untouchable body?
4. What was the apostles' reaction to the reports that others had seen Jesus?
5. Why did Jesus give special attention to Thomas in His second appearance to the apostles?
6. Which apostle came into the spotlight at the breakfast along the Sea of Galilee?

FAREWELL MATERIAL TO THE APOSTLES

Jesus formally chose the original twelve apostles the day of the Sermon on the Mount (Luke 6:1:12-20ff). That was two years before the crucifixion. However, some of the Twelve had traveled with Him more than a year earlier. Thus some of the apostles had been with Jesus on a day-to-day basis for two years and some for three. At this 30 A.D. Passover, commonly called the "Last Supper", Jesus spoke at length to them in preparation for His heavenly departure. This farewell material is found in three chapters of John (chapters 14, 15, and 16) and in the book of John only.

CHAPTER 14

What church-going person has not heard the words of vs. 1-3 at a funeral? Naturally the apostles were going to be sorrowful at Jesus' departure. He told them why He was going away (to prepare a place in God's mansions for them). Then in time He would come back for them (the second coming). Doctrinally this is elaborated in I Thess. 4:16-18.

When Jesus said they knew where He was going and how to get there, Thomas claimed ignorance of both at which Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." He is the way to God, the truth that frees men so they can go to heaven, and the life He came to give. When He said, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me," He was saying about Himself what later inspired speakers and writers said and wrote (Acts 4:12 and I Tim. 2:5).

When Philip expressed the desire to see God, Jesus replied, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." The closeness of Jesus and the Father was manifested in Jesus' words and miraculous works. Then it was that Jesus said they also would do miracles as He had (and they did—note their miracles in Acts) plus what He called "greater works". Their miracles in Acts would be

a part of their evangelistic work. Why would their evangelistic works be greater than their miracles? Miracles would open physically blind eyes, but their preaching would open spiritually blind eyes (Acts 26:18). Miracles would resurrect people from physical death and give them a few more years of earthly life, but their evangelistic work would resurrect them from spiritual death and ultimately give them everlasting life (Eph. 2:1; Rom. 6:23).

There will be something about prayer in each of these chapters. See 14:13,14; 15:7; 16:23,24. It is either an instruction to pray, to pray in Jesus' name as our mediator, or a promise of answered prayer.

In v. 15 Jesus spoke about loving Him and keeping His commandments. Notice vs. 21,23,24 in this connection. The same connection between love and obedience is found in John 15:10; I John 2:5; II John 6. It is also interesting to compare John 14:15 and John 15:14.

Next Jesus began telling about the Holy Spirit who would come upon them on the Day of Pentecost. There is teaching about the Holy Spirit in all three chapters (14:16-18,23,26; 15:26; 16:7-15). He would inspire the apostles to know the divine truths they were to proclaim and record. This is why He is called the "Spirit of truth". He would call to their remembrance all that Jesus had taught them, and then He would finish teaching them the things Jesus could not while with them because they were not able then to receive them. Note too that the Holy Spirit in finishing the teaching would guide the apostles into "all truth". Now if He guided them into all truth, there is no further truth to be revealed after their deaths. We, therefore, reject all purported latter-day revelations to Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, Mary Baker Eddy, or anybody else. In revealing gospel truth the Holy Spirit would convict the world of the sin of rejecting Jesus, of the righteousness of Jesus and that is obtainable through Him, and of the doom of Satan (the usurping prince of this world). The inspired preaching of Peter on Pentecost enabled the Spirit to begin this important work (Acts 2:4,37).

In v. 27 Jesus raised the subject of "peace" and spoke further about it in 16:33. This peace would be needed by them because of His going away and because of the persecuting hardships that would befall them. We will study their coming persecution in both chapters 15 and 16.

Let us note in the last verse of Chapter 14 Jesus said, "Arise, let us go hence." We assume that after the Passover meal and Judas's departure that Jesus began this farewell material in the upper room, and that before continuing with the Chapters 15 and 16 material He said, "Let us go hence." Where were they going? From where they were (the southwest part of Jerusalem) across town and out the east gate of Jerusalem to the Garden of Gethsemane at the foot of the Mt. of Olives. Since they did not get to Gethsemane until John 18:1, the two-chapter material and His John 17 prayer took place on the way to Gethsemane. We conclude from Mark 14:26 that together they sang a hymn just before leaving the upper room.

