**Author:**

None of the four Gospels include a superscription that identifies the author (although it must be noted that several early manuscripts include *KATA IΩΝΝΗΝ* as part of the text). Internal evidence to the author is found in 18:15-16, 20:2 (“the other disciple”); 21:7, 20 (“the disciple whom Jesus loved”), “enigmatic” (Elowsky) though the references may be. This disciple, beloved of Jesus, close to the Lord, in the “inner circle” of the Disciples, friend of the High Priest, was also an eyewitness to the Crucifixion and the piercing of the Lord’s side (19:24-35), and was made son of Mary by adoption by Divine decree (19:26-27).

The Church Fathers Justin (165), Irenaeus(202), Tertullian (220), Hippolytus (236), and Origen (254) identify John, son of Zebedee, as the author of the Gospel. The Book of Revelation being written c. 95 A. D. (see this author’s introduction), this places the earliest testimony of Johanine authorship within the first generation of John’s disciples. Other early authors question the authorship of John, proposing two Johns in Ephesus (Eusebius [339] citing Papias [163]), one the “Elder” and the other the Apostle (See 2 John 1:1 and 3 John 1:1). We hold firmly to the authorship of the Gospel by John, son of Zebedee, the Disciple beloved of the Lord.

Of the four Evangelists, only Matthew and John were Apostles. Matthew links his Gospel to Genesis by beginning with a genealogy, continuing the ten major and two minor genealogies that provide the structure of the First Book of Moses. John, likewise, connects his Gospel directly to Genesis with his opening Words: Ἐν ἀρχῇ, “In the beginning…” Both men were aware that they were writing Scripture.

St. John, Apostle, was a Jewish fisherman called by Jesus. He was the brother of James, son of Zebedee, Jesus’ first cousin, son of Salome, Mary’s sister; the Disciple whom Jesus loved (Matthew 4:21-22; Mark 1:16-20, 16:1;). James and John were called *Boanerges*, “sons of thunder” for their zealous disposition, seen in their desire to call down fire from heaven upon the Samaritan that rejected Christ (Luke 9:54). St. John was one of the three Disciples closest to Jesus (John 13:23; Mark 9:1,2; John 21:20-25). As such, he was witness to the raising of Jairus’ daughter (Luke 8:40-51), and the Transfiguration of our Lord (Matthew 17:1-3).

St. John remained faithful to our Lord throughout His crucifixion (John 19:25-27). In addition to his three Epistles, St. John wrote the Gospel according to St. John, and recorded the vision given him by God in the Revelation of Jesus Christ before his death c. 95 A.✠ D.

Church tradition records that after the Ascension of Christ, John traveled to Asia minor, of Ephesus, taking Mary, mother of our Lord and John’s adopted mother, with him. There John became Bishop of the seven Churches (see Revelation 2 & 3). John did taste the cup of Christ’s suffering (Matthew 20:20-23). Tradition records that John suffered under the persecution of Domitian, but survived, was imprisoned on Patmos, finally dying at Ephesus. His Apostolic Emblem is the chalice with the viper, a traditional symbol of the challenge of the high priest of Diana at Ephesus to drink the poisoned cup. As Evangelist, John is symbolized by an eagle, marking his writing of the Gospel of Jesus Christ according to St. John.

In the west, the Feast of St. John, Apostle and Evangelist, is observed on December 27th.

**John, the date of writing, and the Synoptic Gospels –** Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the “Synoptic Gospels”, from the Greek “seeing together”. Their accounts of the life of Jesus are all very similar. St. John approaches the life of Jesus very differently, and does not include several of the accounts the Synoptics record, while including several accounts they do not record.

John does not chronicle the birth and early life of Jesus. This has special implications for Johanine Christology. John does not link the Christ with Adam or Abraham, rather with God.

John doesn’t include the account of the Tranfiguration, or of the several exorcisms recorded in the Synoptics. Instead of the Parables of the Synoptics, John relates the teaching of Jesus in lengthy discourses (Weinrich, 6).

The Gospel of John does not include the account of the Institution of the Lord’s Supper, but describes in great detail the events in the Upper Room of the same night, and records the great “High Priestly Prayer”.

The Synoptic Gospels record much of the Galilean ministry of Jesus, and end with his Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, His trial, crucifixion and resurrection. John describes three distinct trips of our Lord from Galilee to Jerusalem, and beings in the seventh chapter (7:10) to describe His final trip to Jerusalem from Galilee, and His extensive teaching there as well as His Passion.

In a recently published commentary on the Gospel according to St. John., the Rev. Dr. William Weinrich writes “…the Gospel of John is Palestinian in origin and early in its appearance. In my judgment, the Gospel of John can be dated anywhere between AD 40 and 60 and, quite probably, earlier rather than later in that period. Moreover, this view implies that any dependence of John on the Synoptic Gospels is unlikely. There is every reason to believe that the authority and witness behind this Gospel was the beloved disciple whose identity was, as Irenaeus knew, John, the son of Zebedee.” (5)

**Literary Style –** John’s use of the Greek language is simpler than that of the other Evangelists, and he stresses a number of Greek words through repeated use. Words like ἀγαπάω, ἀλήθεια, γινώσκω, εἰμι, Ἰουδαῖοι, μαρτυρέω, and πατήρ are used far more frequently in John than in the other Gospels. The simplicity of John’s Greek makes it especially easy to learn, and Johanine Greek forms the core of the study of most seminarians.

**Purpose of the Gospel according to St. John –** John writes in his First Epistle “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, concerning the Word of life-- the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us-- that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.” This too is his purpose in recording his account of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ His Lord. May you know the joy John promises as you read the Words the Holy Spirit gave him to give to you!

**Two Outlines of the Gospel according to St. John**

(From R.C.H. Lenski, pgs. 22-23)

**Prologue:** The Word became Flesh

**Theme:** Jesus Christ Attested as the Son of God

I. The Attestation of Jesus Christ as the Son of God in His Public Ministry

1) The opening attestation as His ministry begins (1:19-2:11)

2) The public attestation throughout the Holy Land (2:12-4:54)

3) The attestation arousing unbelief (5, 6)

4) The attestation in open conflict with unbelief (7-10)

5) The final attestation before the people (11-12)

II. The Attestation of Jesus as the Son of God in His Passion and Resurrection

1) The attestation in Jesus’ preparation of the Apostles for the end (13-17)

2) The attestation of His death (18,19)

3) The attestation of His resurrection (20, 21)

(Adapted from both Lutheran Study Bibles)

**Prologue –** 1:1-18 (The Divine Logos)

**The Ministry of Jesus, –** 1:19-10:42

John the Baptizer – 1:19-34

Calling of the first Disciples – 1:35-51

Early Ministry (First 2 Miracles) – 2:1 – 4:54

Wedding at Cana

Cleansing of the Temple

Nicodemus

John the Baptist’s teaching about Jesus

Samaritan Woman at the Well & Official of Galilee

**Opposition to Jesus’ Ministry** – 5:1 – 10:42

Healing at the Pool of Bethesda (Sabbath)

Jesus feeds the 5,000 / Bread of Life discourse

Jesus at the Feast of Booths

Woman caught in Adultery

Jesus’ Testimony before the Pharisees

Healing of the Man born Blind

The Good Shepherd

Unity with the Father

**The Raising of Lazarus through the Triumphal Entry –** 11:1 – 12:50

Lazarus raised

The Triumphal Entry

Jesus anointed for burial

Teaching before the Passover

**Passover and Holy Week –** 13:1-19:42

Upper Room Account

Jesus washes the feet of His Disciples

Jesus prophesies His betrayal

A New Commandment

Jesus prophesies Peter’s betrayal

The Way, the Truth, and the Life

Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit

The Vine and the Branches, world will hate

The Work of the Spirit

Victory over the World, Joy from Sorrow

High Priestly Prayer

Trial and Passion

**The Resurrection** – 20:1-30

**The Risen Christ’s Teaching and Miracles**  - 21:1-25

**Read John 1:1-14**

This section of John is known as the “Prologue”. It establishes the purpose of the Gospel in identifying Jesus Christ as the eternal Word, the Incarnate Son of God, God Himself. Of it Luther wrote that the Gospel of Jesus Christ according to St. John is “the one, tender, real crown-Gospel of them all” (Lenski 26). Although we have seen in our introduction that some conservative theologians date John’s Gospel earlier in the first century, the developed theology and high Christology of the Prologue compel other conservative interpreters to date John’s Gospel later in his life, placing it in the 80’s, before the writing of the Epistles, with the Apocalypse written between 95-98 A. D. It is generally accepted that John died about two years after this.

The Prologue has three distinct parts: The exposition of the Word (1-5), John the Baptizer was not the Word (6-8), and the Eternal Word Incarnate (9-14).

**1:1 –** Read Genesis 1:1. Both Matthew and John were Apostles. Mark and Luke were not. Both Matthew and John write their Gospels as a continuation, even as the fruition, of the First Book of the Bible. Matthew does so by tying his genealogy to the ten major and two minor genealogies of Genesis, which give the Book its structure. Matthew knew he was writing Scripture.

So too John. Led by the Spirit, John uses the first Words of His Gospel to testify to the eternal nature of Jesus Christ.

The Greek Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος describe in inspired Words the begetting of God the Son from eternity. John reaches back to the time before the kosmos were, the time at which God gave Moses to begin his account of creation, and John places Christ there, with God the Father, Himself truly God. Pastor will explain the “predicate nominative” at the end of verse 1.

See John 8:58, 17:5; Revelation 3:14. Then see Proverbs 8:12-35. Pastor will explain the proclamation of Wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:23-24, 1:30-31), which is the Second Person of the Holy Trinity speaking of Himself. In verse 22 of Proverbs 8 the word translated “possessed” is קָנָה in the Hebrew, “get”, “acquire”, “possess”. Here Arias saw “created”, hence the Arian heresy.

John calls Jesus ὁ λόγος , “the Word”. Some commentators, especially critics, tie the use of this word to the first century Greek understanding, which Lenski calls “Philo’s and the Jewish-Alexandrian doctrine of a *logos* near the time of Christ”. (29) This doctrine renders ὁ λόγος “the impersonal reason or ‘idea’ of God, a sort of link between the transcendent God and the world, like a mental model which an artist forms in his thoughts...” But such a “logos” could never be a Person as the Son of God is, and could never “become Flesh”, or be a man.

The antecedent for ὁ λόγος is better found in the Word of God in the Old Testament. The Hebrew word translated into Greek as λόγος is דָּבָר. See Genesis 15:1-7. How does the Word identify Himself? In 15:1 the Hebrew verb is הָיָה, "he was". The Word wasn't heard, He "was" before Abraham. He speaks and acts as only God can. He identifies Himself as יְהֹוָה , the LORD, who brought Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldeans. This is the Word that was in the beginning, the Word who was with God, the Word who is God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the Person by which God makes Himself manifest to men, the Person visible and active in the theophanies of Scripture.

See also 1 Samuel 3:1, 6, 10, and 21. Who is this Word? In verse 1, what was infrequent? In verse 6, what hadn’t been “revealed”? In verse 10, who “stood” and audibly called Samuel? In verse 21, who revealed Himself at Shiloh?

See also Jeremiah 1:4-13; 1 Kings 19:4-9. Fr. Braden would like to thank the Rev. Dr. Charles Gieschen, Academic Dean of Concordia Theological Seminary, and his book *Angelomorphic Christology* (1998, Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill ) for his understanding of the יְהֹוָה דָּבָר and of ὁ λόγος. The same יְהֹוָה דָּבָר appears as “The Angel of the Lord” and as “The Name” in the Old Testament, but that we reserve for a different study.

Having attested to the eternal Nature of ὁ λόγος, St. John describes the relationship between the Second and First Persons of the Holy Trinity. ὁ λόγος was in the beginning. He was with God. And God was ὁ λόγος, and ὁ λόγος was God. See John 14:8-17, 17:11-22. This rich Christology is expressed in many other Books of Holy Scripture, but seems most clear in the Gospel according to St. John. See Revelation 19:11-13.

**1:2 -** Lest there be any doubt regarding the One of whom John speaks, he brings verse 1 to an end with οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν. The demonstrative pronoun οὗτος can be rendered “this same One”. This One was in the beginning with God.

**1:3 –** As we teach the Creeds, we identify God the Father as the Creator, God the Son as the Redeemer, and God the Holy Ghost as the Sanctifier. So the Creeds confess. But in Proverbs 8 (as read above) and in John 1 the truth that all three Persons of the Holy Trinity had a role in the creation. See Genesis 1:1-3. God the Father spoke all things into being, the matter necessary for the kosmos for all time and eternity. As Proverbs 8 and John 1:3 clearly state, that matter was formed and the void was filled through the work of the Son.

Notice the “absoluteness” (Lenski, 36) of the declaration of St. John. All things were made through Him, and apart from Him nothing was made that is.

**1:4 –** Note the similarities between the Genesis account of the creation and John’s description of the Word. In Him was life, life that He imparted to the creation, life that is the light of men. In Genesis 1:3, what does God say? What happens to the darkness (vs. 4)?

**1:4 cont. –** More than being present and active in the creation, by His Incarnation Christ ushers in the “new creation”. See 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15. As the Lord entered the world “made Man”, the fallenness of the creation was being restored – the deaf heard, the lame walked, the mute spoke, the dead were raised. There was healing even in the touching of the hem of His garment (Mark 5:25-29). The Word who was in the beginning was beginning to restore His creation. See Revelation 21:5.

The Light, Christ, is the Life of men. See Job 33:30; Psalm 27:1, 36:9; John 8:12; 2 Timothy 1:9-10.

This world is darkness, but God is Light - Genesis 1:2-5; Exodus 10:21; Psalm 18:9-12, 107:10-14; Isaiah 59:9-10; Daniel 2:20-22; Micah 7:8; Matthew 4:16; Matthew 6:22-23; Matthew 27:45.

**1:5 –** The Incarnation of Christ brought the Light into the world. The Light shined in the darkness, God was in the world, fallen though it is. See Isaiah 9:2. But the darkness did not receive Him. Men mocked Him, reviled Him, persecuted Him, lied against Him, and crucified Him.

**Read John 1:6-8 –** St. John abruptly changes topics. John (the Baptizer, not the Apostle/Evangelist) was sent by God. See Matthew 3:1-13; Luke 3:15-17; John 1:28-34. But after Jesus came, John the Baptizer still had followers. See Acts 19:1-5. This so-called “cult of John” was pervasive. It is generally held that John the Apostle/Evangelist wrote verses 6-8 to correct any misunderstanding regarding the work and baptism of John the Baptizer.

**1:6 –** The name John was God-given. See Luke 1:13, 63. John was sent by God, and given His name by God.

**1:7 –** John came as a witness. His work was to testify to one who would come after him. He pointed to the Christ, but he was not the Christ. See John 1:35-36. Here John gives the purpose of John’s testimony – “…that all believe through him.” Men were not to believe “in” John, they were to believe in Christ “through” the witness of John to the Light. So too the Prophets of Old, the Apostles, the Evangelists, and the Christian Pastor.

**1:8 –** Here John restates, to be perfectly clear: John the Baptizer was not the Light. His God-given job was to witness, bear testimony, of the Light. See John 1:33 for John’s testimony.

The formula for a Sacrament commonly used among us, attributed to St. Augustine, is that three things need to be present: the command of God to do it, a visible element, and the promise of the forgiveness of sins. Did John’s baptism qualify? How does this relate to the disciples in Acts 19:1-5?

**Read John 1:9-14**

**1:9 –** To be perfectly clear, John reaches back to verse 4. John the Baptizer, described in verses 6 and 7, was not the Light. He came to witness to the Light. The Word (verse 1), Who was with God, and Who was God, He is the Light. He shined in the darkness, but the darkness did not receive Him.

He is the True Light, Who enlightens all men. See John 8:12, Matthew 4:16 (See Isaiah 9:1-2, note how this connects to Isaiah 9:6-7). See 1 John 2:8; John 3:19; “Coming in to the world.” John 11:27 (note the context there beginning at verse 23, compare to 1:4). See John 6:14, 11:27, 12:46, 16:28, 18:37. The construction ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον “…coming into the world” is unique to John’s Gospel, and occurs six times in John but not outside of John. But see 2 John 1:7, where a similar construction occurs.

Ultimately, His “coming into the world” is described in 1:14, His “leaving the world” in Acts 1:9. Remember, however, that John has already asserted that “He was in the beginning with God”, so the eternal Divine Nature of the Christ precedes the assertion of His Incarnation.

**1:10 –** In verse 9 He is “coming into the world.” In verse 10 “He was in the world”. At the same time, the world “came to be” through Him, as verse 3 describes. So He was before all things, but He came into the world. This will be articulated uniquely in John’s Gospel by the great “I AM” sayings.

Although the world “came to be” through Him, the world did not know Him. The fallen world was estranged from its Creator, to the extent that it didn’t recognize Him. How is this true today? How does the “theory” of evolution fit into verse 10? In fact, the world is in de-evolution, and knows its Creator less now than in the time of our Lord.

But that men come to know the Word, and Who He Is, the Spirit of the Living God inspired the Words that John wrote. See John 20:31 for the purpose of his Gospel.

**1:11 –** Just as the men did not receive the Light, but remained in darkness, so did the Word come “into His own”, but “His own” received Him not. See John 5:43.

**1:12 –** Just as in the days of the flood, most reject God. But a few, the “remnant” (Romans 9:27, 11:5, noting here the connection to the doctrine of election), those who pass through the “narrow gate” (Matthew 7:13-14), the elect, do receive Him. This they do not because of their own worth or works, but by the grace of God alone. We shouldn’t be afraid to use the Biblical term “receive”, even when it is misused by those who teach “decision theology”. Pastor will review the *Ordo Salutis*, the Order of Salvation.

To those who receive Him, those who receive the Light, those who receive the Word, He gives the authority to become children of God. See Galatians 3:26. According to St. Paul in the Galatians passage, how do we receive Christ? That becoming children of God is inseparably connected to our predestination, see Ephesians 1:5.

“Those who believe in His Name” – We read John 20:31 above. Now see 1 John 5:13. What does it mean to “believe in His Name”? See 1 John 3:23. On John 1:12 Lenski writes “Whenever

ὂνομα “name” is used in connections like this, “name” always means the complete self-revelation of Christ in His redemptive grace.” (62) See Acts 2:38, 8:12, 8:16, 19:5, where the Name of Jesus is the Triune Name.

There is much more to this, however. Weinrich writes “His Name” (τὸ ὂνομα αὐτο̃), literally “the Name of his,” Jn 1:12) does not refer to the name “Jesus.” It is a reference to the Divine Name ( יהוה“YHWH,” “Yahweh,” “the Lord”), which belongs to the Father but which Jesus as the divine Word Incarnate, also possesses.” (161) “The appearance of τὸ ὂνομα here prepares for the self-revelation of Jesus as the divine ἐγὼ εἰμι, “I AM”, elsewhere in the Gospel. (*ibid*)

Just like the Word of God is a theophany in the Old Testament (see our study notes on 1:1-4), so too is the Name of God. See Deuteronomy 12:11 (note that the Name “dwells”); 1 Kings 8:16 (note that the Name “is there”), 1 Kings 5:5; Psalm 124:8; Exodus 23:20-21. (Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology,* 72-76). To believe in the “Name” is to believe in the Triune God as He has revealed Himself to men, which revelation is given through the Son. See John 5:37, 6:46, 14:9-13.

**1:13 –** The ones who believe in His Name (v. 12), the ones to whom He has given authority to become children of God, are such not by their physical birth. They are reborn. And that birth comes not by blood, neither by the will of the flesh, nor by the will of man (as with all human births), but by God. The context of election and Holy Baptism of verse 12 is amplified here. The “new birth” referred to here is explained by Jesus to Nicodemus in 3:5. See 1 Peter 1:23

The prologue has broken into easily identifiable parts. Verses 1-5 introduce the Logos, who is the Light, and assert His Divine Nature and His timelessness. They also show that the world is fallen. Verses 6-7 introduce John the Baptizer, and assert that he is not the Light, but that he came to witness to the Light. Verses 9-13 recount the coming into the world of the Light, the world’s rejection of Him, and the blessings of salvation by God’s grace through faith in His Name. Those who believe are reborn of God, not of flesh. Verse 14 is the crescendo of the prologue. The Light, the Word, is not an ethereal vision. He is not a gnostic concept or a secret knowledge.

**1:14 –** “And the Word became Flesh and dwelt among us, and we marveled at His glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” This is a clear assertion of the Holy Incarnation of the eternal Son, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. The Word, Who was in the beginning, Who was God, through Whom all things were made, Who is the Light, became Flesh. He “was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made Man.” See Ezekiel 37:26-27; 1 Timothy 3:16, Colossians 1:21-22.

While the Word became Flesh, He does not by that cease to be the Word. “Remaining what He was, He became what He was not.” (Theophylact, an 11th century Greek Archbishop and exegete who influenced the theology of Aquinas and of Erasmus, cited in Weinrich, 166)

Christ is the Light and the Life in His Flesh. See 1 John 1:1-3.

While it is impossible for us to comprehend the Holy Incarnation, the Scripture is clear: God became Man. The Athanasian Creed provides us with a confession of the Incarnation of God that our Fathers in the faith have left us:

“God of the Substance of the Father,

begotten before the worlds;

and Man of the substance of his mother,

born in the world;

Perfect God and perfect Man,

of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting.

Equal to the Father as touching his Godhead,

and inferior to the Father as touching his manhood;

Who, although he be God and Man,

yet he is not two, but one Christ;

One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh,

but by taking of the manhood into God;

One altogether;

not by confusion of Substance, but by unity of Person.

For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man,

so God and Man is one Christ” (*Concordia Triglotta, 32, 35*).

R.C.H. Lenski provides: “But while the Word became flesh, he did not become sinful flesh; for the word ‘flesh’ itself, as describing our nature, does not include sin. When we are raised from the dead, no sin will be found in our flesh.” (74-75) The Word became Flesh, but not sinful flesh. He took on our sins, without having sinned Himself.

This is an important assertion, as Article I of the Formula of Concord states. God is the Creator of all flesh, but He is not the source of sin. In fallen man, sin is “accidental” to the “substance” of flesh. “Hence… we must preserve the distinction between the nature and essence of fallen man (that is, between his body and soul, which are God’s handiwork and creatures in us even after the Fall) and original sin (which is a work of the devil by which man’s nature has become corrupted)”. (FC SD I, Tappert, 509). Pastor will explain.

Martin Chemnitz, in his *De Duabus Naturis in Christo*, or *Of the Two Natures in Christ*, develops a rich and specific Biblical Christology that is also found in Article VIII of the F.C., of which he is also author. Taken together these provide the best confession of the Two Natures of Christ, and how they work together. Pastor will discuss the *Genus Idiomaticum, Genus Apotelesmaticum,* and the *Genus Maiestaticum.*

“and dwelt among us” – The Greek verb translated “dwelt” is ἐσκήνωσεν, which is derived from a word that means “tent, and in the LXX is used for the Tabernacle. See Exodus 25:8-9. This word (or its derivatives) is used only four times in the New Testament, see 2 Corinthians 5:1, 4; and 2 Peter 1:13, 14. The verb is used five times in the New Testament, once here in John, and four times in Revelation: 7:15, 12:12, 13:6, 21:(2),3.

“we marveled at His glory” – “John refers to ‘the glory’ of the Logos. See 2 Chronicles 7:1-4; Haggai 2:5-9; Revelation 15:8.

“This term δόξα is constantly used either to designate all the attributes of the Godhead as they shine forth in one or in another way before the eyes of men, or to indicate the manifestation of any one or of several of these attributes.” (Lenski, 76). The Glory of God was veiled in human Flesh, but was still made manifest. See 2 Peter 1:16-19; John 2:11; Hebrews 1:3.

“the Only-begotten” – We confess in the Creeds that He was “conceived by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary.” While the Only-begotten of the Father is the One “conceived by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary”, His being the Only-begotten is an expression not of His Incarnation, but of His eternal “begetting” of the Father, before all worlds. That is the glory of which John writes, that He further expounds in 1 John 1:1-3 (as we have seen above). Note there the distinction between the eternal begetting of the Son, and His Incarnation.

“full of grace and truth” – See Exodus 34:5-6, noting John 1:17.

“In three short, but dense thematic claims, Jn 1:14 proclaims that the God of steadfast fidelity has, as promised, taken up his eternal abode I the flesh of the Word. In the person of Jesus, the glory of God will once more be seen; in him the new temple will be erected; in him a new obedient people will be gathered; and in him a perfected worship in truth and Spirit will be initiated… In the work of the Word Incarnate there is a new exodus, a new Sinai, a new beginning, a new creation.” (Weinrich, 180)

**Read John 1:15-18**

Having met John the Baptizer in verses 6-8, we are now pointed to him once again. He witnessed to the Word made Flesh, the Only-begotten of the Father, when he cried out in the desert “This was He of whom I said: ‘the One coming behind me has become before me, because He was first of me.” (translation by Braden).

Consider the:

NASB: “He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.”

RSV: “He who comes after me ranks before me, for he was before me.”

NIV: “He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.”

The Greek word translated “behind” is “ὀπίσω”, and “before” is πρῶτός, see Revelation 22:13.

**John 1:15 Continued:**

R.C.H. Lenski paraphrases “He that comes after me is become before me, because he was first compared with me.” More than “first compared with me”, the Lamb of God is first chronologically as well: See John 8:58.

**1:16 –** Here proof is offered of the great Miracle of the Holy Incarnation: “of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace.” This is a witness to the very nature of God, shown you in Christ Jesus His Son. In verse 14 we learn that He is “full of grace and truth”. Here we see that His grace is given to us, as is His fullness. See Ephesians 1:7, 3:8; Colossians 1:19. Lenski translates Luther’s comments:

“This spring is inexhaustible, it is full of grace and truth from God, it never loses anything, no matter how much we draw, but remains an infinite fountain of all grace and truth; the more you draw from it, the more abundantly it gives of the water that springs into eternal life. Just as the sun is not darkened by the whole word enjoying its light, and could, indeed, light up ten worlds; just as 100,000 lights might be lit from one light and not detract from I; just as a learned man is able to make a thousand others learned, and the more he gives, the more he has – so is Christ our Lord, an infinite source of all grace, so that is the whole world would draw enough grace and truth from it to make the world all angels, yet it would not lose a drop; the fountain always runs over, full of grace.”

**1:17 –**Having explained that the Word is full of grace, and that from Him we receive grace, St. John uses three sets of pairs to further explain: Law / grace and truth; “was given” / “came”; and Moses / Jesus Christ. Lenski: “The three pairs are opposites, but opposites that correspond.” (91)

Lutherans are unique in our understanding of “the proper distinction”, the difference between Law and Gospel. This distinction is Scriptural, as is all pure doctrine. Here we have an assertion of the difference. In the first set of opposites John distinguishes between Law and Gospel: “For the Law through Moses was given; grace and truth through Jesus Christ became.” (wooden translation). See 2 Corinthians 3:4-11. Compare this with John 6:63, where our Lord speaks of faith.

The Law “was given” through Moses. Exodus 20ff records the events. It was external, imposed, condemning, written on tablets of inflexible stone. Stone is the stuff of tombs. But grace and truth “came” (Gk: became, as in verse 14, an identical form, a connection quite apparent to the original hearer) through Jesus Christ. When the Word became Flesh, God dwelt among us. He took on Flesh. And in His New Testament, the Word is not written externally, but internally. See Hebrews 8:8-10. Note the great, salvific difference between the work of the Word Enfleshed and the Law. Christ brings not death, but life.

Moses had prophesied of this Christ, and the Word who became Flesh is the fulfillment of the prophecy. See Deuteronomy 18:15-18, noting there the same distinction between the work of Moses and the work of the Christ.

The testimony of the Baptizer quoted in verse 15 is expounded upon by the Evangelist in verses 16 through 18. The testimony of verse 15 is support for the great proclamation of verse 14 “…the Word became Flesh and dwelt among us…”. Consider these verses according to this structure.

**1:18 –** Having noted the structure of verses 14-17, verse 18 naturally continues the Evangelist’s explanation of verse 14. It is not a disassociated thought. “…grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” is more fully explained by what follows: “God no one has seen ever. The Only-begotten God, the One who is in the bosom of the Father, that One He declared.” (wooden translation: Braden) The word translated “declared” (as also in the KJV and NKJV) is ἐξηγήσατο, from ἐξηγέομαι, “I explain / interpret / tell / report / describe”, a word used infrequently (6 times in the New Testament).

To understand the work of the Son as described by this word, see the same word used in Luke 24:35; Acts 10:8; 15:12; 21:19. The work of the Divine Word made Flesh includes the revelation of the Father. This is in truth a revelation of the Holy Trinity – see John 14:8-10. Here in 1:18 the Son “declares” the Father.

“The Only-begotten God…” translates the Greek of a 3rd century manuscript of the Gospels P 75, and of Codex Sinaiticus, the oldest complete New Testament (4th – 6th century). Other texts (Alexandrian tradition [Codex Alexandrinus, 5th century, which contains the Septuagint and the complete New Testament] and Majority Text, hence the Byzantine Rescension) have “the Only-begotten Son”. This seems to be an early attempt to make the passage more clear, and in concord with 3:16.

Another later textual emendation (minor witness) adds “to us” after “declared” for the same reason. Those charged with textual transmission wanted the reader/hearer to rightly understand the pericope. Their additions give us a window into early understandings of the text. Accepting either variant, the Word Made Flesh is God, and He is the Only-begotten of God, an undeniable confession of the Divinity of the Son, the highest Christology. Luther writes of the construction “being in the bosom of the Father”: “is – ever and ever is.” (Lenski, 98)

**Read John 1:19-23**

**1:19 –** The Evangelist’s recounting of the Holy Incarnation in verse 14 gave way to his citation of the testimony of the Baptizer in verse 15. The Evangelist adds his “Amen” to the Baptizer’s confession in verses 16-18, expounding by personal testimony on the nature and work of the Christ. Verse 19 returns to the witness of the Baptizer.

**1:19 Cont: -** Priests and Levites are sent by the Jews, from Jerusalem, to ask John “Who are you?” He was baptizing in the desert. He was preaching repentance, and prophesying of a better baptism to come, by One who would give the Holy Spirit. He was teaching. Ceremonial washing, teaching and preaching were held to be the job of the Priests and the Levites. They went out to ask John about his authority to do what they perceived as their work. The question “Who are you?” asks not only who John is, but from where he comes, and by what authority he does his work.

**1:20 –** John “confessed, and did not deny, but confessed”. His assertion was clear. His confession answered all three questions the Jews had – who he is, from where he comes, and the source of his authority. “I am not the Christ.” John’s work was not about John. Like all the Prophets he pointed to Christ. His self-definition as confessed in his answer to the Jews is that he is the Forerunner. Everything he did would give way to the Coming One.

**1:21 –** The Jews continue in their interrogation. The Prophet Malachi promised that Elijah, who did not die, would come. See 2 Kings 2:11, Malachi 4:5. This prophesy is also recalled by the Jews in Matthew 27:46-49 (Pastor will explain the Hebrew). Moses himself promised a Prophet, see Deuteronomy 18:15-18; Mark 6:14-15; John 6:14, 7:40-42. John’s answer to their first question is short and to the point: “I am not.” To their second question he simply answers “No.”

**1:22 –** They persist in their interrogation. They are concerned with satisfying those who sent them. But so is John – he must be faithful to God who sent him. So he answers by citing Old Testament prophesy, establishing himself as the fulfilment of it. See Isaiah 40:3.

**1:23 -** Now read Isaiah 40:1-8, to put the pericope in context. The prophesy of Isaiah 40 is in response to envoys sent to King Hezekiah (729-686 B.C.) by Babylon. This ancient answer is the reply of John to the envoys sent by the Jews. The Babylonian envoys’ report to their sender would result in the sacking of the palace and kingdom of Hezekiah. The Jewish envoys’ report to their senders would result in the death of John. Still, the Prophesy stands, for “the Word of God Stands Forever”. This verse became a theme of the Reformation, see 1 Peter 1:18-25.

John stood in the “wilderness”. He cried out. He “made straight” the Way of the Lord, admonishing his hearers to repent from their “crooked” ways.

**Read John 1:24-28**

**1:24-5 –** The “sent ones” were from the Pharisees. Their concern was John’s baptizing. Read Matthew 3:1-12 for Synoptic context. Ceremonial washing was common in the Old Testament rituals, and included objects used in worship, as well as proselytes.

**1:24-5 Cont.** – See Mark 7:4-8. The Greek word for “wash” is the word for “baptize”. See Leviticus 8:6; Numbers 31:21-24; 1 Kings 7:23. The *Jewish Encyclopedia* offers this: “According to rabbinical teachings, which dominated even during the existence of the Temple (Pes. viii. 8), Baptism, next to circumcision and sacrifice, was an absolutely necessary condition to be fulfilled by a proselyte to Judaism (Yeb. 46b, 47b; Ker. 9a; 'Ab. Zarah 57a; Shab. 135a; Yer. Kid. iii. 14, 64d).”

Their protectionism aside, the “sent ones” understood the Messianic implications of John’s actions. They ask him “why?”, really seeking “by whose authority?” he baptized. The mentions of Moses and Elijah are explained above (see notes on verse 21), but also in this comment from Dr. William Weinrich’s commentary: “There was a Jewish tradition that the Messiah would not be known until Elijah anointed him, at which time the Messiah’s identity would be manifested both to himself and to the people. John 1:26 is interpreted together with John 1:31, 33, where John says that he too did not know who Jesus was until he saw the Spirit descend and remain upon him.” (216).

**1:26-27 –** John, a God-sent Prophet, gives firm and clear answer to the challenge of the “ones sent”: “I, on the one hand, baptize with (*by means of*) water. On the other hand, among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who comes after me, of whom I am not worthy *to loose* the thong of the sandal.” (translation Braden’s)

Compare this answer of John to the Synoptic records:

* "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” (Matthew 3:11-12)
* "There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." (Mark 1:7-8)
* “John answered, saying to all, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire." (Luke 3:16-17)

In all of these passages John points away from himself, and to Jesus. He details his unworthiness, and the superiority of the Baptism that Jesus brings. Yet here Lenski writes “John’s Baptism was the true and complete sacrament, of the same nature and efficacy as our present Baptism. Jesus took up and continued John’s Baptism, 3:22; 4:1-2, and after his resurrection instituted it for all nations. To consider John’s Baptism as a mere symbol in the face of Mark 1:4 and Luke 3:3 is unwarranted.” (119-120). But Dr. David Scaer writes “At Pentecost, by the outpouring of the Spirit, the baptism given by John became the Baptism of Jesus.” (*Baptism*, The Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics vol. XI. 1999. Luther Academy: Cresbard, South Dakota, pgs. 37-38) Scaer, in treating the insufficiency of John’s baptism in Acts 19:1-7, states “The baptism of John was, as his preaching was, anticipatory and thus incomplete.” (*ibid*)

“…of whom I am not worthy *to loose* the thong of the sandal.” Lenski writes “The sandal was fastened to the foot by a leather strap, ἱμάς, “latchet.” When an honored guest or the master of the house himself entered, it was the task of the humblest slave in the house to unfasten the straps, remove the shoes, bathe the feet, and cleanse the shoes. With this imagery John compares himself and Jesus.” (122)

**1:28 –** “Bethany beyond the Jordan” – This distinguishes the city from the Bethany of Mary and Martha, which is just east of Jerusalem, but west of the Jordan River. John’s Bethany, the exact location of which is unknown, was on the east side of the Jordan, an orientation, which, by the identification marks John the Evangelist as a Palestinian. Later John the Baptizer would move, and baptize in Salim, a small city north of the Jabbok ford of the Jordan, east of Samaria. See John 3:23.

It is the opinion of this author, that the place of Jesus’ baptism by John is likely the site identified in Joshua 3:14-17. The old Concordia Study Bible (Map 9), and the new ESV Study Bible (pg. 1584), maps identify it as the “traditional site” of John’s work.

**Read John 1:29-34**

**1:29 –** John’s prophesy and promises find their fulfillment. The next day, in the same place, Jesus came to John. John sees Jesus, and he declares “Behold, the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.” (See also 1:36) John knew Jesus, but this revelation of the Person and Work of the Messiah is the fruition of John’s prophetic work.

Lenski warns against identifying the “Lamb” with any specific lamb of the Old Testament sacrificial system: “…the Baptist’s title for Jesus should not be referred back to this or that particular ‘lamb’ mentioned in the Old Testament rituals, but rather to all of them, since each could typify and illustrate prophetically only some part of the stupendous work God’s own Lamb would perform.” (126-127).

Weinrich identifies the “Lamb” of John’s proclamation as “monadic” (*philosophy - an unextended, indivisible entity)*, but asserts that the article makes it “anaphoric” *(philology – referring back to an earlier word)*, and points to the lambs in Exodus 12 (Paschal Lamb), Isaiah 53:7, the *tamid* or the continual (תָּמִיד )“twice daily offering” of Exodus 29:38-42 and Numbers 28:1-10. (219) See also Acts 8:32 and 1 Peter 1:18-19.

**1:29 cont: -** See also Genesis 22:8; Jeremiah 11:19. How are these lambs different than the lambs in Exodus? While lambs in the Old Testament were associated with offerings, the Day of Atonement and Passover, none could “take away the sin of the world”. This Lamb is different. See Revelation 5:6; 13:8 (although the Greek word for Lamb in these passages is different).

Several commentators mention here the “six day” theme of this section of John’s Gospel. This verse began “the next day”, referring to the day before it. Dr. William Weinrich, following Origen (d. 254 A.D., Alexandria, Ascetic, early Christian theologian. Origen created the *Hexpla*, a six-column comparison of the major versions of the Old Testament in his day: Hebrew, Hebrew in Greek transliteration, Septuagint, Theodotian, Aquila, and Symmacus, the last three being Greek translations of the Hebrew Old Testament)

Origen / Weinrich assert that the first day is John 1:19-28, the second day John 1:29-34, the third day John 1:35-42, the fourth day John 1:43-51. Since John 2:1 begins on “the third day”, the day-after-tomorrow counting from this verse, places the Miracle at Cana on the sixth day. Counting the days of creation, the sixth day is man’s day, so Cana begins the New Creation.

**1:30 –** Here John verifies that this is the One of whom he prophesied. Verses 15 and 27 of John 1 are combined in John’s testimony here, leaving no doubt that it is Jesus that fulfills the Prophecy.

**1:31 –** Jesus’ Office is revealed to John by sign. John’s words κἀγὼ οὐκ ᾔδειν αὐτόν are clear in the Greek as in the English – “and I myself I had not known Him” (the verb is in the pluperfect, Weinrich asserts it should be translated in the simple past tense (223), as Lenski also translates (130)). Since John and Jesus were cousins, and since at Mary’s salutation John lept in Elizabeth’s womb, it seems that John is saying here that he didn’t know that Jesus is the Christ, until it was revealed to him by the sign mentioned in 33 and 34.

What John reveals here is not revealed elsewhere. The purpose of his baptizing was that Jesus be revealed. That teaches us a lot about John’s baptism. Its purpose wasn’t the forgiveness of sins, nor to give the Holy Spirit, that Baptism would come with Jesus. John is also revealing here part of his Divine Calling to the Office of Prophet. This is a statement of purpose, and it includes a result clause – “I came baptizing with water” *in order that* “He be revealed to Israel.” In the Greek the word order is reversed: “In order that He be revealed to Israel, on account of this I *myself* came baptizing *by means of* water.” (Translation: Braden).

**1:32 –** To further define how John came to know Jesus (1:31, “I did not know him”), John reveals how he knew Him: “I beheld the Spirit coming down as a dove out of heaven and remaining on Him.” See Matthew 3:16-17; Mark 1:10-11; Luke 3:21-22. What details does Luke include that give us a fuller picture of Matthew and Mark’s accounts?

Ephrem the Syrian writes of the Baptism of Christ: “Eliezar had given Rebekah as a bride at the well of water. Jacob did the same for Rachel at the well of water, and so did Moses for Zipporah at the well of water. All these therefore were types of our Lord, who betrothed His Church through John’s baptism…” (from *Commentary on Tatian’s Diatesseron,* 3.17. Cited in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament*, vol IVa, John, 1-10. ed. Joel C. Elowsky, gen. ed. Thomas C. Oden. 2006, Downer’s Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press. 71) The Diatessaron is a Gospel harmony dated to 165 A. D. Ephrem the Syrian was a hymn writer and theologian who died in 373 A. D.

**1:33 –** See 1:31. Here we see the explanation of the comment “I had not known Him.” Several Church Fathers comment that John’s life in the wilderness was God-ordained that he not have a relationship with his Cousin until he baptized Him.

In Any case, it was by prophetic revelation, perhaps a theophany, that John was told that the Lamb of God would be identified by the Sign of the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him. More than identifying the Christ, now the promised Baptism by the Holy Spirit was come.

**1:34 –** Adding to the witness of John, putting in clear and powerful Words exactly what the confession of faith is, the Baptizer says “And I have seen and have witnessed that *He* (this, this one) is the Son of God.” See John 10:36, Matthew 16:16, Acts 9:20. Now see Matthew 4:3, 8:29, 14:33, 26:63, 27:40, 27:54. It was well known by the Jews that the Promised Christ would be the Son of God. See Psalm 2:7; Hebrews 1:5 and 5:5.

With these Words of public confession John fulfilled his calling. His work was done. St. Augustine writes “John received the ministry of baptism so that by the water of repentance he might prepare the way for the Lord, not being himself the Lord. But where the Lord was known, it was superfluous to prepare for Him the way, for to those who knew Him He himself became the Way. Therefore the baptism of John did not last long, but it lasted long enough to show our Lord’s humility.” (*ibid*, 72)

The Christ was baptized, and the Spirit lit and remained upon Him. John identified Him to the world, as he would continue to do the following day.

**Read John 1:35 -42**

**1:35-37 –** John’s final testimony is a repeat of what he has already testified. That testimony, “Behold, the Lamb of God”, is now repeated in front of two of John’s “disciples”, that they know the Christ. John must now decrease, that Jesus increase. See John 3:30.John came not to point to himself, but to Christ. His disciples leave him and follow Jesus. John’s ministry is finished. The fulfillment of all Prophesy has come.

**1:37 cont –** Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ. John the Baptizer publicly confessed Christ. Two of his disciples heard, and they did what faith must do – follow Jesus.