CHAPTER 15

Grape growing was a prominent matter in Palestine. Three of Jesus' parables spoke of it (the vineyard workers in Matt. 20:1-16, the two sons in Matt. 21:28-32, and the wicked husbandmen in Matt. 21:33-45). So when Jesus said He was the vine, His followers were the branches, and His Father was the husbandmen, they understood what He was talking about. Naturally the purpose of a vineyard was to produce fruit, and the fruit was produced by the branches. So in this figurative language Jesus was indicating His followers' lives should be fruitful. Let us realize that in these two chapters to the apostles, some material had to do with them as apostles (like their inspiration by the Spirit) while some had to do with them as His followers. The material relating to them as followers is equally applicable to us today while the material to them as apostles is not.

There are two kinds of fruit expected of all Christ's followers: the fruit of the Spirit in Gal. 5:22,23 and the fruit of soul winning

in John 4:35,36. Notice the necessity of being a fruit-bearing disciple and what will happen to us if we are not (vs. 2,6). Notice that it is as important to abide in Christ as it is to accept Him in the first place. Notice "abide" in vs. 4,5,6,7,10, "continued" in v. 9, and "keep" in v. 10. We are to grow (II Pet. 3:18)—not draw back (Heb. 10:38,39).

Having spoken to them earlier at the Passover meal about loving each other (13:34,35), He raised the subject again in vs. 12,13,17. Jesus recognized there are various degrees of love when He said the greatest love is when one is willing to lay down his own life for his friends—which He did and which He wants us to do if the occasion arises for it (I John 3:16).

Knowing from other Scriptures that Christians are to serve (Matt. 4:10; Matt. 6:24; Rom. 12:1), even being called servants (Rom. 1:1; Jas. 1:1; II Pet. 1:1; Jude 1), we are somewhat surprised to hear Jesus say, "I call you not servants." What did He mean? In His day a man might have both servants (slaves) and friends. He did not converse about things with his slaves like he did with his friends. It is in this sense that Jesus thought of His followers as friends and not as slaves.

While Jesus' apostles (and followers) agree with Jesus' choosing them, it was really Jesus who first chose the apostles and us (v. 16). An example would be His calling the fishermen (Luke 5:1-11).

Next Jesus turned His attention to the coming persecutions the apostles would face (vs. 18-20), a very definite matter in the book of Acts. Persecution of Christians has always been as Jesus said—because they are Christians and are not of the world. Paul affirmed that all who would live godly in Christ Jesus will experience some kind of persecution (II Tim. 3:12). Jesus' most elaborated beatitude had to do with being persecuted for righteousness' sake (Matt. 5:10-12). The righteousness of Jesus was hated without a justifiable reason (v. 25), and it is the same with Christians.

In vs. 22-24 Jesus showed that opportunity brings responsibility. The more people know and the greater advantage

they have, the more responsible they are as a result (Luke 12:47,48; Matt. 10:14,15; Matt. 11:20-24).

CHAPTER 16

Returning to the subject of persecution, v. 2 speaks of Jewish persecutions incited for religious reasons. Surely the extreme persecution against the church by Saul of Tarsus was an example. After his conversion he explained, "I did it ignorantly in unbelief" (I Tim. 1:13); "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth, which thing I also did" (Acts 26:9,10).

In vs. 5,6 Jesus spoke of going His way to the Father in the ascension, but even before that He said, "In a little while ye will not see me, and again, a little while, and ye shall see me," referring to His death (gone) and resurrection (back again). Over His death they would "weep and lament" while the world would "rejoice", but His resurrection would turn their sorrow to joy.

Jesus closed the chapter and this farewell material by foreseeing their abandoning Him and scattering in different directions, which they did when He was arrested in Gethsemane later that night. But He said God would not abandon Him—He didn't; He sent an angel to strengthen Him (Luke 22:43).

QUESTIONS

1. How long had some of the apostles been with Jesus on a day-to-day basis?
2. Jesus' "farewell material" to His apostles is found in what chapters of the New Testament?
3. With what well known material did Jesus begin this farewell talk?
4. What well known statement begins, "I am the way, the..."
5. What coming works of the apostles did Jesus say would be greater than His miracles?
6. What did Jesus say the Holy Spirit would do after He

came?