**1:38 –** The Greek shows clearly that the Lord’s back was to the disciples of John. “Turning, and seeing (observing) them following Him”, He asks them a question. “What do you seek?” The ultimate answer to this question is given in Matthew 28:5-6, where the same Greek verb is used.

The disciples of John call Jesus “Ῥαββί”, a Greek transliteration of the Hebrew word that first occurs in Genesis 13:6. Can you identify the word? רַב is the Hebrew word for “great”, and is used in the Old Testament for “captain” and “chief”. The suffix is a first person singular possessive, “my great one”, a title of respect given to, in this case, an esteemed teacher. See Matthew 23:6-12. There the Greek uses the word “διδάσκαλος”, “teacher”, as a translation for Rabbi.

Students of Greek will enjoy the present passive participle (nominative neuter singular) μεθερμηνευόμενον, translated “which being interpreted”.

The disciples’ answer may seem strange to us – “where are you staying?” But the intention behind the question is to follow this Teacher, remain with Him, and learn from him.

**1:39 –** The Lord’s answer is a command: “Come!” A promise follows: “and you will see”. These powerful Words are more than an invitation to see His house. The one who follows Jesus will truly see – Psalm 115:5-9; Isaiah 30:20; Ezekiel 12:2; Mark 8:17-21. As the old adage goes, here “seeing is believing”. They will have faith, which is to trust in that which is not seen. Lenski writes that “come, and you will see” is an “epitome of the entire Christian life.” See John 12:21.

The disciples “went” and they “saw where he was staying, and with him they stayed that day.” In an interesting additional fact, John supplies “It was the tenth hour.” The Gospels bear accurate, truthful testimony. What happened is fact. But there is more. Ten is the Biblical number for completeness. The tenth hour is 4:00 p.m. See also John 4:6, 4:52, 11:9, 19:14. The Gospels are factual accounts.

**1:40 –** Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of the two hearing *of* Him from John and following Him. This, of course, begs the question: “Who was the other one?” The Church has long held that this was John himself, the Evangelist recording accurately the account, who is never named in the Gospel that bears his name. (Lenski 151).

**1:41 –** Already Andrew “sees”, as Jesus promised. Faith confesses. Consider the witness he bears to his brother: “We have found the Messiah!” Again here we meet the Greek word “μεθερμηνευόμενον”. The Evangelist translates the word “Messiah” for us into Greek: “Χριστός”, “Christ”.

The word “Messiah” occurs only twice in the Old Testament – in Daniel 9:25-26. There the word is מָשִׁיחַ , which is formed from the word משׁח , which means “he anointed”. See Exodus 28:41 for a typical use of this word, and note the context there. See also 1 Samuel 16:13. How is this a type of Jesus?

The word “Messiah” occurs only twice in the New Testament, both in John’s Gospel - here, and in John 4:25.

The Greek word “Christ”, Χριστός,means the same as “Messiah”: “anoint”. See Matthew 1:1. See the use of the verb Χρίω, “I anoint”, in 2 Corinthians 1:21.

Where is Jesus anointed? See Matthew 26:6-13 (Mark 14:3; ); Luke 7:36-48 (John 11:2); John 12:1-8; Hebrews 1:5-9 (Psalm 45:6-8). Now see John 1:32. With what (Whom) is Jesus anointed? See Isaiah 61:1-3.

Now read Psalm 2. Who is the center of the Psalm? How is this Psalm prophetic of Christ? Read Acts 4:19-31. This is the Apostolic Testimony that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Promised Savior, the Anointed One, the Messiah, the Christ.

**1:42 -** What does Andrew do? So it is with faith. Andrew confesses what he believes, and takes Peter to Jesus. That’s what you do when you bring someone to church.

Jesus know Simon already. His name, “Simon”, does not occur in English in the Old Testament. It is derived from the tribe of Israel “Simeon”, which in the Hebrew is שִׁמְעוֹן , and in the Greek is Συμεων (See Genesis 29:33 LXT).

“Simon, son of John” refers to what Peter was from birth. But Peter will be made new, and so a new name is fitting. See Genesis 17:5, 15; Genesis 32:28; Genesis 35:10; and Matthew 16:16.

Lenski attributes the name “Cephas” to the Hebrew *Keph*, which he defines as “a large stone” and “a boulder of rock”. He differentiates between Πέτρος (Matthew 16:16) and πέτρᾳ (Mat 16:18) with the distinction “since a single person is to bear this name… and not a cliff of rock.” (159) “Hence, not his original character or one later developed in Peter led Jesus to name him ‘Rock’, but what Peter should become for others, i.e., for the church, which is ‘built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the Chief Cornerstone.’ In this foundation Peter with his confession of Christ would be one of the Apostolic foundation stones. His name Cephas indicates his future historical place in the Church, not his personal excellence.” (*ibid*)

**Read John 1:43-50**

**1:43 –**The introduction and prologue provided the basis for the rich Christology of the Gospel according to John. The account of Jesus’ baptism does not occur in John’s Gospel, but the Baptizer’s testimony of the Holy Spirit descending upon Jesus marks the beginning of the “earthly ministry” of our Lord. John does not include the account of the temptation of the Lord in the desert, or His first sermon. Having now read John 1:1-50, compare what we have read in John with the Gospel according to St. Matthew:

* The Lord’s baptism in Matthew 3:13-17;
* The Temptation in Matthew 4:1-11;
* The beginning of Christ’s “earthly ministry” in Matthew 4:12-17;
* The calling of the first Disciples in Matthew 4:18-22.

The calling of the Disciples recorded in Matthew 4 correlates well with John’s account of the same in 1:35-42, although We learn from this that John’s presentation of Jesus’ life and ministry is based more on the theology of Jesus’ life and teaching than on the historic sequence of events. For this reason Matthew, Mark and Luke are known as the “synoptic Gospels”, from the Greek words for “seeing together”. John’s Gospel is unique.

Andrew brought Simon to Jesus. Jesus’ changing of Simon’s name to Peter marks a turning point in John’s Gospel. Matthew, Mark and Luke do not record the changing of Peter’s name, although in Matthew 4:18 Peter already has both names, and in Matthew 16:17-18 the Lord uses both names.

The Holy Spirit descending on Jesus and remaining marks His “installation” into the Office of Christ. John describes it in detail, and then immediately begins his account of the Lord’s “earthly Ministry.” His first act is to draw Andrew and Simon to Himself. Changing Simon’s name to Peter begins our Lord’s working through men and with men to accomplish His mission. How is God’s use of the Baptizer different than the Son’s calling and use of the Disciples?

**1:44 -** In verse 43, Philip is called. Bethsaida was a small town, principally comprised of fisherman, on the northern tip of the Sea of Galillee. (See map)

**1:45 -** As Andrew brought Simon to Jesus (v. 41), now Philip brings Nathanael. The name Nathanael only occurs in John’s Gospel, here (1:45-49) and in 21:2. The other Evangelists call him Bartholomew. See the chart: Name Lists of the Apostles (handout).

Compare Andrew’s testimony of Jesus in verse 41 to Philip’s in verse 43. See Luke 24:27. Faith confesses its object, saving faith confesses Jesus as the Christ, the fulfillment of all prophecy.

**1:46 –** See Matthew 2:19-23. Can you find Judea, Galilee, and Nazareth on the map? Based on Nathaniel’s comments, Nazareth may not have had the best of reputations.

**1:46, cont. –**Commentators explain that Nazareth was despised among the Jews because it was largely populated by gentiles. See Isaiah 9:1; Matthew 4:15. Philip simply exhorts Nathaniel to see for himself.

**1:47 –** The Lord’s words of praise refer to Nathaniel’s response to Philip, and to Nathaniel’s willingness to “come and see”, although see 2:24-25. “Guile” is deceit or falsehood. Lenski writes “Thus we cannot reduce this word of Jesus to mean merely that Jesus sees the character of the man Nathanael; we must elevate it to mean the character and quality of his being an Israelite, a man who is absolutely sincere about Israel’s hope and salvation, so sincere that he does not allow the mention of Nazareth to turn him from Jesus.” (168)

**1:48 –** Nathaniel’s response is one of surprise, he has not met Jesus before. The Lord’s answer refers to an incident not recorded in Scripture outside of His recounting it. Not only could Jesus read Nathaniel’s heart, according to His Divine Nature working through His Human Nature His omniscience included seeing from afar.

**1:49 –** Nathaniel, knowing the miraculous nature of the Lord’s answer, makes a good confession, equal to that of Peter. See Matthew 16:16. Note there, in Matthew 16:17, our Lord’s answer. So too Nathaniel, a true Israelite, in whom there is no guile. “Son of God” is a Messianic title, giving Nathaniel’s “Amen!” to Philip’s identification of Jesus as the promised Messiah (John 1:45). See also Matthew 4:3, 8:29, 14:33, 26:63, 27:40, 27:54; Mark 1:1; Luke 3:38. Jesus also identifies Himself using this term, see John 5:25, 9:35-38. See also John 20:31.

“King of Israel” is also a Messianic title, the promised King who would reign on David’s throne. 2 Samuel 7:16; 1 Kings 9:5; Psalm 45:6, 89:4; Lamentations 5:19; Hebrews 1:8.

**1:50 –** The miracle evokes the confession of faith (“you believe”). But greater miracles will follow. Nathaniel, and the others (the verb is in the 2nd person plural), will see “greater things” – the many miracles of Jesus, His arrest, His crucifixion, His resurrection, and His ascension.

**1:51 –** Although our text reads “Most assuredly I say to you…”, the Greek reads “Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν”, or “Amen, Amen, I say to you (pl.)”. Some 20 times in the Gospel according to St. John the Lord uses this formula to introduce sayings of great importance.

Note the Lord’s promise to the disciples (the verb is in the 2nd person plural):

* “You shall see heaven opened”
* “and the angels of God ascending and descending”
* “upon the Son of Man.”

“Heaven opened” - Only God can open heaven. See Genesis 7:11; Psalm 78:23; Luke 3:21-22; Acts 10:10-11; Revelation 19:11 (among many others). Both Stephen (who is not present at this time) and John (who is recounting these event) would see heaven opened – Stephen before his death, see Acts 7:55-56 ; and John in the Revelation given to him of heaven. Isaiah (ch. 6) and Ezekiel (ch. 1) had also seen heaven opened.

Heaven opened at the baptism of Jesus, which precedes this account in John’s Gospel (see Matthew 3:16). Peter, James and John would see the Transfiguration of our Lord, certainly a revelation of heaven (see Matthew 17 & Mark 9). The disciples would also see “heaven opened” as the Gospel was preached and men were converted. At the ascension, again the Eleven would see heaven opened. See Acts 1:9-11.

“The angels of God ascending and descending” – These words immediately bring to mind Genesis 28:10-19. Note carefully this account and the patriarch’s response. The Theophanies of the Old Testament are manifestations of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. See Matthew 26:53. Irenaeus (Bishop, Gaul, d. 202 A. D.) writes “And Jacob, when he went into Mesopotamia, saw [the Son of God] in a dream, ‘standing upon the ladder’ [Genesis 28:12-13], that is, the tree, which wa set up from earth to heaven; for thereby they that believe on Him go up to the heavens. For his sufferings are our ascension on high.” (Weinrich citing Irenaeus, 293).

“The Son of Man” – The Name used by our Lord for Himself more than any other Name in the New Testament. Nathaniel confessed Him to be Son of God. But He is in His state of humiliation. He took on the Flesh of the Virgin. He who made man is Son of Man. In Ezekiel, God repeatedly uses this name for the Prophet. But see Daniel 7:13, and now Daniel 8:17. Now see Matthew 9:6, and many others.

**Read John 2:1-11**

**2:1 –** Find Cana on the map. Cana is mentioned four times in John, and not mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament. In 21:1 (after the Resurrection), Nathaniel is identified as being from Cana.

“On the third day”, (John 1:29, 35, 43), the sixth day of the “six day sequence” of John 1:29-51 (Weinrich). Chapter two begins as a continuation of what has just occurred. “Jn 1:19-51 is constructed as a series of four days, separated by the thrice-repeated phrase “on the next day” (Τῇ ἐπαύριον) in Jn 1:29, 35, 43. The four days, therefore, are the following: day 1 (Jn 1:19-28); day 2 (Jn 1:29-34); day 3 (Jn 1:35-42); day 4 (Jn 1:43-51). The temporal sequence continues with the mention of “on the third day” (τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ ) in Jn 2:1. This phrase, counting inclusively, refers to the day after tomorrow, and since the previous day was the fourth day, the miracle at Cana occurred on the sixth day.” (Weinrich, 20).

**2:1, Cont. –** Four times in John Mary is referred to as “mother of Jesus.” Outside of John only in Matthew 1:18 and Acts 1:14 is she referred to in this way. This is interesting in light of the tradition of the Church that Mary, having been given to John at the cross, accompanied John to Asia Minor, and lived with him there, possibly in Ephesus, until her death. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* explains: “A passage in the synodal letter of the [Council of Ephesus](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05491a.htm) [111, 431 A. D.] reads: ‘Wherefore also [Nestorius](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10755a.htm), the instigator of the impious [heresy](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07256b.htm), when he had come to the city of the Ephesians, where [John the Theologian](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08492a.htm) and the Virgin Mother of God St. Mary…’” (The *Catholic Encyclopedia* article on Mary includes an expanded discussion of the account of the Wedding at Cana, and will be cited in the following.)

**2:2 –** Both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. Mary was “there”, Jesus and the disciples were “invited”. Mary was apparently helping in the wedding festivities. Lenski asserts “Since Mary takes the matter in hand she must have been one of those who helped with the serving, in fact, the one who oversaw and managed affairs as also her word to the helpers indicates.” (187) This is, of course, speculation, since Scripture is silent on her role.

**2:3 –** The wine depleted, Mary apparently comes to Jesus seeking help.

**2:4 –** The Lord understands that she is asking for His intervention. He gives her a two-part answer. In the Greek His answer is “Τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί, γύναι; οὔπω ἥκει ἡ ὥρα μου.” Pastor will translate. Lenski paraphrases: “Never mind!” (188).

In the New King James, the Lord says first “Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me?” While it sounds strange to us that the Lord calls His mother “Woman”, it is not unusual for the time. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* explains “In addressing women, Jesus uniformly employs the word "woman" ([Matthew 15:28](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/mat015.htm#vrs28); [Luke 13:12](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/luk013.htm#vrs12); [John 4:21; 8:10;](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/joh004.htm#vrs21) [19:26](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/joh019.htm#vrs26); [20:15](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/joh020.htm#vrs15)), an expression used by classical writers as a respectful and honorable address.The above cited passages show that in the language of [Jesus](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08374c.htm) the address "woman" has a most respectful meaning.” (Maas, A. (1912). The Blessed Virgin Mary. In The Catholic Encyclopedia. New York: Robert Appleton Company. Retrieved November 19, 2016 from New Advent: http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15464b.htm)

St. Augustine writes “Although the Evangelist himself mentions Jesus’ mother by her very name, Jesus nevertheless addresses her with the words ‘Woman, what have I to do with you?’ But here he is not pushing her away from Himself since He had received Flesh from her. Rather, His purpose is to convey the conception of His divinity, which is especially appropriate at this time when He is about to change the water into wine…” (*Gospels,* 4.10.11, cited in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament IV A, John 1-10*. Elowsky, Joel, ed. 2006. Downer’s Grove, Illinois: Institute of Classical Christian Studies, 91)

*Catholic Encyclopedia* continues “The clause "what is that to me and to thee" renders the Greek ti emoi kai soi, which in its turn corresponds to the [Hebrew](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07176a.htm)phrase mah li walakh. This latter occurs in [Judges 11:12](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/jdg011.htm#vrs12); [2 Samuel 16:10](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/2sa016.htm#vrs10); [19:23](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/2sa019.htm#vrs23); [1 Kings 17:18](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1ki017.htm#vrs18); [2 Kings 3:13](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/2ki003.htm#vrs13); [9:18](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/2ki009.htm#vrs18); [2 Chronicles 35:21](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/2ch035.htm#vrs21). The [New Testament](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14530a.htm) shows equivalent expressions in [Matthew 8:29](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/mat008.htm#vrs29); [Mark 1:24](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/mar001.htm#vrs24); [Luke 4:34](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/mar004.htm#vrs34); [8:28](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/mar008.htm#vrs28); [Matthew 27:19](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/mat027.htm#vrs19). The meaning of the phrase varies according to the character of the speakers, ranging from a most pronounced opposition to a courteous compliance. Such a variable meaning makes it hard for the translator to find an equally variable equivalent. "What have I to do with thee", "this is neither your nor my business", "why art thou troublesome to me", "allow me to attend to this", are some of the renderings suggested. In general, the words seem to refer to well or ill-meant importunity which they endeavour to remove.”

“My hour has not yet come." See Luke 22:53; Mark 14:41; John 12:23, 16:32; 17:1.

**2:5 –** Mary’s response is one of great faith. She neither knows nor understands what Jesus will do, but trusting wholly in Him she commands the servers (τοῖς διακόνοις not τοῖς δούλοις, not conscripted but willing, Lenski 191) to obey Him. That’s what faith does. It is as if she prays “Thy will be done..”

**2:6 –** See Mark 7:3-4. Ceremonial washing was part of the Jewish cultus. It could only impart an external cleanness, but was regularly required by the Law. See Exodus 29:4, 30:18-21, and many others. It pointed the Israelites to the truth that man is unclean, and pointed them forward in time to a new and better washing, on of water and the Holy Spirit.

Much ink is spilled on the number of jars (6), and their capacity. In the view of this author, if allegory is to be employed, six is the number of man (see Genesis 1:27-31, Revelation 13:18). The Greek reads χωροῦσαι ἀνὰ μετρητὰς δύο ἢ τρεῖς, “making room *for* upwards *of* two or three *metretas*.” Lenski estimates the *metreta* to be roughly equivalent with the Hebrew בַּת*bath*, about 8 ½ gallons. The New King James translates “twenty or thirty gallons a piece.” In any case, the capacity matters little, the jars are empty. Pastor will explain how, empty or full, the stone water jars, as the footsoldiers of the Law, did their work. This is the most important aspect of this account – the Law is about to be miraculously fulfilled. Consider Jeremiah’s prophecy in 31:12-14 in light of this verse. “New wine” is frequently associated with the end times, the coming of the Messiah, and the Judgment. See Hosea 2:22; Joel 2:19.

**2:7 –** Jesus commands the servers to fill the jars. They comply, filling the jars ἕως ἄνω, “until the highest”. So is the New Testament. While the Old is empty, the New abounds.

**2:8 –** Jesus commands them, without any intervening action or word, to draw some out, and take it to the master of the feast, the banquet master. The men comply as they had before.

**2:8 –** Weinrich recounts that the Greek word for “draw out” has the meaning “to draw water from a spring or well”, and ties this “drawing out” to that of 4:11, where the noun derived from this verbal root is used. (302)

The “banquet master” or “master of the feast” is a word that occurs only here (John 2:8-9) ἀρχιτρίκλινος in the New Testament. The Greek word ἀρχιτρίκλινος has three distinct parts. ἀρχι is the head or ruler. τρί is derived from the Greek number three. Κλινος refers to laying down, reclining (can you see the Greek root in the English word?). A table with a couch on three sides, each side accommodating three people, was customarily used for dining. The word came to be used for a dining hall. Thus, the man was the master of the dining hall. The Latin *triclinium* becomes the root of the moniker by which the man is called in Lenski – “Trinclinarch”. One of the duties of the banquet master was to taste the food before it was offered to the guests. (Weinrich & Lenski).

**2:9 –** No record of the actual changing of the water to wine occurs in Scripture. We simply know that the water the men poured into the water pots is now wine. John records that the master of the feast was unaware of the source of the wine, although, John adds, the servants knew. This is included to bear witness to He who performed the miracle. The response of the master of the feast, according to Lenski, is to call the bridegroom because he thinks he has made a mistake.

**2:10 –** The banquet master recounts to the bridegroom the custom – “every man first the good wine sets out, and when they are drunk, the worst.” (translation Braden) This is quite telling of human nature. In acting this way, men try to make themselves appear wealthier than they are, serving inferior wine when the guest is too drunk to know the difference. The banquet master expected this. The groom must have been quite bewildered, since John mentions no interaction with him before this point. Lenski points out that good wine is wasted on drunken guests, they are not worthy of it.

**2:11 -** There is no further discussion of the miracle. In the Greek the word used for “miracle” is “sign”. John recounts that this was the first of the miracles of Jesus. See John 21:24-25. John places this miraculous act in Cana of Galilee (2:1).

The purpose of the sign, John explains, was to “make manifest” or “show forth” “His glory.” This reaches back to John 1:14. The miracle at Cana was the first of many revelations of the Deity of Christ given to men. The glory of God in Christ is a major theme of Gospel according to St. John, see John 11:4, 11:40, 12:41 (Isaiah 6:1-13), 17:5, 22 & 24.

John does not explain the miracle, nor does he allegorize it. Faith knows without being told that Christ Jesus is the Bridegroom (Matthew 9:15, 25:1; John 3:29; Revelation 18:23). The Church is the Bride (Isaiah 61:10, 62:5; John 3:29; Revelation 21:9). In this miracle, the Law is fulfilled (how?) and the Old Testament is replaced by the New, the Testament of grace, in which the prophesied new wine flows freely from God. See Hosea 2:22-23; Joel 3:18; Matthew 9:17 (the Old cannot contain the New).

In His presence at Cana, the Lord blesses earthly matrimony, which is to be a model of Christ and His Church. See Ephesians 5:23-33. Christ as the Bridegroom is a major theme of Revelation, also written by John.

**2:11, Cont. –** This miracle, like the other miracles of Jesus, did not find their ultimate fruition in the earthly sign. While Jesus changed water into wine, even the best wine, the miracle is about neither water nor wine. With this miracle the New Testament is ushered in, the washing of the Law replaced with the Good Wine of grace. No earthly washing can cleanse man. But God, in His mercy, in His great love for you, works a miracle that surpasses all understanding in the Washing of Regeneration, and in the Miraculous Wine He gives you to drink which is His Blood.

The miracles of Jesus were external signs. At this sign, which John reports as the “beginning” of the signs (the word “beginning is **ἀρχή** , the same word used in 1:1, see also John 4:54), was performed not in Judea, but in Galilee. By this miracle, John reports, Jesus showed forth His glory (see 1:14 for the same word, **δόξα**), which is to say that He publicly demonstrated His Divinity, with the result that His disciples believed in Him. John, who authored the account, was one of those disciples.

**Read John 2:12-17**

**2:12 –** “…He went down” is a topographical reference. According to Weinrich, Jesus went from “the hill country of Galillee to Capernaum, which is below sea level on the Lake of Genesaret.” (326)

“…His mother and His brothers and His disciples” – the “brothers” of Jesus were unbelievers (see 7:5). At Zion we confess with the Church of the Ages that the Lord had no uterine siblings from Mary. From our tract on “Mary, Ever Virgin” (which can be read for more information on this topic):

“This is frequently explained by asserting that where “brothers” and “sisters” are identified, they are not natural-born brothers or sisters of Jesus. They are counted as children of Joseph by another mother, or cousins of Jesus, but not “uterine” sons and daughters of Mary. Indeed, Scripture frequently uses the word “son” to mean distant descendant, and “brother” to mean close friend or relative. For instance, in Matthew 1 Jesus is Son of David, son of Abraham.

This use of the word “son” stresses the clear fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. To this point, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Kittle) demonstrates that ἀδελφός (“brother”) is used 30 times in Acts and 130 times in Paul to mean “spiritual brother”, rather than “physical brother” (I.144-5).We frequently refer to our fellow members of Zion as our “brothers” and “sisters”. Exegetically, the words “son” and “brother” still carry their proper literal sense, but they are used in ways that highlight close or direct relationships. Examples of this abound in the Scriptures, as we read, for example, in Mark 10:29-30.”

St. Augustine (Bishop of Hippo, North Africa, d. 430 A. D., in His *Tractate X* on John 2:12, writes:

“Behold He has a mother, and brethren, and disciples: whence He has a mother, thence brethren. For our Scripture is wont to call them brethren, not only that are sprung from the same man and woman, or from the same mother, or from the same father, though by different mothers; or, in truth, that are of the same degree as cousins by the father’s or mother’s side… Whence the Lord had brethren? For surely Mary did not give birth a second time? Far from it! With her begins the dignity of virgins… Then, whence the brethren? The kinsmen of Mary, of whatever degree, are the brethren of the Lord… (Here Augustine cites Genesis 13:8 and Genesis 29:15\*, and continues…) Read the Scripture, and thou wilt find that uncle and sister’s son are called brothers. When thou hast known this rule, thou wilt find that all the blood relation of Mary are the brethren of Christ.” (*NPNF* 7; 69. This is available in the Pastor’s Study for those interested.)

\*It should be noted that while the NKJV translates “relative” here, the KJV rightly translates “brother”. The Hebrew word is אָח , which is defined as: “1) brother 1a) brother of same parents 1b) half-brother (same father) 1c) relative, kinship, same tribe 1d) each to the other (reciprocal relationship) 1e) (fig.) of resemblance” (Hermeneutika: *Bibleworks*; *TWOT* 62a)

Similarly, “The Venerable” Bede (an English Monk, d. 735 A. D., who interestingly was married) writes:

“There have been heretics who supposed that Joseph, the husband of the blessed Virgin Mary, begot of another wife those whom the Scriptures call the Lord’s brothers. Others, with greater lack of faith, have supposed that he begot these of Mary herself after our Lord’s birth. But we, dearly beloved brothers, without any hesitation or questioning must be aware and confess that not only the blessed Mother of God, but also Joseph, the most blessed witness and guardian of her chastity, always remained wholly aloof from the conjugal act; and further, that those who after the customary manner of the Scriptures are called our Savior’s brothers or sisters were not their children but their relatives.”

(*Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament IVa, John 1-10*. 2006. ed. Joel Elowsky. Downer’s Grove: Intervarsity Press. pg. 100.

“…they remained there not many days” – incidental facts such as this bear witness of the veracity of Scripture. They also help us to, for instance, place the events of Christ’s life into the proper time. Here they remained not many days, and the Passover drew near. The Passover was observed on the 14th day of the month of Abib (a reference to the fresh shoots of the barley plants, which appeared around the new moon of our March/April) see Exodus 13:3-19, 23:15), which would have been approximately the 4th day of our April. Later Abib is called Nisan, a Babylonian name learned in the captivity (see Nehemiah 2:1; Esther 3:7). *The New International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* says the Abib was a month in the Bab year, which was brought out of Ur of the Chaldees by Abraham. (1939. vol I, Grand Rapids: Eerdman’s. 9) The *Anchor Bible Dictionary* attributes Abib to the Canaanites.

**2:13 –** “The Passover of the Jews” – the great festival of the Jewish liturgical year. See Exodus 12:1-11, 12-20. The Christological implications and the typology of the Passover are seemingly inexhaustible. See 1 Corinthians 5:7; Luke 2:40-43; John 6:3-6; John 11:55-12:8; John 19:13-16; Matthew 26:1-5, 14-20, 21-30; Hebrews 11:27-29.

“…Jesus went up into Jerusalem.” While Jerusalem is south of Capernaum (see map), the reference here again is topological – Jerusalem is of higher elevation.

**2:14 –** This account occurs at the first Passover recorded in John’s Gospel. The Synoptic Gospels place the Cleansing of the Temple after the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, just before the third Passover of our Lord’s “earthly ministry”. See Matthew 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-17; Luke 19:45-46. Note that in each case there are differences in the accounts, and different words and forms are used in the Greek. Mark adds the prohibition against carrying anything in the Temple. Note Luke’s addition of the Old Testament prophecies in Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11. Remember that Matthew and John are both Apostles, Mark and Luke disciples of Apostles (see 2:17). Matthew’s account is much shorter than John’s. See also Zechariah 14:21 (Just).

In our introduction, this author asserted that St. John arranges his accounts in theological rather than in chronological order. Luther concurs, asserting that the Cleansing of the Temple occurred only once, over against Church Fathers like St. John Chrysostom, who maintain that the Lord cleansed the Temple twice (Just, 341). Luther writes (as cited in Just) “It is my opinion that here John skips over the first three years of the Lord’s preaching after His Baptism and speaks only of the fourth year… I hold that this event occurred only once… whether it happened sooner or later, whether it happened once or twice, this will not prejudice our faith.” (Just cites *AE* 22:218-219)

St. Augustine writes “This account… is given by all the Evangelists, but John introduces it in a remarkably different order… This makes it evident that this act was performed by the Lord not on a single occasion but twice over; but that only the first instance is put on record by John, and the last by the other three.” (*Harmony of the Gospels*, cited in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture IVa,* 101).

“…and He found in the Temple those selling oxen and sheep and doves…” There, in the holiest place on earth, the place where God once dwelt physically between the cherubim over the Mercy Seat, the Jews had corrupted that very place and made it a place of commerce. The sacrifices were required by the Law, but it was more convenient for the Jews keeping the pilgrim feast to travel light and to purchase the sacrifices once there. Although the text does not clearly articulate it, many commentators hold that the sacrifices were blemished, which was not allowed by the Law, or that exorbitant prices were charged, like hot dogs at a football game. Not only was this disrespectful, it did what modern televangelists do – pervert the One True Faith by making it a means of financial gain.

Theodore of Mopuestia (Bishop of Mopuestia, a region north of Syrian Antioch, exegete, d. A.D. 428) explains that the Lord was actually eliminating the entire sacrificial system (*Commentary on John*, cited in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture IVa*.) As such, the Once for All Perfect Sacrifice was replacing all other sacrifices. As John the Baptizer had testified, He is the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world. See Malachi 3:1.

The Greek word translated “selling” is from **πωλέω**, “I sell” or “I barter”. It is commonly used, and occurs in all four Gospels, Acts, and 1 Corinthians. St. James uses a different word for “sell for profit”, ἐμπορεύομαι, which carries also the meaning “trade, deal, import for sale” (see 4:13). In Acts a yet different verb is used for “to sell and render possession” (πιπράσκω), see Acts 4:34 where both verbs are used, but both are translated “sold” in the English.

The section of the Temple St. John refers to was called “the court of the Gentiles”. It is to be distinguished from the three inner courts which it encircled (Priests, men, and women).

“…oxen, sheep and doves…” – sacrifices required by Old Testament Law.

“moneychangers” – money had to be exchanged for currency acceptable to the Temple. The Greek word is κερματιστής. It occurs only here in Scripture. While the NKJV has “doing business”, the Greek word is simply “being seated”. See the same word in a very similar use in Matthew 9:9.

**2:15-16 –** Here the Sinless One who would be scourged makes a scourge and drives away sinners. For them He would be scourged. God’s jealousy, wrath, and His anger are holy, sinless. See Psalm 4:4 and Ephesians 4:26. The doves, held in cages, had to be carried out.

**2:17 –** His disciples, who were with Him (v 12), know this is the fulfillment of prophecy. See Psalm 69:9, a Psalm of David.

**Read John 2:18-25**

**2:18 –** The Jews ask for signs, see 1 Corinthians 1:21-25. Their demand for a sign is revealing – they had let the sacrifice-sellers and money-changers into the Temple, and may well have profited from it. They seek a sign of the authority by which He does these things. See Matthew 12:38-42.

**2:19 –** The Lord’s response, in keeping with Matthew 12, is “Loose (an imperative) this Temple, and in three days I will raise it.” The word Jesus uses here for “Temple” is a different word than is used in 2:14. There the reference is to the Court of the Gentiles or the outer parts, here it is a reference to the inner, holier parts.

**2:20 –** The Jews’ answer here is indicative of a thematic failure to understand that is a main theme of several chapters to follow. Here the Lord refers to His Body, they think He’s speaking of the Temple. Just as earlier in chapter 2 they could not understand the water changed to wine, so in chapter 3 Nicodemus will fail to understand the birth from above to which He refers. In chapter 4 the woman at the well will fail to understand the nature of the “water” which He gives. So too in Chapter 6 will they fail to understand that to eat His Flesh means to believe. The Lord speaks heavenly truths, men are earthly.

**2:21 –** St. John explains what the Jews could not understand.

**2:22 –** Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, finally they would understand. See Luke 24:30-32. By God’s grace, you have the advantage of the Scriptures, the testimony of the Apostles and Evangelists, and can study that Divinely inspired testimony. God has given you His Spirit to bring to your mind the very things Jesus said. See John 14:26.

**2:23 –** The “signs” He did were miracles. Seeing, many believed “in His Name”. See 1:12-13. But blessed are you who have not seen and yet believe. See John 29:29-31 for the purpose of all of Jesus’ “signs”. And yet see Matthew 13:13-17.

**2:24-25 –** A more wooden translation of 2:24 reads “But Jesus Himself did not entrust Himself to them on account of Him knowing all.” Verse 23 said that many believed. But of those, many would soon cry “Crucify!” The Lord knew. He did not need the witness of men, because He knew what was in man. See Mark 7:21-23.

**Read John 3:1-8**

**3:1 –** Here we meet Nicodemus. The text tells us that he was a ruler of the Jews, a Pharisee. The word “Pharisee” is the Greek transliteration of an old Aramaic word meaning “set apart.” The Pharisees were a manifestation, a religious, social and political movement, of “second Temple Judaism”. There are no Pharisees in the Old Testament, the word does not occur, nor does the word Sadducees. The Pharisaic teachings established the foundation of Rabbinic Judaism. While the Sadducees favored Hellenism, the Pharisees rejected it. The Maccabean Revolt of 167-160 B.C. was waged to oppose the Hellenistic influence of the Seleucid Empire (Antiochus Epiphanius). The Pharisees accepted all the Old Testament Scriptures and listened to Greek philosophy, the Saduccees accepted only the Five Books of Moses. According to Flavius Josephus (d. 100 A. D.) there were about 6,000 Pharisees at the fall of the second Temple (*Jewish Antiquities*, 17.41-422).

Josephus writes: “For there was a certain sect of men that were Jews, who valued themselves highly upon the exact skill they had in the law of their fathers, and made men believe they were highly favored by God… These are those that are called the sect of the Pharisees, who were in a capacity of greatly opposing kings. A cunning sect they were, and soon elevated to a pitch of open fighting and doing mischief. Accordingly, when all the people of the Jews gave assurance of their goodwill to Caesar, and to the king’s government, these very men did not swear, being above six thousand…” (*Jewish Antiquities,* in *The New Complete Works of* Josephus, trans. William Whitson. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1999, pg. 556)

While Priests served in the Temple, the Sadducees controlled the teaching and interpretation of the Torah. During the Hasmonean Dynasty of 152 B.C., the Pharisees emerged as a sect of the Sadduccees. The Pharisees demanded that the purity laws that dealt with the goings-on inside the Temple be applied to those outside the Temple, as did the Essenes. The Sadduccees rejected the “oral Torah”, Talmud and Mishnah, which the Pharisees recorded, accepted and taught.

The Sadduccees and Pharisees both were left without the center of their religion when the second Temple was destroyed in 70 A. D. Modern Judaism, Rabbinic Judaism, developed out of the Pharisees. Their religion is still vacuous, lacking the very center of all their Feasts and rites, the Jerusalem Temple.

**3:1, cont. –** Now we better understand John’s description that Nicodemus was a Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews. Nicodemus occurs only in John’s Gospel. Outside of this account, see John 7:50-52 and 19:39-42, noting the Jewish customs observed.

**3:2 –** Nicodemus was Jesus’ “night student”. While other Pharisees opposed and avoided Jesus, Nicodemus came to Him, but cautiously, apparently not wanting to be seen by others (Lenski).

Nicodemus’ confession is remarkable. “Rabbi, we know that you have come from God a teacher. For no one is able to do the signs which you do, if God is not with him.” (Braden) The only “sign” recorded previously in John’s Gospel was the changing of water into wine at Galillee, although 2:23 refers to “signs”. Nicodemus believed in the miracles.

**3:3 –** Continuing to speak heavenly truths to earthly men, Jesus’ answer cuts to the heart of the cautious Pharisee: “Amen, amen, I say to you, unless someone is born from above, he is not able to see the Kingdom of God.” The phrase “Kingdom of God” is a mark of the New Testament, it is not used in the Old Testament. It is used for the first time in Matthew 6:33. Although commonly used in the Synoptic Gospels, it is used only here (3:3, 5) in John. It is used twice in the Apocalypse (1:9, 12:10)

I have translated “born from above” for the Greek γεννηθῇ ἄνωθεν. The preposition ἄνω is used in John 2:7. It means “up, upward, from on high”. The suffix θεν identifies “from where”. The Greek word for “again” is πάλιν (see John 1:35, 4:3, 4:13, 4:46). ἄνωθεν occurs 13 times in the New Testament. See its use in John 3:31, 19:11, 19:23. All other occurrences of the word “again” in John’s Gospel are πάλιν in the Greek. “Again” is only used once in the Johanine Epistles, where it is πάλιν (1 John 2:8). The same is true of the Apocalypse. Septuagintal Job 3:4 uses ἄνωθεν. The only use of ἄνωθεν in Holy Scripture with the significance of “again” is in Galatians 4:9, where the construction is πάλιν, which is best translated “again from the start” or “all over again.” Adhering to our hermeneutical principles, ἄνωθεν in Galatians 4:9 could also be rendered “from above”, thus all occurrences of the word would be rendered the same. This distinction in the translation of ἄνωθεν is not mere semantics. The Lord chooses His Words carefully. Here Weinrich translates “from above”, Lenksi and Elowsky translate “anew”, citing Nicodemus’ question in the next verse, “a second time”, on which Weinrich comments that Nicodemus might have understood “again” .

The Lord’s answer is stern. Nicodemus, a Pharisee, has no part in the Kingdom of God. Lenski writes “…Jesus’ word must have struck Nicodemus hard, being uttered, as it was, by a young man to one grown old and gray as an established “teacher”.” (236)

**3:4 –** Nicodemus truly does not understand: “How can a man be born being old?” (Braden) His use of the word “old” points to the fact that he was thinking of himself. His follow-up question “He is not able to enter a second *time* into the belly of his mother and be born, *is he*?” (Braden) can apply to any man.

**3:5 –** Jesus answers, affirming here again with the double “Amen.” The “birth from above” is now explained by juxtaposition with the formula “*out* of water and the Spirit”. This does not describe two births, one of water, the other of Spirit, as enthusiasts and those who reject Baptism teach, but rather one birth of water and Spirit. Justin Martyr (d. 165 A. D.) understands the pericope in the same way – one baptism of water and Spirit. (*Ancient Christian Commentary,* 112.)

St. John Chrysostom (d. 407 A. D.) writes “if anyone asks how is someone born of water, I ask, in return, how is someone [like Adam] born from the earth? ...humanity was formed last, when the creation had been accomplished. Now, on the contrary, the new person is formed before the new creation. He is born first, and then the world is fashioned anew.” (*ibid*)

Our catechism teaches

* “**What is Baptism?** Baptism is not simple water only, but it is the water comprehended in God’s command and connected with God’s Word.
* **Which is that Word of God?** Christ, our Lord, says in the last chapter of Matthew: Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.”
* **What does Baptism give or profit?**  It works forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, and the Words and promises of God declare.
* **Which are such Words and promises of God?** Christ, our Lord, says in the last chapter of Mark: ‘He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.’
* **How can water do such great things?** It is not the water indeed that does them, but the Word of God which is in and with the water, and faith, which rusts such Word of God in the water. For without the Word of God the water is simple water and no baptism. But with the Word of God it is a Baptism, that is, a gracious water of life and a washing of regeneration in the Holy Ghost, as St. Paul says, Titus, chapter third: ‘[According to His mercy He saved us] By the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Savior, that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying.
* **What does such baptizing with water signify?**  It signifies that the Old Adam in us should, by daily contrition and repentance, be drowned and die with all sins and evil lusts, and, again, a new man daily come froth and arise, who shall live before God in righteousness and purity forever.
* **Where is this written?** St. Paul writes, Romans, chapter sixth: We are buried with Christ by Baptism into death, that, like as He was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

**3:5, cont. –** So this “birth from above”, Holy Baptism, conveys forgiveness of sins, life, faith, and binds us to the death and resurrection of Christ. Without this, our Lord teaches, “*a man* is not able to enter into the Kingdom of God.” Baptism, as our Confessions state, is “necessary” for salvation: “Our churches teach that Baptism is necessary for salvation, that the grace of God is offered through Baptism, and that children should be baptized, for being offered to God through Baptism they are received into His grace.” (*Augustana* IX) See 2 Peter 1:10-11.

In counting Baptism among the Sacraments, our Confessions teach “If we define sacraments as ‘rites which have the command of God and to which the promise of grace has been added’, we can easily determine which are sacraments in the strict sense... The genuine sacraments therefore, are Baptism, the Lord’s Supper, and absolution (which is the sacrament of penitance.)… The ministry of the Word has God’s command and glorious promise… If ordination is interpreted this way, we shall not object either to calling the laying on of hands a sacrament.” (*Apol.* XIII.3-4, 12)

**3:6 –** Here our Lord distinguishes between the birth from “above” and the birth from “below”. While both are God’s work (Job 10:9-12; Psalm 139:13-16), because of the fall the results are different. Those born of flesh die. Those born from above of water and the Spirit receive a birth unto everlasting life. This juxtaposition of “flesh” and “spirit” will continue in chapter 6, see verse 63. Those who live by the flesh live differently than those who live by the Spirit, who are free from sin. (Weinrich 392) See John 1:29, 8:32-36; 1 John 3:5-6.

**3:7 –** Here the Lord restates his assertion from 3:3 – a man must be born from above. And at this Nicodemus shouldn’t marvel, since:

**3:8 –** “the Spirit blows where He wills and the voice of Him you are hearing, but you have not known from where He comes and where He goes.” This explanation to the Lord’s assertion in 3:7 teaches us much of the work of the Holy Spirit, and His role in Holy Baptism. The word “blows” reflects the fact that in Hebrew as well as Greek “spirit”, “breath” and “wind” are frequently expressed using the same word. So the one born from above is begotten of the Holy Spirit.