7. What did Jesus say about their coming persecutions?
8. What did Jesus say in the closing part of this material?

JESUS' "VERILY, VERILYS"

No doubt as you have read through Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, you have noticed Jesus opening various statements with either "Verily I say unto you" or "Verily, verily I say unto you". Such is noticeable to us because it is not a usual way of speaking. Let us look into the matter.

FACTUAL OBSERVATIONS

All the cases of a single "verily I say unto you" are found in Matthew, Mark, and Luke and not once in the gospel of John. On the other hand, all the cases of a double "Verily, verily I say unto you" are in John and none in the other three accounts. Altogether there are 50 single "verilys" in Matthew, Mark, and Luke and 25 double "verily, verilys" in John. The Greek word from which it is translated is "amane" from which our English word "amen" comes. While the King James and other versions translate it "verily", some versions translate "truly" and some "indeed". All three of the above translations show that Jesus' statements which they introduce are **EMPHATICALLY TRUE!** The New International Version translates it, "It is the truth."

SOME DOUBLE "VERILYS" IN JOHN

JOHN 3:3,5—Jesus was in Jerusalem for the annual Passover, and John 2:23 reports that "many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did" (John 2:23). One was a Pharisee, even a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin, who came to Jesus one night and said, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him" (John 3:2). We have no indication what Nicodemus had planned to proceed saying or asking, for Jesus immediately took over the conversation and said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Since the ruler took the statement literally, he

questioned how such could be possible (v. 4). Then Jesus elaborated, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Since the kingdom had not yet come, since the Holy Spirit had not yet been sent, and since the baptism that brings one into God's kingdom had not yet been inaugurated, it is obvious that Jesus was giving some New Testament teaching ahead of time, and in so doing He was dealing with a very vital matter!

JOHN 5:24—This is a great statement when properly understood. "Hearing my word" and "believeth on him that sent me" are both used in a broad, comprehensive sense—including much more than just "hearing" and "believing", much more than faith in God. So when faith-only people say from this verse that all one has to do to have eternal life is just believe in Jesus, and when they take "shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death into life" to mean "once saved always saved", they are not regarding the teachings of Jesus as given in Matt. 7:24-27 and elsewhere. On the positive side, those who accept the teachings of Jesus as true and the teachings to follow while believing on the God who sent Jesus into the world will be Christians, and Christians are those who accepted Christ and abide in Him. As a result they will not be condemned at the Judgment but will have been redeemed from death and will inherit eternal life

JOHN 6:53—At what is called the "Last Supper" Jesus instituted the Lord's supper in which He took bread, gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat: this is my body" (Luke 22:19). At the same time He said the cup was His blood of which they were to drink (Luke 22:20,17). Jesus' "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you" answers the Jews' question in the previous verse: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" When we properly partake of the Lord's supper, we are partaking of the benefits of Jesus' crucifixion by which we obtain life.

JOHN 8:58—In the closing part of John 8 Jesus and His Jerusalem enemies were in a real confrontation. They objected to His saying that if a man kept His word, he would never see death

(v. 51). They said, "Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets who are dead: whom makest thou thyself?" (vs. 52,53). When He went on to say, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad" (v. 56), they replied, "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" (v. 57). In this He was referring to His eternal pre-existence affirmed in the Old Testament (Mic. 5:2) and in the New (John 1:1).

JOHN 10:1—When Jesus said, "All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them" (v. 8), He was talking about false messiahs who came before Him. The true Messiah, as a shepherd, would use the door, but a thief would climb over the wall to get in where the sheep were (v. 1). In v. 10 Jesus drew another contrast between Him and the false messiahs: "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

JOHN 12:24—In this passage Jesus was employing an agricultural illustration to encourage Himself as He faced death on the cross. To get a crop one has to plant kernels of grain. Those kernels will be destroyed in the process of giving life to the plants. Jesus said, "If it die, it bringeth forth much fruit," but if it doesn't die by being planted, it abides alone—fruitless. This was positive thinking that helped Him face what was ahead of Him.

JOHN 16:23—The thought of Jesus' leaving them made His disciples feel alone. They would not have Him as they had been having Him. He would not be with them for asking Him for personal help. He told them, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you...Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."

Let us call Jesus' statements in John prefaced by "Verily, verily, I say unto you" EMPHATIC TRUTHS. This was one of Jesus' ways of teaching.