**3:8, cont. –** Theodore of Mopsuestia (d. 428 A. D., a city in modern Turkey by the ancient city of Antiochia in the province of Cilicia) refers here (…you hear the sound of it…) to Pentecost, where the Holy Spirit came first as the sound of a mighty wind. See Acts 2:1-4. St. Augustine writes “…therefore we are born spiritually, and in the Spirit we are born by the Word and Sacraments… And how do we hear the voice of the Spirit? A Psalm sounds forth: it is the Spirit’s voice. The Gospel sounds forth: it is the Spirit’s voice. God’s Word sounds forth: it is the Spirit’s voice…” (*Ancient Christian Commentary* IVa 116-117). Weinrich writes “Nicodemus hears the ‘voice’ of the Spirit in the voice of Jesus, the Christ”, referencing 3:29; 5:25, 28; 10:3-5, 16, 27. (395)

**Read John 3:9-15**

**3:9 –** As in 2:9-10, 4:11, 4:32, 6:7-8, 6:52, 60, here Jesus speaks clearly of heavenly truths, but earthly hearts cannot receive it. See Isaiah 6:9-10; Matthew 13:13-16; Luke 8:10-11; Acts 28:23-28. As St. Paul found the Jews in Rome, so is much of the world today. The Word of God is clear, the world mocks and reviles it. Consider the Biblical truths of creation, male and female, marriage, salvation, sanctification, the Word and Sacraments, the Mass, the Parousia, and heaven. How does the fallen world treat these Truths?

Nicodemus is not asking in malice. He understands the Lord’s Words. But they create in him a “cognitive dissonance” – that which he believes to be true is shaken by what he hears. Apologetics, at its core, works to create the same.

**3:10 –** Our Lord’s rebuke of Nicodemus is strong. As introduced in 3:1, Nicodemus had a role in the “ruling council” and as a Pharisee. But how was Nicodemus to have known? Weinrich answers “The answer lies in Jesus’ rebuke to the other Jews that if they believed the witness of their own Scriptures, they would believe His Words…” (396, where Weinrich cites 5:39, 45-47; 8:48-58).

**3:11 –** “We speak of what we know…” Here our Lord switches to the first-person plural. In verses 3 and 5 of this chapter He used the first-person singular. The NIV Lutheran Study Bible speculates “The plural associates with others, perhaps with the disciples…” (1608). The author of this study sees this as dividing between the Jews, of whom Nicodemus is teacher, and “Us”, a reference to Abraham and Moses and the Prophets, especially John the Baptizer, those who have “seen and witnessed…” While some commentators see this as a “majestic plural” or a “*pluralis ecclesiasticus”* (Weinrich, 397), the context of 1:31, 34; and 5:39, 45-47 place the Patriarchs and Prophets in one group, Nicodemus and the Jews in the other. (Weinrich, *ibid*).

So in His statement “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God” the Lord testifies to what the Patriarchs and Prophets and John clearly knew. But that Witness the Jews would not accept (see especially John 1:10-13)

**3:12 –** Here the Lord contrasts the earthly with the heavenly. This fallen world is a perverse distortion of what God once made it. The heavenly Truths are hidden to us, veiled by our fallenness and sin. Further, He “is from above”, see 3:13, and can speak of the heavenly things. See John 8:21-27. So it is in the world today – the Word of Christ and His clear testimony are rejected, the consequence of that rejection is that they “will die in your sins”.

**3:12, cont. –**See Luke 22:67-70. His teaching of earthly/heavenly will extend to 3:15 and 16 as well. This continues the theme from chapter 1 (He came to His own, His own received Him not), chapter 2 (wine-filled water jars), chapter 3 (heavenly birth), chapter 4 (water that gives life) and chapter 6 (Feeding of the 5000/Bread from Heaven). See especially 6:36-38, 62-63.

To the point that Israel and its teachers do not receive His witness, see 9:30-31 and Romans 2:17-24. Nor does the world receive Him today. But it will receive Him, even those who reject Him. See Philippians 2:9-11.

“If the earthly things I told you and you are not believing, how if I tell you the heavenly things will you believe?” (Braden) is a central theme of John’s Gospel. The Greek New Testament has a margin note equating this verse (3:12) with Wisdom of Solomon 9:16. This is an Apocryphal Book, Luther suggested Philo of Alexandria (a Jew, d. 50 A. D.) as the author based on the Fathers’ testimony. We read:

9 With thee is wisdom, who knows thy works and was present when thou didst make the world, and who understands what is pleasing in thy sight and what is right according to thy commandments.

10 Send her forth from the holy heavens, and from the throne of thy glory send her, that she may be with me and toil, and that I may learn what is pleasing to thee.

11 For she knows and understands all things, and she will guide me wisely in my actions and guard me with her glory.

12 Then my works will be acceptable, and I shall judge thy people justly, and shall be worthy of the throne of my father.

13 For what man can learn the counsel of God? Or who can discern what the Lord wills?

14 For the reasoning of mortals is worthless, and our designs are likely to fail,

15 for a perishable body weighs down the soul, and this earthy tent burdens the thoughtful mind.

16 We can hardly guess at what is on earth, and what is at hand we find with labor; but who has traced out what is in the heavens?

17 Who has learned thy counsel, unless thou hast given wisdom and sent thy holy Spirit from on high? (RSV)

While Wisdom is not a Canonical Book, this section compares favorably with Proverbs 8:12-36, where Wisdom is the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. The Hebrew word for wisdom is חָכְמָה(See Proverbs 8,verse 12), a noun of feminine gender. Pastor will explain why the noun can be feminine, but refer directly to Christ. See Job 28:12. Where can He be found? He is from above, we are from below, but He has come down to us.

**3:13 –** “And no one has gone up into heaven except the One coming down out of heaven, the Son of Man.” (Braden) This verse connects directly to the thought of 12.

**3:13, Cont. –** Here the Lord identifies Himself as the Son of Man. We first encountered this Name in 1:51, where He is Jacob’s Ladder, the One who bridges heaven and earth – the heavenly and the earthly, that which is above with that which is below, as the context here reflects. See 1 Corinthians 15:40-49; John 20:17; Proverbs 30:4; Deuteronomy 30:12. The work of faith is to bring the Christ who descended and ascended to you – Romans 10:6-9.

**3:14 –** The topic seems to change significantly here, but it is a continuation of the thought of 3:11-13. The Son of Man became incarnate, “came down”, “descended” for this purpose: that just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, thus it is necessary for the Son of Man to be lifted up. Read the account of Moses and the serpent in Numbers 21:4-9. See John 8:28, 12:32-34; Isaiah 52:13, where the Hebrew verb “extolled” is נָשָׂא, “lifted up”.

**3:15 –** The Son of Man will be lifted up for a reason. Just as the Israelites looked to the brazen serpent and lived, so all those who believe in Jesus Christ and Him Crucified will be cured of the lethal venom of sin that courses through their veins – the bite of the serpent of Eden, and the death sentence which follows, fulfilled by Christ when He died for you on the cross. Here we have a clear articulation of Scripture upon which the 4th Article of the Augsburg Confession is based – “everyone who believes in Him has eternal life.”

This assertion of our Lord – that of salvation by God’s grace through faith (believing) in Jesus Christ, undergirds and provides the main theme of the entirety of Holy Scripture, but especially the chapters of the Gospel according to St. John that follow. See 3:18, 36; 4:41-42; 4:48; 4:53; 5:24; 5:46-47; 6:29, 36, 40, 47-50 and ff.

**3:16 –** This oft-quoted, usually poorly translated verse is well known by most Christians. It does not say “God loved the world so much…”, as is taught by most. It reads “For thus God loved the world…”, or “In this way God loved the world…” In what way did God love the world? What is the connecting thought?

“…that He gave His only-begotten Son, that everyone who believes in Him won’t die but have life eternal.” (Braden) “…won’t die” is a fairly awkward way to render the Greek aorist subjunctive. The subjunctive expresses futurity without doubt. This is similar to a “future more vivid conditional sentence”: He who believes (indicative verb in the protasis) – won’t die (subjunctive verb in the apodosis) but have (subjunctive verb in the apodosis) life eternal.

Weinrich translates “whoever believes in Him might not perish but rather might have eternal life” (356). Lenski translates “everyone believing in Him should not perish but have life eternal.” Both scholars use “might” or “should”, but the subjunctive does not convey doubt, only unrealized futurity. The trouble isn’t the Greek – it’s clear – the trouble is there is no way to render this exactly in the English.

All this is to say that there is no doubt – whoever believes in Him will not perish, but will have eternal life. For that He came. For that He died. And that is how God loved the world.

Again here, as in 12 and 15, justification by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ is clearly taught.

Consider anew the type of the serpent in the wilderness, and the Antitype Jesus Christ – the lowest most despised sinful creature lifted up on a pole, that simply looking at Him in faith brings healing and life.

**3:16, cont. –** Can you see central doctrine of the Christian faith, which is taught by the Lutheran Fathers in the Fourth Article of the Augsburg Confession, in verses 15 and 16?

In the context of John 3:16, read Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:9.

**Read John 3:17-21**

**3:17 –** This verse also begins with a conjunctive “for”. What thoughts does this connect? Can you see the connection between verses 14-17?

For what has Christ come? For what has Christ not come? Reconcile this with John 9:39-41, remembering that Scripture never contradicts itself. See John 5:24-30, 8:16, 12:27-33, 16:7-11.

The Christ indeed comes again in judgment on the Last Day, see Matthew 12:36; Romans 2:5-8, 14:10-12; Hebrews 6:1-2, 9:27; 2 Peter 2:4-9, 3:7; Jude 1:6; Revelation 20:4-6. For the Christian His Second Coming is a Day of joy – see John 14:3.

Who is it that Christ comes to save in John 3:17? Pastor will explain the doctrine of Objective Justification. Do you see this also in John 3:16?

**3:18 –** In light of the Bible verses on the Judgement just read, what hope does this verse bring for the Christian? How does 3:18b correlate with our Lord’s statement that He came not to judge? Note that God is not bound to time, He is eternal. The Sacrifice of Christ on the cross happened in time, but its benefits are not bound to time. Adam is saved by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ, as is Seth, and Noah, and Abraham, and Moses… See Revelation 13:8.

“…the Name of the Only-begotten Son of God” – See John 1:12, 1 John 3:23. Weinrich writes “To ‘believe in His Name’ characterizes those who accept as true the claims that Jesus makes concerning himself, that he is the Christ and the Son of God and the one who gives eternal life… Thus the phrase ‘those who believe in his name’ may be regarded as nomenclature for those who are disciples of Jesus… ‘His Name’ does not refer to the name ‘Jesus.’ It is a reference to the divine name YHWH…” (160-161) Dr. Charles Gieschen, in his book *Angelomorphic Christology*, asserts that the Name of God in the Old Testament is a Theophany. See Exodus 23:20-21; Judges 13:17-18 (Gieschen, 76). What are the implications of Gieschen’s understanding on John 3:18?

**3:19 –** After asserting that He did not come to judge, here is the judgment: the Light has come into the world, and men loved darkness more. See Matthew 17:2; John 1:9, 8:12, 9:5, 11:9-10, See especially John 12:46-48. See Matthew 4:16; 6:23; Romans 13:12; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 1 Thessalonians 5:4-5. The darkness/light theme is central also in 1 John (see 1:5-6, for instance).

**3:20-** Sin is not simply ignoring God. It is hatred for God. See Ephesians 5:6-14. So Christ the Light would be covered in darkness, Matthew 27:45.

**3:21 –** Those who are “of the Light”, those who have faith in Jesus, love the Light, and it illumines them and their works. See Ephesians 2:8-10 for God working through the Christian to accomplish works pleasing to Him. See Matthew 5:15-16.

**3:21, Cont. –** On the Truth, see 1 John 1:6 (as above in v. 19). Note the continuity of theme in this section of John’s Gospel – how does 3:19 connect to 3:21? 3:12? 3:16? The wonderful thematic structure of John testifies that this is inspired Scripture.

**Read 3:22-24**

3:22 – The factual nature of Scripture is attested to by the details of the accounts. In verse 2:12 the Lord is in Capernaum, in 2:13 He goes to Jerusalem. In 2:23 the Lord is in Jerusalem. Here, in 3:22, the New King James renders Μετὰ ταῦτα ἦλθεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν Ἰουδαίαν γῆν as “After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea…”, which is a bit difficult because Jerusalem is in the “land of Judea”. The NAS and RSV translate similarly. The sense of the text can be seen in the NIV and ESV translations: “After this Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside” (ESV). This would mean that the Lord left the City of Peace and went out into the regions of Judea.

Weinrich translates “…came into the countryside of Judea”, admitting it is an unusual use of the word γῆ (soil, earth, ground *or* land, region or country) as a modifier of Ἰουδαία in John’s Gospel. The only other option here, following the NKJ translation, is that our Lord had left Jerusalem and was now returning to Judea. Since the account of Nicodemus does not occur in the Synoptic Gospels, this author finds the best treatment to reflect the Lord leaving the city and heading for the countryside with His disciples. Elowsky simply translates “After this Jesus and His disciples went into the land of Judea” (130). The verb ἦλθεν can mean “he came” or “he went”. The force of “went” fits well with Jesus, in Jerusalem, went into the country.

While the actual location is difficult to place, what is important is what Jesus did: “…He remained with them and baptized.” Most commentaries point to 4:2, which reads “…though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples.” But that clearly conflicts with the testimony in 4:26 “…He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him…” This author is comfortable understanding the Text as it clearly reads. 4:2 may well refer to a later time, when the number of converts was multiplied as the disciples also baptized.

**3:23 –** We met John the Baptizer in 1:6. His work was to witness to the Light, that through Him men might believe. Verses 27-36 of this chapter record that testimony of John.

In support of the translation of v. 22 that places the Lord in the countryside, John mentions Αἰνὼν ἐγγὺς τοῦ Σαλείμ “Aenon (drawing) near Salim.” This place occurs nowhere else in Scripture by this name. One possibility is that it is an Aenon west of the Jordan, 12 kilometers (that’s Canadian) south of “Scythopolis”, also known in Hebrew as “Beth-Shan”. Eusebius and Jerome assert this (Weinrich, 426, n.5). Another possibility is that “Salim”, which means “peace” is a reference to the City of Peace, Jerusalem (Weinrich 427 n. 8, citing Barrett). Lenski attributes the name “Aenon” to the word “springs”, citing the end of the verse, “…there was much water there”, connecting it to the thought of John baptizing and placing it west of the Jordan in the countryside.

The force of the verb “…they came…” is better rendered “…they were continually appearing…” or “…they were continually making themselves present…” for the purpose of being baptized by John.

**3:24 –** John adds an anachronistic thought. He writes after these events occurred. See Matthew 4:12, 11:2, 14:3, 14:10; Luke 3:18-21, noting the chronology there.

**Read John 3:25-30**

**3:25** – Based on the context of 3:22-24, why would the topic of cleansing be germane? See Exodus 29:4, 17; Exodus 30:18-21; Mark 7:3-4; Luke 11:37-40.

**3:26 –** John’s disciples are concerned. One that he baptized, Jesus, is now baptizing, and more people are going to Him. Note how Jesus is identified: He is the One to whom John testified. That in itself should be enough, John’s testimony was that He would come and give a better baptism. See 1:24-28; Luke 3:15-16.

**3:27 –** Note the humility of the Baptizer’s answer. What was given John from heaven was to prepare the way, see 1:22-23. He was not given to baptize by the Holy Spirit.

**3:28 –** John was sent by God, but He is not the Christ. St. John son of Zebedee, the Evangelist, makes this abundantly clear here, for in his time there was a “cult of John”. See 1:6-8, 35; Matthew 11:2-3; Acts 19:1-6.

**3:29 –** Christ is the Bridegroom, His Holy Church is the Bride. See Isaiah 61:10-11, 62:5; Matthew 9:15, 25:1ff; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 21:2, 9; Revelation 22:16-17.

“Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled.” What does John mean? How does this relate to 1:32-34? See John 15:11.

**3:30 –** “It is necessary that that One abound, but me to be made to decrease.” Faith is not proud. John fulfilled his calling. John pointed to the Christ. John made straight the way. For faith that is enough. His faithfulness will be shown even in the face of martyrdom.

**Read 3:31-36**

**3:31 –** Remember our previous discussion about “above/below”? Here John testifies of the same. See 3:3. This theme finds it’s fruition in 8:23. See Romans 9:5. Christ is “above” John because He is from above, and before him. John is “out of the earth”, in idiomatic and also in very real ways – Adam was formed from the earth. See 1 Corinthians 15:47. On the “speaking”, see 1 John 4:5-6.

**3:32 –** See John 1:11-12. Fallen men could neither receive Christ nor those who witness to Him.

**3:33 –** “The one receiving His testimony sealed, because God is true.” The word here for “sealed” is translated “has certified” in the NKJ. It’s first meaning is “seal”, it’s third meaning (third most common use in Scripture) is “attest”. The NKJ, although paraphrasing, gets the meaning right. This is often necessary in translation. See John 8:26.

**3:34 –** “For the One whom God sent the Words of God He is speaking, for He does not give the Spirit out of measure.” Again here John testifies that Jesus is the Sent One, promised of old, and that He speaks God’s Word, for it is upon Him that the Spirit descended and lit. He has the “full measure” of the Spirit. See John 7:16, 12:49-50, 14:24-26.

**3:35 –** John continues to bear witness to the Son. The omnipotence of the Son, His Divinity, is revealed here. He has all things in His hand. See Matthew 28:18; John 10:28-30.

**3:36 –** This clear statement of salvation by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ continues the theme of this section, this Book, and of both Testaments of Scripture. See 5:24; 1 John 5:12, noting there and here the Unity of the Trinity.

There is an opposite to believing in the Son – hating the Son. The one who hates the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God remains upon him. See Romans 1:18, 2:5; Ephesians 5:6; Revelation 14:9-10, 15:1, 16:19, and 19:15. Why would Revelation contain such a strong theme of God’s wrath?

**Read John 4:1-6**

**4:1 –** Already the Lord is aware that His reputation was spreading widely. He had cleared the Temple in chapter 2, as well as taught publicly and done miraculous signs. We learned about the Pharisees in 3:1 (see our study notes there). The religious establishment was well aware of Jesus’ activities. When the Truth comes, those who have learned false doctrine cannot hear it.

**4:2 –** We saw above in 3:26 that John’s disciples reported that Jesus Himself was baptizing. Here John (not the Baptizer, rather son of Zebedee!) clarifies that it was the disciples of Jesus that were baptizing. But see John 1:33, 1 Corinthians 1:17.

**4:3 -** John again here provides an accurate, historical account of the movements of our Lord. The Christian faith is an incarnational faith – God became Man. He walked, spoke, taught, bled and died. He was not a spirit, although eternal He dwelt among men in time, although omnipresent He dwelt among men in specific locations.

**4:4 -** St. John records the Lord’s movement from the Judean countryside (3:22) to Sychar in Samaria. Samaria is the region north of Judea, south of Galilee, hence the assertion “He needed to go through Samaria”. Here He returns to Galilee, where Nazareth, Capernaum and Cana were located.

**4:5 –** Sychar was a little town west of the Jabbok ford of the Jordan River. In Genesis 33:18-19 Jacob the Patriarch bought land in nearby Shechem. In Genesis 48:21 he gives what is apparently the same land to Joseph, although the description of his acquisition of the land doesn’t match the Genesis 33 account. The “ridge of land” described, however, in Hebrew is שְׁכֶם, “Shechem”, although the NKJ translates this “portion”.

**4:6 –** Genesis 33:20 records Jacob building an altar at Shechem. Jacob’s building of a well at that place is apparently not recorded in Scripture. The building of wells was common. See Genesis 21:25, 26:25, 30-31, 26:19-22, and many others. Wells were places where people congregated, see Genesis 24:13.

**4:7 –** Jesus was “wearied” from the journey. Here we see the State of Humiliation of our Lord. God does not weary, He is omnipotent. But enfleshed, Jesus, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, did not always nor fully use His divine powers. He ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν “emptied Himself” or “made Himself void” of them. See Philppians 2:5-8; 2 Corinthians 8:9. Whatever the Patriarchal history of the well, now the God of the Patriarchs was there.

**4:7 – “**A woman from (out of) Samaria came to draw water.” See Genesis 24:11. Several sources indicate that water was drawn later in the day to avoid the great heat the region is known for. The sixth hour is noon. St. Augustine identifies the woman as a type of the church, for the church would come from the Gentiles. (*Ancient Christian Commentary*, 146) Lenski holds that the woman was a social outcast, since she did not, according to custom, travel with a group of women to draw water. (301) The pursuant discussion of the woman’s life makes this likely. “Give me to drink.” See Genesis 24:43-45; John 7:37-38. Lenski says that “…here the Fountain asks for water, and he who bids all that thirst to come to him himself asks to have his thirst quenched.” See Revelation 22:17.

**4:8 –** The Lord does not ask His followers to give Him to drink, because they weren’t with Him.

**4:9 –** The relationship between the Jews and the Samaritans is clearly understood, and articulated, by the woman. The Samaritans were ethnic and religious enemies, unclean by Jewish law. The woman is surprised. The Greek word translated here “dealings” means to “use jointly”, to “have part with” or “to associate with”. See Mark 2:16-17.

**4:10 –** The Lord gives her earthly question a heavenly answer. “If you knew…”, he says. That knowing is the knowing of faith. “…the Gift of God” is forgiveness, salvation and life through the Holy Spirit. The word δωρεά, “gift”, is used only here in John’s Gospel. In 15:25 the same word in adverbial form is translated “cause”, in the sense “without payment” or “freely”, “undeservedly”. See Acts 10:45 for a manifestation of this Gift. Paul tends toward the word “χάρισμα” for “gift”, see Romans 1:11, 6:23.

“…and who is the one saying to you…” Without knowing Him, she could not know the Gift.

Had she known Him, had she known the Gift, she would have asked Him, and He would have given her living water. As at Cana with the wine, as with Nicodemus and rebirth, now He describes not earthly but heavenly water. See Revelation 21:6, 22:1, 22:17. In an arid, desert place water is life. In the arid, desert place of sin and death, Christ is life. See Jeremiah 2:12-13; Zechariah 14:8-9.

The woman, of course, like the wedding guests at Cana and Nicodemus, understand Jesus’ Words, but cannot fathom their meaning.

**4:11 –** Her answer betrays her unbelief. As Nicodemus asked if a man, being old, can enter again into his mother’s womb to be born again, the Samaritan woman provides the Lord with two reasons He can’t do what He says – He has nothing with which to draw water, and the well is deep. From where, then, is he having (Greek) the living water?

**4:12 –** The woman identifies herself as a daughter of Jacob. She asks Him “You are not greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and he himself drank from it and his sons and his flocks, *are you*? In verse 6 the word used for well is πηγή, which refers to a well fed by spring. Here the word is φρέαρ, the simple word for “well” or “pit”. For other uses of φρέαρ in the New Testament, see Luke 14:5; Revelation 9:1. Christ is talking about “water”, she is stuck on the “well”.

**4:13 –** To her earthly objection, the Lord gives heavenly answer. The one who drinks from the earthly well before them will thirst again. But the one who drinks out of the water which He gives to him, he shall surely not thirst forever. The Lord, in His mercy, explains further: the water He gives will become in him a fountain (πηγή) of water “leaping up” (ἁλλομένου) into eternal life. For other uses of the verb translated “leaping up” (ἅλλομαι), see Acts 3:8 and 14:10. The imagery here is that the water will flow forcefully from the wellspring of life – no dipper or bucket is necessary. Here Weinrich proposes that the Jewish understanding (Qumran, *Damascus Document*) of Torah as a “well of living water” may lie beneath the Lord’s Words. (472) See Isaiah 12:2-3. The Greek New Testament margin notes refer to Isaiah 58:11.

In any case, what the Lord promises is not temporal, earthly water, for it is associated with, indeed causal of, everlasting life. See 1:4, 10:10. See John 6:35, where the discussion is not about “drinking” but about “eating”. This can easily be seen as referring to the Holy Spirit. See John 7:37-39.

**4:15 –** The woman reacts as any of us would have – “Sir (Lord), give me this water…). In a desert thirst must be constantly quenched. Wells are a source of life. Carrying water is hard work. The Lord’s Promise also includes that she not return to draw, a Promise which she seizes on. What He offers, she wants, although she still does not understand what He offers. See John 6:34.

**4:16 –** The Lord’s answer is not disconnected from her request. There is something preventing the woman from receiving what the Lord offers. He desires to freely give. But He also knows all things. Omniscience is a Divine attribute. And never having met her before, He knows that she is an adulterer. The 6th Commandment, Exodus 20:14, “Thou shalt not commit adultery”, is explained in this way: “We should fear and love God that we lead a chaste and decent life in word and deed, and each love and honor his spouse.” (Small Catechism) Sin keeps us from receiving what God freely gives. To the woman’s answer, the Lord responds “Go, call your man (husband) and come hither.” The verbs “go”, “call” and “come” are all imperatives.

In the garden the same Lord asked Adam “Where are you?”, knowing full well where he was. He also asked “Have you eaten from the tree…?”, although He knew that he had. Here the Lord, in the same way, says “Go, call your man…” He points her to the thing that keeps her from receiving the Living Water. What would the Lord say to you if you asked “Sir, give me this water?”

**4:17 –** The woman answers truthfully, but not fully. She has no husband, but the Lord is well aware of that. He sees all, He knows all.

**4:18 –** It is the Lord that convicts her. She answered truthfully but deceptively, like a child caught doing something wrong. But you can’t trick God. He reveals the truth. This should strike fear in the heart of every sinner. It is her sin that keeps her from receiving what He desires to give. So it is with each fallen man.

Each man with which she had intimate relations is seen by God as her “husband”. In the Old Testament idolatry and adultery are interchangeable – to run after idols is to “cheat” on the true Groom, the Lord. The Church is His Bride. See Malachi 2:13-17.

In our society, divorce is common, as is having multiple partners out of wedlock. Remember, the Lord sees it all. See also Matthew 5:28. Were it not for God’s grace, no man could be saved.

**4:19 –** His answer revealed His Divine powers. She responds that she can see He is a prophet. See 1:21, Luke 7:39, Deuteronomy 18:15.

**4:20 –** See Deuteronomy 11:29, 27:12; Joshua 8:33-34. Mt. Gerazim is “known today as Jebel et-Tor, located just SW of the ancient city of Shechem. It lies on the S side of the Nablus Valley, with Mt. Ebal standing opposite it on the N. Its valley became an important E-W pass and road.” (*Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary,* vol. 2, pg. 993). There the Lord appeared to Abraham and promised him the Promised Land. (See Genesis 12:6) Jacob’s Well is located in the same valley to the north east (see Genesis 33:18-20; John 4:5-6, 12)

The *Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* explains that in both the Hebrew O.T. and in the Septuagint Mt. Gerizim is described as the “center of the land”, and was understood to be “a connection between heaven and earth”. There the Samaritan Temple was built (Josephus records this). Antiochus IV Epiphanes renamed the Temple on Mt. Gerizim for Zeus in the 2nd century B.C. 2 Maccabees 5:23 and 6:2 speak of Mt. Gerizim as a place of desecration. The Samartian Temple was destroyed in 128 A. D. by the Jewish king John Hyrcanus (recorded by Josephus in *Antiquities* 11.8.2, 4 and 13.9.1; as well as *War* 1.2.6)

The woman’s identification of Jesus as a Prophet sets up her theological question – which is the correct mountain of worship? See Isaiah 2:3. See also the superscriptions of Psalms 120-134.

**4:21 –** As He had with His reference to Living Water, the Lord answers her temporal question with a heavenly response – “Believe Me, woman, that an hour comes when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem you will worship the Father.” Temporally, after the destruction of the Temple in 70 A. D. by the Romans, and the destruction of the Samaritan Temple in 128 A. D., it was impossible to worship on either mountain. But more importantly, true worship of God is not bound to a single physical place, as our Lord is about to reveal. See 1 Kings 8:27; Isa 66:1; Malachi 1:11.

**4:22 –** The Samaritans worshipped a god, but not the One True God. See the “you”/”we” of 4:20. See 2 Kings 17:28-29. The Jews had the revelation of the Hebrew Scriptures, and so they knew God. See Acts 17:23 (Paul in Athens); Romans 9:1-5.

**4:23 -** For the time, see John 5:25, 16:32. This is a mark of the great and horrible Day of the Lord prophesied of old. See Isaiah 13:9-13. That Day is ushered in with the birth of the Messiah, and ends in the final judgment. See the prophesy in Joel 1:15; Amos 5:18-20; Zephaniah 1:14-18; 2 Peter 3:10; but see Romans 13:11, and Malachi 4:1-6, the final chapter of the Old Testament. That the Christ stood before the Samaritan woman was a sure sign that the Day of the Lord, the Coming Time, had come.

True worship is worship “in Spirit and truth”. See Ephesians 2:13-18; Philippians 3:3.

**4:24 –** The construction “God is Spirit” is a predicate nominative. “We”, as Augustine asserts, is not all Jews, but only those Jews who have faith in Jesus Christ, the faith that the Holy Spirit alone can give (Apostles, disciples, etc.- Weinrich 496-7).

“God is Spirit” – The Father and the Spirit are Spirit only, it is the Son who is Incarnate.

“…in Spirit and in truth.” Christ is Truth: See 14:6. Although the NKJ reads “…must worship…”, the Greek is better translated “…the ones worshipping Him, by the Spirit and truth it is necessary to worship”. This contrasts “the ones worshipping Him” with the ones worshipping the god of the Samaritans, and also contrasts the way of worship.

**4:25 –** Here the Samaritan woman speaks aloud the Hope of Israel – that Messiah (Μεσσίας)will come. The Greek word “Christ” (Χριστός, from χρίω , “I anoint”, see Luke 4:18) means the same as the Hebrew word “Messiah” (מָשִׁיחַ from משׁח, “He anointed”). The Anointed One is the Redeemer, the Savior promised of old. See 1 Samuel 16:13; Isaiah 59:20-21, 61:1-3; Matthew 1:16; John 1:41.

Weinrich writes “The Samaritans hoped for a future return of a prophet like Moses who would bring a new age of divine blessing and tranquility. This expectation was based on Deut 18:15-22, and the title usually given to this new Moses was Ta’eb (“Restorer)… The Samaritans did not refer to the Ta’eb as “Messiah” or as “Christ”. Thus the woman exercises a certain accommodation to Jewish usage, perhaps suggesting that she is approaching spiritual insight concerning the person of Jesus…” (485) Weinrich points to the use of the verb Οἶδα “I know…” in support of this, a “knowing” that is personal.

As in Isaiah 59:20-21, the Samaritan woman is correct in saying that the Christ will “tell us all things.”

**4:26 – “**λέγει αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Ἐγώ εἰμι, ὁ λαλῶν σοι.” – Pastor will translate. Note the relationship between this and Exodus 3:13-15. The great “I AM” statements of the Gospel according to St. John are one of its unique attributes. Here the Christ clearly confesses His Divinity, and His rightful use of the Divine Name. See also John 8:58-59, and the Jews’ reaction there.

**Read John 4:27-32**

**4:27 –** The disciples, who had been sent to buy food (see 4:8), now return. They are well aware of the social customs and religious laws that prevented Rabbis from speaking to women in public – even more she is a Samaritan, and they “marvel”, “wonder” that He speaks with her (the verb implies duration – they “continually marveled”). These, and other works like it (Mark 2:16-17; Luke 15:1-2) cause the Jewish religious rulers to oppose Him. But their real objection is His Self-identification as the Great I AM, and the Religion He teaches.

**4:28 –** As at Cana, the waterpots of the old are no longer necessary – the New is here. In this case her waterpot was not for washing, but for drinking. Jesus has offered her better water.

**4:29 –** “Come and see!” the woman exclaims to the townsfolk. See John 1:39 and 1:46 for similar constructions. This is what faith does – invite others to come and “see” Jesus. See John 12:21. We do this by inviting others to the very place He has promised to be – the font, the pulpit, and the altar.

**4:29 cont. –** The woman’s question is significant, and telling: “Could this be the Christ?” The Greek here is paraphrased – this author prefers “Could this not be the Christ?” or more strongly “Why isn’t this the Christ?” Lenski translates “Can it be that this is the Christ?” (328). Weinrich translates “Could it be possible that this man is the Christ?” (479), explaining “Although the interrogative μήτι may imply a negative response, it ‘does not demand absolutely a negative answer, but can express a cautious opinion’ (Weinrich cites Schnackenburg’s *John* commentary), hence, ‘could it be possible…?’ In this context one might even discern in the woman’s question a hint of hope in Jesus’ claim to be the Christ (4:25-26)”.

See the comments on 4:25 for the Samaritan’s expectations of the Christ.

**4:30 –** The people to whom the woman were speaking reacted by “going out of the city”, a simple past tense statement. The second half of this verse is in the imperfect – “they began going” or “they were continually going” to Him. Their response gives answer to her excited invitation “Come and see!” See 4:42 for their conclusion.

**Read John 4:31-38**

**4:31 –** While all this was going on, while the woman marveled at the “drink” He could give that yields eternal life and the townsfolk were going to Him, the disciples were urging him (contemporaneously) to eat. His answer, “I myself have food to eat which you do not know”, continues the theme of the account of the woman at the well. How? This also establishes the foundation for the upcoming chapters, especially chapter 6. See John 6:5, 6:26-29, 6:33-34, 6:49-51, 6:58.

The Christ has Food and Drink that transcends man’s understanding. See Matthew 16:6-12. Consider the “Collect for the Word”: “Blessed Lord, Who has caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of Thy Holy Word we may embrace, and ever hold fast, the blessed hope of everlasting life, which Thou hast given us in our Savior Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.”

This Collect was composed by Thomas Cranmer (Archbishop of Cantebury, leader of the English Reformation, d  1556) for the Book of Common Prayer of 1549, and appeared as the Collect for the Second Sunday after Advent. Although many of Cranmer’s collects are reworked or translated from the Gregorian, Leonine or Gelasian Sacramentaries, the “Collect for the Word” is absent in the old Roman Missal. (For more on this see C. Frederick Barbee and Paul F.M. Zahl, *The Collects of Thomas Cranmer*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999)

Where does the “Collect for the Word” appear in American Lutheran usage? What does this tell you about the understanding that “eating” is “believing”?

**4:32-33 –** Here is the Lord’s answer. He wasn’t talking about the water from the Samaritan well, nor is He talking about earthly food. The food the disciples sought (verse 8) is earthly. Our Lord desires to give them heavenly Food. See the woman’s response in verse 15.

**4:33 –** See Matthew 16:5-12. Note the Samaritan woman’s reaction in verse 15, and John 6:30-35, 51-53.

**4:34 –**  Now see Isaiah 55:1-6, in the context of Jesus and the Samaritan woman.

It is the work of the Son to do the Father’s will. See Matthew 26:39. In John the Mystery of the Holy Trinity is revealed, see 5:30, 6:38, 8:26, 9:4-5.

**4:35 –** The signs of the time are clear – see Matthew 16:1-4, 24:29-33; Joel 3:11-17; Revelation 14:15.

**4:36 –** The coming of the Messiah is the sign of the end times. The theme of “planting”, “sowing” and “reaping” is a major New Testament theme. See Isaiah 5:1-7; Matthew 9:36-38, 13:3-9, 18-19.

**4:37 –** See Job 31:8; Micah 6:15; 1 Corinthians 3:6-9.

**4:38 –** See Matthew 20:1-2ff.

Again, the Lord is not speaking of grapes or crops or monetary wages any more than He is speaking about water from a well.

**Read John 4:39-42**

**4:39 –** The Samaritan woman had gone back into the town, and gave testimony of Jesus to the people there – see 4:28-30. The townspeople came out to see Jesus. The woman’s testimony, coupled with the things they saw and heard, caused many to believe.

**4:40 –** See Matthew 8:33-34. Compare the reaction of faith to the reaction of unbelief. The Jews desired to kill Him. The Samaritans wanted Him to stay. See John 10:16, where the Lord isn’t talking about sheep.

**4:41 –** His Words worked faith. See Romans 10:17-21, and John 6:66-68 (what is the setting?)

**4:42** – The confession of the Samaritans is no less accurate than that of Peter – see Matthew 16:13-16. Note the confession – He is “Savior of the world”. See 1 John 4:14, the only other place our Lord is so identified. See John 3:16. While Peter and the others would confess Him to be the Messiah, their understanding was that He came to save Israel (in the narrow sense). See Matthew 15:22-24; John 4:22. The Samaritans’ confession is the Christian Confession. See Galatians 2:7-10. What are the two categories named here?

**Read John 4:43-48**

**4:43 –** The two days are mentioned in verse 40. Now He leaves Samaria for Galilee, the region north of Samaria, where Nazareth, Cana, Nain and Capernaum are located.

**4:44 –** See Matthew 13:53-58. See Isaiah 11:1, where the word “branch” or “shoot” is נֵצֶר in the Hebrew. Why would this quote of Jesus be presented here by John, if Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea? See Matthew 2:23; 4:13-16, 21:11, 26:71; John 1:46, John 19:19.

**4:45 –** “The Feast” – see John 2:23. The Gospels record Jesus going to Jerusalem three times for the Passover. On his last Jerusalem visit He Instituted the New and Better Meal. John is the only Gospel that does not record the Institution, but John records more fully the “Upper Room” dialogue of our Lord, including the great High Priestly Prayer – we’ll see this in chapter 14ff.

**4:45 –** Leaving Samaria, the Lord goes again into Cana. Can you find Samaria and Cana on the map, and identify their relationship to Jerusalem? Where is Nazareth? Capernaum? Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim are located in southern Samaria, north and west of Jericho. What happened in view of these mountains in John’s Gospel (hint: “Our fathers worshipped on this mountain…”), and in the time of Joshua? (hint: Joshua 8:33-35)

A picture containing text, map

Description generated with very high confidence

**4:46 –** Being in Galilee, the Lord goes to Cana. St. John reminds us of His miracle there. But more, there is a royal “of whom the son was sick in Capernaum.”

**4:47 –** The royal, a powerful man, was powerless to help his son. So it is with us. No matter our station in life, our riches, our great strength, God alone heals. The man recognized that Jesus had power he lacked, and travelled to seek His help.

**4:48 –** Jesus answers “If signs and wonders you (pl.) do not see, you (pl.) will not believe”. The Lord answers with a conditional sentence, with both verbs in the aorist subjunctive.

The word “miracle” doesn’t occur in the New Testament. Three words are used to describe supernatural acts: power (δύναμις -εως), sign (σημεῖον -ου), and wonder (τέραs -ατος). Note that in Acts 2:11 the word translated “the wonderful works” is τὰ μεγαλεῖα.

See Matthew 12:38-39, 16:1, 24:3; Mark 8:11-12; Luke 6:17-19, 21:7; John 2:18, 23; 1 Corinthians 1:21-24. Now see Matthew 13:10-14. Why did Jesus speak in Parables? Why was He unwilling to give “signs”? But see Acts 5:12. Why did the Apostles do miracles? See 1 Kings 17:20-24.

**Read John 4:49-54**

**4:49 –** The “royal” seems to completely miss the Lord’s Words, or he is simply too concerned with his son to answer. He repeats his request, now in the imperative: “Come down before my son dies.” The urgency is seen in the verbal force. See Matthew 27:40; Luke 19:5; and Acts 10:20 for uses of the same verbal form.

**4:50 –** The Lord does not agree to “come down.” See Matthew 8:8-10. The Lord is not like the “healers” of the age – He simply speaks, and it is. He proclaims the son alive. He does not need to be physically present. And yet He took on Flesh to be physically present for your salvation.

Notice the royal’s reaction – “He believed the word which Jesus spoke to him…” See Romans 10:17; Galatians 3:2, 5. Notice also that his faith was put into action – that’s how faith is. Faith isn’t silent and still, faith is living and active. See Luke 17:14. The Word heals and works faith, which is true healing. Like the lepers, the royal goes at Jesus’ command, believing, and yet not seeing.

**4:51 –** Faith precedes proof. Otherwise it wouldn’t be faith. The Word of God is worthy of our faith, for God is faithful. He speaks and it is. What the Lord declared to be true was true. The child lived.

**4:52 –** See 2 Corinthians 13:5. The royal already believed. This confirms his faith. See 2 Peter 1:19. What is the context there? Now in verse 52 we learn the boy’s affliction, a fever. The Greek word for “fever” (πυρετός) is related to the Greek word for “fire” (πῦρ)

**4:53 –** In verse 50 the man “believed”. Here in verse 53 the man “knew”. His son was healed at the same hour the Lord pronounced him alive. Faith received its reward. It was to him as he believed. See Matthew 8:13; John 4:42. Sadly, this is also true for those who do not believe – it is to them according to their belief – see Matthew 13:58.

His saving faith was contagious – his entire household believed. See Acts 16:34; 18:8.

**4:54 –** John adds his testimony to that of the factual, historical account – the Lord can do miracles, even in Galilee – the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy – see Isaiah 9:1-3, Matthew 4:13-16.

**4:54, cont. –** That the Messiah came out of Judea and travelled to Galilee (see 4:3) is the fulfillment of Old Testament Prophecy, as seen above (Isaiah 9). But now see 2 Kings 15:29, Matthew 2:19-23, Acts 2:7-8. John is establishing the Lord’s presence in Galilee as the fulfilment of Scripture.

**Read 5:1-9**

**5:1 –** Now the Lord returns to Judea, where there was a “feast”. See 2:13, 6:4, 7:2 & 10. Three feasts were “Pilgrim Feasts”, which required Jews to travel to Jerusalem.

Three feasts were held in the first month of the Jewish calendar, Abib: Passover (Exodus 12:1-14, a “Pilgrim Feast”); Unleavened Bread (Exodus 12:15-20); and Firstfruits (Leviticus 23:9-14).

In the third month (Sivan) the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost, Harvest, a “Pilgrim Feast”) was held (Leviticus 23:15-21).

Four feasts were held in the seventh month: Trumpets/Rosh Ha Shanah (Leviticus 23:23-25, Numbers 29:7-11); Tabernacles (Booths, Ingathering - Leviticus 23:33-43, a “Pilgrim Feast”); the Sacred Assembly (Numbers 29:35-38), and Purim (Esther 9:18-32).

The Feast in John 5:1 is unnamed. Irenaeus (d. 202 A. D.) held it to be the Passover. Weinrich (550) says that it could be Tabernacles, except that Jeremias “notes that during autumn, most pools fed by rainwaer were dry, and since the pool was filled with water (5:7), this healing could not be during Tabernacles.” This is important in calculating the length of the Lord’s “earthly ministry” – the time between His baptism and resurrection. John cites three Passovers directly – 2:13, 23; 6:4; and 11:55, 12:1). If 5:1 is a fourth Passover, the Lord’s “earthly ministry” exceeded three years.

For the first time in the Gospel according to St. John, Jesus is in conflict with the Jews regarding the Law (Weinrich, 558), see John 1:9, 17. If Galilee is north of Judea, how can Jesus “go up” into Jerusalem?

**5:2 –** Note the accuracy of John’s historical description of the site. Note also that it is in the present tense. This is support for John’s writing of his Gospel before 70 A. D., when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans. The Majority Text names the place “Bethesda”, one early manuscript reads “Bethsaida”, one early manuscript reads “Belzetha”, the critical text based on Codex Sinaiticus, a fourth century manuscript among the most valuable in the world, reads“Bethzatha”.

On the Sheep Gate, see Nehemiah 3:1, 32, ; Nehemiah 12:39. The Sheep Gate was located in the north east corner of Jerusalem.

On the “pool”, see John 9:7, where the same Greek word is used.

St. Augustine wrote that the whole people of the Jews were signified by the pool, as in the Apocalypse waters represent peoples, and since there were five, the people were “shut in” by the Law of Moses. Thus the healing represents the Gospel supplanting the Law. (*Ancient Christian Commentary*, 178.

**5:2, cont. –** Note that the Gospel of St. John records even the most minute of details – the pool has its name in Aramaic. Aramaic was the language of the Aramean tribes of the Levant (Syria-Palestine) and the northern Euphrates valley. “Aramaic is the best-attested and longest-attested member of the NW Semitic subfamily of languages (which also includes *inter alia* Hebrew, Phoenician, Ugaritic, Moabite, Ammonite, and Edomite). (“Aramaic”, Anchor Bible Dictionary, vol. 4, 173-178).

Aramaic occurs in Holy Scripture in Daniel 2:4-7:28; Ezra 4:8-68 and 7:12-26; Jeremiah 1:11, and two words in Genesis 31:47. Aramaic, attested to over a period of 3000 years, was the primary international language throughout the Near East from 600 B.C. to 700 A. D. The Syriac Peshitta (Old Testament) and the Jewish Targumim were written in Aramaic. Aramaic was the “administrative language” of the Near East until it was replaced by Greek, beginning in around 300 A. D. The Lord Himself spoke Aramaic, as is evidenced in Mark 5:41, 7:34, 14:36; Matthew 5:22, 6:24 (Mammon is an Aramaic “loan word” used in Rabbinic Hebrew), 27:46; John 20:16, and others. See also 1 Corinthians 16:22.

**5:3 (4) –** Here the critical texts omit much, skipping from the middle of verse 3 all the way to verse 5. Compare the ESV to the NKJV here. The text critics support their position by showing that the passage is not attested to in several key manuscripts; they identify the language of the lacuna as non-Johanine; and call it an explanatory gloss that was later incorporated into the text to clarify verse 7. Pastor will explain. Miracles are usually subject to the harshest treatment of the critics.

Here we read that the sick would wait patiently for the stirring (troubling) of the waters by an angel of the Lord, and then rush to enter the pool. While this act is unparalleled in the New Testament, angels certainly appear and act in both Testaments of Scripture according to the will of God. St. John simply records it as a fact, a fact germane to the account of Jesus’ healing of the man unable to walk.

**5:5 –** The man had been an invalid for 38 years. Here again John records a fact attesting to the veracity of the Scriptural account. The Bible is true, and records historic truths, centered on the Truth of Jesus’ death and resurrection.

**5:6 –** In the Greek St. John uses a word otherwise not used by him in healing miracles in the Gospel – the word translated into English “well”, although see 7:23 for a use of the same word (the Lord refers to this event there). See Acts 4:10 and Titus 2:8 for the use of the same word. In all three places (John, Acts and Titus) the word means to be made “completely whole” (sound, whole, pure, without fault, Weinrich 554). As this account unfolds in the upcoming verses, the Lord’s use of the word here is better understood. See especially 5:14 and 7:23.

The Lord asks if the man desires to “be made whole”, a passive form of the verb. Men cannot make themselves “whole”, they are flawed from birth. But man’s flaw is not simply a 38-year infirmity. It is the sinfulness he has had since the birth of Cain.

**5:7 –** The infirm man explains why he hasn’t been healed – but misses the point of the Lord’s question. So it is with us, as we seek to heal ourselves. See Luke 5:31-32.

**5:8 –** The Lord doesn’t try to explain His meaning to the man. He simply commands him “Rise, take up your bed and walk.” See Matthew 9:6. There the word for bed is “bed” or “couch”, here it is “mat” or “pad”. (Lenski 365) At His Word, the man is healed.

**5:9 –** As the Lord speaks, so it is. “Straightaway” he became “healthy”, and he took up his mat and began to walk. The Greek form of the verb “walk” is *inceptive*, meaning that at that moment he began a continuous activity. See Acts 3:6-8.

That day was the Sabbath Day, a day of rest. By ancient Law work was prohibited on the Sabbath. The Jews had created strict rules that exceeded the Sabbath requirements, that in observing them they would not come close to breaking the Sabbath. See Exodus 20:8-11, John 9:14.

See Luke 14:3-6.

**Read John 5:10-18**

**5:10 –** Note the response of the Jews – not to marvel at the miracle, but to accuse of breaking the law. The Greek verb here conveys repeated or continual action in the past – “they were continually saying to him…” or “they were repeatedly saying to him…” See Jeremiah 17:20-22, Matthew 12:1-8.

**5:11 –** The man’s response is natural, and honest. The One who healed him told him to do it.

**5:12 –** As if to further investigate a crime, the Jews ask “Who is the man…?”

**5:13 –** The man isn’t able to answer – not because of his lack of observation or diligence, but because Jesus didn’t desire to be known. The verb translated in the NKJV “withdrawn” occurs only here in the New Testament. It means “to turn aside”. Lenski translates “…Jesus slipped aside”, explaining that the verb means “to lean sideways” or “to evade”. The fact that there was a crowd in the place is mentioned, apparently related to the fact that it was the Sabbath. Weinrich attributes to the Greek forms the meaning “Jesus was lost to the sight of the man because Jesus removed himself ‘from’ the crowd…” (556)

**5:14 -**  This verse ties what went before to what comes after. Jesus was not trying to “hide” his miracle. That is clear in his seeking out the man and speaking with him. Jesus’ knowledge of the man’s condition made it clear that He is the One that healed him. On the admonition to sin no more, see John 8:11. On something worse happening, see Matthew 12:43-45.

**5:15 –** Perhaps as a natural reaction to lend credibility to his claim of healing, or perhaps as an opportunity to publicly confess Jesus, the man “announces” to the Jews that Jesus is the One that made him whole.

**5:16 –** As above, rather than marveling at His miracle, the Jews seek to punish Jesus for healing on the Sabbath. See Matthew 12:14; Mark 3:2-6; Luke 6:10-11.

**5:17 –** Unafraid of the Jews, rather than hiding from them, and apparently without having been present to hear it, Jesus publicly gives answer to their accusation.

**5:17, cont. –** What the Father does, the Son does. Jesus answers “My Father is working until now, and I also am working.” The construction in the Greek does not imply that the Father stops working when the Son starts (Weinrich 570), rather that they now are working together. See John 9:4, then note the relationship expressed in 5:19, 5:30, and 15:5.Lenski focuses on the fact that Jesus does not say “our Father” (see John 20:17), but “My Father”, which the Jews immediately understand to be an assertion by Jesus that His Father is God. Note their reaction:

**5:18 –** “On account of this therefore the Jews were seeking Him more (continually) in order to kill Him…” See John 7:1, 19, 25, 30; John 8:37, 40; John 11:53; and Matthew 12:14. (These and other citations are drawn from the marginal notes in the Greek New Testament)

“… because He not only “was loosing” the Sabbath, but also His own Father He was saying (continually) God *to be*, making Himself equal withGod.” The verb “loosing” is used to express that He did what the Sabbath laws prevented, “loosing” what they “bound”. Lenski provides “dissolving and annulling”. (375) See Exodus 31:14-15; John 10:33, 36; and 19:7.

So here are the two major charges: He breaks the Sabbath, and He makes God the Father His Father, thus making Himself equal to God. The first charge is false, the second true. See John 10:30, and the Jews’ reaction in 10:31.

**Read John 5:19-23**

**5:19 –** The Lord asserts exactly what the Jews accuse Him of – He makes Himself equal to the Father. Here God the Son opens the Trinitarian Mystery to us. The Son does nothing of Himself, except what He sees the Father doing. For that which that One does, these things also the So n likewise is doing. See verse 30 of this chapter, as well as 8:28. See 2 Corinthians 3:5. There is no question, He makes Himself equal to God.

**5:20 –** Here the Son gives the reason – the Father loves Him. The verb used for “love” refers to filial affection – the love between two equals. In that love, the Father shows the Son all the things that He is doing. But if the Jews are concerned at what they’ve seen thus far, the Son has a prophecy for them – greater works He will show, that they will marvel. See John 3:35; 14:12. The greatest work, of course, is the resurrection of the Son, to which the Son alludes in the following verse:

**5:21 –** Just as the Father raises the dead and gives life, thus also the Son makes alive those whom He desires. See Deuteronomy 32:39; 1 Samuel 2:6; 2 Kings 5:7; Hosea 6:2. In the context of John 5, the Son has just healed the sick man. That was His will.

**5:22 –** Now we learn more about the distinction (not separation) between the Son and the Father – the Son judges, not the Father. Note, however, the passive verb – all judgment *has been given* to the Son – given by the Father. See verses 26-28, where this is confirmed, and is related to the raising of the dead.

**5:23 –** Again here the Equality of the Persons of the Holy Trinity, and Their Perfect Unity, is confessed – “that all who honor the Son honor the Father. The one not honoring the Son does not honor the Father, Who sent Him.” See Isaiah 9:6 (when is this pericope read?); Matthew 11:27, 16:27; Mark 8:38, Mark 13:32 (the State of Humiliation); Luke 2:49, 10:16, 22; John 3:35-36, 10:36; Galatians 4:6; Hebrews 1:5-6; 1 John 2:23-24; 2 John 1:9.

**Read John 5:24-29**

**5:24 –** Note the distinct parts of this teaching: “Truly, truly I say to you, that…”

1. The one who hears My Word (see Luke 8:21; John 14:23; Revelation 3:8)
2. And believes in the One Who Sent Me (see Mark 9:37; John 6:44, 8:18, 9:4)
3. Has eternal life (see Matthew 19:29 [is this in conflict with 5:24?]; John 6:54, 6:68, 10:28, 17:1-3)
4. And into judgment he does not go (see 1 Timothy 5:24; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 1:6)
5. But has passed over from death to life (see John 8:51)

Now consider 5:24 as one – note how seamlessly the Lord describes the Father, His own work, and the results.

**5:25 –** Again this verse begins with the attention getting “Truly, truly I say to you…” But now the results of the “sending” and the “Word” and “work” of verse 24 are expressed.

The “hour” is coming, and has now come.

The resurrection of the dead is described. How had that “hour” come?

“Faith comes by hearing” (Romans 10:17). So does the resurrection: “…when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and the ones hearing shall live.” See Matthew 8:22; Luke 16:31.

The dead shall live. See 1 Corinthians 15:16-20. Note also that in the Apocalypse, two births, two deaths, and two resurrections are clearly taught. See Revelation 20:6. Pastor will explain. See 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

**5:26 –** Again here the Mystery of the Holy Trinity is revealed: Just as the Father has life in Himself, thus also He gave the Son to have life in Himself.

**5:27 –** More than giving Him life, the Father gave the Son authority to judge (to do judgment), because the Son of God is the Son of Man. A clear exposition of the Divinity of Christ, and His judgment at the Last Day, is given here. Note the relationship between this verse and verses 22-25. The Son is speaking clearly, that all may understand.

**5:28 –** Again, the hour comes – the Last Day, see Matthew 24:34-36, 25:13; Revelation 9:15. That hour is predetermined, but we do not know when it is.

The ones in the tombs will hear… See Isaiah 26:19-21; Ezekiel 37:12-13. Together with the clear teaching of Job 19:25-27, these Old Testament texts clearly teach the resurrection of the dead. See Matthew 22:33.

**5:29 -** In his teaching in John 5:19-28, the Lord has clearly identified Himself as the One sent by the Father, the One who speaks and does what the Father wills, the One to whom the Father has entrusted all judgment. Believing in Christ is believing in the Father, and so His Word gives life. In fact, it is His Word that will rouse the dead, and those who believe it will live. He has also clearly taught the resurrection of all flesh.

Now, in verse 29, He teaches more about the resurrection of all flesh: those who have done good will rise to life, those who have done evil will rise to judgment. See Acts 24:14-16. Note that there is no purgatory, no middle ground, to intermediate state – there is either eternal condemnation or eternal bliss. See Daniel 12:1-4; Matthew 25:46; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; Revelation 20:13-15.

**Read St. John 5:30-35**

**5:30 –** Again the Son’s “equality” with the Father is exposed; the Son acts in perfect accord with the will of the Father. See John 4:34 (especially in the context of the upcoming ‘Bread of Life’ dialogue). His judgment, the judgment of the Son, is just (righteous), because it is the judgment of the Father made through the Son. See 8:16, 8:28-29, and Numbers 16:28 (Korahite rebellion, but see the superscription of Psalms 42, 44, 45, 47, 48, 49, 84 and 85).

Moses was sent by God to deliver Israel out of bondage and into the Promised Land. Here Moses is a type of Christ, the New and Better Moses, the Son sent by the Father to deliver the true Israel, the One, Holy, catholic and Apostolic Church, out of the bondage of the evil pharaoh of this world, and into the true Promised Land, Heaven.

In verse 30 we read that it is Christ that does the “will of Him who sent Me.”

**5:31 –** See 1 John 5:9. See Deuteronomy 17:6 and 19:15. Deuteronomy 19:15, spoken before 1406 B.C. (3,423 years ago) is fulfilled in the judgment of the Last Day.

**5:32 –** The Father and the Spirit both witness to the Son. See Matthew 3:17, 17:5; John 15:26; 2 Peter 1:16-21. The witness of God is True, because God is Truth. See 1 Timothy 3:15; 1 John 4:6.

**5:33 –** Here the Lord refers to John the Baptizer, not the Evangelist. How/when did they “send to John”? See John 1:19-27, and Matthew 11:2-10. Note that John testified of Christ, and Christ of John. So does the Lord say here that the Father and Spirit witness to Him, and He to them.

**5:34 –** See John 11:41-42. The Lord received His “Testimony” from the Father, not from men. Therefore whoever hears Him shall be saved. See Romans 10:9-11.

**5:35 –** Here the Lord refers to John the Baptizer. In the darkness of sin and unbelief, he preached the Coming One. See John 1:28-34. Compare the sermon of John (Matthew 3:1-2) and the sermon of Jesus (Matthew 4:17). See John 1:6-8. They “were willing for a time to rejoice in his light” – see Matthew 3:5-6. John’s word was true. But he preached not himself, but the Coming One. They liked John’s preaching (see Matthew 21:25-26), but when the One came that John preached they rejected Him. See John 1:9-15.

**Read John 5:36-40**

**5:36 –** John himself bore witness that he was not the Christ, see 1:6-9, 19. Now the Christ distinguishes between Himself and John – his witness is greater, for He is greater, and His work is greater. How does this relate to verses 31-32 of this chapter? Note especially in verse 34 that the testimony isn’t “from men”.

To what does the Lord point rather than John, as the witness of Who He Is? See Matthew 11:4-5. On “finish”, see John 19:30. Christ as the “One Sent” of the Father is a major theme in John, occurring over 14 times. See 6:39, 8:16,12:49, 17:21. Now read 20:21. The Greek word that underlies the English word “Apostle” means “send”.

Christ is the “Sent One” of the Father. That you be saved, He sends the Apostles to continue the work He finished. As Christ went forth with the full authority of the Father, so the Apostles, and those who rightly continue their Ministry, speak “in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ.” Where is this language from? Which doctrine (or Chief Part) does this undergird?

**5:37 -** That Christ is sent by the Father means that He speaks the very Word of God. See John 8:28. Here Jesus is answering the Jews that persecuted Him (5:16). They have never heard the voice of the Father, nor seen His Image. At the Baptism of Christ, at His Transfiguration, and at His prayer, the Father’s voice is heard, and He testifies to the Christ. See Matthew 3:17, 17:5-6; and John 12:28-30.

Christ Himself is the Image of the Father, see Colossians 1:15. He is the Word of the Father. If you have seen Christ, if you have heard Christ, you have seen and heard the Father. Compare the dialogue here with that of John 14:9-12. Note the testimony of the works, and the Diety of the Son.

**5:38 –** The relationship between the Word of God and faith is made clear here. How does faith come? See Romans 10:17. Chapter 15 will reveal the Word that abides, see verses 4-10. What does Jesus say (in 5:38) is the result of the Word not abiding in the Jews who persecuted them? This is true for us today.

**5:39 –** Continuing on the topic of the Word of God, the Lord teaches that the Jews miss the entire point of Holy Scripture. The Center of every Book, every Testament, is Christ. This directs us as to how we are to read Scripture.

**5:40 –** Where is true life found? See John 1:4, 20:31; Romans 5:17; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:4.

**Read John 5:41-47**

**5:41 –** While we have divided this from the previous section, our Lord continues here with the same thought He began in verse 19 – read verses 19 and 24 again, understanding this verse in their context. His testimony is not from men, nor is His praise from men.

**5:42 –** Their testimony is from men, and their praise also. His Divine Nature is revealed in that He knows them, and that He sees their hearts. See Matthew 9:4; Luke 11:17.

**5:43 –** There is a direct relationship between 5:40 and verses 42 and 43. He has come in His Father’s Name – see Psalm 118:26; Isaiah 59:19-20; Matthew 21:9. To come “in one’s name” is to come as their apostle, with their full authority. He has the authority. See Matthew 28:18. See John 10:25.

**5:44 –** They were interested in glory from men. Fixated on that, it is impossible to receive the glory that comes from the only God, whose Glory is Christ. See Proverbs 25:2; Ezekiel 8:4, 11:22; Romans 3:23-24, 5:1-2; Philippians 2:11; John 11:4. Ultimately, it is the Holy Church that has the glory of God, see Revelation 21:10-11. The Lord sees this as He speaks with the Jews.

**5:45-46 –** The Law was given through Moses. The Law shows us our sin. See Exodus 16:4; Malachi 4:4; Luke 24:44; John 7:19, 8:5-6, Acts 13:39, 28:23. The Jews clung to Moses and the Law, but at the same time broke the Law, especially in their condemnation of the Christ.

**5:47 –** The Law testifies of Christ. The Jews, by their actions, show that they do not believe what the Law says, so they cannot believe what Jesus says.

**Read John 6:1-5**

**6:1 –** The Sea of Galilee is also known by its Roman name. Tiberias Caesar was a Roman Emperor from 14-37 A. D., a town next to the Sea of Galilee was founded in his name (by Herod Antipas, the regional ruler [“Tetrarch”, ruler of a quarter] of Galilee and Perea) about 10 years before the events of John 6. The city itself was Greek. Herod Antipas, who reigned for just under 40 years, was preceded by Herod the Great, and followed by Agrippa I. See Matthew 2:14-16; Acts 26:1.

**6:2 –** The crowd was great, and they followed because of the miracles of Jesus. The Greek word used is “signs”, which the ESV renders literally. The NIV has “miraculous signs”.

**6:3 –** The Lord went up onto the mountain, and sat down there with His disciples. He took His disciples aside to teach them, the crowd did not follow them up the mountain. See Exodus 19:20; Matthew 5:1, 14:23, 15:29; Luke 9:28; Matthew 28:16.

**6:4 –** St. John, in recording the time these events occurred, uses the Passover Feast to date them. This sets the great Bread of Life discourse in the context of the Passover. What part did bread have in the Passover? See Exodus 12:5-8, 16:4; Matthew 26:17.

**6:5 –** Philip was one of the Twelve. See Matthew 10:3; John 1:43-44. When God asks man questions, He already knows the answer. The next verse explains.

**6:6 –** The Lord tests, He doesn’t tempt. The deeper meaning of the Greek verb is “test for approval”. The lexicon explains “to endeavor to discover the nature or character of something by testing”. For other uses of the same verb, see Matthew 22:18; Acts 15:10; 2 Corinthians 13:5. The Lord introduces an impossible situation to Philip. So it is in our lives – testing brings the increase of faith.

**6:6 –** In any case, the Lord already knew what He would do. Weinrich sees parallel uses of the verb “he knew” in John 5:32, 6:61, 64 and, using a different verb, 1:48 and 6:15. Here the one Christ, in His State of Humiliation, uses His Divine Nature, by which He “knows” things that ordinary men could not.

**Read John 6:7-10**

**6:7 –** Most commentaries identify the denarius as a day’s wage for a laborer. See Matthew 20:2; Luke 20:24. Revelation 6:6 describes incredible inflation, causing horrible suffering and shortages for the average worker.

Here Philip gives answer to the Lord. Philip was one of the Twelve, named in most Apostolic lists with Bartholomew. See Matthew 10:3; Luke 6:14, Acts 1:13. Philip was from Bethsaida. See John 1:44-45. Bethsaida was located on the east (far) side of the Sea of Galilee (see 6:1). Several commentators suggest that the Lord asks Philip because he is from that area. The Scripture stop short of explaining the Lord’s “reason”, other than to test him. Philip’s exclamation, that “200 denarius of bread is not sufficient for them (dative of advantage) in order that each receive a little” (my translation).

Hence an impossible situation presents itself – a great crowd, no food.

**6:8 –** Now Andrew, brother of Simon Peter, speaks. He is identified as “one out of the disciples of Him”. Andrew is identified in all of the Apostolic lists, see our comments on 6:7. Andrew and Simon Peter were from the region of Galilee, but from the other side of the north coast of the Sea, by Capernaum.

**6:9 –** Andrew identifies a “small boy” who has five barley loaves and two small fish. The word for “small boy” is a diminutive, used only here in the New Testament. The Greek word for “barley loaf” refers to bread made with barley flour, a cheap ingredient. The Greek word for “barley” occurs only here and in Revelation 6:6. The poor ate barley loaves. The Greek word for “small fish” is also a diminutive, and refers to cooked or dried fish (Weinrich, 630). See John 21:9 where the same word is used, but a different word is used in 21:11, since the fish are raw. The stress in this verse, by the use of the diminutives, is how small the amount of food is.

**6:10 –** The Lord directs His disciples (the verb is plural, not referring only to Andrew) to make the men “recline”, the position one assumes to eat at table.

“There was much grass in the place….” This is a simple fact, a testimony to the veracity of Scripture. Weinrich details the ancients seeing parallels between this verse and Psalm 23:1-2; and Genesis 1:30, making the place of the feeding of the four thousand a little eden, a lush place where God gives His creatures rest and feeds them. Understood in this way, 6:10 also points towards 10:14.

“Therefore they reclined, the men *in* number as 5,000.” The feeding of the 5000 is one of the few accounts that occurs in all four Gospels – Here in John, as well as in Matthew 14, Mark 6, and Luke 9. That the Lord is about to give the men miraculous bread will find its fulfillment in John 6:33-35. The proper interpretation of any Biblical text relies on its context.

**Read John 6:11-15**

**6:11 – “**Then Jesus took the loaves, and having given thanks, He distributed to the ones reclining, likewise also from the fish, as much as they desired.” (Translation: Braden)

Here St. John gives an eyewitness account of the miracle. That the language is very similar to the actions of our Lord in instituting the Lord’s Supper is undeniable. Compare 6:11 with Matthew 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:17-19. The verb John uses for “having given thanks” is εὐχαριστήσας, the same verb and same form as in Matthew 26:27, but not in 26:26, where “He blessed” is a better translation. See also Mark 14:22-23, where the same verbs are used – “blessed” for the bread, “having given thanks” for the wine.

Our word “Eucharist” is derived from the word used for the barley loaves and for the Cup. In Luke 22:19 the word “having given thanks” is used for the bread, as it is here in John for the barley loaves. The same is true of 1 Corinthians 11:24.

In the account of St. Matthew (14:19), Jesus gives the blessed bread and fish to the disciples, and they give them to the crowd, which is even more like the Distribution of the Lord’s Supper by the Pastor.

Mark’s account of the same miracle, received from Peter and/or Paul, includes the fact that the crowd was arranged in groups of “hundreds and fifties” (Mark 6:40). This may emulate the ruling of the tribes of Israel as they traveled in the wilderness. See Exodus 18:21.

The bread that Jesus gave to the multitudes was not the Holy Eucharist. It was, however, a miraculous meal. But eating blessed barley loaves and fish does not bring the forgiveness of sins. No promise was attached to the eating of the 5000.

It is not lost on the Christian, however, that Jesus is the Bread of Life (John 6:35), born in the House of Bread, Bethlehem (Matthew 2:1-6). In Hebrew “house” is בֵּ֥ית, “bread” is לֶ֔חֶם. Here, in a paradisical place, a place of life carved out of a wilderness, God Incarnate blesses and distributes miraculous food to sustain the multitudes.

**6:12 –** The miracle does not end with the multitude becoming full. There is a superabundance of bread and fish. It is not irreverently discarded, fed to the flocks, or thrown away. The Lord directs the disciples to gather up the remaining food. This is not unlike the gracious provision of God, as He gave the Israelites manna to eat in the desert. But that bread miraculously disappeared, the remainder was not gathered. See Exodus 16:4, 21-26. On the men eating as much as they desired, see Exodus 16:16.

**6:13 –** They filled twelve baskets full. Twelve is the number of the Tribes, the number of the Apostles, the number of God (3) working on earth (4). It is the number of the gates and the foundations of the heavenly Jerusalem. See Revelation 21:12-16. Pastor will explain.

**6:14 –** The men, seeing the sign He did, exclaimed “This is truly the Prophet, the One coming into the world.” See Deuteronomy 18:15-19; John 1:21, 4:19.

**6:15 –** The imaginations of fallen men are limited, temporal. They cannot see the eternal. And yet the accusation that would serve as the epithet on His cross named Him King. See John 12:13; Matthew 4:8-10; Luke 23:3; John 18:33-37, 19:3, 19:19.

The Lord seeks not the attention of the crowd, He “withdraws”. See Matthew 5:1, 14:23 15:29; Luke 6:12, 21:37. This verse says that Jesus departed to a mountain “again.” The referent is 6:3. But see John 4:20-21.

**Read John 6:16-21**

Most commentators hold the account of Jesus walking on the water in John as the same event recorded in Matthew and Mark. Having read John 6:16-21, now read Matthew 14:22-33 and Mark 6:47-51. St. Augustine (*Harmony of the Gospels*) saw the accounts as complimentary: “There is no inconsistency between Matthew and John”. St. John Chrysostom held that they were accounts of a different event: “This miracle seems to me to be a different one from the one given in Matthew…” (*Ancient Christian Commentary)*

**6:16-17 – S**ee Mark 6:45-46, where Jesus’ intention is revealed.

Capernaum – see John 2:12 and 4:46. After this chapter, Capernaum is not mentioned again in John’s Gospel. Its last mention is 6:59.

Since Jesus is the Light, it makes sense that if He had not come to them, they were in darkness.

**6:18 –** The NKJV gets this verse right. The Greek verb indicates that the sea “rose up” because a great wind was blowing. See Matthew 8:24.

**6:19 –** The word used for “rowing” can also mean “driving” – see Mark 6:48 and James 3:4. The distance they row is 25 Stadia, the ESV renders this “about three or four miles”, the NIV “three or three and a half miles”. Weinrich explains that a Stadion was 1/8 of a Roman mile, and notes that Joseph recorded that the Sea of Tiberias was 40 stadia across (4.8 miles). In other words, they were over three miles from the shore, out in the middle of the sea.

In the Greek the present tense is used here, as you might switch to the present tense when telling a story about something you have experienced.

Quite literally “They are seeing Jesus walking upon the lake and (be)coming near the boat.”

See Job 9:8. Here the Lord demonstrates His command over the creation. See Proverbs 8:28, Mark 4:39.

“And they feared/were afraid”. The Greek verb is in the passive voice – “they were made afraid”, but this verb is usually found in the passive. See John 9:22; Matthew 9:8, 17:6, 21:46, 27:54.

Several church fathers comment that a small, frightened group, in darkness, tossed about by waves, reminds us of the church in this world – but the Lord is not afar off, and those safely kept in the Ark of Christendom will be delivered.

**6:20 –** In two short exclamations, the Lord says much. First, He says to the frightened men in the boat “I AM” (the NKJV paraphrases this). Here He uses the Divine Name as His own – see Exodus 3:14; which He will do four more times in this chapter. See 6:35, 41, 48, 51. See also 8:58, 9:5, 10:9, 10:11, 10:14, 11:25 and many more. See 2 Corinthians 12:3-4. So the One who comes to them on the waves is the Great I AM.

“Do not be afraid”, the Lord tells them. See Matthew 14:25-27 for a fuller account of the Lord’s Words (two other Evangelists also record this miracle – see Matthew 14:22-33, Mark 6:47-51). Then see Matthew 10:31, 28:5, 28:10. At Sinai they were afraid, and rightly so – Exodus 20:18-19. But now God comes to save them, so they need not be afraid. And this is God’s Word to you in Christ as well – you need fear neither death nor hell, for Christ has suffered both for you. Believing in Him, there is only heaven for you.

**6:21 –** “Therefore they *very much* desired to take Him into the boat, and straightaway the boat *was* (became) upon the land unto which they *had* departed.” (Translation: Braden)

Consider the variety of ways in which this verse is translated:

NKJ: “Then they willingly received Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going.”

ESV: “Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.”

NIV: “Then they were willing to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading.”

NAS: “They were willing therefore to receive Him into the boat; and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.”

Weinrich: “Therefore, they wanted to take him into the boat, but at that very moment the boat reached the land to which they were headed.” (This relies on a conative treatment of the imperfect verb “they desired”, and the translation of the conjunction as an adversative)

Lenksi: “They were willing, therefore, to take him into the boat; and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.” Lenski adds this note: “John now mentions something that the other narrators omit. They report only that Jesus entered the boat, and that the storm then instantly ceased, due of course, to the will and power of Jesus. John adds the detail that ‘immediately’ the boat ‘was at the land to which they were going.’ In other words, the exhausted disciples were not compelled to begin their rowing again in order to cover the considerable distance to shore… that distance melted away when Jesus stepped into the boat.” (444)

**Read John 6:22-29**

6:22 - The crowd begins to wonder what had occurred. They knew one boat had left, but that Jesus was not in that boat, nor was He any longer with them.

**6:23 –** The account records specific details regarding the life of Jesus. While the details seem to us to be a bit commonplace, such details attest to the veracity of the Scriptural accounts. Scripture is a reliable, trustworthy Witness. Here we learn about the crowds interest in Jesus, and their desire to continue to follow Him. As the Lord Himself will expose, their motives for following Him were not those of faith.

The multiplication of the barley loaves and fish took place on the other side of the Sea of Galilee, on the north east shore. “The perspective that the crowd was ‘on the other side of the sea’ is that from Capernaum, where by this time the disciples and also Jesus were” (Weinrich, 66, note 22). This would be a natural orientation for St. John. Tiberias was located on the west shore of the Sea of Galilee, south of Capernaum. Our earlier notes on Tiberias are found in the comments on 6:1 on pg. 57. Since only one boat was left, the arrival of other boats make the journey of the crowd possible.

**6:24 –** Capernaum, a city on the north west shore of the Sea of Galilee, was a natural place to look for Jesus. See Matthew 4:12-13; Luke 4:31; John 2:12, 4:46, 6:17. The Lord did many miracles at Capernaum. See Mark 2:1ff; Matthew 8:5ff, 17:24ff; and others. The last mention of Capernaum in the New Testament is found in this chapter, see 6:59.

**6:25 –** The crowds ask a natural question – in verse 22 they had been bewildered by Jesus’ leaving. Now that they have found Him, they ask for an explanation.

**6:26 –** The Lord does not answer their question. He brings their motive to light. In verse 15 we learned what they desired – a magician-king that would satisfy their bodily desires.

**6:27 –** As at the wedding in Cana, as with Nicodemus, as with the Samaritan woman at the well, now the Lord speaks in heavenly terms – not of bread and fish, but of spiritual nourishment, Food that “remains unto life eternal.”

The “Son of Man” alone can give this Food – “The Son of Man” is the most frequent Name that Jesus uses for Himself in the New Testament (81 times in the Gospels). See Daniel 7:13-4; John 1:51. See Mark 8:31 for the Lord’s description of the Work of the Son of Man, a response to Peter’s use of the Title “Christ” , placing the Titles on par with one another.

The Son of Man alone can give this Food – in contrast to working for food that perishes, the Food the Son of Man gives cannot be earned – it must be given.

“For Him God the Father sealed.” (translation Braden) This is not unrelated to the previous statement –see John 4:34 – the Christ must suffer and die, and by His death will the Food He gives be available. The sealing is found after His baptism, as the Spirit descends upon Him and remains, and the Father proclaims His approval (see Matthew 3:16-17).

What happens immediately after His sealing? How does this relate to the Work of the Son of Man? See John 1:29. The Son of Man is an expression of the State of Humiliation of the Christ. For the future tense of the verb “will give”, see John 1:33.

**6:26-27, cont. -** With these verses the great “Bread of Life” discourse begins. Commentators who see John 6:53 as a direct reference to the Lord’s Supper begin that interpretation in vs. 26-27 (or earlier), as in Dr. Weinrich’s commentary. He identifies the discourse in 6:23ff as what may be a *proem* or *petihtah*, a homiletical form used in synagogues by the Jews. In this case the text would have been the Pentateuch *seder\** text, which would have been “expounded by a sermon which opened with the proem (introductory) text chosen from the Prophets or from the Hagiographa. A second text, the *haftarah*… served as a sort of interpretive matrix through which the *seder* text was interpreted.” In this case the “reading-pericope text” would have been Exodus 16:4, the introductory proem text Psalm 78:24. (663)

\*(The Hebrew word “seder” {סֵדֶר}means “order” or “arrangement”, a reference to the rite employed in the meal ordained by God in Exodus 12:1-11, see especially Exodus 13:8 {1-9}, noting that Christ is the “One Sealed”

In reference to this understanding, read Psalm 78:22-32, and note the importance of faith – believing – which is the central theme of John 6 and the Bread of Life discourse.

Pastor will lead a quick study on Exodus 12 & 13, and on Psalm 78, as background to the “Bread of Life” discourse.

**6:28 –** Responding to the Lord’s command in 6:27 (…work not for… but *rather* for…), they ask the Lord “What shall we do in order that we work the works of God?” See again John 4:32-34, which addresses both eating and working. See Deuteronomy 8:1-3. What is eaten there? What actually sustains? In the estimation of this author, “eating is believing”, both in the above texts and in John 6. Consider the Lord’s answer to their question in the following verse:

**6:29 –** Here Jesus teaches them what the “work of God” is – the work required of God for the benefits named here – that they “ you {pl.} believe in He whom *that* One sent” (Braden). The referent of the demonstrative pronoun is “God” in the previous verse.

**Read John 6:30-35**

**6:30 –** The crowd responds predictably. Jesus has clearly identified Himself as “The One Sent” by the Father. They demand a sign – a “work” that they may see and believe in Him. See 2:18, Matthew 12:38-39; Hebrews 11:1-2.

**6:31 –** Here the Jews refer directly to the Passover, the Lord will reference it as well in verse 49 as He corrects them. It is clear from their question that they had never understood the Passover rightly. The text they quote is Exodus 16 and Psalm 78 as seen above in Pastor’s explanation of those texts. See also John 2:6-9; 3:3-5; 4:13-15. What do these accounts have in common? It is the understanding of this author that these verses provide the context for the great “Bread of Life” discourse.

**6:32 –** The Lord corrects the Jews. It was not Moses, as they said, that gave the bread, rather it was Jesus’ Father, God the Father, that gave “the True Bread from heaven.” This salvific assertion the Lord will explain further in the following verse:

**6:33 –** “For the Bread of God is the (Bread/One) Coming Down from heaven and giving life to the world” (Braden. Pastor will explain the predicate nominative, a device John also uses in 1:1, and seven times in the Gospel)

If the bread given through Moses allowed the Israelites to die in the desert, as they did, it was not the “True Bread” from heaven. It is Jesus who gives, indeed Jesus who is this Bread, as the Lord will explain in the next verses. But for now see read again verse 33, and then verse 51.

**6:34 –** Note the response of the Lord’s hearers: “O Lord, always give us this bread.” Compare this with the response of the banquet master in John 2:10 (which wine would he have preferred to drink?), Nicodemus in John 3:4, 9; and the woman at the well in John 4:15, but note the Lord’s response in 4:16 – what prevents the woman from drinking?

**6:35 –** Here we have one of the great “I AM” sayings in the Gospel according to St. John. See verses 48 and 51 as well. See John 8:58; 10:7, 9; 14:6; 15:1. Our study notes on 6:20 have treated this more fully, where the same Lord says “I AM. Do not be afraid” [Weinrich, 676, where he writes “…I am rather inclined to see the divine revelatory formula ‘I AM’ also in these predicate uses…”]

Jesus is the Bread of Life, He is also the source of the water that gives everlasting life – see 4:14.

Remember the context of this discourse – the feeding of the 5000. They ate miraculous bread, but like their fathers in the desert even that miraculous bread did not grant everlasting life. Jesus is the Bread From Heaven, the Bread that gives everlasting life. He is the True Manna, to which the manna in the desert pointed.

“The one who comes to Me shall surely not hunger, and the one believing in Me shall surely not thirst, ever.” (Braden) Can you see how the context of the previous chapters frames this dialogue? See Matthew 5:6. To “come” to Jesus, to “believe” in Jesus, are parallel thoughts here. The eating and drinking He describes are believing.

**Read John 6:36-40**

**6:36 –** “But I said *this* to you because (although) you have seen (yet) you did not believe.” (Braden) When did they see? See verse 26, which the Lord explains in verse 29. Do you see the strong theme of “believing” being established?

**6:37 –** “All *the ones* the Father gives to Me will come, and the *one* coming to Me I shall surely not cast outside…” (Braden) *Here* the Lord explains further the concept of “coming to Me”, a parallel to “believing in Me” in verse 35. Note here (as in the High Priestly Prayer), the strong Trinitarian theme, the Unity of the Father and the Son, and especially here the doctrine of election – see Ephesians 1:3-9; Romans 8:28-30; Matthew 18:14; John 10:28-29. Now see John 10:27-30. The Lutheran Confessors treat this doctrine – Election - fully in FC XI.

They have not believed – can they be among those given the Son by the Father?

**6:38 –** The will of the Son is that of the eternal Logos, One with the Father – see Matthew 26:42.

**6:38, cont. –** See 4:34, where the Son asserts that He has come to do the will of the Father – and note the relationship between “food” and God’s will.

**6:39 –** Here the Sent One reveals the will of the Sender – that “all which He has given me I will not destroy *out of* it, but I will raise it up on the last day.” (Braden) The translation of this verse varies between the English versions, but the general sense is clear. The next assertion by our Lord further clarifies the meaning of this statement. See John 10:28, 17:12.

The Son here asserts that there is a resurrection (raise it up), and that there is a Last Day, a Day of Judgment. The construction “Last Day” is unique to the Gospel of St. John, occurring seven times: four times in this dialogue (6:39-54), and in 7:37, 11:24, and 12:48. Note the context and the descriptions of the “Last Day” in these passages.

**6:40 –** Here again the Son reveals the will of the Father, the reason He was sent.

The Words of Christ are clear: “seeing the Son and believing in Him” is what avails eternal life, and thus resurrection to life. Compare this to 6:54. What is necessary in 6:54? Now see 11:25-26. What is necessary there to receive everlasting life? How does this inform the understanding of 6:54? What is the Fourth Article of the Augsburg Confession, the Article on which the church stands or falls?

On “seeing” and “believing” see John 20:29; Hebrews 11:1.

In this there is great hope and comfort for the Christian. The will of the Father is that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him has eternal life, and the Son will raise him up on the Last Day. This is the Christian hope. See Matthew 22:23-32; Acts 23:6-9; 1 Corinthians 15:12-20; Revelation 20:5-6. Even in the face of death, those who believe in Christ have God’s Promise of life eternal.

**Read St. John 6:41-50**

**6:41-42 –** The Jews “complained” against Him. The Greek verb means “to mutter, murmur”. See Luke 5:30; 1 Corinthians 10:10; in John see 6:43, 6:61, 7:32. Note the theme of their complaint, made clearer in verse 42. They understand His assertion, but they will not believe it.

“Is this not Jesus the son of Joseph, of whom we have known the father and mother?” See Luke 3:23; John 7:25-29; Acts 1:12-14; Matthew 13:54-57

**6:43 –** Audible or not, the Lord hears their murmuring.

**6:44 –** The Lord returns to His assertion of verse 37. He is not distracted by their complaining, He speaks the Truth clearly. The word translated in the NKJV as “draws” is literally “drags”. Note especially the Father as the “One who sent Me”, another public confession that Jesus is God the Son, the Apostle of the Father. See verse 39, and Hebrews 3:1. How does this relate to the doctrine of Election? See Ephesians 1:3-10. Those whom the Father draws to Christ, those who believe in Him (vs. 40), He will raise up on the Last Day (vs. 39 and 40). The Lord clearly restates His assertions.

**6:45 –** If they would not receive His Word, they would surely believe the Scriptures… The Lord cites Isaiah 54:13: “They shall all be taught by God.” See the passage in Isaiah. What is the difference between what God gave Isaiah to say and what God Incarnate Himself spoke? Note that in Isaiah the Divine Name is used. Since He is standing with them “teaching” them, giving Isaiah’s Words their fulfillment, again here God the Son uses the Name too Holy to speak as His own Name.

See 1 Thessalonians 4:9; 1 John 2:27-29;

“Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me.” This is equivalent to the Lord’s assertion in John 5:37-40, of which this chapter is a continuation. How does this relate to the context of the great “Bread of Life” discourse?

**6:46 –** The Lord has identified Himself as the “Apostle” of the Father, the “One Sent”. He reinforces that fact with a simple truth: “No one has seen the Father except the One from God, He has seen the Father.” See 1:18, 7:29, 8:38-40. The Jews understand well what He says, consider 9:16.

**6:47 –** Faith, faith, faith! Again the Lord returns to the central theme of this section of Scripture: “Amen, amen, I say to you, the one who believes has eternal life.” And how is that life obtained? The Lord continues:

**6:48 – “**I AM the Bread of Life.” Remember our earlier discussions of the Christ using the Divine Name as His own? This is a central theme of the Gospel according to St. John. Read verses 31-35 again.