QUESTIONS

1. In what books (and how many times) did Jesus say, "Verily I say unto you"?
2. How many times did John use the double "verily"?
3. Besides "verily" what are some other ways the Greek word "amane" has been translated?
4. What did Jesus tell Nicodemus was necessary for entering God's kingdom?
5. Jesus said that he who _____ my word and _____ on Him who sent me had _____.
6. What did Jesus say a person will not get who does not eat His flesh and drink His blood?
7. In what way was He older than Abraham?
8. What did Jesus say about false messiahs who preceded Him?
9. What agricultural illustration did Jesus use to encourage Himself as He faced Calvary?
10. What would take the place of Jesus' presence with the disciples after He was gone?

JOHN'S ACCOUNT OF JESUS' CRUCIFIXION (John 19:16-42)

The four gospel accounts do not all record the same events in Jesus' life, but they all cover the death, burial, and resurrection and events leading up to them. Let us study John's account of His crucifixion.

The Roman governor Pilate was unduly pressured by the Jewish leaders to condemn Jesus to death against his own judgment.

We note that Jesus was bearing His own heavy cross as He proceeded to Golgotha. Does this not give some meaning to Jesus' statement, "Whoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:27)?

Was Jesus crucified on Golgotha or Calvary? Both. Calvary is Latin and Golgotha Hebrew. Both mean "the place of the skull". Many who travel to Jerusalem today think what is known as Gordon's Calvary just outside the ancient city's north wall might be the place since the face of its bluff sports an imaginary skull.

John's account mentions the other two men who were crucified with Jesus and His being the center cross, but it does not give the details mentioned in other accounts. Check in Matt. 27:38,44 and Luke 27:39-43 for those details.

Pilate's feelings of being pressured into condemning Jesus are reflected in his sign on Jesus' cross: "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews," which raised the ire of the Jews who asked him to change the sign to read that He said He was King of the Jews. But Pilate, disgusted with himself and the Jews, was adamant: "What I have written I have written."

It is from John's account that we learn there were four soldiers under their centurion who did the actual crucifying of Jesus.

Mary, Jesus' mother, was one of several Galilean women present at the crucifixion. When Jesus was only forty days old and was presented to the Lord in the temple, the aged prophet Simeon had foretold this awful day in Mary's life: "A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" (Luke 2:35). Bible scholars generally think Joseph had been dead for several years. Jesus, Mary's oldest son, was dying. With His no longer being able to look after her, His mother, He committed her to the care of His beloved disciple John. Why not to her other sons? Probably because of a rift between her and them because of Jesus in whom she believed but they didn't (John 7:5) until after the resurrection (I Cor. 15:7 and Acts 1:14).

The extreme fever brought on by the crucifixion caused Jesus to cry out, "I thirst." Upon being given some sour wine, He cried, "It is finished," and died. What was finished? Foremost the assignment of dying on the cross. When the legs of the crucifixion victims were being broken to hasten their deaths to get them off their crosses before the sabbath, it was not necessary to break Jesus' legs since He was already dead. Just to be sure He was dead, one of the soldiers rammed a spear into His side. The water and blood that issued from His body were later mentioned by John in I John 5:6. The piercing of Jesus was also mentioned by John in Rev. 1:7.

Since Jews entombed their dead the same day they died, it was necessary to have their places of burial prepared beforehand. The rich Joseph of Arimathea had his, and being a member of the Sanhedrin and having not stood up for Jesus to his council members as he knew he should have, he was a "Johnny-come-lately" by volunteering to take care of Jesus' body and putting it in his burial place. The delinquent Nicodemus, also a member of the high council, joined him in the burial. Both Jesus' enemies and His disciples thought His death was the end of Jesus—but it wasn't. He will be back!

QUESTIONS

1. Harmonize the reports that Jesus was crucified at Calvary and at Golgotha?
2. To what did the Jews object about Pilate's sign?
3. How many soldiers did the crucifying?
4. What did Jesus say from the cross to His mother?
5. Why did the soldier stab the side of Jesus?
6. What 2 prominent Jewish men were involved in entombing Jesus?

FINAL STUDY

In life we hate to come to the last of anything that has been good. We hope you feel that way as we come to this final study in the Gospel of John.