**6:49 –** In the context of 6:31, the Lord reminds the sons of Israel that “Your fathers ate manna in the desert and died.” The Bread He gives is better Heavenly Bread, which He will again make clear in verse 51. Eating Manna, although miraculous food, did not bring eternal life. See Numbers 14:26-29; 1 Corinthians 10:1-6; Hebrews 3:15-19. What does the Author of Hebrews give as the reason they could not enter God’s rest? What then is the eating that avails eternal life? How does this relate to John 6 and the Bread of Life discourse? See Jude 5.

**6:50 –** There is a Bread that one may eat and not die. He is better than the Manna, for He gave the Manna. The true children of Abraham ate Manna, but also believed – see Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:9-13.

**6:51 –** The Lord explains clearly:

1. He is the Bread of Life
2. He has come down out of heaven
3. If anyone eats this Bread he will live forever
4. The Bread He gives is His Flesh
5. This He does for the life of the world.

The Lord has already contrasted the Manna in the desert with His Bread. The Israelites did not even know what the Manna was (Exodus 16:14-15), nor did they know who He IS (vs 42).

On this verse (6:51) St. Augustine writes “You are God’s beggar. I mean, we are all God’s beggars when we pray. We stand in front of the great householder’s gate. In fact we go so far as to prostrate ourselves, we whine and implore, wanting to receive something, and that something is God Himself. What does the beggar ask from you? Bread. And you, what do you ask from God, if not Christ, who says ‘I AM the Living Bread who came down from heaven’”?

The Rev. Dr. William Weinrich’s *Excursus: St. Augustine on John 6:49-51* is commended to the reader (pgs. 717-726). In it Dr. Weinrich attributes St. Augustine’s (d. 430 A.✠ D.) position on John 6 in his *Tractate 25* (*“crede, et manducasti”,* “Why prepare ye your teeth and your stomach? Believe, and you have already eaten.”) to a “spiritual” interpretation, and hence Luther’s position to the same (although Dr. Weinrich nowhere makes this connection, but see his citation of Luther on pg. 747).

Dr. Weinrich identifies Platonic tendencies in St. Augustine’s treatment of the text. (Plato, d. 437 B.C. Platonism is the intellectual result of denying the reality of the material world – the world as it seems to us is only an ‘image’ or a ‘copy’. Faith is less than knowledge, faith is elevated to knowledge when it becomes ‘justified true belief’ through having an ‘account’ of the object.)

Dr. Weinrich himself proposes a “realistic” understanding of the pericope. Still, ever an excellent academician, Dr. Weinrich cites St. Augustine from his *Tractate 26*: “*Qui credit, manducat”,* or “To eat” is “to have faith.” Dr. Weinrich also cites Augustine’s *Tractate 26* where he writes “For we, too, today receive visible food; but the sacrament is one thing, the efficacy of the sacrament another.”

To this point, see the paper recently given at the St. Mark Theological Conference by the Rev. Dr. Eric Phillips entitled “Saint Augustine and the Sacrament of the Altar”, in which Dr. Phillips finds a “fuller” and “less full” eating of the Eucharist described in St. Augustine as related to his commentary on this pericope.

See also Dr. Weinrich’s *Excursus: Does John 6 Speak of the Eucharist? Sic et Non,* pgs. 740-753, where he writes “It is well known that the Reformers rejected a eucharistic interpretation of John 6.” Dr. Weinrich also quotes the *Formula of Concord: “*this eating ‘which occurs in no other say than with the Spirit and faith, in the preaching and meditation of the Gospel’, although a spiritual eating can occur also in the Supper.” (FC VII.61)

Finally Dr. Weinrich quotes the Rev. Dr. David Scaer: “Luther’s removal of John 6 from the eucharistic playing field has deprived Lutheran theology of what is arguably the most extensive and detailed discourse in the New Testament on the nature of the Lord’s Supper and its benefits. John 6 has incarnation, atonement, forgiveness and resurrection all woven within a eucharistic cloth.”

**Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, VII, “Of the Holy Supper”, 61-66**

61] There is, therefore, a two-fold eating of the flesh of Christ, one spiritual, of which Christ treats especially [John 6:54](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%206.54), which occurs in no other way than with the Spirit and faith, in the preaching and meditation of the Gospel, as well as in the Lord's Supper, and by itself is useful and salutary, and necessary at all times for salvation to all Christians; without which spiritual participation also the sacramental or oral eating in the Supper is not only not salutary, but even injurious and damning [a cause of condemnation].

[62]](http://bookofconcord.org/sd-supper.php" \l "para62) But this spiritual eating is nothing else than faith, namely, to hear God's Word (wherein Christ, true God and man, is presented to us, together with all benefits which He has purchased for us by His flesh given into death for us, and by His blood shed for us, namely, God's grace, the forgiveness of sins, righteousness, and eternal life), to receive it with faith and appropriate it to ourselves, and in all troubles and temptations firmly to rely, with sure confidence and trust, and to abide in the consolation that we have a gracious God, and eternal salvation on account of the Lord Jesus Christ. [He who hears these things related from the Word of God, and in faith receives and applies; them to himself, and relies entirely upon this consolation (that we have God reconciled and life eternal on account of the Mediator, Jesus Christ),-he, I say, who with true confidence rests in the Word of the Gospel in all troubles and temptations, spiritually eats the body of Christ and drinks His blood.]

[63]](http://bookofconcord.org/sd-supper.php" \l "para63) The other eating of the body of Christ is oral or sacramental, when the true, essential body and blood of Christ are also orally received and partaken of in the Holy Supper, by all who eat and drink the consecrated bread and wine in the Supper-by the believing as a certain pledge and assurance that their sins are surely forgiven them, and Christ dwells and is efficacious in them, but by the unbelieving for their judgment and condemnation, [64]](http://bookofconcord.org/sd-supper.php" \l "para64) as the words of the institution by Christ expressly declare, when at the table and during the Supper He offers His disciples natural bread and natural wine, which He calls His true body and true blood, at the same time saying: Eat and drink. For in view of the circumstances this command evidently cannot be understood otherwise than of oral eating and drinking, however, not in a gross, carnal, Capernaitic, but in a supernatural, incomprehensible way; [65]](http://bookofconcord.org/sd-supper.php" \l "para65) to which afterwards the other command adds still another and spiritual eating, when the Lord Christ says further: This do in remembrance of Me, where He requires faith [which is the spiritual partaking of Christ's body).

[66]](http://bookofconcord.org/sd-supper.php" \l "para66) Therefore all the ancient Christian teachers expressly, and in full accord with the entire holy Christian Church, teach, according to these words of the institution of Christ and the explanation of St. Paul, that the body of Christ is not only received spiritually by faith, which occurs also outside of [the use of] the Sacrament, but also orally, not only by believing and godly, but also by unworthy, unbelieving, false, and wicked Christians. As this is too long to be narrated here, we would, for the sake of brevity, have the Christian reader referred to the exhaustive writings of our theologians.

**6:51, cont. –** The Lord asserts that HE IS the Bread of Life, in contrast to the Manna their fathers ate. The fathers ate and died. HE IS the Bread of Life (v. 48), which, as did the Manna, came down from heaven. But if anyone eats (φάγῃ, the aorist subjunctive of ἐσθίω, the verb our Lord uses in the Institution, see Matthew 26:26, but see 1 Corinthians 11:24, then 11:26).

**Read St. John 6:52-58**

**6:51, cont. –** We have seen the Formula of Concord’s treatment of this section of the Gospel according to St. John. Following that treatment, the 2009 *Lutheran Study Bible* notes, regarding this section (6:51-58): “Not an obvious reference to the Lord’s Supper: the words of institution are not recorded, no wine is present, Jesus speaks of ‘flesh’ not ‘body’, and the crowd is generally hostile and unbelieving.” The note ends by interjecting “His wording anticipates the blessings of the Sacrament.” This author would add the doctrine of the *Mandacatio Impiorum* or *Indignorum*. Pastor will explain this in light of verse 53.

**6:52 –** Note the response of the Pharisees, who understand clearly what Jesus has said, and parrot his proclamation in the words of their question – “How can this Man give us *His* Flesh to eat?” (In many manuscripts the pronoun “His” does not occur.) Their “quarreling” in the Greek has the sense of a violent confrontation.

Cyril of Jerusalem (d. 386 A.✠ D.) writes “Failing to understand His Words spiritually, [the Jews] were offended… Then again in the old covenant there was the showbread. But that, since it belonged to the old covenant, has come to an end. In the new covenant there re the bread heaven and the cup of salvation, which sanctify body and soul. For as bread corresponds to the body, so the Word is appropriated to the soul. So do not think of them as mere bread and wine. In accordance with the Lord’s declaration, they are body and blood. And if our senses suggest otherwise, let faith confirm you.” (Elowsky, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, 239)

“How can this Man give us His Flesh to eat?” “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter into the womb of his mother a second time and be born?” “Sir, you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where will you get that Living Water? Are you greater than our father Jacob…?” Note the similarities of the responses.

**6:53 –** The Lord speaks in a conditional sentence. A note in the 1986 *Concordia Study Bible* on this pericope reads: “Jesus’ statement that ‘unless you eat the body of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you’ (vs. 53) is not a direct reference to the Lord’s Supper. In this discourse he emphasizes faith in response to testimony… Flesh and blood here point to Christ as the crucified one and the source of life. Jesus speaks of faith’s appropriation of himself as God’s appointed sacrifice.” (1618) The 2009 *Lutheran Study Bible* replaces this note with the following: “Graphic description of faith, the topic under discussion”, pointing to verse 47. (1793)

**6:54 –** There is an important change in the verb “eat” in this verse. It is a different verb than is used in verse 53. The verb in verse 53 is explained above (bottom of pg. 68 in the commentary on verse 51). The verb used here (τρώγω) occurs only six times in the New Testament. The first is Matthew 24:38. Four are found in verses 54-58 of this chapter. The last is found in John 13:18.

The ESV translates the verb used in verse 53 as “eat”, the verb used in verse 54 as “feed” to reflect the change in words. Note especially the ESV translation of verse 58, where both verbs are used. The word used by our Lord in the *Verba Domini* is a different word than is used here.

Just as the word for “eat” is different in this verse than in the *Verba Domini*, so is the word “flesh” (σάρξ) used here, rather than the word “body” (σῶμα), which is used in the Words of Institution.

The promise that the one who “feeds” on His “flesh” has eternal life connects with John 3:15-16, 3:36, 4:14, 4:36, 5:24, 5:39, 6:27, 6:40, 6:47, 6:58, 10:27-28, 17:2-3. As you can see from these verses, eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ is a main theme of the Gospel of St. John, indeed, it is the main theme of every Book of Scripture.

“My Blood” – Consuming blood was prohibited by Law in the Old Testament, see Genesis 9:3-4; Leviticus 17:10-14. Now see Hebrews 9:7-14; Hebrews 13:20. The verb “drink” used by our Lord in John 6:54 is the same verb (in a different form) used in the *Verba Domini*.

“And I shall raise him up on the last day” – a restatement of verse 39 – what is the context there? (see 36-38) The great “Day of the Lord” foreseen by the Prophets of old begins with the Incarnation of the Messiah, and ends with the final judgment at His Second Coming. The eschatological connection the Lord makes here is a confession that He is the Lord of the “great and terrible Day of the Lord”. See Joel 2:11 (what is the context there? Hint: read the next two verses…); Joel 2:31; Malachi 4:5, and many others. Believing in the Lord Jesus Christ brings salvation, and with salvation the Promise of the Resurrection.

In Article IV of the *Apology,* the Confessors write “The greatest possible comfort comes from this doctrine that the highest worship in the Gospel is the desire to receive forgiveness of sins, grace, and righteousness. About this worship Christ speaks in John 5:40, ‘This is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life.’…” (AP IV.310) The joy and comfort of the resurrection is the center of Christian hope.

**6:55 –** “for my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink” (translation mine). Discussing Christology, the Confessors write “Because of this personal union and the resultant communion the divine and human natures have with each other in deed and truth in the person of Christ, things are attributed to Christ according to the flesh that the flesh, according to its nature and essence outside of this union, cannot intrinsically be or have – for example, that his flesh is truly a life-giving food and his blood truly a quickening beverage, as the two hundred father of the Council of Ephesus attested when they stated that Christ’s flesh is a life-giving flesh, whence only this man and no other human being in heaven and on earth can say truthfully, ‘Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them,’ likewise, ‘I am with you always even to the close of the age.’ SD FC VII.76 It should be noted that this section of Scripture, John 6:53-63, is not used in the Lutheran Confessions until after Luther’s death.

To identify His flesh as “true food” and His blood as “true drink” is to contrast them with the food and drink that perish, the food and drink that support temporal life. His flesh and His blood are “true” because they give everlasting life. So the birth of John 3 is a “true” birth, and the water of John 4 is “true” water. That “eating” and “drinking” Christ is believing has already been well established in this study. Note how this connects to the thought in verse 56.

**6:56 –** In contrast to the eating their fathers did in the desert (6:48-49), verses 56-58 build to the assertion that the True Bread which comes down from heaven is Christ Himself. Read 56-58 together.

The eating and drinking described in verse 54 is reiterated here by the Lord: “The one eating (ὁ τρώγων) of my flesh and drinking of my blood remains in me and I in him.” In verse 54 the promise attached to this eating and drinking was resurrection and eternal life. Here the promise attached to the same eating and drinking is remaining “in” the Lord, and He remaining “in” the one who eats and drinks. See John 15:4-11, and note there how one “abides” in Christ and remains in Him. See 5:38, 6:27, 8:31 and 14:10-11 for the use of the same verb “remain”. How do each of these teachings of our Lord reveal the way to “remain” in Him?

R.C.H. Lenski writes “To eat and to drink means to be spiritually joined to Jesus, the Son of Man. Our souls embrace Him and His sacrificial death in faith and trust, and He embraces us as now drawn to Him (v. 44) and given to Him (vss. 37 and 39). That is why Jesus once more speaks of ‘My flesh’ and ‘My blood’, His sacrificial death, and of our eating and drinking, which denote the reception of this death and sacrifice by faith…” (496-497)

It is the opinion of this author that Christ remains in the Christian by the indwelling of His Spirit, the Holy Spirit, who creates and sustains saving faith in Christ. By that faith, by that believing, by that “eating” and “drinking”, we remain in Him. Here is described the *Unio Mystica*, the “Mystical Union” of Christ and the believer (Lenski 497). See 1 John 3:5-6, 24.

**6:57 –** To be united to Jesus, to be One with Him, is to be One with the Father. See John 14:19-26, and note the same themes there as in the great “Bread of Life Discourse”. See the same themes in John 15:23-27.

“He will live on account of Me” – See John 5:26-29. How is this accomplished? See 5:24. This section flows into the section at hand, helping us understand the “eating” and “drinking” our Lord describes.

**6:58 –** The ultimate promise for the one who “eats” is eternal life – note that the “drinking” isn’t mentioned here.

We give St. Augustine the last word regarding this section of Scripture: “The Lord and Master was inviting His slaves, and the food He had prepared for them was Himself. Who would ever dare to eat his own Lord and Master? And yet He said ‘Whoever eats Me lives because of Me.’ When Christ is eaten, life is eaten. Nor is He killed in order to be eaten, but He brings life to the dead. When He is eaten, He nourishes without diminishing. So do not be afraid, brothers and sisters, of eating this bread, in case we should possibly finish it and find nothing to eat later on. Let Christ be eaten; when eaten he lives because when slain He rose again.”

**Read John 6:59-65**

**6:59 –** The events of Holy Scripture are factual, real events that occurred in real places. Here the Evangelist interjects that the Lord said these things while He was teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum. “These things He said in synagogue *while* teaching in Capernaum.” See Matthew 4:13-20. The mention of Capernaum here in John 6:59 picks up the thought of 6:17 and 6:24.

Lenski says that the anarthrous “synagogue” means to convey that this teaching was public, to distinguish it from what occurs next, which involves only Christ’s disciples.

**6:60 –** As did the wedding host at Cana, as did Nicodemus, as did the Samaritan woman at the well, so here many of Jesus’ disciples find this to be an impossible teaching. Of course, it is impossible for men, but with God nothing is impossible.

**6:61 –** Jesus reads their hearts, and asks “Does this scandalize you?” (translation mine) See Matthew 11:6,

**6:62 -** See John 1:51, 3:13. If the exhortation to eat and drink Christ is “hard word”, His ascension will be impossible for them to believe.

Note the connection to Moses in 3:13-14, as the Lord connected the Bread of Life to the manna in the wilderness. He spoke to Jews. See John 5:46-47. Moses testified to Christ. In John 7, 8 and 9 Moses will be thematic.

**6:63 –** “The Spirit is the Lifegiver” (literally “Lifemaker”) - This is not a change in theme or subject from the previous verses. The entire section has dealt with faith. It is the Spirit who works and sustains faith. It is the Spirit that indwells the believer, joining the believer to the Triune God through the Mystic Union. It is the Spirit that gives life, the promised eternal life that comes by the Spirit’s work through faith in Jesus Christ. See 1 Corinthians 15:45-50. Note there the use of “flesh and blood”.

“The flesh avails nothing”. See Galatians 6:8, 1 Peter 3:18-19. This passage Zwingli used to prove the “real absence”. Our Lord, however, wasn’t speaking of Holy Communion, rather of faith. So He continues “The words which I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.” See Romans 10:17. The conjunctive “and” can be seen as “epexegetical”, that is reading more meaning into “spirit”. A formula is continued here – spirit = life.

If the “flesh avails nothing”, and our Lord has directed them to “eat” His flesh for eternal life, the only possible understanding can be that “eating = believing”. This is proven in verse 64:

**6:64 –** “But there are among you some which are not believing” (translation mine). The Evangelist explains further “For Jesus had known from the beginning there were some who were not believing and who is the one betraying Him.” See 5:38-40, 6:36, 8:45, 10:24-30. Consider the Evangelist’s insight – the Words of the great “Bread of Life Discourse” were spoken by Christ with the full knowledge, indeed the knowledge “from the beginning”, that there were those who would not believe, and that unbelief would be manifest in the ultimate betrayal. See Mark 14:20 – and note the context there… What would happen next?

**6:65 –** Again here there is no change in subject. Election is from eternity, but it is not the cause of salvation. The Means of Grace are the cause of salvation, as Christ and Him crucified and risen is brought to you. This is only possible through faith.

**6:65 cont. –** The faith required to “eat” and to “drink” Christ, faith articulated in verse 64 (which faith is the topic of this discourse) is a Gift of God. No one is able to come to our Lord Jesus Christ or believe in Him by his own reason or strength, but the Holy Ghost calls us by the Gospel (sound familiar?). That this is impossible of ourselves, note the response of many of Jesus’ disciples in the next verse.

**Read John 6:66-71**

**6:66 –** Lenski writes of this verse that the internal separation that already existed because of their lack of faith is now manifested externally (518). These, however, are not “losses”, because the Lord made it clear in verse 64 that He never counted them among the faithful. This is frequently true of “losses” in the Church. Here in John these “disciples” were so thoroughly scandalized by t

he Lord’s assertion that He is the Bread of Life, that He came down from heaven, that they must believe in Him to live, that the flesh without the Spirit is dead, that He will ascend to where He was before, that they no longer “walked” with Him – which is to say that they went their own “way”. See Matthew 7:13-14.

For a million confirmation bonus points, can you recite or paraphrase the first sentence of the *Didache*? Answer: “There are two ways: a way of life and a way of death, and the difference between these two ways is great…” Those who attend our Proverbs study have learned about “walking” in the “Way” of life, see Proverbs 2:20, 9:6 and 12:28, for example. It is no surprise that our Lord proclaims “I AM the Way…” See John 14:5-6. The “disciples” who left our Lord in this verse had never truly “walked” in the Way. Consider then the hypocrisy of the Jews in Luke 20:21.

Here in verse 66 the verb “walked” – “and they no longer *walked* with Him”, carries the meaning of a continual or habitual action.

**6:67 –** At the leaving of “many disciples”, the Lord asks His the Twelve “And you, do you *also* desire to leave?” (translation Braden) The Lord compels no one to follow Him. Those who follow Him are given to do so by the Father (vs. 65). This is the general “call” of all Christians. See Romans 1:5-7, 8:28-30; 1 Corinthians 7:17; Ephesians 4:1-6; 1 Peter 1:15, 2:9-10; Jude 1, and Revelation 19:9.

**6:68 –** Simon Peter answers. His answer reveals that he has the faith our Lord has described in the great “Bread of Life Discourse”. His answer has two parts, versified as 68 and 69. First, Peter addresses Him: “O Lord, to whom shall we go?” There is no other Way of Life. Faith knows it. Jesus alone has “the Words of Life”. See verse 63 – Peter heard and understood. Now the meaning of verse 63 is clearer to us – reread the verse in light of Peter’s remarkable answer of faith.

**6:69 –** “And we *ourselves* have believed (thus remain in a state of belief), and *even* have known (thus remain in a state of knowing, which flows from faith) that You are the Holy *One* of God.” (translation and elaboration: Braden). Peter’s “we” stands in contradistinction to the “disciples” who have left. The Lord Himself testifies to Peter’s answer in the great High Priestly Prayer in 17:8.

**6:69 continued –** Here we encounter a difference in the underlying manuscripts of the KJV/NKJV and the modern texts. The “received text” or “Majority Text” reads “…You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” The modern texts, which are based on older Greek papyri, read “…You are the Holy One of God.”

Bruce Metzger, in part responsible for the modern texts, writes “The reading adopted for the text, decisively supported by P*75,* א, B, C\*, D, L, W, *al,* was expanded in various ways by copyists, perhaps in imitation of expressions in 1.49; 11.27; and Mt 16.16.” (Metzger, Bruce, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. 1998. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft. Pg. 184) Pastor will explain.

“To whom shall we go…?” In verse 63 the Lord asserts that His Words are life. Here Peter affirms that he believes what the Lord has said. See Acts 4:10-12. Truth be told, there is nowhere else to go, no one else to go to. Faith alone knows this. Peter’s words are the confession of faith. See 1 John 4:14-16, where the Evangelist expresses the same thought. Peter’s confession here is prophesied in Isaiah 10:20-21.

How could Peter “believe and know”? See 1 John 2:20; Romans 10:8-10; Philippians 2:9-11. In this same way you have known, and have believed, that Jesus is the Holy One of God. See Psalm 16:10 (where is this found in the New Testament? See Acts 2:27, 13:35); Psalm 71:22; Proverbs 9:10. The Title “Holy One” is most used in the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, as in 17:6, 43:15, 48:17.

**6:70 –** Peter has confessed faith. In response to his confession, the Lord affirms that He has chosen them, the Twelve. But among them is one who does not hold the faith that Peter has confessed. See Luke 6:13; John 13:18-19 (note here the connection with faith).

The word “devil” is not used anywhere in the Old Testament. Its first use in the Bible is in Matthew 4:1, but note what the Lord calls him in 4:10. The Old Testament uses the word “Satan”, although surprisingly it first occurs in 1 Chronicles 21:1. In light of this dialogue, see Matthew 16:23.

St. John Chrysostom writes “See the wisdom of Christ. He neither exposes the traitor nor allows him to remain hidden. In this way, [Judas} is not so publicly humiliated that he becomes more contentious, but Christ also does not embolden him by allowing him to think that his wicked deeds are proceeding undetected.” (*Homilies on the Gospel of John*, 47.4) in *Ancient Christian Commentary.*

**6:71 –** See 6:64 – the Lord knew, and here in verse 71 the Evangelist explains.

**Read John 7:1-5**

**7:1 –** While the great Bread of Life discourse had ended, and the Twelve are identified as Peter gives a confession of faith, still …”many of His disciples walked with Him no more.” That theme, the separation of the faithful from those who refused to believe, opens the seventh chapter. In chapter 6 Jesus left Capernaum and went to the east side of the Sea of Galilee. See John 4:3. Here in John 7 He travels around Galilee, far north of Judea. Now, in counterpoint to Peter’s confession that He has the Words of eternal life, the Jews seek to kill Jesus. See John 5:18.

**7:2 –** The Feast of “Booths” or “Tabernacles” drew near. This was a seven-day Feast commanded to be observed in the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar, Tishri, on the 15th through 21st days (Tishri is approximately our September-October). See Leviticus 23:34-44, Deuteronomy 16:13-17. See also Zechariah 14:16-19.

The major Feasts of Israel are nicely delineated in the 23rd chapter of Leviticus. The Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and the Feast of the First Fruits were celebrated in Abib, the first month of the Jewish calendar (Approximately our March-April, on the 14th day, the 15th-21st day, and the 16th day, respectively. See Exodus 12:1-20; Leviticus 23:9-14). The Feast of Weeks was celebrated in the third month, Sivan, on the 6th day (Exodus 23:16, 34:22, Leviticus 23:15-21).

The Feast of Trumpets was celebrated on the first day of the seventh month, Sivan (Approximately our May-June, Leviticus 23:23-25, Numbers 29:1-6).

The most important Feast of the year was Yom Kippur, י֧וֹם הַכִּפֻּרִ֣ים , the Day of Atonement the 10th day of the seventh month, Tishri. On that Day the plenary remission of sins was offered to all of Israel as the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies and spilled the blood of the sacrifice at the Mercy Seat.

While the Feast of Tabernacles, in Greek ἡ ἑορτὴ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἡ σκηνοπηγία, was named for the “tents” constructed of leaves and branches for the Feast, John 1:14 certainly rings in the ears of faith each time this Feast is mentioned. The Pastor will explain how the construction of the Tabernacle (מִשְׁכָּן in the Hebrew, σκηνή in the Greek), and all of the above-named Feasts, including the Sabbath (Exodus 16:23; Leviticus 23:3) pointed to Christ.

**7:3 -** Since Tabernacles was a “pilgrim feast”, the Lord’s “brothers” (see my tract on this, and our study notes on 2:12) encourage Him to go to Jerusalem (although in 7:1 it is clear He is avoiding Judea). Their expressed reason is that His disciples “also see/marvel at you *because of* the works which You are doing.” (translation: Braden) This is a remarkable statement following the many disciples that left Him after the Bread of Life discourse. While the true motivation of Jesus “brothers” is not here revealed, it is revealed in verse 5. These brothers too are those who did not believe, their exhortation is blasphemous. See1 Corinthians 1:22. There is another account of tempting the Lord to do miracles, see His answer in Matthew 4:7.

**7:4 –** “for no one in hiddenness works *while* also seeking to be in *the* open.” (translation: Braden) See John 11:54 and 18:20 for other uses by John of the Greek word παρρησίᾳ, which means “boldness”, “openness”, “confidence” or “publicly”. The “brothers” reason betrays their sinfulness – they think that the Lord desires His own exaltation in the eyes of men, certainly what they would have sought. See Matthew 20:23-28.

**7:4, cont. –** “…show Yourself to the world.” See Matthew 17:9; John 11:54, 14:19-22, 18:20; Matthew 12:14-16. Jesus would be “seen” – see Matthew 28:10.

**7:5 –** Here the Evangelist reveals the motivation of Jesus’ “brothers”. They did not believe. See Matthew 12:46-50.

**7:6 –** Even though He knew they did not believe, He answers them. He explains why He needn’t go: His time had not yet come. See 2:4, 8:20, 16:32. What is that “time?” See 17:1, Mark 14:41; He would go to Jerusalem, the place where they murder the ones sent by God. See Mathew 23:29-31. See also Matthew 23:37; Luke 18:31; Acts 13:27.

Consider Jesus’ “time” in light of His answer to His “brothers.” Exhorting Him to go to Jerusalem was encouraging His death. But He had not yet finished His Work: see John 4:34, 19:28-30 (Pastor will explain the Greek of verse 28 and how it relates to verse 30). Here we find “His hour”.

**7:7 –** “The world is not able to hate you, but Me it hates, because I bear witness concerning it that its works are evil.” Because the brothers don’t believe, they fit in well in the “world”, the fallen creation. See 1:9-10, 8:23-24, 14:17, 15:18-19. The word “world” (κόσμος) occurs many times more frequently in the Gospel according to St. John than in the other Gospels. (11x in Matthew; 4x in Mark; 7x in Luke; 59x times in John, making the contrast between the Kingdom of God and the world a major theme in John)

The “works of the world” are sinful, because the world is sinful, fallen. The Christ bears witness of this in Truth. The world does not receive this well – then, or now. See 3:19.

**7:8 –** His “brothers” had said “Depart from here and go into Judea…”, directing Him to go to Jerusalem for the feast. Here He answers “You yourselves go up to the feast. I Myself do not yet go up to this feast, My time has not yet been fulfilled” (translation: Braden) Note the two points of clarification – First, that He doesn’t go “yet”, but He will go (this “not yet” is omitted from the modern critical texts, who hold that it is an early addition to the text in an attempt to harmonize verse 8 with verse 10 – while they miss the fulfillment in verse 9).

Second, that His time has not “yet” been fulfilled”, but it will be. See verse 30 of this chapter. Here in chapter 7 the shadow of the cross is already visible. Note the major theme of Luke’s Gospel in Luke 9:51-53. This “trip” He must make alone.

**7:9 –** St. John affirms that as Jesus said, He remained in Galilee.

**7:10 –** In perfect accord with His Words in verses 6-8, He did not go “yet”, but then did go, as He did in 5:1. Also in keeping with His Words, and against the words of His “brothers”, He does not go up “openly”, but rather “hiddenly”. St. Augustine writes “…the time of My glory is not yet come. That will be My Feast Day, not a day that passes and is gone, like holidays here. Rather, it will be a feast that remains forever. At that time there will be festivity, joy without end, eternity without stain, sunshine without cloud.” *Tractates on the Gospel of John*, 28.8, cited in *Ancient Christian Commentary.*

**7:10, cont. –** Above we noted the “not yet” in verse 8. Lenski decides against this variant, replacing οὔπω with οὐκ, asserting that this is the original reading. He finds no contradiction between the Lord’s Words and actions in verses 8 and 10, however, for the Lord does not go up as His “brothers” did, rather He goes later and alone, and in secret. His “going up” is not like theirs. His time is not yet come. See also John 11:56.

**7:11 –** Like the “brothers”, the Jews seek a public appearance. They desire a spectacle. See Mark 8:12; 1 Corinthians 1:22. The verb “sought” here is a weak translation. The Greek tense imparts the sense of “continual” or “habitual” action. It can also rightly be translated conatively, which would add an interesting nuance to the meaning. Pastor will explain.

**7:12 –** Jesus’ “brothers” were not the only ones that wanted a spectacle. The crowds “murmured” a lot – some that He was good, others that He led astray. See Matthew 27:63. Again here the verb “said” is in the Greek tense that imparts continual or habitual action.

**7:13 –** “Nevertheless no one spoke openly with boldness concerning Him, on account of the fear of the Jews.” (translation Braden) The “nevertheless” is quite revealing. The crowds knew that the Jews rejected Jesus. They were happy to engage in great murmuring, but afraid to do so openly. It will only get worse: see John 9:22.

**7:14 –** Jesus came up (again, a topographical reference) differently than His “brothers”. He arrived “in the midst” of the Feast. Without fear of the Jews, He immediately went to the most sacred, the most public place, to teach. It was the House built for Him, they, not He, were the unwelcome intruders. See 2 Chronicles 6:1-10; Ezra 6:12; Jeremiah 7:11; Matthew 21:13.

**7:15 –** The Jews marvel. See Matthew 8:26, 13:54; Luke 19:47-48. The answer to their question is “Because He is the Author of Scripture, and these are they which testify to Him.” See John 5:39; Matthew 22:29; Romans 16:25-27. The NKJV translation “letters” is not the strongest. The Greek word here, the plural of the Greek word for “letter”, in the plural means “a set of written characters forming a document or piece of writing”. Here the discussion is of the Pentateuch, see John 5:46-47 where the same Greek word is used. A proper treatment here of the Greek word opens the meaning of this passage to us: Jesus was teaching publicly about the Torah, and astounding the Jews. See Luke 2:46-50. That was at least 18 years before this account.

**7:16 –** Taking no honor or glory for Himself, God the Son gives glory to God the Father. He again asserts that He is the “Sent One” of the Father. Recall our Lord’s teaching in John 3:31-36, 4:34, 5:19-27. This is a major theme of John’s Gospel. See John 8:28-29.

**7:17 –** The Lord that teaches His disciples to pray the Father “Thy will be done” here asserts that the one that desires to do the Father’s will recognizes the Son’s doctrine as Divine. Those given to bring this Doctrine to the world were met with a similar response – see Acts 4:13.

**7:18 –** The Lord speaks in His State of Humiliation. There will be a time when He is glorified – see John 17:5.

**7:18, Cont.:** The Lord offers a formula for discerning who is a True Teacher, and who is a false teacher. It is revealed by the glory the teacher seeks. See John 8:50 and 8:54; 5:41 and 5:44.

“There is no unrighteousness in Him.” See John 8:45-47, Psalm 90:16.

**Read John 7:19-24**

**7:19 –** The Law was given through Moses. See John 1:17, 5:45-57; Acts 15:5; Romans 10:4-5. All external appearances aside, the Jews (see vs 15) were not keeping the Law. See Romans 2:17-24, where St. Paul makes the same case.

The specific breaking of the Law to which the Lord refers is the violation of the Fifth Commandment – Thou Shalt Not Kill. Although the Jews will deny this, their denial is a lie. See John 5:18. That lying has not ended, see 2 John 1:7.

**7:20 –** How does the crowd answer Jesus’ assertion? See John 8:44-49, noting how the dialogue of chapter 7 continues there. The Lord’s teaching is consistent and clear.

**7:21 –** What is the relationship between the crowd’s accusation and Jesus’ answer? See John 10:25, 37-38. See John 5:9 for the referent to the Lord’s assertion. See Luke 13:14-16.

**7:22 –** The conjunctive “On account of this…” (“Therefore” in the NKJV) sets up another equation – the Jews’ understanding of the Sabbath was errant, because it did not flow from faith. Note the Lord’s assertion that the Law isn’t “from” Moses, it was given to Abraham in Genesis 17, but it is from God.

**7:23 -** The Lord easily shows them the contradiction: to circumcise on the Sabbath is a keeping of the Law, but to heal the whole man they hold to be breaking the Law. See Matthew 5:18.

**7:24 –** The Lord has said He has not come to judge. He directs them, however, to do so. See 8:15, Isaiah 11:3-4, 1 Samuel 16:7. See Acts 10:34-35.

**Read John 7:25-30**

**7:25 –** Now the truth of our Lord’s Words in 7:19 is revealed. Even the Jerusalemites knew that the Jews desired to kill Him (5:18 as above). But their realization is greater than that:

**7:26 –** They seek to kill Him, He speaks openly and boldly. The people see the contradiction, and the Lord’s Truth rings in their speculations. See 18:20-21.

**7:27 –** While they have a glimpse of the truth, they are confused by what has been taught them according to the Jews. See 6:42, 7:41-42. Then see Matthew 2:4-6. Apparently (according to comments by several authors) some of the Jews thought the Messiah’s origins would be unknown, others disagreed (see 7:43). See Matthew 13:57-58.

**7:28 –** An example of the “bold speaking” the Jerusalemites noted is clearly given here: “Jesus, teaching, cried out in the temple and said” (Braden). See verse 37; 12:44. Consider His “brothers’” accusation in 7:3-4 in light of this verse. His presence and teaching was not to bring glory to Himself, but to the One Who Sent Him.

**7:29 –** While He has just asserted that they do not know the Father, now He emphatically asserts that He does, and that it is the same Father that sent Him. See John 8:19. To know God is to know Christ. He is the Image of the Father – See Colossians 1:15. If you would see God, you must see Christ. See John 14:9. The Second Person of the Holy Trinity as the Incarnate Son of God is a major theme of John. God is not an ethereal, nebulus spirit-being. God the Father is Spirit (not the Holy Spirit, but “incorporeal”), God the Spirit is Spirit, but God the Son appeared throughout the Old Testament, was visible, spoke and acted, and took on Flesh.

One cannot believe in the True God if one does not accept the deity of the Son. Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Muslims all talk about “god”, but reject the deity of the Son. They all stand with the Jews that Jesus rebukes in this verse. The Second Person cannot be removed from the Holy Trinity – if He were (which is not possible), you would not have the Father and Spirit “left”, you would loose the whole Trinity, which is to loose the whole God.

**7:30 –** “They were continually seeking Him to seize/arrest Him, but no one cast the hand upon Him, because His hour had not yet come.” (Braden) See Luke 22:53; John 13:1.

**Read John 7:31-36**

**7:31 –** Even to the crowd it was clear, from the signs, that Jesus did miraculous works. See John 10:37-39. What is the reaction of the Jews there?

**7:32 –** Hearing the murmuring of the people, the Chief Priests and the Pharisees sent “servants” to seize Him. See Luke 4:20 where the same word is used. The Greek word is ὑπηρέτας. In Hellenic Greek Hermes was the ὑπηρέτης of Zeus. His job was to proclaim the will of Zeus to the people. Kittle defines ὑπηρέτης one whose is “assistant to another as the instrument of his will.” The President of the Synagogue had “assistants” who were known by the same Greek word. (*TDNT*, 8.539) See also Acts 13:5; 1 Corinthians 4:1.

**7:33 –** He will not be “seized”, as they intend. His hour is not yet come, He has work yet to do, and then He will go to His Father, the One who sent Him. He does not say “you will not seize Me”, because they will – they will arrest Him, torture Him, and murder Him without cause. But He will finish His work, and He will rise from the dead and go to the Father in His glorious Ascension.

**7:34 –** Still responding to the servants of the Pharisees and Chief Priests seeking to seize Him, the Lord prophesies of His death and resurrection. See 8:21. It is not only the unbelieving that do not understand, see 13:33-38.

**7:35 –** They debate amongst themselves the meaning of His words, which are clear. The διασπορὰν of the Jews began with their exile, and even after their return to the Promised Land many Jews remained settled among Hellenic peoples all over the Roman Empire. See James 1:1; 1 Peter 1:1; and the list in Acts 2:9-11 for an example (Lenski 571). The grammar here reveals that the Jews are sneering at Jesus. But God works even through adversity, see John 12:20-21.

**7:36 –** Mocking the Lord, the Jews repeat His statement, as if it were impossible and He were not of right mind.

**Read John 7:37-44**

**7:37 –** “On the great last day of the feast…” See Leviticus 23:34-36. The feast was seven days long, the “holy convocation” (מִקְרָא־קֹ֑דֶשׁ , a sacred assembly, see Exodus 12:16 for the use of the same term regarding the Feast of Unleavened Bread) was held on the eighth day.

The Lord “cried out” in verse 28 as well. He made no effort to remain concealed. Here His cry is “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and let him drink.” What does this remind you of? See John 4:10-14. What kind of water does He give? See 7:38.

**7:38 –** Continuing the theme from chapter 6, that eating and drinking are believing, the Lord asserts “The one who believes in me, just as the Scripture said, rivers of living water are flowing out of his innards.” The word rendered “innards” here is κοιλία, which means the whole belly or entire cavity. The same word is used to refer to the womb, see Matthew 12:40; Matthew 15:17. The same word is used for “womb” – see Luke 1:15; John 3:4. Here “inward parts” as we might understand “heart” is meant. Consider John 19:34.

On “as the Scripture said”, see Isaiah 58:11. The word used there for “spring” isמוֹצָא, which means “source”. See Deuteronomy 8:3 for the same word.

“Living waters” – See Ezekiel 47:1-6, Joel 3:18, Zechariah 14:8-9, Proverbs 18:4,

**7:39 –** Lest there be any misunderstanding, the Evangelists clarifies for the hearer what the Lord means by His Words: “This He said concerning the Spirit, the One about to come *to* the ones who believe in Him. For the Spirit was not yet *manifest*, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.” See 13:31. See 14:16-17, 26; 15:26.

**7:40 –** Some of the crowd responds in honesty. “The Prophet” is the promised Prophet, see Deuteronomy 18:15; John 1:21.

**7:41-42 –** Some of the crowd gets it exactly right. See Matthew 16:16-17. Understanding the Messianic reference, others immediately cite the commonly taught prophecy from the Old Testament:

* The Seed of David, see Genesis 3:15, 22:18, 26:4, 28:14; 2 Samuel 7:12; see Romans 1:1-4; Galatians 3:16.
* From Bethlehem, see Micah 5:2 (so the statement that the Messiah could not come out of Galilee, but see Isaiah 9:1-2; John 7:27)
* Bethlehem, the City of David, see 1 Samuel 17:12; 2 Samuel 6:10-12 (a reference to Jerusalem); Luke 2:4

**7:43 –** Then as now, there is a “schism” concerning Jesus. See John 9:16, 10:19.

**7:44 –** See verse 30. The purpose of seizing Jesus has already been revealed – see verse 25.

**Read John 7:45-52**

**7:45 –** The word rendered “officers” here by the NKJV is translated in other places “servants”. The better transation is “officers” (see Matthew 5:25, 1 Corinthians 4:1). These officers were sent in verses 31-32. They were sent because there was a clear indication that the Jews were beginning to believe that Jesus is the Christ, so they were to seize the Lord that He not win converts. In verse 44 we saw that “…some were continually desiring to seize Him…”, but not one of the officers sent for that purpose laid a hand on Him. Here those that sent the officers require them to give account for their failure to do what they were sent to do. The reason for their actions is given in the following verse.

**7:46 –** “Never did a man speak like this”, they respond. Just as the Jews respond in verses 40-41, so also the officers hear the Lord’s teaching and are at least unsettled by it.

**7:47 –** “You also haven’t been led astray, *have you*?” The Pharisees’ enquiry reveals what we already learned in verse 32 – many were listening to Jesus and believing His Words - not only the common Jews (as in 31 & 32), but now also the officers sent to seize Him. The Scriptures do not say that the officers came to faith, but the Lord’s teaching certainly was an impediment to their mission.

**7:48 –** Trying to assess the extent to which others had been convinced by Jesus’ Words, the Pharisees ask “Not any out of the rulers believed in Him or out of the Pharisees, *did they*?

**7:49 –** Distinguishing between the rulers, the Pharisees, and the general population of the crowd, the Pharisees draw a contrast to aid in their argument to the officers: “But this crowd, which does not know the Law, they are cursed!” The word “cursed” is literally “exposed to Divine vengeance” – truly blasphemy on the Pharisees’ part, and not the last time they will blaspheme the Lord. Here Lenski writes “…Observe the superior tone of these rulers over against their petty subordinates. What business have these dependents to follow impressions and thoughts of their own?” This haughtiness will continue until it drives them to cry “Crucify!”

**7:50 –** Since they have invoked the Law, now one of their own sees a contradiction, and is bold to ask a question. “Nicodemus said to them (he who went to Him before), being one from among them” (Braden) Nicodemus realizes the illegality of their attitude and actions.

**7:51 – “**Our Law doesn’t judge the man unless it first hears from him and also know what he is doing, *does it*?” (Braden) Even by their own standards, the Pharisees act unjustly. They have judged Jesus without cause.

**7:52 –** Nicodemus asks a question about the Law. The Pharisees, knowing their error, do not answer his question, but rather attack him personally. They ask if Nicodemus is from Galilee.

See John 9:33-34 for a similar response. Like Nathaniel, they do not believe the Prophet can come from Galilee. See 1:46, but see Isaiah 9:1-2, which proves that the Pharisees are wrong. The Promised Prophet had come out of Galilee indeed.

**7:53 –** Yes, that’s right. 7:53: “And they journeyed each into his own house”. The section of John’s Gospel from 7:53 through 8:11 is among the most contested parts of Holy Scripture (see also 1 John 5:8, the *Johannine Comma*, and Mark 16:9-20). The editors of the Nestle Aland family of Greek texts (like NA 27 & 28 and UBS 4 & 5), led by Bruce Metzger, write “The evidence for the non-Johannine origin of the pericope of the adulteress is overwhelming. It is absent from such early and diverse manuscripts as P66(Contains only the four Gospels, circa 200 A.✠ D.),P75(A third century manuscript of the four Gospels), א (Codex Sinaiticus, a 4th century manuscript), B (Codex Vaticanus, a 4th century complete Bible of the Old and New Testaments).

In addition to these Metzger lists many more are listed witnesses in which the text is excluded (Metzger, Bruce. *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. 1998, Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, pg. 187). Two more of the “Four Great Uncials”, A (Codex Alexandrinus, which contains most of the Septuagint and the New Testament) and C (Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus, an incomplete 5th century manuscript of the entire Bible), are defective at this pericope. The Metzger team decides “…it is highly probable that neither contained the pericpue, for careful measurement discloses that there would not have been space enough on the missing leaves to include the section…” (*ibid.*) Metzger adds that “…no Greek Church Father prior to Eughymius Zigabenus (12th c.) comments on the passage, and Eughymius declares that the accurate copies of the Gospel do not contain it.” (188)

Still, “At the same time the account has all the earmarks of historical veracity… Although the Committee was unanimous that the pericope was originally no part of the Fourth Gospel, in deference to the evident antiquity of the passage a majority decided to print it, enclosed within double square brackets.” (189) The ESV study note elaborates on where else this pericope may have been located in John’s Gospel.

R.C.H. Lenski, a very conservative Lutheran exegete and commentator, writes “7:53-8:11 is not an integral part of John’s Gospel, but part of the early oral tradition (antedating the year 70); it was very early put into written form, and one if its two versions was eventually inserted into John’s Gospel. These findings of the text critics must be accepted as facts. Between 7:52 and 8:12 nothing intervenes. The spurious section is foreign to John’s Gospel, fits nowhere into the plan of this Gospel, and is easily recognized as an interpolation in the place which it occupies. The language differs decidedly from that of John’s own writing. Yet this spurious section reports quite correctly an actual occurrence in the life of Jesus.” (592)

Braden: Verse 52 is clearly part of the dialogue between Nicodemus and the Pharisees. The critics (and those who follow their argument) find 7:53 to be an interruption, and 8:1 to contradict the setting, since Jesus was not with the Pharisees and officers during their dialogue. In my estimation 8:2 picks up the dialogue of 7:14. The account that follows seems to fit well with the events of 7:45-52, as the Pharisees try to discredit Christ and His teaching in front of the crowds. If we accept 7:53 where it is located in our text, the Pharisees, officers and Nicodemus retreat to their own homes, while Jesus goes off by Himself to the Mount of Olives, where He often went to pray (see Luke 21:37; Matthew 24:3; Luke 22:39), returning to the Temple in the early morning the next day. While the manuscript evidence is compelling, I do not find this account to be completely impossible to place here in John’s Gospel, and support its inclusion. Luther cites the account of the woman caught in adultery repeatedly in his works.

**Read John 8:1-5 –** Accepting, then, the text as presented, we continue:

**8:1 –** As above, see Luke 21:37. This was the Lord’s practice.

**8:2 –** See Matthew 5:1-2, 7:29, 13:54; Mark 2:13; John 7:14-15. They rightly call Him “Teacher”. See Matthew 12:38.

**8:3 –** “…caught in adultery” – See Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 20:10; Numbers 5:20-24; Deuteronomy 22:22-24. The Greek indicates that they “apprehended” the woman while yet in the act. The scribes and Pharisees seem to take some joy in the public humiliation of the woman, standing her before the crowd and before Jesus. They also intend by the act to publicly test Him.

**8:4** – They present the case as both judge and jury.

**8:5 –** They have already decided on the sentence, they challenge the Lord to judge. See 7:24; 12:47-48. The Lord did not come in the Flesh to judge, for that He will come again on the Last Day. The Lord came in the Flesh to save the world – which is what He does for the woman caught in adultery.

**Read John 8:6-11**

**8:6 –** The Evangelist provides the motivation for the actions of the scribes and the Pharisees. It is not that they sought to learn from the Lord’s answer, nor that they sought true justice. Their desire to seize him is already known – see 6:6, 7:30.

“Bent down” – a symbol of His humiliation.

Holy Scripture does not reveal what the Lord wrote here. Jerome wrote that the Lord etched in the dirt the sins of those accusing the woman (*Ancient Christian Commentary)*. St Augustine writes that scribing their names in the earth was a sign that their names were not written in heaven. (*ibid*). Lenski writes “Since John did not write this section, we give no exposition of it.” The writings of the finger of God are revealed here: Exodus 31:18. Fr. Braden will discuss what he thinks – the Scripture does not say - the Lord wrote.

**8:7 –** “… they continued to ask Him” – They were insistent, the Greek verb reveals continual action. In answering, He stood upright. “…the sinless one among you, upon her let him cast a stone first” - See Deuteronomy 17:5-7.

**8:8 –** The mysterious scribing upon the dirt continues. Perhaps the division was that of the First and Second Tables, on this the Scripture is silent.

**8:9 –** See Matthew 22:22. None were found to be without sin. The commentators assert that the elders would have had a greater responsibility for the enforcement of the Law, thus a more certain knowledge of their own sinfulness.

**8:10 –** As He asked Adam and Eve (Where are you? Who told you…? Have you eaten…?), so now does He ask the woman a question “…where are they?.. does no one condemn you?”

**8:10, cont. –** “condemn” is not just a pubic shaming. The verb only occurs here (and in the next verse) in John, but see Matthew 20:18, 27:3; Mark 14:64, 16:16; Romans 2:1, 8:3; 1 Corinthians 11:32; and Hebrews 11:7 for other uses of the same verb.

**8:11 –** Our Lord speaks a great Word of absolution. There are none to bring charges against her. See Matthew 22:19-22. In whatever the Lord wrote in the dirt each of them saw their own sinfulness. Jerome wrote that, knowing their hearts, the Lord listed their personal sins.

“Go, and from now sin no longer.” See John 5:14. This is God’s will for all of us as well, that we “sin no longer.”

Jerome writes that the account of the woman caught in adultery occurs in many of the Greek manuscripts as well as the Latin. St. Augustine writes that the paucity of textual evidence may be due to those of a weaker faith removing the text, lest others be encouraged to commit adultery by it.

**Read John 8:12-16**

**8:12 –** Here again we meet the expression “I AM” in its unique Greek construction – see Exodus 3:14, and our several discussions of this Divine Name above.

“…the Light of the World.” As John introduces his account of the life of our Lord, in his prologue he wrote “in Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.” (1:4-5) In the beginning God first spoke light into being, and it divided from darkness. That light was not Christ, for He is before all things. It did make all life possible. St. John the Baptizer is called a “witness” to the Light, but not himself the Light (1:7-9). Consider Christ as the Light in 3:21, 5:35, 9:5, 11:9-10, 12:35-36, and note the relationship between faith and Light in 12:46. After 12:46, the word “light” does not occur in John. Isaiah prophesied exactly what happens in John, and what happens in John fulfills Isaiah’s prophecy, see Isaiah 9:1-2.

Note here that Christ is the Light. He teaches that the one following Him “walks” in the Light, not in the darkness. Walking in the Light one has the Light of Life. The concepts of “walking” and “way” or “path” are common ways to express living the Christian life.

**8:13 –** The Pharisees, apparently unable to give answer, instead level an *ad hominem* attack on the Lord personally. In 5:31-33, the Lord has already given answer to their complaint about the number of witnesses. Still, the idea of multiple witnesses is drawn from Deuteronomy 17:6. What is the context there?

**8:14 –** The Lord knows the unknowable. He knows the Mystery of His begetting by the Father, and the Mystery of His Holy Incarnation. In the immediate context of 7:52, the Lord also knows where He is from, and they don’t. See 9:29. That knowledge speaks to His Divinity, by which He is worthy to testify, since He is One of Three. See 8:21-25 (especially in the context of “I AM”, 9:29. His witness is true, because He is Truth. See 14:6, and notice there the “Way” (see the comments above on verse 12) is immediately related to the Truth.

**8:15 –** “You judge according to the flesh…” See 12:48, 18:31. See 3:6, 6:63, 7:23-24; 1 Corinthians 4:5. The Scripture sets us “flesh” and “Spirit” as opposites. That said, read 1:13-14. “Flesh” typically refers to the fallen flesh, aside from direct references to the Flesh of Christ.

“…I am not judging anyone.” See verse 26, 3:17, 5:22. The Christ will come as Judge, see Revelation 20:11-12. But His coming in the Flesh is for a different purpose – see 12:47, 17:2.

**8:16 –** Just as His witness is true (see 8:14), so is His judgment true. See 5:30-32. Again here the Mystery of the Divinity of Christ is made manifest – He is One with the Father. See verse 29, 16:32. In Christ, you are never alone.

**Read John 8:17-20**

**8:17-18 –** Notice that the Lord calls the Law “your Law” – it does not apply to Him, it was given by Him to apply to them, and yet He has come to fulfill it. See Matthew 5:17; Galatians 3:19-20.

The Law is not “over” Christ, for then it would be “over” God. The Law is not written to simply impose on fallen men, that would make God arbitrary and capricious. The Law rightly understood is an expression of the ontology of God – God is Life, breaking the Fifth Commandment violates that. God is the Good and Gracious Giver, breaking the Seventh Commandment violates that. God is Love, both Tables are fulfilled by love, see Deuteronomy 6:5; Mark 12:31; Romans 13:8-10; Galatians 5:14, 22-23; James 2:8, So to violate any of the Commandments is to break the First, because to break any of the Commandments is to go against who God is. See Leviticus 19:2.

“It is written” – See Deuteronomy 17:6, 19:15; Matthew 18:16; 1 John 5:7-9.

Here again the Incarnate Lord is the “Sendling”, the “Apostle”, of the Father (although the Greek verb here is not ἀποστέλλω but πέμπω.

The Father “witnesses” to the Son: See Matthew 3:17, 17:5; John 12:28.

**8:19 –** Their question is a natural one for those who lack understanding, but He has already told them that His Father is God, so this question is a taunt.

The Lord turns their taunt back onto them. His Father is God, and their actions testify to the fact that they do not know Him.

To know Christ is to know the Father. This dialogue will open the upcoming exposition of our Lord, see 8:55. See 10:30, 14:6; Matthew 11:27; Colossians 1:15, 19. The second half of verse 19 is a “contrary to fact” conditional sentence.

**8:20 –** See 7:30, and our notes there – especially Mark 15:25. “These sayings He was continually speaking openly in the γαζοφυλακίῳ...” The NIV Concordia Study Bible translates “the place where the offerings were put”, citing Mark 12:41. The ESV Concordia Study Bible translates “treasury”. Lenski writes “Just what place is meant by ‘the treasury’ is disputed… the purpose in mentioning the place is to indicate that it was public, under the very noses of the authorities.” Lenksi stresses that Jesus was teaching publicly.

**Read John 8:21-30**

**8:21 –** They do not seize him (8:20), although He continues to teach them openly in public. Lenski writes “There cannot have been a long interval between the events recorded in these two verses.” (610). The thoughts follow logically. In verse 14 Jesus reminds them that they do now know where He is from, nor where He goes. Nor do they know Him nor the Father who sent Him. (8:19) Now He reiterates that He is going: “I *Myself* I am going, and you (pl.) will seek me, and you will die in your sins. Where I am going, you (pl.) are not able to come.” See John 16:7-10. See also Deuteronomy 24:16.

See 7:33-34. He will endure His Passion, go to the cross (8:28), and then die and rise and ascend into heaven. Compare the Lord’s answer to the Jews with His teaching of His disciples in 14:3-6. Note the relationship between who Christ is, knowing the Father (where He is from), and going where He goes. This opens up the understanding of the Great I AM statement “I AM the Way.” The dialogue here undergirds that later assertion.

**8:22 –** See 7:35. The Jews mock Him. Suicide is a scandalous breaking of the Law. The interrogative particle Μήτι begs a negative answer, translate “He won’t kill himself, will He?” They quote Him sarcastically.

**8:23 –** To faith, His answer makes perfect sense. Faith knows where He is from – from above, where the Father is who sent Him, from eternity, from before all things. Note the opposites He employs – above/below, this world/not of this world. See 3:31, 17:16.

**8:24 –** We saw many previous examples of saving faith described by our Lord (see our discussion on John 6). Since they are from below, not from above, He reiterates that they will die in their sins – because they do not believe. If they did believe, if they had faith, they would know from where He came, and to where He goes, and they, like the disciples, could go with him. Where He is there is life. Apart from Him, men die in their sins. See Isaiah 43:10.

Again here the Lord uses “I AM” as a designation for Himself. “For if you do not believe that I AM, you will die in your sins.” See our discussion above of the Divine Name (4:26, 8:12, etc.). This is a clear statement of the Divinity of God the Son. To believe in Him is to believe He is God. He will reiterate this in 8:28. Both the ESV and NKJV translations of ἐγώ εἰμι miss the point here. See 13:19.

**8:25 –** Not understanding because they are unbelieving, the Jews ask “Who are you?” See John 1:19. So will the Lord say to them “I do not know you”, see Matthew 25:11-12; Luke 13:25-28. Not knowing Him, He will not know them. The importance of the Saving Gospel and the work of the Church cannot be over-emphasized.

Note the Lord’s response: “He who from the beginning I have openly said to you.” (Braden) The NIV “Just what I have been claiming all along” is a paraphrase. He has made no “claims”, He has openly spoken the Truth, and what He says does not change.

**8:26 –** They will die in their sins because the One they seek to kill is the Judge. He has much to say against them in judgment. Contrary to their lies, the One who sent Him, the Father, is true. What He has spoken openly, that He is “I AM”, that which He has heard from the Father, this is what He has spoken openly in the world. See John 3:33-36. This reinforces His statement in 8:14 – His testimony is valid. Note how this relates to:

1. Where He is from
2. Where He goes
3. Who He is
4. Why they cannot come
5. Why they will die in their sins.

**8:27 –** “…the One who sent Me…” The Evangelist interjects an explanation – “They did not know that to them He *had been continually* speaking *of* the Father.” (Braden, clunky, but accurate. The verb translated “know” can also be taken to mean “understand”).

**8:28 –** Now the Lord explains where He is going: “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I AM, and from Myself I do nothing, but just as the Father taught me these things I am speaking. (Braden) His time has not yet come. See 7:6. But it comes, when He will be lifted up on the cross.

**8:29 –** The blessed Unity of the Holy Trinity, the Oneness of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, is manifest here. See 8:16.

**8:30 –** It was the Pharisees that had challenged Jesus, although He spoke to the people. See 8:212-13. He condemns the Pharisees because they know neither Him nor the Father, and they will die in their sins. Many of the people, however, “believed in Him.” See 7:31.

**Read John 8:31-38**

**8:31 –** He has spoken what the Father has taught Him (8:28). His Word is Truth. See John 17:17. Those who hear His Words and believe are truly His disciples. See Romans 10:17.

**8:32 –** Note the formula: Remaining in His Word = being His disciple. His disciples know the Truth. The Truth will free them. Pastor will explain the significance of the Greek word ἐλευθερώσει and its relationship to Luther. This promise is valid for you as well – if you remain in His Word you are His disciples, and you will know the Truth, and the Truth shall set you free – which is to be “from above”. Compare with the Lord’s assertion to Nicodemus (3:3,7-8; 8:23-24).

**8:33 –** The pride of the Jews (remember they are the Jews “who believed in Him”, 8:31) becomes a stumbling block to them. They have made idols of the Patriarchs and of their ancestry. They are Semitic peoples, sons of Shem, from whom Abraham descended (See Luke 3:34-36). As such they claim, by genetic relation, the promises to be theirs. But see Genesis 22:18 – who is blessed? See Romans 9:6-8; Galatians 6:14-16.

The Jews claim “…we have never been enslaved to anyone”. Incredibly, they seem to conveniently forget Pharaoh and the 400 years in Egypt. See Genesis 15:13; Acts 7:6. Ironically, they challenge Jesus as they themselves are enslaved by the evil one, and they will do the work of their master at Gabbatha and Golgotha.

**8:34 –** The Lord teaches them of true slavery, exposing them as slaves.

**8:34, Cont. –** Slaves to sin – see Genesis 4:7; Romans 6:16-23; 2 Peter 2:18-22; 1 John 3:8. The true slavery of the “Jews who believed in Him” is exposed, Christ comes to free them and all men.

**8:35 –** There is a fundamental difference between the slave and the son – while they both inhabit the same house, the son is the heir. The slave is quickly cast out, not so the son. See Galatians 4:29-5:1. See also John 12:34.

**8:36 –** As the Son remains forever, so also those whom the Son has freed – see Romans 8:19-23; How is this done? See verse 32 – through the Gospel.

**8:37 –** “Abraham’s seed” – see Genesis 21:12 (the Hebrew means “called out”); Genesis 22:17-18; Acts 3:25-26; Galatians 3:16; Psalm 105:5-7; Romans 4:13-16.

**8:38 –** Remembering that these are the “Jews who believed in Him”, we here see the Christ distinguish between two “fathers” – one is God the Father, the other is the devil. Remember 8:35? They seek to kill Him. See 8:44.

**Read John 8:39-47**

**8:39 –** The Jews take pride in their Abrahamic genealogy. They have been taught, and believe, that they are favored by God because of their family tree, rather than because of faith in Christ.

The Lord responds with a conditional sentence, which clearly teaches that they are not Abraham’s children in the Biblical sense. They do not do the works of Abraham, rather in seeking to kill Him, they do the works of a different father.

**8:40 –** The Lord reveals openly that the Jews seek to kill Him, and He knows it. He knows it because He can read their hearts. See Matthew 9:4; Luke 11:17.

Note the three assertions of our Lord: 1) He has heard the Truth from the Father. 2) That Truth He has continually spoken openly. See John 3:11. And – 3) He is a Man.

All three were also true of Abraham. He received God’s Word, and preached it, and he was a man. But Abraham “saw His day and rejoiced” (verse 56), rather than trying to kill Him.

**8:41 -** They do not do what Abraham did. Instead, their works reveal that they are of a “different father.” Read Psalm 15. Note the similarities between this Psalm and the Lord’s assertion that “the son remains in the house.” (verse 35)

The “Jews who believed in Him” respond: They are descended from Abraham. They are not children of unchastity (contrast the NIV “illegitimate children” with the ESV “born of sexual immorality” See Genesis 38:24 for an example of this). They boldly claim God as their Father. See Malachi 2:10. See also Genesis 26:24, spoken to Isaac, and Genesis 28:13 spoken to Jacob. See Exodus 3:6. Now see Isaiah 63:7-8, 16 – which describes the true children of Abraham. See 1 John 5:1. Now see John 16:27.

**8:42 –** Again the Lord answers with a conditional sentence, a “contrary to fact” sentence. Note the force of the NKJV translation of ἐξῆλθον “I came out”, in the NKJV “I proceeded forth”, a description of the Begetting of the Son.

**8:42 Cont -** He did not “come from”, rather He “came out from” or “proceeded forth from”. The Greek wordἥκω translated “came” carries the meaning “have come and am present”. Again the Lord asserts that He is the Sent One of the Father. See 4:34. From 4:34 to 8:42 the Lord restates this some 25 times, before the end of the Gospel according to St. John He will restate this again over 15 times. Christ as The One Sent Of The Father is a major theme of the Gospel according to St. John.

What the Lord speaks is determined by His coming forth from the Father. This also demonstrates that His witness is true, for He does not speak only from Himself. See 8:14, which begins the dialogue that we are still in – a marvelous confession of the Son regarding His Unity with the Father.

**8:43 –** The Word He speaks, “His Word”, is from His Father, God the Father. They can not “come to know” what He speaks, because they “are not able” to hear His Word. See Isaiah 6:9-10; Matthew 13:14. Not only will they not hear His Word, those of a fallen heart, those who do not believe, will not be able to hear the Word about Him, the preaching of the Holy Gospel – see Acts 28:25-29. And so it is to this day. The Word of God is mocked and ridiculed.

**8:44 –** Lest there be any doubt, what He has said He clearly restates here: “You are of your father the devil…” See 1 John 3:8-15; Acts 13:6-10 – and so it is with all those who reject or pervert the Word of God, or work to keep others from hearing it. They do the work of their father.

The Lord reveals the very nature of the devil – he is a “manslayer” from the beginning (Adam), who does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. See Isaiah 14:12-15. The devil is a liar and the father of lies. So Luther writes “…one little word can fell him…” – the word is “Liar!”

**8:45 –** A kingdom divided cannot stand. Because the Lord speaks the truth, the children of the liar cannot hear Him, and cannot believe in Him. See verse 40. See John 6:64. Consider Paul’s argument to the Judaizing Galatians in Galatians 4:16.

**8:46 –** To lie is to sin, to bear false witness. The Lord asks “which of you convicts Me of sin?” And if He is not sinning, if He is speaking the Truth, why do they not believe in Him? See Luke 22:67-71. He is truly without sin – see Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22-23; 1 John 3:5.

“Why don’t you believe Me?” See John 18:37.

**8:47 –** Only the one who is from God, of “of God”, hears God’s Words. That is the work of the Holy Spirit. See John 14:26. Because they do not hear His Words, it proves that they are not the children of God, as they claimed in verse 41. See 5:19; 1 John 2:16, 3:10, 4:1-6

**Read John 8:48-52**

**8:48 –** The Jews do not address our Lord’s statements. They cannot give answer to His indictments of them, because they are guilty of exactly what He says they are. Rather than answer Him, rather than repent and be saved, they attack Him personally: “Do we not say well that you are a Samaritan and you have a demon?” The proper noun “Samaritan” occurs four times in the New Testament – see Luke 10:33, 17:16; John 4:9, and this verse. While the Samaritans were ethnic, political and religious enemies of Israel, in each of the four occurrences of the word “Samaritan” in the New Testament, God’s grace is evident.

The accusation the Jews make against our Lord are serious – they say that He is no Son of Israel, and that the works He does He does by the devil’s power. They make the same accusation again in 10:20. While the English there says “He is mad”, the Greek carries the sense of raving lunacy.

**8:49 –** Our Lord answers them clearly, directly, and indeed mercifully. “I do not have a demon.” Rather than having a demon, what the Lord does is “honor My Father” with His Words and Deeds. They, on the other hand, dishonor Him.

**8:50 –** Continuing to teach them, He tells them that He honors His Father by not seeking His own glory. See Malachi 1:6. There is One, however, who does seek His glory. He is the One who judges. Note the connection in our Lord’s Words – The Christ will be seen in His Glory, and there will be a judgment. That means that those who will not believe in Him will be judged and convicted. It is not He who has a demon, rather it is they. Their judgment He will pronounce in the following verse:

**8:51 – “**Amen, Amen I say to you, that if anyone keeps My Word, he shall surely not see death unto the ages.” (Braden) The connection to the previous verse is clear: to “keep My Word” is to believe in Him, to honor Him, which brings glory to Him and to the Father. The one who does that will not die. See 14:19-24, 15:20-24, 17:5-8. Note there the relationship between keeping His Word, giving glory to Him and to the Father, and everlasting life. See 5:24-25; Luke 2:26; 1 John 2:4-5, Revelation 3:8-11. See also Hebrews 11:5-6. Would that God would strengthen us to believe as Enoch did!

**8:52 –** Unpersuaded by His Words, the Jews “double down” on their blasphemy and accusations. They will continue to repeat this accusation, see 10:20. Although God is not the God of the dead, but of the living (see Matthew 22:32; Mark 12:26; Luke 20:38), they assert the death of Abraham and the Prophets (see 1 Peter 1:3-5). See Zechariah 1:4-6. They also twist His Words, misquoting Him. Can you find their intentional error? See Matthew 16:28.

**8:53 –** “You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died, *are you*? And the Prophets died.” (Braden) See 4:12 – who now is the Samaritan? Again here they bear testimony to the death of the Prophets. See Luke 11:47-51.

“Who do you make yourself *to be?*” (Braden) They understand from His clear Words that He is something other than they are. See verse 25. He has already told them, clearly. See 1:25. But this question will be raised again, see 10:24, ; Matthew 26:63; Luke 22:67-71, 23:39.

**Read John 8:54-59**

**8:54 –** Watch carefully the question and answer. The Jews asked “Who do you make yourself *to be*?” The Lord answers “If I glorify Myself…”, a contrary to fact conditional sentence. In verse 53 the Jews asked “You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died, *are You*?” The answer of course, is “Yes!”, He is greater than Abraham and the Prophets, as we saw above they worshipped Him. This answer “If I glorify Myself…” shows that He is not “making Himself” be anyone other than Who He Is – God. But He does not seek His own glory. See 7:18, 13:31-32, 16:13-14, and 17:4-5. Notice the prominence of the cross in the “glory” of the Son.

The Jews have claimed Abraham as their father, and God as their Father. But their willingness to doubt Christ’s Word means that they doubt Who Christ Is. And that means that they do not truly know Abraham’s God, God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is still true today – the Jews still reject that Jesus is the Christ.

**8:55 –** To “not know” the Father is to be without salvation. See verse 19. This argument has gone on for a while, He has already stated what He is asserting here. But now He adds to it: “If I said I do not know Him, I would be a liar like you (pl). But I do know Him…” So, the “Jews who believed in Him” are shown to be frauds. The Lord calls them liars. We have already seen the genealogy of liars in verse 44.

He does, in fact, know the Father. He has clearly asserted His Unity with the Father. Now He gives another sign: He keeps the Father’s Word. See 14:23-24, 15:20; Deuteronomy 4:2; 1 Chronicles 10:13-14 (what is the end of failing to keep God’s Word?); Psalm 119:17 (what is the end of failing to keep God’s Word?); Luke 8:15; 2 Thessalonians 3:14.

**8:56 –** How did Abraham “see” His Day? Genesis 18:1, 18:21-22, 22:13; Hebrews 11:13; 1 Peter 1:6-9; Matthew 13:14-17; John 12:37-41; Luke 17:22.

**8:57 –** The Jews “don’t get it”, but of course that has been the Lord’s point all along – He is God the Son, they do not believe Who He Is.

**8:58 –** A clear articulation of the Deity of God the Son, the Incarnate Christ. “Amen, Amen, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.” We have already studied the Lord’s use of the Divine Name as His own. Remember verse 24? Here he does it again, clearly. The Jews have two options. They can fall down and worship Him, because He is the Great I AM. See Isaiah 43:10-13. Or – He must be put to death for blasphemy, because He took the Name of the Lord God in vain, even using as His own. See Leviticus 24:10-16. What will they do next will show whether or not they have understood and believed His Words.

**8:59 –** They try to stone Him. See Matthew 26:65. Remember John 8:5? He would die at their hands, but stoning was too easy a death. See John 10:39, 12:36; Luke 4:28-30.

**Read John 9:1-7**

**9:1 –** The account of the healing of the man born blind is the appointed reading for the Wednesday after *Laetare*. On that day we hear verses 1-38.

**9:1 –** In 7:14 the Lord entered the Temple. In 8:59, He went out of the Temple. Now He is traveling about. Since this day is the Sabbath, it is most likely not the same day as described in 8:59, because the Jews would not stone someone on the Sabbath (Lenski 674).

In 10:22, He will enter the Temple again at the celebration of Hanukkah. From the account of the healing of the blind man, it seems that our Lord remains in Jerusalem for the intervening accounts.

That the man was born blind (Gk: blind from his birth) is significant. This was not the case of an injury that could be healed, as if he once saw, lost his sight, and it was restored. His eyes had never seen. This account is not disassociated with the extended dialogue of John 8. Here the Lord demonstrates that He is the Light of the World, that He brings Light to darkness, sight to the blind. See Isaiah 29:18, 42:18-19; Matthew 11:2-6. The importance of this account to the popular understanding of who Jesus is can be seen in John 10:21 and 11:37 (Lazarus). Those are truly blind who cannot see the Christ as the Promised Savior.

**9:2 –** The disciples call the Lord “Rabbi”. The basic question of the disciples, who haven’t been mentioned since 2:2 (Lenski), is about the fairness of God. If the man’s sin brought his blindness, God isn’t fair, since the blindness was from birth. The Concordia Study Bible quotes (without citation) a Jewish source, which says “There is no death without sin, and there is no suffering without iniquity.” (1624) The explanation continues that the Jews believed a child could sin while in the womb, or that in a “preexistent state” the child’s soul could have sinned. See 9:34. They also believed that punishment for the parents’ sin was visited upon the children, a misunderstanding of Exodus 20:5 (note there it is not the punishment, but the iniquity, that is visited upon the children, and see Exodus 20:6). If the parents’ sin resulted in the son’s blindness, God isn’t fair, because the son would be bearing the consequences of the sins of another. See Deuteronomy 24:16; 2 Kings 14:6 (2 Chronicles 25:4); Proverb 5:22.

But that is exactly what Christ has done for you – He died for the sin you inherited, and the sins you have committed.

**9:3 –** The Lord’s answer must have been quite shocking to the disciples. They had been taught what the Jews believed. The Lord corrects them – it was not the direct result of the man’s sins, nor of his parents’ sins. See Luke 13:2-5. His affliction was for the glory of God. Just as the tribulations of this life work to strengthen our faith, see Romans 5:3-9, so the few years he endured blindness will pale in comparison to the eternity of light and joy that come to him through believing in Jesus.

**9:4 –** That a deeper meaning is to be gained from the situation is clear from the Lord’s answer. First, He is the Sent One of the Father. The works the Father gave Him to do He does. See John 5:17. When Christ, the Light, is with them, it is day. See John 11:8-11. But night comes, the absence of the Light. See Genesis 1:5, and consider the day/night language here employed by the Lord as the man who was in darkness comes into the Light.

**9:5 –** This is the point. All theology is Christology. Christ is the Light. See 8:12.

**9:6 -** “After saying these things He spit on the ground” – the word used in the Greek for πηλὸν (Joh 9:6 GNT) “ground”, χαμαὶ , is not the word for earth or dirt, rather “ground” generally. It is used in classical Greek, and means the “flat ground” as opposed to a rocky or hilly ground. The word occurs only twice in the New Testament, here, and in John 18:6.

In the beginning God gave life to man by that which proceeded from His mouth. See Genesis 2:7. Here He heals His creature in the same way – by that which proceeds from His mouth, and the “dust of the ground”. How is this related to John 20:22? This points to the New Creation, see 2 Corinthians 5:16-21; Galatians 6:15; Revelation 21:5-7. Here we see in John’s Gospel the doctrine of “inaugurated eschatology” – the beginning of the End Times, with the coming of the Christ.

The word the Lord uses for “clay”, πηλὸν, occurs only five times in the New Testament, four of these in John’s Gospel. See Romans 9:20-21. How is Paul’s use of the word in Romans appropriate to what is happening in John’s Gospel? The Scriptures do not clearly state it, but Paul may well be calling on the miracle that John records in his Epistle to the Romans.

The Greek word translated “anointed”, ἐπέχρισεν, is derived from the preposition “upon” and the verb χρίω, ‘‘I anoint”. This is the same verb that gives us the Name “Christ”, the Anointed One. See Psalm 2:2. Here the Anointed One anoints… See Psalm 20:6 for God’s promise of salvation to those anointed by the Lord, a reference to those who have His Spirit.

**9:7 -** Here the New and Better Elisha heals, a clear sign of His Prophetic Office – see 2 Kings 5:10.

Having repeatedly asserted that He is the “Sent One”, the “Apostle” of the Father, the Lord sends the man to the pool named “Siloam”, “Sent”, for healing. The Greek word Σιλωάμ transliterates the Hebrew wordהַשִּׁלֹחַ , which may well be related to the Hebrew word “Shiloh”, שִׁילוֹ see Genesis 49:10. What is the Promise there?

True healing comes only through the Sent One of the Father, the Christ. The Greek word that underlies the English word “hermeneutics” occurs in this verse – can you find it in the English? The meaning of the Greek word is “to explain, expound or interpret the meaning of a word”.

There were other pools around Jerusalem. See 5:2. The Pool of Siloam was located on the southern end of Jerusalem. It was cut from rock. It dated to King Hezekiah (*Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, vol. VI, pg. 25), who installed a system of bringing water to the city, channeling water from the Gihon spring (See 2 Chronicles 32:2-5). See Nehemiah 3:15 and Isaiah 8:6 for direct references to the same pool. It also may be referred to in Isaiah 22:9 as the “Lower Pool”.

The word “Siloam” occurs in Luke 13:4. The relationship between the Pool and the Tower is unknown, although some commentators identify the location of the Tower with that of the Pool.

What the Lord did worked. His Word of Command and Promise, together with the earthly elements, brought the miracle to pass. The man “came seeing”. It was a washing that made new.

**Read John 9:8-12**

**9:8 –** The results of the miracle are clear to all – to his neighbors, and to all who saw him before the healing – they exclaim “Is this not the one *who was* sitting and begging?”

**9:9 –** Others agree, saying “This is him.” Still others question what they clearly see, saying “But no, like unto him he is.” (Braden) Confronted with the miracle, they could not believe. The man himself testifies “I am *me.*” (Braden)

**9:10 –** The narrative follows a very natural course. If it is him, as he states along with many others, then “How were your eyes opened?” Read what Isaiah promises about the Day of the Lord in Isaiah 20:18-19. The sign shows forth that the Prophecy is fulfilled. What they have witnessed is the Coming of the Holy One of Israel, the Promised Messiah, The Anointed. Still, they ask him “How?” They will not be satisfied, they will ask the same question in verse 15.

**9:11 –** The man’s answer is clear and factual. He tells the truth: “The Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me ‘Go into to Siloam and wash.’ Then going I washed *and* regained sight.” (Braden) Compare this translation to our translation. Our translation, the NKJV, uses the indefinite article “a”, a variant in Codex Alexandrinus and the Majority Text. The Greek uses the definite article “the”.

**9:12 –** The man has just returned from washing his eyes according to the Lord’s command. He has not yet seen Jesus again.

**Read John 9:13-17**

**9:13 –** The seeing man is taken to the authorities. The miracle is too great to ignore. It was the same, the Pharisees, that brought Him the woman caught in adultery in 8:3, to test Jesus. It is apparent that they hope to disprove the miracle, and so declare Him a fraud.

**9:14 –** “It was a Sabbath on the day in which Jesus made clay and opened his eyes.” See Exodus 16:23, 20:8-11. See John 5:9-12. The Lord is proving that He is Lord of the Sabbath. See Mark 2:23-28.

**9:15 –** The Pharisees ask the same question – “How did you regain sight?” The man restates, succinctly, what happened.

**9:16 –** The immediate condemnation of our Lord by the Pharisees follows: “This Manis not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath.” Still, the fact of the miracle testifies against their accusation: “How is a sinful man able to do such signs?” (Braden) The Word of Christ and the sign cause a division in the group. See Matthew 10:34-36; Hebrews 4:12. Just as the Words and miracles God gave through Moses worked hope in the Israelites, but hardened Pharaoh’s heart, so do the Words and miracles of Jesus divide, as it is in our day as well.

**9:17 –** Again they ask, seeking a different answer. The man answers truthfully, naming Him a prophet. See John 4:19. What are the Three Offices of the Christ? Pastor will explain.

**Read John 9:18-23**

**9:18 –** The man’s testimony, although truthful and supported by the obvious fact that he can now see, was not believed by the Jews. It did not fit their narrative about Jesus. They sought additional testimony, sending for the seeing man’s parents.

**9:19 –** Notice the accusatory nature of their question – that he now sees is quite obvious, the question is asked to invoke doubt as to their claim that he was born blind.

**9:20 –** The parents answer clearly, truthfully, and their answer supports the man’s account.

**9:21 –** They avoid a “perjury trap” by limiting their testimony to facts they know. They do not speculate, although the Jews’ question invited their speculation. The ESV Study Bible includes a note explaining that the legal age of maturity to which the parents refer was 13 years and 1 day.

**9:22 –** The Evangelist explains: the parents were testifying in fear. They knew of the agreement of the Jews that anyone who confessed that Jesus is the Christ would be excluded from their religious fellowship. The Greek uses only one word for “put out of the synagogue”, a noun. The word is used only in John’s Gospel. See the other two uses – 12:42 and 16:2.

R.C.H. Lenski explains the meaning of the word: “To become or to be made an ἀποσυνάγωγος does not refer to one who does not dare to enter a synagogue but to one who is expelled from the religious communion of Israel, cut off from all its blessings, hopes and promises, like a pagan or Gentile.” (691) The Jews feared such treatment: See John 7:13, 19:38, and 20:19

So the hypocrisy of the Jews is evident. They know the man can now see, and they have testimony from his parents that he was born blind. They have clear testimony from him as to how he came to see. They threaten to cut off anyone who holds that Jesus is the Christ from their fellowship, but it is they themselves that are cut off from fellowship with God and the True Church by their refusal to accept the truth. See Matthew 10:32-33; 1 Corinthians 12:3.

But the state of the Jews is not unique to them. All fallen men are in the same situation. The world rejects Jesus, who He is, and what He has done, to the same end. The refuse to believe the clear Testimony of the Scriptures. And the fallen world excludes from its “fellowship” all who confess that Jesus is the Christ. See John 15:18-19.

**9:23 –** Another explanatory verse by the Evangelist. It was fear of the Jews that compelled the parents to send them back to their son.

**Read John 9:24-34**

**9:24 –** Their earlier efforts having failed, they set up a blasphemy trap for the man born blind: giving glory to God is the opposite of crediting Christ with the healing. Their words smack of a call to repentance. See Joshua 7:19; Luke 17:18; Revelation 14:7. Christ they call a sinner, which is to commit blasphemy themselves, for to deny that He is God is to deny God the Glory due Him alone.

**9:25 –** The man answers honestly, his testimony doesn’t change. He doesn’t know Jesus. That will change in verses 35-38 of this account.

**9:26 –** The Jews question is quite specific. It had already been answered in verses 10 & 11.

**9:27 –** Apparently tired of the process, the man’s answer becomes a bit edgy.

**9:28 –** “They reviled him” – his snappy response was not well received. The label him as “His disciple”, themselves as disciples of Moses, although Moses promised Him. See Deuteronomy 18:15. The healing of the man born blind was a sign that Jesus is the Promised Christ, according to Moses and the Prophets. It is the Jews who are truly blind. See Isaiah 29:18-19. Who is it in this account of John that enjoys an increase in joy, and “rejoices in the Holy One of Israel?”

**9:29 –** God did indeed speak to Moses. See Exodus 3:14-15, 20:1ff; Numbers 2:1ff, and many others. The argument “but this *Man* we do not know where He is from” is immediately contradicted by the testimony of 7:27-31. Although the Jews contradict themselves, the Lord, it seems, agrees with the Jews’ assertion “we do not know where He is from”, see 8:14. See also John 19:8-9.

**9:30 –** The man sees the folly of their position. They are the leaders of the church, and they have confessed ignorance regarding One who clearly has divine powers.

**9:31 –** The man supports his position to the embarrassment of the Jews – he knows the Scriptures. “God does not hear sinners” – see Isaiah 1:15; Psalm 66:16-20, 145:19; Proverb 15:8, 29. The Greek word that the NKJV translates as “worshipper of God”, θεοσεβὴς, occurs only here in the New Testament. A better rendering is “God fearer” (“… the true worship of God in contrast to pagan superstition and idolatry”, TDNT III.128), although ultimately the meaning would be very similar. The second half of this verse defines what a “God fearer” does. See a closely related Greek word, θεοσέβειαν, in 1 Timothy 2:10. This word too appears only once in the New Testament.

**9:32 –** In explanation of the will of God being done, the now-seeing man reminds the Jews of the miraculous nature of what they see standing before them: “…from the ages it has not been heard that the eyes of anyone born blind were opened”. If Jesus was, as the Jews allege, a sinner, what is clearly before them would be impossible.

**9:33** – The man’s argument is summarized in a conditional sentence – “If this *Man* were not from God, He would not have been able to do anything.” See 6:46.

**9:34 –** The man’s argument theologically irrefutable, they resort to an *ad hominem* attack: “You were completely born in sin, and are you teaching us?” See Psalm 51:5. They must cast him out, for they reject the Lord he confesses. Remember verse 22? See 3 John 10, by the same Evangelist.

**Read John 9:35-41**

**9:35 –** The Lord seeks the man He healed, finds him, and asks him to give a confession of faith. Remember 9:25?

**9:35, Cont. –** “Do you believe in the Son of God?” The translation here reflects the “Majority Text” or “Textus Receptus” tradition. Many early manuscripts, and many reliable manuscripts, read “…the Son of Man.” See Matthew 4:3, 8:29, 14:33, 16:16, 26:63, 27:54, and many others. See Daniel 7:13. See also Ezekiel 2:1 (over 50 times in Ezekiel); Matthew 9:6, 12:8 (our Lord’s most used Name for Himself in the New Testament); John 3:13-14, 8:28; Revelation 14:14. Both terms are understood in Scripture as Messianic Titles. Both terms are clear expressions of the Two Natures of the One Christ – Divine and Human. The variant readings here, as is common with variants, do not affect the theology of the text.