THE "LAST SUPPER" (John 13:2-14:31)

"Last Supper" is a name commonly given the Passover meal Jesus ate with His apostles the night before He was crucified. Unbeknown to the apostles was the fact that their several-year day-by-day association with Jesus was terminating with this meal. From this meal forward Jesus would be in His end-time events that did not include them as had been customary earlier. True, Acts 1:3 speaks of post-resurrection time He was with them, but as you read the various accounts of His resurrection appearances His time with them was of an on-and-off nature rather than constant.

John's account alone tells of His washing the disciples' feet. We have never noticed His doing this before. Why did He do it here? For sometime the group had been discussing among themselves which was going to be the greatest in the coming kingdom. Two of them (James and John) had even gone so far as to ask for the chief seats in it. As you read in Matt. 18:1-4 and Mark 10:35-45 of Jesus' dealing with that problem, you would think the matter would be forever settled, but not so, for Luke's coverage of the Last Supper indicates that even at that supper that strife again broke out among them as to which was going to be the greatest. Among other things Jesus said to counter their behavior, He asked which was greater—he that sitteth at meat or he that serveth (Luke 22:27)? To illustrate that one who serves is the greater, Jesus took a basin of water and a towel and washed and dried their feet—as a servant would do. And yet He was their Lord and Master and said He was giving them an example of kingdom-greatness—it would be service. Before leaving this

incident we observe that Jesus was not instituting the practice of foot-washing in a church service. Any way that we can serve one another is carrying out what Jesus had in mind. Notice His conclusion to this event: "If you know these things, happy are ye if ye do THEM (plural-D.G.H.)"

The rich material in John 14 was also delivered at the Last Supper, but it was already discussed in our study on Jesus' farewell material to the apostles.

JESUS' DIVINE MISSION TO EARTH

Among the various names, titles, and descriptive terms used to designate the great person Jesus, Heb. 3:1 calls Him the "APOSTLE and High Priest of our profession". "Apostle" means "one sent" or dispatched on a mission. That perfectly fit Jesus' coming to earth. He was "sent" of God, and the book of John mentions that fact no less than forty-one times. Here are a few sample statements of that fact: "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that SENT me" (6:38); "My meat is to do the will of him that SENT me" (4:34); "I must work the works of him that SENT me" (9:4); "Now I go my way to him that SENT me" (16:5). Yes, He was sent of God, and He perfectly fulfilled His divine mission among men.

A SPECIAL PRAYER **(John 17:1-26)**

Many, many times do the gospel accounts of Jesus' life speak of His praying, but this prayer in John 17 is the only prayer of any length that is recorded for us. This prayer consumes the entire 17th chapter of John.

Observe the setting for this prayer. The time was between the Passover meal and His agony in Gethsemane. That place is somewhere between the upper room in southwest Jerusalem and Gethsemane just east of Jerusalem.

Verses 1-8 are devoted to praying about His own personal concerns. Read and consider this part of His prayer.

Next He turned His attention to His concern for the apostles (beginning in v. 9). He prayed they might be kept by the Father even as He had kept them while with them on earth. He prayed they might not be taken out of the world that needed them but that they might be kept from the evil of the world, which by way of extension to us shows we are to be active in the world as light, salt, and leaven, affecting the world for good while not being affected by the world for evil. He prayed for their sanctification, realizing the work that was before them and their need to be set apart to that work. He prayed for their oneness that His kingdom not be divided in its beginning leadership.

In the midst of His prayer for the apostles, He also prayed for the coming church, those who would come to believe on Him through their preaching—"that they all may be one...that the world may believe."

How important each part of this prayer was!

Near the end of John's long lifetime He wrote in I John 1:1-3, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word of life; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you," for two expressed reasons: that we who did not get to see Jesus might have fellowship with John and those who did (v. 3) and that our joy may be full as a result (v. 4). Thank you, John, for the wonderful things about Jesus you have shared with us!

QUESTIONS

1. Why was this meal called the Last Supper?
2. Why did Jesus wash the disciples' feet at this time?

3. How many times in the book of John does it say Jesus was sent from God?
4. In Jesus' prayer, for what did He ask for Himself?
5. List one thing in the prayer Jesus said about His apostles.
6. List one thing He requested for them.
7. For what did He pray for all who would come to believe on Him?