**9:36 –** The man’s answer exhibits complete trust – faith – in Jesus Christ. He will believe what Jesus tells him to believe.

**9:37 –** If there were any question as to who Jesus is, here He clearly identifies Himself. See John 4:25-26.

**9:38 –** Here we see faith in action. The man confesses with his lips what he believes in his heart, and it causes a physical reaction. The Greek verb for “worship” used here is to “fall down and worship.”

**9:39 –** Having identified Himself as the Christ, the Lord now teaches the meaning of His statement in verse 3 of this chapter. “For *the purpose of* judgment I have come into this world, in order that the *ones* not seeing see, and the *ones* seeing become blind.” (Braden) See Matthew 13:13-14, Isaiah 6:9-10. The saints of the Old Testament knew this sign as well – the Messiah had come! See Matthew 11:25-26. The blind man saw, the Pharisees were blind. So it is in the world today.

**9:40 –** With the Lord there were some “out of the Pharisees”. When they heard His statement, they asked “We are not also blind, *are we?*” They understood His Words in their plain sense, but they still did not see. To truly see is to see the Divinity of God the Son, the Son of Man. And that “seeing” always compels a right confession of faith.

**9:41 –** They did not ask about sin. But the Lord answers directly addressing sin: “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now you say “we see”, *so* your sin remains.” (Braden) Why would the Lord tie “seeing” Him rightly with the remission of sins? See John 15:22-27.

**Read John 10:1-6**

**10:1 –** In what seems from the text to be in the same breath, our Lord gives criteria for “seeing” Him properly – He uses a metaphor, the example of the shepherd and his sheep. John 10 is the great “Good Shepherd” teaching of our Lord.

“Truly, truly I say to you, the one not entering into the pen of the sheep through the door, but going up by another way, that one is a thief and a robber.” (Braden) The word translated “by another way”, ἀλλαχόθεν, occurs only here in Scripture. Its literal meaning is “from another”, referring to a different way to enter, or entering through a different place. From a dialogue on “seeing”, the Lord immediately speaks of the forgiveness of sins, and the coming of the Shepherd “in the right way”. How are these three concepts related? Remember John 2-6?

**10:2 –** “The One coming in through the door is Shepherd of the sheep.” (Braden) In 10:1 the Lord cited those who enter through another way. But the Shepherd enters through the door, the correct way, the way the Prophets promised.

**10:3 –** This verse includes several assertions by the Lord. First, he names a “doorman” or “doorkeeper”. Then he speaks of the voice of the shepherd. Then he says the sheep are called by name.

On the “doorman”, St. John Chrysostom (d. 407 A.✠ D.) said that the “gatekeeper” was Moses. St. Augustine said that Christ is the Door the “porter”, and the Shepherd: “Whoever you understand here, be careful that you do not think that the porter is greater than the door… ”(*Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, New Testament Iva, *John 1-10*. Ed. Joel C. Elowski, Gen. Ed. Thomas C. Oden. 2006, Downer’s Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, pg. 338). See John 10:7. Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444 A.✠ D.) says that the “gatekeeper” is either an angel or Christ Himself. Origen (d. 253 A.✠ D.) said that the “gatekeeper” is the Word of God and its study, through which Christ comes. (*ibid*)

Although the text is not clear on who the “doorkeeper” is, see Mark 13:34, where the same word is used. See also John 18:16-17, where the same word is used. These four occurrences are the only four uses in Scripture. When interpreting a parable, one must guard against trying to assign meaning to every detail, rather it is better to seek the meaning generally conveyed.

R.C.H. Lenski makes the point that shepherds shared “sheepfolds”, keeping their flocks safe at night. (712) While they slept there was a doorman. At first light they would retrieve their sheep. The flock would recognize the voice of its shepherd and follow him, not the others. This seems to comport well with the text. He add that the one that was not the shepherd climbed in through another way because the door was guarded.

It is the sanctified opinion of this author that the “gatekeeper” of our day is the rightly Called and Ordained Pastor. It is he that brings the Word to the hearer, as Origen described, letting Christ in.

The Lord says “…the sheep hear his voice…” See Romans 10:17. There are many “voices” in the world that call. There is only One that brings forgiveness, salvation and eternal life. Faith knows that Voice. And faith knows that the other voices are not trustworthy, indeed they lead to serious harm. See John 18:37; Revelation 3:20; Psalm 95:6-8.

“…his own sheep he calls by name and leads them out.” (Braden) See Luke 10:20; Revelation 13:8, 17:8, 21:24-27, 22:19. God knows those who are His, see Matthew 10:30. These are they who are written in the Book “from the foundation of the world.”

**10:4 –** His own sheep follow Him. See Matthew 4:19, 8:22, 9:9, 10:38, 16:24, 19:21, and many more. This adds to our understanding of our Lord’s assertion that He is the Way. To follow Christ is to go the Way of the Cross, see John 13:36-38. But the Good Shepherd alone can lead His flock out of the valley of death. See Psalm 80:1-3. The sheep follow Him because they know His voice. His voice comforts and soothes and encourages faith. See Psalm 119:105.

**10:5 –** A strange voice frightens the sheep. The sheep of the Good Shepherd will not follow a strange voice. What does this mean? See Matthew 16:12; Luke 12:1. Compare this to Acts 2:42.

**10:6 –** “…they did not understand…” For this reason He spoke in parables (here not παραβολή, rather παροιμία, a “figure of speech” or “illustration”). See Matthew 13:13-17; John 16:25 (where the same word is used.) But His sheep “hear” His voice – faith understands.

The verb for our Lord’s “speaking” is ἐλάλει, a form that denotes a continual, public, even bold speaking aloud.

**Read John 10:7-13**

**10:7 –** Here our Lord identifies Himself as the “Door”. The construction “I AM” we have discussed before (see our notes on 4:26). This is another great “I AM” saying of our Lord, by which we learn who He is and what He does. HE IS the Door of the sheep (as St. Augustine and St. Cyril asserted above, see our notes on 10:3). If the “illustration” were to stop here, faith would still understand well. See John 14:6. What do these two “I AM” sayings have in common? See Psalm 118:19-23.

**10:8 –** This is not a reference to Moses or David or Solomon or the true Prophets, who pointed to the True Door, the Good Shepherd. The “others” who “came before” are the Saduccees, Pharisees, Scribes and Zealots, who claimed to be doorkeepers and shepherds. They were in fact thieves and robbers. These are they that would have climbed in another way, see verse 1 of this chapter. Note the similarity in language there. In view of the Analogy of Faith, we can assert here that they tried to “come in” by works, while the proper “Way” is justification by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

**10:9 –** Our Lord teaches by using a conditional sentence, here a “future more vivid” description – “…if anyone enters through Me he shall be saved and will go in and go out and he will find pasture.” (Braden) At this point let’s pause, and read Psalm 23. Who is the author of Psalm 23? See 1 Samuel 16:11.

The one who enters through the Good Shepherd has freedom. He goes in and goes out safely, and following the Good Shepherd he finds pasture – safe pasture, pasture that nourishes and quickens and sustains. See Revelation 21:22-27. Note that in verse 24 it is the “nations” who are saved that go in and go out, and that in verse 25 “the gates shall not be shut.” Who is the author of Revelation? This is the fulfillment of Prophecy – Christ is the “Man” of Numbers 27:15-17 for whom Moses prayed – while Joshua was given to Israel to lead them into the Promised Land, it is Christ who fulfills the Prophecy and opens heaven to those with faith in Him.

**10:10 –** Read Matthew 13:13-23. Here the Lord gives two choices – opposites – the thief, and the work he does, and the Good Shepherd, and the work He does. By their fruits you shall know them. The Lord directs you to judge. The thief comes in to the sheepfold to steal and to slay and to destroy. Christ came in order that you have life, and that you have it more abundantly. See John 5:24.

**10:11 –** In the second great I AM discourse of this chapter (do you remember the first?, see also our comments above at 6:20 and 6:35), having discussed the false shepherds, the sheepfold, and the flock, He now identifies Himself: “I AM the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd *lays down* His life on behalf of the sheep.” (Braden – Pastor will explain the verb τίθησιν, a third person singular, present indicative active form of the verb τίθημι) See 13:37.

He is not like the thieves and robbers who enter in some other way. R.C.H. Lenski writes “Hence, this shepherd is absolutely in a class by himself; no other shepherd can ever be grouped with him.” (722) Indeed, He is the Bread of Life, He is the Door. He gives, rather than taking away life. More than that, He is the Good Shepherd. This is an Old Testament Messianic reference – see Ezekiel 34:11-24 (consider this pericope carefully) and 37:21-28 (this one too!); Hebrews 13:20. Consider David, the shepherd king of Israel, and yet an incomplete type of which Christ is the perfect Antitype.

The thieves and robbers and false shepherds kill and destroy the sheep. But not so the Good Shepherd. He “…*lays down* His life on behalf of the sheep.” See John 15:13, where the verb is also τίθημι. But see verse 17 of this chapter, where He describes why He lays down His life. See Matthew 20:28 and Mark 10:45 (where in both verses the verb is different).

See 1 Samuel 17:34-37 – what is the context there?

So He is the Good Shepherd, who is the perfect Lamb, see 1:29 (a reference to Leviticus 16:1-10, what is the context there?). See Revelation 5:6, 7:17, 14:10, 15:3, 19:9, 21:23, 22:1, and 22:3. Who wrote Revelation?

So how can He be the Good Shepherd, the Lamb, and the Door? St. Augustine writes “Just as he knows the Father through himself and we know the Father through him, so he enters into the fold through himself and we enter through him. Through Christ we [pastors] have a door of entrance to you; and why? Because we preach Christ and therefore enter in through the door. But Christ preaches Christ too because he preaches himself; and so the Shepherd enters in through himself… He is also the door to the Father, for there is no way of approach to the Father except through him…” (*Ancient Christian Commentary on John, pg. 345)*

R.C.H. Lenski further writes “The astonishing realities here clothed in the figure of the shepherd and the sheep are chiefly two: first, that instead of some sheep of the flock serving as a blood-sacrifice for the shepherd, here the very reverse takes place – the shepherd makes himself the blood-sacrifice for the sheep; secondly that whereas all other blood-sacrifices yield their lives in sacrificial death never to regain them, this marvelous shepherd does, indeed, like them also yield his life, but, absolutely unlike them, takes his life back again. A third point may be added: all other blood-sacrifices die without volition of their own, this shepherd of his own will dies for the sheep. And a fourth: no other blood-sacrifice by its death brings forth and bestows life upon others, but this is exactly what the blood-sacrifice of the Supreme Shepherd does.” (726)

**10:12 –** Having described the false shepherds who come to kill and destroy, then having confessed Himself as the Good Shepherd, now the Lord contrasts Himself with the “hireling”, the one who tends the flock for money, for his own benefit. Note the differences: the hireling is not the Shepherd, the sheep are not his own, when the wolf comes he leaves the sheep and flees. How is the Good Shepherd the opposite?

**10:12 cont. –** Note the two distinct assertions in this verse: 1) the hireling leaves the sheep and flees; and 2) the wolf seizes and scatters the flock. The second could not be true unless the first were true. See Hebrews 13:5-6; John 10:28-29. The Good Shepherd never leaves His Flock, indeed, He is present with her even now. The Flock that is the Body of the Christ the Head is safe.

Luther preaches “Such will be the result when men once begin to lay hands on and persecute us in earnest. There will be preachers who will hold their tongues and flee, and the sheep will be pitiably scattered, the one running here and the other there. God grant that there may be at least some who will stand firm and risk their lives to rescue the sheep…” (Sermon on *Misericordias Domini*, the Church Postil, pg. 29)

St. Gregory writes “The evil spirit tears apart the minds of believers in temptation, and the one holding the place of the shepherd does not take responsibility. Souls are perishing, and he enjoys earthly advantages. The wolf snatches and scatters the sheep when he entices one to drunkenness, inflames another with greed, exalts another by pride, destroys another by anger, stirs one up by envy, trips up another by deceit. When the devil slays believers through temptations, he is like a wolf dispersing the flock. No zeal rouses the hireling against these temptations, no love excites him. He seeks only the outward advantages and carelessly allows the inward injury to his flock.” *Ancient Christian Commentary*, pg. 347)

What does the Good Shepherd do? See John 15:13.

**10:13 –** “But the hireling flees” – these words do not occur in some manuscripts, which rather begin “because he is a hireling...” Both continue “and it is not a care to him regarding the sheep.” (Braden) See a similar construction in John 12:6.

Here is the motivation behind the actions of the hireling. He cares for himself, not for the sheep. The Good Shepherd is not like that.

**10:14 –** Again here our Lord begins with a great “I AM” saying, see verse 11. In verse 11 the attribute of the Good Shepherd is that He lays down His life for the sheep. Here the attribute is that He knows His own, and His own know Him. See verse 27. See also 1 Corinthians 13:12; Matthew 10:28-31. See Revelation 3:5, where our Lord’s “knowing” us brings us to the doctrine of election. See Ephesians 1:4-5; Romans 8:29-30. This is how our Lord “knows us”.

**10:15 –** The Lord continues to teach about His “knowing” – He knows His sheep, “just as the Father knows me and I also know the Father”. See Matthew 11:27; John 17:24-26, 6:46, 14:9. Here we have a wonderful description from our Lord of the Mystical Union, the Truth that Christ is One with His Church, and One with the Father and Spirit. We are in Christ (Romans 8:1), and Christ is in us (Galatians 2:20), therefore we have Communion with God (1 John 1:3). The Holy Spirit facilitates this Union (2 Corinthians 1:22), which is how the Father and the Son come to the believer and dwell in him (John 14:23). So Christ is “in us” (Colossians 1:27, the “Mystery” of the Mystical Union), even to the extent that we become partakers of the Divine Nature (2 Peter 1:4). This is how our Good Shepherd “knows us”, just as He knows the Father and is known by the Father.

**Read John 10:16-21**

**10:16 –** “…other sheep”? See 11:52, 17:20-21, 3:16-17. Then read Romans 11:13-29.

In 10:16 how it is that the “other sheep” are gathered? Where could we go to hear that voice?

What is the result of hearing that Voice? Note the perfect unity and Communion of the Invisible Church – see Ephesians 2:14-22; Colossians 1:18-21, 2:18-19. See Ezekiel 34:23-24, 37:24. See John 17:22-26. What is the proclamation of the “voice”? What is the result? Again here we see the Mystical Union described.

**10:17 –** In order that the Flock be redeemed, the Shepherd must do what was prophesied of Him of old – See Genesis 3:15; Psalm 22; Isaiah 53; and many more. He lays down His life. But there is more – He takes it up again. See Psalm 16:9-11; Acts 2:25-32. It is here, in His teaching regarding the Good Shepherd, that our Lord clearly portrays His vicarious atonement.

**10:18 –** His authority (see Matthew 28:19) surpasses all human authority. He has authority over death. Remember 3:35-36? The Command will be fulfilled, see John 14:31. Where were the Words of our Lord in John 14 spoken? Where do they go?

**10:19 –** We have seen this before – the Truth always divides. See 7:43 for instance. Where do we see this today?

**10:20 –** Both sides of the schism are revealed. One side says He has a demon and is mad. See 7:20, 8:48. They exhort the others to close their ears to His Words. See Matthew 13:14; Acts 28:25-29.

**10:21 –** This is the other “side” of the schism – and they present proof: the healing of the man born blind. See 9:16.

**Read John 10:22- 30**

**10:22 –** Antiochus Epiphaneus, king of the Selucid Empire (a great empire that included Asia Minor, Palestine and Mesopotamia) profaned the Temple in 167 B.C. by erecting in the Temple an altar to Zeus, by banning circumcision in the Kingdom, and by ordering that pigs be sacrificed on the altar of the Temple. The events are not recorded in Scripture, but are in the “time between the Testaments”. The Books 1st and 2nd Maccabees, Apocryphal literature, as well as the historian Josephus, record the events. “The Feast of the Dedication” commemorated the reconsecration and dedication of the Temple by Judas Maccabeus in December of the year 165 B.C. Modern Jews call the day Hannukah (dedicate) or The Festival of Lights. The “lights” referred to are the nine candles of the Menorah, four on each side and one in the middle. The middle candle is used to light the others, one candle each day for eight days. The houses of Hillel and Shammai disagreed on the order in which the candles should be lit, Tradition among the Jews holds that although only one day’s worth of oil for the candles was available, the oil lasted eight days, a miracle.

Here John speaks of the Festival, and for those not familiar with the Jewish calendar, reminds the reader that it was winter (December).

**10:22 continued –** 1 Maccabees 4:59 reads “Then Judas and his brothers and all the assembly of Israel determined that every year at that season the days of the dedication of the altar should be observed with gladness and joy for eight days, beginning with the twenty-fifth day of the month of Chislev.” A footnote in *The Apocrypha: The Lutheran Edition with Study Notes* (2012, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House) reads “This event was celebrated afterwards as the Fest of Dedication or Hanukkah. The text records no miracle that occurred in connection with this festival. Later Jewish tradition tells of the miraculous vessel that never failed to provide oil for the eight-day festival of lights.” (170) All oral traditions aside, as Christ enters the Temple the True Eternal Light is present.

**10:23 –** Solomon’s Colonnade was a portico, a covered area open on the inside, which was built by Solomon, and reputedly survived the Babylonian destruction of the Temple in 586 B.C. In the reconstruction of the Temple, giving name to the “Second Temple Period”, tradition records that King Agrippa let the Colonnade stand because of its antiquity. Solomon’s Colonnade was located on the east side of the Temple. It was completely destroyed by the Romans, with the Temple, in 70 A.✠ D. Several commentaries indicate that Rabbis met with Jewish men in Solomon’s Colonnade. See Acts 3:9-11.

**10:24 –** The Greek can be rendered “The Jews tightly encircled Him…” Lenski writes “By a concerted action they surround and enclose him, meaning that he shall not again get away. No friendly multitude is at hand to support him and to stay their hand. Jesus is suddenly face to face with his bitter enemies, who are now bound to force the issue. The moment is charged with the gravest potentialities.” The Jews’ question translated woodenly is “until when are you lifting up our souls?”, translated in the NKJV as “How long do you keep us in doubt?” Their allegation is that He has been evasive in not clearly disclosing who He is – although the great I AM passages of John, and the Jews’ reaction, contradict their accusation. “If you are the Christ, tell us boldly” or “…tell us plainly”, they demand. See Matthew 26:63-66 (which occurs later than the account at hand).

**10:25 –** The Lord’s answer is clear and true: “I told you and you are not believing.” His identification of Himself as the promised Messiah, the Christ, has been clear – consider the “Good Shepherd” account earlier in this chapter, and its Old Testament referents. The Lord points the Jews to His works – the works that He Himself does in the Name of His Father – these testify concerning Him. He heals. He blesses. He multiplies fish and loaves. He commands nature. He raises from the dead. See Matthew 11:5; Isaiah 29:18-19, 35:4-6 (especially following the account of the healing of the man born blind), 61:1-3. He told them, but they are not believing. See John 6:64.

**10:26 –** Note how the Lord links this discussion to the Good Shepherd dialogue – His sheep hear His voice, the Jews that challenge Him are not His sheep.

**10:27 –** See 10:14-16. How is it that His sheep hear His voice today?

**10:28 –** The Good Shepherd gives life to His sheep. Earthly shepherds take the lives of the flocks they are hired to tend. Note the kind of life the Good Shepherd gives – life without end!

**10:28 continued –** See John 5:24. St. Augustine writes “This is the pasture of which He spoke before when He said, ‘And he shall go in and out and find pasture.’ The good pasture is called eternal life…” (*Ancient Christian Commentary,* 357). Cyril of Alexandria writes “It is also possible to understand by ‘life’ a reference to the mystical blessing [of the Eucharist] by which Christ implants in us his own lie through the participation of his own flesh by the faithful, according to the text, ‘He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life.’” (*Ibid*). The eternal life that Christ gives cannot be taken away, and no one can take Christ’s elect sheep from His hand. See John 6:37-39.

**10:29 –** Note the unity of the Father and the Son, which our Lord has repeatedly asserted. The sheep are in the hand of the Son, and no one can “snatch” them out of His hand. Those sheep the Father has given Him, the Father that is “greater than all”, and no one is able to “snatch” them out of the hand of the Father – which means that Christ is the Hand of God.

**10:30 –** This section of John’s Gospel climaxes in the statement that most clearly reveals the Son’s unity with the Father, and the Divinity of the Son: “I and the Father are One.” See John 17:9-12, where in the great High Priestly Prayer the Son prays the same to the Father.

**Read John 10:31-38**

**10:31 –** The Jews understand exactly what the Lord has said. What is their response? Why? See Leviticus 24:16. On “again”, See John 8:59. What was our Lord’s assertion in 8:58? Why would that cause them to take up stones against Him there, and again here? See John 7:19-20 for the hypocrisy of the Jews. Here again they attempt to do what they deny trying to do. But stoning is too efficient a death for the Christ.

**10:32 –** The Lord responds by again stressing His unity with the Father by attributing His good works to the Father. See John 9:3. He can do nothing apart from Him. See John 5:19-20. Finally the Lord asks: “…for which of these works are you stoning Me?”, pointing to the gross error of the Jews.

**10:33 –** The Jews answer. Not because of the works, but because of blasphemy, because He, being a Man, “make yourself God.” See Matthew 9:3; John 5:18. His Words were clear. They understood Him perfectly. And His Confession of His own Divinity will grow only clearer – see verse 36. But they could not receive His Word. See John 1:10-11.

**10:34 –** In response, the Lord quotes Psalm 82, a Psalm of Asaph. Asaph was the son of Berekiah, “and one of the great families or guilds of musicians and singers in the Jerusalem Temple. See 1 Chronicles 6:39, 25:1-2; 2 Chronicles 5:11-14. (*The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, vol. 1, “Asaph”, 471). Asaph is called a “seer” in 2 Chronicles 29:30. Read Psalm 82, noting especially verses 1 and 6. In verse 1, most commentators hold that the “gods” (note the lower case “g”) are the judges of Israel. See Exodus 7:1 (“written in the Law”); 2 Chronicles 19:6. Keil Delitzsch calls them “the chiefs of the congregation of His people, who have perverted the splendor of majesty which He has put upon them into tyranny.” (*Psalms*, 401). Interestingly, the *Ancient Christian Commentary* on John omits this verse, and provides no commentary on it. See Exodus 22:28; Deuteronomy 1:17, 16:18.

**10:35 –** The Word of God that came to the judges and leaders of Israel of old now speaks to them. See Genesis 15:1; 1 Samuel 15:10; 1 Kings 6:11, 21:28; Isaiah 38:4; Jeremiah 1:1-6, and many, many more. See 1 Corinthians 10:1-4. That the Word of God is a theophany is well established. Consider St. John’s introduction to the Gospel that bears his name. Our study Bibles miss this connection here, Lenski alludes to it in saying that they were judges in a theocracy, appointed by God.

“The Scripture cannot be broken” – see John 7:23; Matthew 5:17; Luke 16:17.

**10:36 –** The conditional sentence begun in 10:35 finds completion here in the form of a question from our Lord. The protasis, “If God called those gods...” corresponds to the apodosis “I am the Son of God”. God did call them “gods”, and so the Lord, the Word, rightly calls Himself the Son of God. Note – in some manuscripts the definite article is omitted, leaving the text to read “I am *a* son of God” (there is no indefinite article in the Greek). For this reason, the NIV and the ESV differ, the NIV translating “I am God’s Son.” The ESV accepts the definite article: “I am the Son of God” (capitalization noted).

Notice the “credentials” the Lord presents: He is the One that God the Father “sanctified and sent into the world…” See 3:17, 17:18-22. The Greek word “sanctified” is rendered “consecrated” in the ESV, and “set apart as His very own” in the NIV, Lenski translates “sanctified”, because that is the first meaning of the verb. Since from conception God the Son was Holy, this can be taken as a reference to His baptism, where the Holy Ghost descended upon Him and remained, thus marking Him as the promised Messiah. This proves that Jesus is greater than all the judges that came before.

Note that in verse 36 once again the Son identifies God as His Father. It is for this reason, now proven, that the Jews accuse Him of blasphemy. But He is not blaspheming, He speaks Truth.

**10:37 –** The Lord speaks by means of another conditional sentence – “If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe in Me.” It is a contrary to fact conditional sentence. He clearly does the works of His Father.

**10:38 –** “But if I do…” the Lord clarifies, “and you aren’t believing in Me, believe *in* the works, in order that you know and be knowing that the Father *is* in Me, and I *am* in the Father.” This statement is directly connected to the Lord’s assertion that He is Son of God. His testimony is not alone – the works also testify. See 5:18, 1:34, 5:36. He does the works, He is God the Son, One with the Father.

**Read John 10:39-42**

**10:39 –** The response of the Jews is predictable. “Therefore they were continually again seeking to seize Him…” His assertion in 7:19, 8:30 and 8:40 is again proven true. Further, His Diety is proven by this work – He simply “went out from their hands”. See 8:59.

**10:40 –** At the end of chapter 7, the Lord was teaching in the Temple. In 8:1 He goes to the Mount of Olives, only to return to the Temple, and escape their attempt to kill Him (8:59).

**10:40, Continued -** The account of the healing of the man born blind takes place in Jerusalem, not far from the Pool of Siloam (9:7). In 10:22 He is in the Temple in Solomon’s Colonnade for the Feast of Dedication. Now He returns to the east side of the Jordan River, across from Jericho, the region of Perea south and west of the Decapolis, see 1:28 (Pastor will explain why he prefers the location of John’s baptizing at this site rather than the alternate site north of the Jabbok Ford). This would have been the normal route a Jew would take to go from Galilee to Judea (Jerusalem), to avoid Samaria. “He remained there.”

**10:41 –** The people compare Jesus to John – John did no signs, Jesus does many. The verb indicates that they were habitually saying this. By the signs John’s testimony regarding Jesus is proven true. See 1:7-9, 34, 4:48.

**10:42 –** The testimony and the fulfilment worked faith. “Many believed in Him there.” See 7:31.

**Read John 11:1-5**

**11:1 –** Bethany is on the west side of the Jordan, just east of Jerusalem, located on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. That would be on the other side of the Jordan from where Jesus had remained, west and a bit south. John identifies this as the village of “Mary and Martha her sister”. See Luke 10:38-39. Luke 10, and John 11 & 12:2, are the only mentions of Martha (by name) in Holy Scripture. Lazarus, called here “sick” or “weak”, is only named in John 11 & 12. Lazarus means “he whom God helps”, like the name Eleazar. Bethany probably means “house of dates” in Hebrew, alternate meanings include “house of misery”, but see Matthew 21:17-19.

**11:2 –** John explains that this is the Mary that anointed (ἀλείψασα) the Lord’s feet with myrrh, and wiped them with her hair. This account will be given in 12:3, an indication that John’s Gospel was written after both had occurred. Lazarus’ sickness is reiterated here.

**11:3 –** The sisters’ message seems dire enough – “O Lord, behold *the* one you love is sick.”

**11:4 –** Having received their message, the Lord prophesies. “This sickness is not unto death, but on behalf of the glory of God, in order that the Son of God be glorified through it.” What He predicts will come true, the mark of a true prophecy, although in the interim it will appear that He was wrong. How so?

**11:5 –** The Evangelist inserts a parenthetical note, lest the hearer come to think that the Lord did not love Lazarus and his sisters.

**Read John 11:6-11**

**11:6** – Having heard, the Lord did not rush to Bethany. He remained where He was for two days. This must have seemed strange to the disciples, but see verse 8. Lazarus will have been in the tomb four days before Jesus arrives at the tomb.

**11:7 –** It is after two days (“thereupon”) that the Lord says to His disciples “Let us go again into Judea.” Although the verb the Lord uses means “lead”, it is used colloquially as a hortatory subjunctive for “Let us go.”

**11:8 –** The disciples’ question seems to come from amazement – the Lord knows what the Jews seek to do, and yet He is returning to Judea. The sense of the verb “stone”, in the imperfect tense, is conative and continual – “they are striving to stone You”. See 8:59, 10:31, 39. Although not appropriate to the chronology of John’s Gospel, St. Luke gives reason for the Lord’s motivation – see Luke 9:51.

**11:9 –** At first glance the Lord’s response seems strange. But see Jeremiah 13:16… the Lord is the Light of the World (a main theme of John’s Gospel, see 1:4-9). It is His “Day”, the Day in which He must do the Work He has come to do – our salvation. He will not be stoned, the Messiah will die as prophesied, on the cross. See 9:4-5; Deuteronomy 21:22-23; Galatians 3:13. It is not yet “His Hour”, but His hour will come. See John 2:4, 7:30, 8:20, 16:32. In this context the Lord’s Words make perfect sense, as His Words always do.

**11:10 –** See John 12:35-36. Now the Light is with them, but the “night” comes. The coming “night” will be marked by His Passion and death.

**11:11 -** Lazarus’ eyes are now dark. He knows “night”. But the Lord does not say “Lazarus is dead”, rather “Lazarus, our friend, has fallen asleep”, using the verb that customarily refers to sleep – see Luke 22:45. But now see Matthew 27:50-52 for a use of the same verb. See Psalm 13:3; Daniel 12:2. The reason the Lord returns to Judea against the disciples’ admonition is to “wake” Lazarus. The verb used for “wake” is found only here in the Bible. It is a compound, built from the noun “sleep” (ὕπνος,our word ‘hypnotize’ is from the same root), and the preposition “out of”. It is used in Job 14:12 in the Septuagint. Read Job 14:10-13. Note that although our Lord said “Let us go” in verse 7, here He states “I go…” Lenski comments “In Bethany all is still dark – the shadow lies heavy on the sisters’ hearts… But beyond the Jordan the sun is already shining.” (789)

**Read John 11:12-16**

**11:12 –** Apparently still trying to persuade the Lord not to go into Judea, the disciples respond “O Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be saved.”

**11:13 –** The disciples’ misunderstanding of Jesus’ statement is clear. They understood His Words, not His meaning. He is teaching them about the resurrection.

**11:14 –** “Then Jesus said to them boldly/openly/plainly…” The Lord clarifies His meaning. “…Lazarus died.” But the Words “I go to awaken Him” must still hang in the air.

**11:15 –** “…and I rejoice on your account, in order that you believe, because we were not there…” See verse 42. The Lord will raise Lazarus from the dead, and the disciples, who tried to talk Him out of going, will see it and believe. “But let us go to him” (Braden) The Lord will do what He originally said.

**11:16 –** Thomas, called “Twin”, speaks to his co-disciples. See 21:2. Now see 14:5, 20:24-28. “Not being there” and “believing” are important themes – we are to believe without “having been there”. Thomas says “Let us (we ourselves) also go that we die with him.” Thomas is willing to go, because faith is promised. He is willing to die with Jesus. Lenski disagrees with this interpretation, pointing the pronoun “him” not at Jesus, but at Lazarus, explaining “This is pessimistic unbelief… Thomas does not believe that Jesus will be able to raise Lazarus from the dead. The veiled promise of Jesus has kindled no hope in him. Going back to Judea, they may all run into death. The assurance of Jesus in the allegory has not assured Thomas…” (794)

St. Cyril of Alexandria writes “There is audacity in Thomas’ words, but also timidity. It was the outflow of a devout heart, but it was mixed with a small faith… he neglects to look at the power of the Deliver as he should have.” (*Ancient Christian Commentary*, 10) Origen treats Thomas’ words differently: “Perhaps Thomas also knew that it would not be possible to live with Jesus except by having died with Him, as Paul taught.” (*ibid,* 11)

**Read John 11:17-22**

**11:17 –** John records no details of the journey, only the arrival.

**11:18 –** The Evangelist’s parenthetical comment regarding the geography of the region helps us see that he knew that some of the hearers of his Gospel would not be Jews. The Greek σταδίων δεκαπέντε is literally “15 stadia”. A “stadion” was a Greek measurement that varied in length between regions, as did the Greek “foot”. The stadion was based on the circumference of a typical sports stadium, and was approximately 190 meters, about 620 feet, or roughly an eighth of a mile. Fifteen stadia would be just under two miles.

**11:19 –** The Jews that came to comfort Martha and Mary would leave with mixed reactions – see verses 45-46. Lenski says that the great number of visitors is an indication that the family was influential, probably wealthy. (796)

**11:20 –** From the way the account is presented, it seems that someone went ahead and alerted Martha, who went out to meet Jesus. Mary remained behind. Note the specificity of John’s account – he provides small details that speak to the veracity of his account.

**11:21 –** Martha’s faith in Jesus is evident. She calls Him Lord, using the vocative case. She trusts that had He been present, He would have healed Lazarus.

**11:22 –** Although Lazarus is dead, Martha believes that “even now” Jesus can do a miracle. That “God Himself” would grant it is echoed in 16:28-30.

**Read John 11:23-27**

**11:23 –** The Lord’s response to Martha is direct and clear – “Your brother will rise again.” What joy there is for the Christian in these Words! So too will all those with faith in Jesus rise again on the Last Day to be taken by the Lord to heaven.

**11:24 –** While the Pharisees and Saduccees disagreed on whether there will be a resurrection or not (see Matthew 22:23; Acts 23:6-8), Martha certainly believed in the resurrection. She also believed in “the Last Day”. On “the Last Day”, see 6:39.

**11:25 –** Our Lord here speaks another great “I AM” proclamation. The first was in 4:26 (see our notes there, and at 6:20). “I AM the resurrection and the life..”, our Lord proclaims to Martha.

**11:25, Cont. -** The consequence of Christ being the Resurrection and the Life is that “he who believes in me *even though* he die, he shall live…” (Braden) All men die. Where Christ is, there is life. Martha need not wait for the Last Day, for the resurrection of all flesh. Where Christ is, resurrection is possible now, for He is Lord of the Last Day. At the Last Day He will call all men forth from their tombs. But “even now” (11:22) He can raise the dead, for “the one believing in Me, even though he die, he shall live.”

This statement continues the main theme of the Gospel according to St. John – faith in Jesus Christ, salvation that comes only through believing in Him, as our Lutheran Fathers confessed in Article IV of the Augsburg Confession, the chief article of the Christian faith, the one article on which the Church stands or falls. See 1:7, 12; 3:12; 4:42; 4:48; 5:24; 5:46-47; 6:29; 6:63-64; 8:24; 10:25-26; 20:31; 1 John 5:13, and many others.

**11:26 –** These Words of our Lord continue His assertion of the previous verse – “…everyone living and believing in Me shall surely not die unto the ages.” (Braden) St. Augustine writes “Believe then, and though you were dead, yet shall you live; but if you do not believe, even while you are alive you are dead… And how does death come to the soul? When faith is wanting. How does death come to the body? When the soul is wanting. For faith is the life of the soul.” (From *Tractates on the Gospel of John,* 49.15, cited in *Ancient Christian Commentary*, vol IVb,15)

Compare the statement “everyone living and believing in Me shall surely not die…” to John 6:53-54. To what is our Lord referring there?

St. Cyprian writes “…why should we either show reluctance when we ourselves have to depart or lament and grieve for others who depart as though they were dying forever? Christ Himself, our Lord and God, tells us, ‘I am the resurrection and the life…” (*On Mortality*, 21, cited in *Ancient Christian Commentary,* vol IVb, 15).

In Christ we live forever. This is the Christian hope!

Now the Lord, having clearly confessed Who He is and what He gives, elicits a confession from Martha, by simply asking “*Do you* believe this?” See Matthew 10:32; Luke 12:8; Romans 10:9-11; 1 John 4:2; 1 John 4:15.

**11:27 –** Martha’s answer is succinct: “Yes, Lord, I have believed *(and thus continue to believe)* that You are the Christ the Son of God the One coming into the world.” The purity and accuracy of Martha’s saving confession rivals that of St. Peter… see Matthew 16:16. Note that Martha confesses the Divinity of the Christ, and that He is the fulfillment of the Messianic Promise. If we would be saved, this must be our confession, each one of us personally and individually. See 1 John 5:20.

**Read John 11:28-31**

**11:28 –** Faith is active. More than confessing, Martha desires her sister Mary to come into the presence of the One who is the Resurrection and the Life. Note that Martha’s invitation to Mary seems to indicate that they knew Jesus simply as “the Teacher”. See Matthew 8:19, 23:8-9; Luke 7:40, 9:38, 10:25, 21:7; John 1:38, 3:2, 8:4, and many others…

**11:29 –** When called by Christ, faith gets up quickly and goes to Him.

**11:30 –** Again the Evangelist interjects facts attendant to the contemporary setting, shedding light on verse 20.

**11:31 –** John’s description is first-hand, demonstrating a thorough knowledge of the facts. Lenski proposes that Jesus remained outside the city and met the women there with a purpose: “As He had prepared Martha for the miracle, so He desired to prepare her sister also.”

**Read John 11:32-37**

**11:32 –** Mary’s reaction to Jesus’ presence, and her words, show forth her great faith. See Martha’s similar statement in verse 21. See also Luke 8:41, 17:16; Acts 10:25; Revelation 19:10, 22:8, and the angel’s response in 22:9.

**11:33 –** Where our translation reads “He groaned in the spirit and was troubled”, the NIV reads He was deeply moved in spirit and troubled”, the ESV reads “He was deeply moved in spirit and greatly troubled”, Lenski translates “He was indignant in the spirit and shook himself”. The Greek reads ἐνεβριμήσατο (deeply moved with anger) τῷ πνεύματι καὶ ἐτάραξεν (stirred up, troubled) ἑαυτὸν. His response to their grief is visceral. See Matthew 9:36, 14:14, 18:27; and Luke 15:20 (the verb in these pericopes is different, but the concept is the same). On “greatly troubled” see John 12:27 and 13:21, where the same word is used. Jesus, having taken on Flesh, could sympathize with human suffering, which is to say that He can sympathize with what you suffer. See Hebrews 4:15.

**11:34 –** The Christ, in His State of Humiliation, did not know where they had laid Lazarus’ lifeless body. According to His Divine Nature He is omniscient. But His State of Humiliation is the willing non-use of the very Divine Powers that are His, powers which He did not always nor fully use. The women bid Him “come and see”.

**11:35 –** At the death of His friend, in the face of the suffering of the sisters, God cried. He wept. See Ezekiel 18:23, 33:11. See Luke 19:41. What was before Him in the Luke pericope? Read Luke 19:42-46. In Christ so too did God sweat, hunger, thirst, suffer, bleed, and die.

**11:36 –** Those that witnessed the event that John records understood. Jesus loved Lazarus. See 11:3, 5. So too does He love you, and desire that you live.

**11:37 –** The great miracle of the healing of the man born blind was apparently well known and widely reported. It occurred in the vicinity of the Temple in Jerusalem, but was known in Bethany. In the Matthean account of the Triumphal Entry and the Cleansing of the Temple, Jesus leaves the Temple and goes to Bethany for the night (Matthew 21:17). The Jews consideration of the situation is the same as that of Mary and Martha in 11:21 and 11:32 – here expressed in a conditional sentence, a question, that leaves room for doubt.

**11:37 Continued** – St. John Chrysostom writes that the reference to the healing of the blind man is meant to be a slur against Jesus: “They therefore slander Him by those very points through which they ought to have marveled at His power…. And when they ought to have admired Him because of that miracle, they use this latter case as a way to cast a slur upon it, as though it had not even taken place… even before He has arrived or done anything, they try to prevent Him with their accusations without even waiting to see how things will turn out.” (*Ancient Christian Commentary*, 22)

**Read John 11:38-44**

**11:38 –** Again here the Lord is “groaning in Himself”, evidence of His perfect suffering. See verse 33, where the same verb is used. His suffering is real. He is the God of Life facing the death of one He loved. Although it is hard to see in the English, Matthew 9:30 uses the same verb.

The Evangelists adds details that only an eyewitness would have – it was a cave, and a stone was laid upon it. See Matthew 27:60, Daniel 6:17. This fact removes all doubt regarding Lazarus’ condition – he was quite dead, and had been for days.

**11:39 –** Only God has the power to unseal that which is sealed, to close and to open. See Revelation 5:2, 10:4, 20:3, 22:10 (Daniel 12:4). So will He command the graves to be opened at the last day, see 5:28; Ezekiel 37:12; Mathew 27:52; 1 Corinthians 15:20-23.

Martha is afraid of the horror that the stone hides. The Lord Himself would know the inside of a sealed stone tomb.

**11:40 –** The Lord recalls His promise – see 11:4, which was spoken to His disciples. Then see verses 25-26.

**11:41 –** They obey the Lord’s command. In the Greek they “lift up the stone”, and the Lord “lifts up” His eyes. See Matthew 14:19. He gives thanks. See Matthew 11:25, Luke 22:17-20.

**11:42 –** The Father always hears the Son. See Matthew 14:23, 26:36; Luke 6:12; Luke 9:28; Before He works the miracle, praying aloud He reveals the reason. It is in knowing that He is the One Sent by the Father that the Glory of God is revealed. See again 11:4, then 17:8. This is a major theme of John’s Gospel.

**11:43 –** The voice that spoke and it was speaks again. See Genesis 1:3. The Greek here says “*by means* of a great voice He cried out”. This is the voice that will split the rocks and open the tombs on the last day. See 1 Thessalonians 4:16.

**11:44 –** At the command of that Voice, even the dead obey. The grave cloths testify. See Luke 24:12. Note the Lord’s command to the people: “Loose him and let Him go.” The miracle is complete. His voice commands the dead and they rise. The raising of Lazarus is a miracle no man could reproduce – a greater miracle than healing a man born blind. See verse 37. He does more than “keep him from dying”. He raises him from the dead. This miracle verifies his earlier miracle too.

**Read John 11:45-54**

**11:45 –** The strong miracle overcame unbelief. They knew that Lazarus was dead, now they see him alive. See 7:31. But see 4:48. Miracles demonstrate Christ’s Divinity and God’s power, but are meant for the unbelieving, as we see here. See 2:18, 20:28.

**11:46 –** The Scripture does not attribute a motive to those who reported what they had seen to the Pharisees. If their motives were evil, it would be an attempt to further upset the Jewish religious rulers, who were already seeking to kill Jesus. It their motives were good, it would be to speak the truth to the Pharisees, that they too know who Jesus is. In any case, the Pharisees, whose motives were not good, were informed that Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead.

**11:47 –** The Pharisees and chief priests gathered to discuss how to proceed. See 12:19, which seems to indicate that they feared the Romans would see the multitude of Jesus’ followers as a political rebellion. See also Matthew 26:3-5.

**11:48 –** It is in fear that the Jews respond to the miracles of Jesus. Of what are they afraid? Of God or men? See Acts 4:13-20. St. John Chrysostom writes “…they did this, not from any such expectation but out of malice. And yet things happened contrary to their expectations, so much so that the Romans took their nation and city when they had killed Christ. For everything He did was beyond all suspicion.” *Ancient Christian Commentary*, 34.

**11:49 –** Here we meet Caiaphas. John chronicles that he was High Priest that year, which means that he was a Sadducee. The dates of his High Priestly service were 18-36 A.✠ D. He was son-in-law of Annas (see 18:13-14, a reference to the verse that follows here). The Romans had removed Annas from the position of High Priest in 15 A.✠ D. Caiaphas will be named again in John only in the 18th chapter, in verses 24 and 28. Read 18:24-28, after which Jesus is turned over to Pilate.

**11:50 –** It seems from the context (see also 11:51), that Caiaphas’ rebuke of the Pharisees and chief priests is based in politics rather than in religion. See Jonah 1:12-15.

**11:51 –** While Scripture does not give any additional information, it is clear that the High Priest had spoken prophecy – and that a true prophecy, for it would come to pass, but not as the Jews expected. Christ’s death would offer them freedom, but not from the Romans, who would eventually take away their nation and their place. While the Scripture does not tell us by what means Caiaphas prophesied, the archetype of Caiaphas is seen in Exodus 28:30; Numbers 27:21.

**11:52 –** This portion of Caiaphas’ prophecy is clearly true – in Christ we are One, the True Israel. See 10:16; Romans 9:6-8; Galatians 6:14-16.

**11:53 –** Apparently believing that prophecy was on their side, they go about finding a way to kill Jesus. But their efforts are not new – see 5:18; Matthew 26:3-5, where fear of an uprising is expressed.

**11:54 –** The conjunctive “Therefore”, joining verse 54 to verse 53, reveals that Jesus knew of their plans. This is akin to Matthew 17:9, 16:20; Luke 5:14, 8:56, 9:20-22. Origen understood these Words to mean that the Christian should not seek or rush into martyrdom. (*Ancient Christian Commentary* 37-38) Jesus would fulfill Caiaphas’ prophecy. He would be the One that dies for the many. But before He was put to death there were many things to do. See 2:4.

On Ephraim (Ophrah), a town to the north and west of Jericho, see Judges 6:11, 24, and 2 Samuel 13:23. On Ephraim Lenski writes “Jesus did not return to Perea from Bethany but went to a new locality, which is designated broadly as ‘the country near the desert’…a small place, so little known that its present location is in dispute. It was probably located in northern Judea. Here Jesus remained until the approach of the Passover season.” (832) Perea was east of Judah, on the east side of the Dead Sea, and extended northward to the southern border of the Decapolis.

**Read John 11:55-57**

**11:55 –** From the remote village, now the Evangelist’s attention turns to Jerusalem. That “…many went up” indicates that St. John was not only referring to Ephraim, but to many remote locations. See 2:13, 5:1; Matthew 26:2.

Purification was required before taking part in the Passover. See 2 Chronicles 30:12-20; Acts 21:24-26. On the use of the same verb (ἁγνίζω, “to cleanse, ritually purify”), see James 4:8; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:3. Why would James, Peter and John use this verb and not Mark, Luke or Paul? Paul uses καθαρίζω, see Titus 2:14.

**11:56 –** The tense of the verb supports translating “They were continually seeking” and “continually saying”. Jesus was the main topic of conversation. They were amazed that He hadn’t come already to the feast, the greatest feast of the Old Testament, although it was still days away.

**11:57 –** The Lord’s reasons for no longer speaking openly (54) are plain to see. Again here the intention of the chief priests and Pharisees is clear. Going into the Passover, they intend to kill Him, the two recent great miracles (the man born blind, Lazarus) seemingly ignored.

On this verse St. Augustine writes “Let us at least for our part show the Jews where Christ is… Let them come to the church and hear where Christ is and take hold of him for themselves. Let them hear it from us. Let them hear it from the gospel.” (*Ancient Christian Commentary* 39)

**Read John 12:1-8**

**12:1 –** The Sacrifice is prepared. Moving towards Jerusalem, Jesus returns to Bethany. The One about to die dines with the one raised from the dead, as the Sacrifice, the One who will die for the many, is marked by anointing.

This account may be a parallel account to Matthew 26:6-13, the reason that many hold that the woman of Matthew 26:7 is Mary of Bethany, sister of Martha. But see Luke 7:36-38, where many hold the woman to be Mary Madgalene. Compare the accounts. Where did the account take place? Where was the Lord anointed in each account?

**12:2 –** Martha, Mary and Lazarus we met in chapter 11. On Martha “serving” see Luke 10:40.

**12:3 –** The Greek reads λίτραν μύρου νάρδου πιστικῆς, literally a “pound” (Roman) of pure nard perfume”. The Study Bible notes that it was unusual for the feet to be anointed rather than the head (but see Isaiah 52:7); and that in order to wipe His feet with her hair, she would have to have unbraided it and let it down, something that women did not do in public.

“The house was full of the aroma of the perfume…” Incense was mixed with most Old Testament offerings, see Levitucus 2:1; Leviticus 6:15, for example. Where Christ is, there is a Pleasing Aroma, language of sacrifice. See Genesis 8:21; Exodus 29:18; Ephesians 5:2; Philippians 4:18. Where the Body of Christ is, there is incense and anointing – consider the Tabernacle (Exodus 30:1), the Magi (Matthew 2:11), this anointing, the spices used for His Bodily preparation (John 19:38-40). Why do we use incense during Mass? Are we making an offering? See Psalm 141:2.

**12:4 –** See 6:64, 70-71, where we meet Judas Iscariot for the first time in John’s Gospel. How was he identified there? How is he identified here?

**12:5 –** Judas’ deceit is already evident – he speaks smooth words, but evil is in his heart. See Jeremiah 12:6; Romans 16:18.

**12:6 –** Judas’ motivation is revealed by an interjection of the Evangelist into the historic account. See Matthew 6:24. The Greek reads τὸ γλωσσόκομον, the “box”. This word occurs only here, and in 13:29. Lenski writes “The term, originally used to designate a case in which to keep mouthpieces for flutes, came to be used for any boxlike receptacle, here one to hold coins, and was translated ‘bag’ by the Vulgate, which translation Luther and our versions followed.” (843) That the money Judas stole was from the offerings of the faithful for the support of Jesus and the disciples “makes his crime the blacker.” (844)

In this account we see an act of great faith, and an act from the depths of unbelief. The marginalia in the Greek New Testament refers to John 10:13 here.

**12:7 –** Lenski notes that Mary does not make her own defense, rather Jesus intercedes for her. So too does He intercede for us, giving defense for us. See Matthew 10:32. The cross fully in view, the Lord teaches that He is being prepared for burial. St. John Chrysostom writes “Again, as if to remind his betrayer, Jesus alludes to his burial. But the reproof does not reach him, nor does the expression soften him, although it should have been sufficient to inspire him with pity…” (*Ancient Christian Commentary*, 47). We remember that it is for money that Judas betrays Jesus. See Matthew 26:15-17. What feast of the Jews is about to take place? Why is this significant? See Exodus 12:21.

**12:8 –** Answer Judas’ question, the Lord alludes to His death. Remember His admonition of the Jews in 8:21. See Deuteronomy 15:11.

**12:8, Cont. –** Cyril of Alexandria writes “…the Savior also brings forward an argument that convinces us that nothing is better than devotion toward Him. For, He says, love for the poor is very praiseworthy, only let it be put after veneration of God. And what He says amounts to this: The time, He says, that has been appointed for My being honored, that is to say, the time of My sojourn on earth, does not require that the poor should be honored before Me.” (from his “Commentary on John”, cited in *Ancient Christian Commentary*, 47)

**Read John 12:9-15**

**12:9 –** The double attraction – seeing Jesus, and seeing Lazarus whom He had raised from the dead, resulted in a great crowd. This crowd, assembling in Bethany, would be added to by the crowds assembled in Jerusalem for the Passover. See 12:12, 17.

**12:10 –** The murderous jealousy of the chief priests is multiplied. Now they want to kill Lazarus also. They willingly plot to break the Fifth Commandment.

**12:11 –** The reason for the chief priests’ dark plans is revealed: jealousy, and fear of losing followers. Note that many of the Jews “began to believe” (inceptive imperfect, “were continually believing”, imperfect) in Jesus. This great increase in those who believed in Him would continue to multiply. See 12:19.

**12:12 –** St. Matthew testifies to this in 21:1-9.

**12:13 –** “They took the branches of palms and went out to meet Him and cried out “Hosanna! Blessed *is* He who comes in *the* Name of *the* Lord, even the King of Israel.” (Braden) Palm branches were used in joyous celebrations – see Leviticus 23:39-43. The Feast of Booths, celebrated in the seventh month (Tishri), also called the Feast of Tabernacles and the Feast of Ingathering, also required branches, see Nehemiah 8:15.

The exclamation “Hosanna” means “Save now!”. See Psalm 118:19-29. נָּא הוֹשִׁיעָה “Hosanna”, two words in the Hebrew, occurs in verse 25 of the Psalm. Can you find it? It is derived from the Hebrew word יָשַׁע, which means “He saved.” Consider what is occurring in the Gospel according to St. John in light of the Words of the Psalm.

For uses of the same Hebrew verb see Exodus 14:30; Deuteronomy 20:4; Psalm 6:5. St. Augustine writes “The branches of palms are psalms of praise for the victory that our Lord was about to obtain by His death over death and his triumph over the devil, the prince of death, by the trophy of the cross…” (*Ancient Christian Commentary*, 52) See Zephaniah 3:14-17.

The theology is not lost on us – the Word became Flesh and Tabernacled among us, and now the Ingathering has begun, by which He leads us out of captivity and into the true Promised Land. See John 1:49, 6:15, 18:33-39, 19:3, 12; and Revelation 7:9-10.

**12:14 –** See Zechariah 9:9. See 1 Kings 1:32-40. The white mule was the “king’s mount”, the sign that Solomon was the true king of Israel, not Adonijah. What does this mean?

**12:14, cont. –** See Isaiah 35:4-10. What joy there must have been for those who realized that these prophesies (Zechariah c. 520 B.C.; Zephaniah 630 B.C.; Isaiah c. 700 B.C.) were fulfilled before them.

**12:15 –** Words from Zechariah 9:9 (we read them above). The True King comes on the King’s mount. See also Isaiah 40:9-11. Note the Messianic centrality of these Old Testament prophecies.

**Read John 12:16-19**

**12:16 –** John here inserts a personal comment. He was one of them. See 2:22, 20:30-31. Note that the reference here (12:16) refers to these things being written about Him – a fulfilment of Scripture.

**12:17 –** The miracles and the Words of Scripture fulfilled convinced them, they testified to Him as the Christ. Their testimony would quickly change.

**12:18 –** The crowds heard their testimony. So have you. See 2:11.

**12:19 –** The desperation of those who were trying to stop Jesus is clear from their words.

**Read John 12:20-24**

**12:20 –** On “Greeks” note the snide comment in 7:35. A class of non-Jews called “God Fearers” attended synagogue, but rejected the nationalism and ethnocentricity of the Jewish religion. See Acts 17:4 for a later mention of the same type of Greeks. Lenski writes that they were “former idolaters who had accepted the essentials of the Jewish religion and some of its customs and practices without formally being received into the synagogue by circumcision…” (859) Lenski directs his reader to 1 Kings 8:41-43, Words spoken in the 10th century B.C.

**12:21 –** This is the question that faith asks every Divine Service: “Sir, we desire to see Jesus.” On Philip, see 1:43-46. Here too he brings someone (Nathanael) to “see Jesus”. On Bethsaida, see John 1:44. Bethsaida was a town on the north east tip of the Sea of Galilee. It was positioned to the east of the border of the region of Galilee, in the region of the Tetrarchy of Philip, which was north of the Decapolis.

**12:22 –** Philip does not go directly to Jesus. He gets Andrew, Peter’s brother, and together they tell Jesus.

Why might Philip not simply have taken the Greek men to see the Lord? The Scripture does not clearly tell us. Lenski reminds us that Jesus had taught them not to “go in the way of the Gentiles” (Matthew 15:24). He was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel (Matthew 15:24). Other sheep would be gathered, but that only in the future (John 10:10). All that said, He also heard the prayer of the Canaanite woman, referred to “many” coming from the “east and the west” (Matthew 8:11), and praised the faith of the Roman centurion at Capernaum, who was no Jew (Matthew 8:5-10; Luke 7:2-9).

12:23 – Consider the Lord’s response “The hour has come in order that the Son of Man be glorified” in the context of the disciples telling Jesus that there were Greeks who wanted to see Him. The Lord has said many times “My hour has not yet come” (see 2:4; 7:6, 30; 8:20). But now it has come. This marks a turning point in the Gospel. See 13:1. The shadow of the cross falls upon the Lord. The Greeks seeking Him is apparently a sign. In the context of 7:30 and 8:20 this means that He will now allow them to “lay hands on Him.”

The hour has come. What happens in that hour? His Passion and death. And yet here He identifies it as the time for “the Son of Man to be glorified. The NKJV supplies the word “should”, which is not in the Greek. The subjunctive expresses unrealized truth, futurity without doubt. Lenski writes “Jesus was glorified by the obedience he rendered to the Father even unto the death of the cross, and in the redemption he thus achieved for the fallen world; he was glorified when the Father highly exalted him, giving him a name above ever name and seating him at this right hand, he was and is glorified in the work of the Holy Spirit (16:14)…” (862) See John 7:39, 16:14, 17:5, 21:19.

12:24 – The glorification of the Son of Man is further explained by the Lord: “Amen, Amen, I say to you (pl.), unless a grain of wheat having fallen into the earth dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit.” He will be glorified in hanging on the tree, in falling into the ground, in dying, in remaining alone for three days, and then in bearing much fruit. The firstfruits are the first and best parts of the crop, offered to the Lord in the sure confidence of a bountiful harvest. Christ is the Firstfruits of the great harvest, of which you are part. See 1 Corinthians 15:20-24. Then read 36-38 of the same chapter.

**Read John 12:25-33**

12:25 – Having stated that He will die as the Firstfruits, the Lord now describes the harvest, the faithful: The one loving his soul/life destroys it, but the one hating his soul/life in this world will keep it into eternal life.” See Matthew 16:24-25.

12:26 – loosing one’s life in this world is here described by the Lord “If anyone serves Me, He *must* follow Me, and where I am there also My servant will be. If anyone serves me the Father will honor him.” See Matthew 4:19, 8:22, 9:9; Mark 8:34-38, 10:21; John 1:43, 10:27. What is it to follow Him? See John 13:36. When we follow Him, our works follow us: Revelation 14:13-14. That is how we are “honored” by the Father – we who follow Him are set apart on earth as we follow Him into heaven.

12:27 – The word translated “soul/life” in verse 25 is here translated simply “soul”, but it is the same word. His hour has come. “Now My soul is troubled, but what do I say? ‘Father, save me out of this hour?’ But on account of this I came into this hour.” See Psalm 6:3-9, a Psalm of which Christ is the center. See Psalm 31:10-16, Matthew 26:38.

12:28 – Now the Lord, who had directed His teaching to Philip and Andrew (see verse 23), directs His Words to the Father in prayer: “Father, glorify Your Name!” The answer comes in a voice from heaven: “I have both glorified it and I will glorify it again.”

12:28 cont. – See 5:37, still true here because those who stood by heard what they believed to be thunder. See also Matthew 3:17, Mark 9:7. The Father will be glorified by the active and passive obedience of the Son in His Passion, in His resurrection, and in His ascension. See 17:4-5. Here the Father honors the Son, see 8:54. Now in John’s Gospel the cross is in full view.

12:29 – See Job 37:5; Exodus 19:16; Revelation 11:19, 16:17-18.

12:30 – The voice of the Father was not for the Son’s benefit, rather for those who stood by, that they know that He is the Sent One of the Father. See 11:42.

12:33 – The Incarnate Son’s presence ushers in the great and terrible Day of the Lord. So now is the Judgment, and now is the “ruler” of this world judged. See 14:30, 16:8-11; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4; Ephesians 2:1-3; Luke 10:18; Revelation 12:9; 20:1-3.

12:32 – The crushing of the serpent’s head comes in the lifting up of the Christ from the earth. See Genesis 3:15; John 3:14-18.

12:33 – The Evangelist explains: “This He said signing what kind of death He was about to die.” (Braden) Similar language is applied to St. Peter in John 21:19. What immediately precedes Christ’s prophecy of how Peter would die? So the sand of the paths of the martyrs are marked by their blood.

**Read John 12:34-36**

12:34 – The crowd well understands that He has identified Himself as the Christ, the Son of Man. Now they test Him by the Scriptures, echoing their prince: “Has God indeed said…?” See Ezekiel 37:25. The quote “It is necessary for the Son of Man to be lifted up” is an apparent reference to 3:13-14, although in verse 32 of this chapter He has spoken similar words. See 8:28-29. Now they demand to know “Who is this Son of Man?” See John 1:51, 5:26-27, 6:27; Acts 7:56; Revelation 14:14. Again, “Son of Man” is the most-used moniker for God the Son by God the Son.

12:35 – How does the Lord answer the question “Who is this Son of Man?” First see 7:33, where He has already promised He would be with them a short time. Then see John 1:4-9, 8:12, and many others in John’s Gospel. Who is the Son of Man? He is the Light. And He is the Way (14:6), so that those who do not walk (conduct their lives) in His Light are lost in the darkness. See 11:10; 1 John 2:8-11.

12:36 – How does one become a “son of the Light”? Faith in Christ is the central theme of every Book of the Bible. See John 6:35, 40, 63-65. Now see Luke 16:8; Ephesians 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:5-10. Having said these things, “Jesus departed hidden from them.” (Braden). See 8:59.

**Read John 12:37-40**

12:37 – How do the crowds respond? Do they believe? Why? The answer lies in verses 38-40, where the Evangelist points to show that this is the fulfilment of prophecy.

12:37, Continued – Lenski translates “Yet though he had done so many signs before them, they were not believing in him.” The NIV has “Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in Him”. The ESV has “Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in Him.” These English translations wrestle with how to render the imperfect tense of the verb ἐπίστευον. The imperfect treats of continual, repetitive, or habitual action in the past. See 1:11.

12:38 – See Isaiah 53:1. Isaiah 53 is a chapter of 12 verses. What is it describing? On “The Arm of the Lord”, see Exodus 6:6, 15:16; Isaiah 30:30, 51:9-11, 52:10, 62:8. In Isaiah, the Arm of the Lord is a Messianic title. Consider this in light of John 12:38 and the Evangelist’s inspired use of this verse. St. John, speaking/writing by the Holy Spirit, here tells us that this is the fulfillment of the prophecy.

12:39 – “On account of this”, the verse begins. They were continually unable to believe. On account of what? They were continually disbelieving “the Report”, the Holy Gospel. Rejecting the Gospel prevents saving faith. See Romans 10:13-21, noting St. Paul’s citation of Isaiah. See John 5:44, 8:42-45. This is still true today – those who will not hear cannot come to saving faith.

12:40 – When Isaiah says “Here am I, send me!”, what does God tell Isaiah to preach to the people? See Isaiah 6:9-13; Psalm 115:4-8, 135:16-18. Just as those who craft idols become like them, so do those who have faith in Christ become (are declared to be) like Him. Now see Matthew 13:13-18; 2 Corinthians 5:7. In John 12:40, what would end their blindness? Consider this in light of: faith, repentance, salvation.

**Read John 12:41-43**

12:41 – When St. John writes “he saw His glory”, consider these Words in the context of the Isaiah quotations – see Isaiah 6:1-5. What is St. John here teaching regarding Isaiah’s understanding of Jesus Christ?

12:42 –Again here we meet a verb in the imperfect tense, ὡμολόγουν, “they did not try to confess”, or “had not begun to confess”, either in a continual state. Can one have saving faith without confessing it? See Romans 10:6-11. See John 7:31. Consider our rites of Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation, and Reception of Members. For whom is their confession important? On being put out of the synagogue, see John 9:22.

12:43 – Here we have the underlying reason that the leaders were continually unable to confess Jesus. It was not simply fear of being put out of the synagogue, although that would have been the result. The motive, that which was in their hearts, was that they preferred to please men rather than God. See John 5:44. The rulers of Israel were to have been God fearers, see Exodus 18:21-22; 2 Samuel 23:3. Consider Moses’ parting Words to the Israelites in Deuteronomy 31:12-13. See Acts 5:29.

**Read John 12:44-50**

12:44 – Continuing the thought of 12:37, the Lord knows their unbelief. And He knows the reason for it – they prefer the glory of men rather than the glory of God, His Father. Note here the strong Trinitarian background to our Lord’s Words. See Matthew 10:40. Christ as the “Sent One” of the Father is a major theme of John, as we have seen repeatedly above.

As we saw in John 6, faith in Christ is the major theme of His Johanine dialogues. See John 6:29, 35-36, 39, 47-48, 61-64. Compare these verses with 12:44. According to John 12:37, they were not believing in Him. The Greek for “believing” uses a tense that imparts continual action.

On Jesus “crying out”, see John 7:28.

12:45 – Again our Lord stresses His unity with the Father. See John 6:40, 14:9.

12:46 – The Greek construction places “I” and “Light” in the nominative case, making them equal to one another – He is the Light. To be saved from the shadowy darkness of this fallen world is to believe in Him, the Light.

Note here the strong relationship between hearing and believing. It is His Word that works faith. See Acts 15:7. This hearing/believing continues today through the Apostolic Word. See Romans 10:14-17, remembering the Words our Lord has just spoken, and His citation of the Prophet Isaiah.

To walk in the Light, or to walk in darkness, are the choices. See Matthew 4:16; Luke 1:76-79 (a reference to John’s preaching of Christ); Luke 11:34-36; John 1:4-5, 8:12, and many others in John. Christ as the Light is a major theme of this Gospel.

12:47 – See Luke 11:27-28. Our Lord has spoken about hearing His Word and believing. Now He progresses to an explanation of those who will not hear and believe. They will be judged.

Our Lord has already taught that those who hear His Word and do not believe shall be judged - see John 3:17-21, noting the unity that His Words there have with 12:47. But He has not come to judge, although He will come again to judge. His Coming in the Flesh is for the salvation of the world. Again here, as in John 3, we see the doctrine of objective justification clearly explained. Pastor will explain objective justification, and its corollary, subjective justification. Can you find both of them in the Words of our Lord in this section of John 12?

12:48 – The “rejection” of Christ’s Words is equal to “not receiving” His Word – something the hearer elects to do. In 12:47 the Lord spoke of “keeping” His Word, here He speaks of the opposite – rejecting His Word. The very Word rejected will be the Word by which those who reject it will be judged on the last day. See Matthew 5:17-18; John 3:18; Hebrews 4:12-13. What do these Words teach for you and for me? Can you keep the Word without hearing it? Where is the Word heard? Note that Scripture never speaks of reading the Word, but hearing it.

12:49 – The relationship between the Son and the Father, and the Word the Son speaks (the Greek is “to speak openly”) is again revealed. Christ is the Apostle of the Father. He is Faithful in His Work and His Word. Read again John 6:39-40, 8:28-30.

12:50 – The Commandments that Christ speaks bring life – Commandments the Father gave Him to speak. Here the Lord repeats the central teachings of this section. See 3:34-36, 15:10.

12:50, Cont. – In 6:40 the Lord says “…everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him” will have everlasting life. How does that compare with this verse? See 17:2. Consider how the will of the Father, seeing the Son, believing in the Son, and the commands the Father gave to the Son are related. See Matthew 17:5.

**Read John 13:1-5**

John 11:55 prepared us for these events (as we see also in 2:13). The events of this account are commemorated on Maundy Thursday at the evening Mass, the Mass of the Institution. The name “Maundy” is taken from verse 34 of this chapter, which in Latin reads “*mandatum novum do vobis*…”, the first word in 13th century middle-English being “*maunde.*”The Institution of the Sacrament of the Altar recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke and 1 Corinthians does not occur in John. The events of this chapter, and the several that follow, mark this night as that of His betrayal. The Great High Priestly Prayer of our Lord in the Upper Room is unparalleled in all of Scripture.

13:1 – The connection between the Passover celebration and the Lord’s actions in the Upper Room is not lost on the Christian – the perfect Lamb without Blemish will be sacrificed, His Blood marking the lentils of our souls, that death pass us over. The Lamb will be eaten by those saved by His Blood. See 1 Corinthians 10:16 for an immediate reference to the “after supper cup”, the “Cup of Blessing”.

See John 2:4, 7:30, 8:20 – and now He knows His hour has come. See 12:23, 17:1, 18:4. What will happen in “His hour”? The Lord has stressed that He came from the Father, that He is the One sent by the Father, and that what He speaks is what the Father has given Him to speak. As proof, He now knows it is time to return to the Father. He told them that He is not of this world, see John 8:23. Now He will be taken out of this world. See 16:28.

Knowing His hour had come, He loved them. He loved “His own”, the ones in the world. He loved them unto the end. In the Greek the word “end” is from the same root as τετέλεσται, “finished”, see 19:30. See 17:11 for His prayer for those “in the world.”

13:2 – In rapid succession, St. John gives us several facts: the supper “had come to pass”, in some versions translate “supper had ended”, others “during supper”, that they were in the midst of the Passover Meal (verse 4 gives weight to the translation “during supper”); and that the devil had already cast into Judas of Simon Iscariot’s heart to betray Him. It is in light of this that the Lord does what He will do next. See Luke 22:1-7; John 13:27. If you are following in the Greek text, note the function of the genitive absolute here – it expresses two unrelated things taking place at the same time, the third is identified in the next verse.

13:3 – The participle “knowing” hearkens us back to 13:1, and the subject Jesus. Note the separate facts that John presents: Jesus knows, all things have been given into His hands, the Father gave them to Him, He came from the Father, and He is going to the Father. These assertions by the Evangelist underscore the veracity of the Lord’s repeated testimony.

13:3, continued – On the Father placing all things in the hands of the Son, see 3:35; Matthew 11:27; Luke 10:22. St. Augustine makes the point that even Judas is placed into the Son’s hands. What Judas will do would be impossible but for the Son allowing it. (Ancient Christian Commentary, 85)

13:4 - The Lord “rises from the supper, and places aside the vestments, and taking a towel he girded Himself.” (translation Braden) Lenski elaborates on the vestments – “the flowing outer robe and the girdle”. (913) Lenski translates λέντιον, “linen towel”, as “apron”. The word only occurs twice in the New Testament, both times in this account. Lenski asserts that the apron was there for the use of the servant, and had bands attached used for tying it around oneself, like an apron.

St. John places the washing of the disciples’ feet during the Passover meal. It would have been traditional to eat from a kind of couch, in a reclining position. In verse 23 it seems that the Lord has returned to the table. Washing feet was the job of the lowest servant, and was apparently done as one entered the house. Here our Lord takes the place of the servant, cleansing the feet of his disciples. He humbles Himself. This is manifestation of His great love, and a prophecy of His cross, where His vestments (in John 19 a different Greek word is used for “tunic”) will also be removed to allow for His flogging and crucifixion.

Christ is the Promised Suffering Servant – see Isaiah 53:10-11. See also Matthew 20:27-28. He served you by bearing your sins, and by going to the cross in your place. He is the Suffering Servant that cleanses the souls of those who believe in Him. He also cleanses your soul by the forgiveness of your sins as you are washed in the washing of regeneration He gives, and as you eat the Meal He prepares, the Sacrament of the Altar.

13:5 – The washbasin was apparently there and available. Our Lord “cast water into the washbasin and He began to wash the feet of the disciples.” Lenski says that their sandals would already have been removed upon entering the house. (914). To wash the disciples feet as they reclined at table would have meant that the Lord knelt before each of them, placing the basin on the floor, washing their feet, and drying them before moving on to the next disciple. The God through whom the oceans were placed now serves sinful men from a basin of water.

**Read John 13:6-11**

13:6 – The Scripture does not detail the order in which the disciples were seated, but at some point, the Lord came to Simon Peter. Peter’s objection takes the form of a question – “O Lord, you are washing my feet?” The Greek word order does give stress to the word “my”, as if Peter stressed the word. Several translations supply the word “going”, as in “going to wash” (present conative), but the Greek is in the present indicative active, and uses no participle. By calling Jesus “Lord”, Peter is providing the great contrast between Who Jesus Is, and what He is doing. It is clear that the Lord’s State of Humiliation confuses His disciples.

13:7- The Lord answers promising that Peter will know what He is doing “after these things”. In verse 12 the Lord begins the explanation. But their understanding will be better when He is risen from the dead.

13:8 –Lenski opines that Peter’s strong refusal makes Peter lord and Jesus the servant. (917) Putting the best construction on Peter’s words, he is simply unable to bear the Lord serving in this way. Peter has been called “impetuous”. See 21:7; Matthew 14:28-31, 26:72.

In any case, Peter’s refusal, which in the Greek expresses the strongest negation, ends with “unto the ages”, we might say “forever and ever.” In no way will Peter allow the Lord to wash his feet.

The Lord’s answer is exclusive. Either He washes, or one has no part in Him – which points to a different washing, a better washing, Baptismal washing. Faith never says “no” to Christ – even when what the Lord does surpasses our understanding. Consider Luke 1:38.

13:9 – Peter’s impetuousness seemingly knows no bounds. He goes from “never” to “not my feet only but also the hands and head.” Peter still finds himself ordering the Lord’s doings. How like Peter we are… Thanks be to God, as he protected Peter from his own will so does He protect us. And thanks be to God, the washing the Lord provides cleanses the soul – and that unto the ages.

13:10 – That the Lord was speaking spiritually, a mark of the Gospel according to St. John (remember chapters 2, 3, 4, and 6?) is now evident. The uncleanness to which the Lord refers is not dirty feet – it is the unbelief, the spiritual uncleanness, of Judas Iscariot, which is further explained in verse 11. Ephrem the Syrian, a 4th century theologian and hymn writer, comments that Judas responded to Jesus’ washing of his feet by giving His feet over to be pierced. (Ancient Christian Commentary, 94)

13:11 – The Evangelist inserts an explanation, so that the hearer rightly understand. Consider the Lord’s actions in light of the fact that He knew Judas would betray Him. The Greek verb for “knew” is one of durative action, we might say “knew all along”, indeed He knew from eternity. Unbelief prevents the cleansing that Jesus would give.

**Read John 13:12-17**

13:12 – The Evangelist provides an exact description of the events and the chronology. Details like this testify to the veracity of Scripture.

As He promised Peter in verse 7, now the Lord will teach His disciples what the foot washing signified. The dative of advantage marks the pronoun “you (pl)”, we might translate “…do you know what I have done for your benefit?”

13:13 – “You call Me The Teacher and The Lord, and well you say, for I am.” (Braden) The “I am” in the Greek here is not the Great “I AM”, although here the Lord identifies Himself as The Lord. Compare this with Matthew 27:9-12.

13:14 – Our Lord’s Words here are clear – He directs the disciples to wash one another’s feet. This has given birth to the Maundy ceremony of the Western Church in which the Bishop or Pastor washes the feet of the members on Maundy Thursday. We understand His command to mean that we are to submit to one another and to serve one another, rather than to physically wash one another’s feet. See what Peter, whose feet Jesus washed, writes in 1 Peter 5:5-7. See also Ephesians 5:1, 21-27.

13:15 – The “example” the Lord has given us, and how it is to be done among us, is generally understood in three different ways:

1. We should physically wash one another’s feet
2. We should be submissive to one another and serve one another
3. Ordained men, in the Apostolic tradition, should remove the filth from other men – the filth of sin, by the means and power of the Sacraments

Lenski points out that the Greek word used, καθὼς, is rightly translated “just as” rather than “that which” – we are not to do that which the Lord did, but to do as He did – put away pride, be willing to be last, submit to one another, serve one another. The Greek word for “example”, ὑπόδειγμα, is alternately translated “example” and “copy”, supporting Lenski’s assertion. See Hebrews 4:11, 8:5, 9:23; James 5:10; 2 Peter 2:6. In light of these verses, consider our Lord’s Words in Matthew 20:16; Mark 9:35. How is it Christ-like to do so? See Revelation 1:17.

13:16 – Further supporting our conclusion regarding the Lord’s will for us as expressed in verse 15, here the Lord applies His Word directly to the Twelve – they will be able to work miracles, they will have the very Oracles of God to declare to men, but they are to remain humble. See Matthew 10:24.

13:17 – The Lord sums up His example with a double conditional sentence – “If you are knowing these things”, “Blessed are you if you do them.” The first requires the wisdom of faith. The second expresses that faith through actions. See James 1:21 and 1:25. So it is with us – we are saved by faith alone, but saving faith is never alone. By now you know Ephesians 2:8-10 by heart… See Luke 10:28, 37.

**Read John 13:18-20**

13:18 - The Lord knows whom He has chosen. See 15:16-17. The Gospels chronicle His choosing of the Twelve. But more, in the context of His next comment, He is referring to their election as redeemed of Christ. See John 6:70. Carefully consider Ephesians 1:3-14, the source of much of our teaching on the doctrine of election. Then see Romans 8:28-30, Mark 13:20, where the same verbal root for “chosen” is used.

The Lord quotes Psalm 41:9. Read Psalm 41:5-9, and consider those Words in the context of the Last Supper. Note here that in the Greek the verb used for “eat” is the same verb as used in John 6:54 (as we noted earlier, the verb in 6:53 is a different verb). The first meaning of this verb is to “gnaw” or to “crunch”. Here the verb translates the standard Hebrew word for “he ate”, אָכַל.

Note that the Lord reveals that this fulfills the Scriptures. Now we can better understand what He meant by “knowing whom I have chosen”, both in terms of His imminent betrayal, and in terms of everlasting life. See Psalm 55:12-15. Lenski, who tends towards rectilinear typology, rejects that the Lord is speaking of Judas being the fulfillment, and is rather speaking of Himself.

13:18, Cont. – In verse 10 the Lord told the Disciples gathered in the Upper Room that they were “not all” clean. In verse 18 He reiterates that He speaks concerning “not all of you.” That “not all” will be revealed in the sign of the sop. For those interested, in Psalm 41:9 (40:9 in the Septuagint) the Greek Old Testament reads “ὁ ἐσθίων” where the Hebrew has אוֹכֵל , the qal participle. 31 times St. Luke uses ἔσθιω for “eat.” He uses τρώγω 5 times, 4 in John 6:54-58, and once in John 13:18.

13:19 – Here the Lord speaks clear prophecy – He tells them before it happens, that when it happens, they will know that “I AM”. First, He foretells an event. Which event? That one of them, one that isn’t clean, one He hasn’t chosen, would eat bread with Him, and then lift up his heal against Him – do Him harm. Remember 6:70? Now see 15:16-19, where His “chosen” are identified by their work

On the prophecy identifying Him as the Lord, the Great “I AM”, see 14:29, 16:1-4; Matthew 24:24-25; Isaiah 43:10-11, 46:9-10. This Truth becomes a major theme of this section of John.

He desires that they believe that He is the Great “I AM”. We have already established that to believe it is necessary to salvation. See 8:24.

13:20 – Now His Unity with the Father is clearly expressed, and He imparts that Unity to the ones He chooses, the ones He cleanses, the ones He sends. See Matthew 10:40. This is a Mystery that God provides through the Office of the Called and Ordained Pastor – see 1 Corinthians 3:21-4:2 (here the chapter break also breaks a cogent thought).

**Read John 13:21-26**

13:21 – The Lord now returns to the topic of the one who is not clean, the one He has not chosen. He knows what will happen, and it is horrible. So He is “troubled in spirit.” Consider 11:33, and the setting there. He is God and Man. Then He “witnessed” and said “Amen, Amen, I say to you that one out of you will betray Me.” See Matthew 26:21-25; Mark 14:18-21. What happens next in Matthew and Mark? The sign of the sop is given after the Institution of the Sacrament of the Altar. Judas received Holy Communion. Our Confessions assert this in the Formula of Concord Solid Declaration 7.33 and 7.60. See Luke 22:14-23.

13:22 – The disciples looked at one another, “perplexed”, or “at a loss”, concerning what He said. This interjection by St. John introduces the dialogue that follows in the coming verses, in which St. John will introduce himself as the disciple who Jesus loved.

13:23 – Here we have a first-hand, eyewitness account of the Upper Room. On the disciple who Jesus loved, see 20:2, 21:7, 20. How great was that love? See 19:26. The same Greek word for “bosom”, κόλπῳ, means “the front of the body between the arms.” It occurs only five times in the Gospels, and once in Acts. In the Gospels it is used to describe “Abraham’s bosom” in Luke 16:22ff, in John 1:18 it describes the “bosom” of the Father. In Luke 6:38 it is the bosom into which the full measure is poured. The same Greek word is used for “bay”, see Acts 27:39. Why would this be?

13:24 – Simon Peter motions to St. John to ask Jesus – this reveals the love that the Twelve knew the Lord had for St. John. The Greek verb translated “motioned” in the New King James means “signaled, beckoned”, and can include nodding to point to something or someone. In Scripture the verb occurs only here and in Acts 24:10.

13:25 - That He reclines again onto the Lord’s breast ( a different word is used here, not “bosom”) proves that he is the Disciple who Jesus loved. See 19:26, 20:2, 21:7, 20. Here we find a helpful referent that aids us in understanding later references to “the Disciple whom Jesus loved.”

13:26 – The answer and the sign come in rapid succession. Our Lord answers the question “who is it?” by explaining the sign, then giving the sign. He will dip the fragment of His bread and give it to him. The word translated “piece of bread” is ψωμίον in the Greek, which means a “piece or morsel”. It occurs only here in the New Testament. In the Septuagint, it is used in Numbers 11:4, 18 (where the Lord’s promise of meat uses a different word); and Isaiah 58:14, where it occurs in verbal form “He will feed you with morsels”.

Then the Lord immediately does what He has described, giving the morsel to Judas Simon Iscariot. The Lord’s prophecy, and that of Psalm 41:9, are fulfilled. For the same action, see Ruth 2:14, where Boaz, the Kinsman Redeemer, see Ruth 3:9, (where the unfortunate NKJ translation of גֹאֵל is “close relative”) uses the same sign to identify the one he will redeem.

The Fathers wrestle with the relationship between this fragment and the Blessed Bread which is His Body, and to correlate the accounts in Matthew and John. Ephrem the Syrian writes here that Jesus dipped the bread in the cup of water, and “washed the blessing from it and thereby marked the offender.” (*Ancient Christian Commentary,* 104.) St. Augustine writes that Judas had already received the Sacrament before this sign was given. (*ibid,* 105) St. John Chrysostom writes that the public rebuke was meant to bring Judas to repentance, but it didn’t work. (*ibid*) Lenski comments that the Lord was trying “to break his hard heart in repentance, and thus save his miserable soul”. (947) Remembering our study notes from 13:21, our understanding is in line with St. Augustine’s.

**Read John 13:27-30**

13:27 – As the Lord had stated in 13:2, so “now after” the sign of the sop does Satan enter Judas. Satan enters after the sop, not with it. God is not the author of sin, and God indeed tempts no one. Satan must obey God, see Job 1:7. See Luke 22:3-5. The Lord had already promised this in Matthew 26:25. In fact, here the Lord must give permission to Judas to do what he “is doing”, and that quickly. The Lord knows what this means. Lenski points to the inchoative sense of the verb – “what thou art occupied with”, i.e., “what thou hast begun.”

13:28 - The Lord’s command was indiscernible to the ones reclining with Him. Their lack of understanding will be explained in the next verse.

13:29 – Judas office as money-box keeper is made clear here (see 12:6). The Eleven thought the Lord’s command was to buy what was needed for the feast, or to give something to the poor.

13:30 – Two facts are related by the Evangelist here (remember he was at the table, reclining on the Lord’s breast). First, Judas complied with the command of the Lord – “he went out straight away”. (Braden) The second fact brings us into the ominous setting of our Lord’s betrayal: “And it was night.” Light and darkness are major themes of the Gospel according to St. John. See John 1:5, 3:19, 8:12, 12:35, 12:46. See also 1 Thessalonians 5:6-10.

**Read John 13:31-35**

13:31 – The Lord’s Words teach the importance of what is about to happen – “Now the Son of Man has been glorified and God has been glorified in Him.” Note the fact that our Lord refers to a past event – His approval of the satanic desires of the betrayer. “Son of Man” is frequently used by the Lord to describe Himself in His State of Humiliation, see 1:51. In this context, that of His betrayal, see 3:13-14.

Judas went out in the dark. The dark would envelop the Son of Man in Golgotha. Still the Lord can exclaim “Now the Son of Man has been glorified…” It is in His great act of redemption, yes in His resurrection and Ascension, but here clearly also including His betrayal, His arrest, His suffering, and His crucifixion, that He is glorified. Lenski writes “Jesus’ death is now assured, his actual redemptive work is now ushered in, the final decisive act has not begun. Viewing it thus, it is glorious indeed…” (956)

That the Son’s glorification brings glory to the Father is a clear theme in John’s Gospel. See 7:39, 11:4, 12:16, 12:23, 12:28, 14:13, 15:8, 17:4, 17:10.

13:32 – The blessed Unity of the Trinity is seen here in a Mystery – the darkness that is about to befall the Son brings glory to the Father, who glorifies the Son. Note the change of tense in the verb “glorify” from past to future. It will come to pass “straight away”. The glorification “of Him” will come “through Him”, and yet of the Father and to the Father.

13:33 – Here the Lord repeats, in the context of the darkness soon to come, in the context of His glorification, His Words to the Jews in 7:32-36. What He said to the Jews He now reiterates to the Eleven – He is with them for but a little while, and where He goes they are not able to go.

13:34 – In the context of His going, in the context of their inability to follow, He gives them a new command: “love one another.” And this love is to be as His love for them has been. See 15:12-15; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:11, 23; 1 John 4:7, 11. Finally, consider this verse in the context of John 15:8-14.

13:35 – Just as the Father is glorified by the Son, and glorifies the Son, so as the Eleven love one another all will know that they are Jesus’ disciples, because as He did for them so they do to one another. This is a description of God’s will for His Church, the Bride of Christ.

**Read John 13:36-38**

13:36 – Peter asks the same question the Jews asked in 7:35, although here Peter asks the Lord directly. The Lord answers in the context of His suffering and death – Peter cannot follow Him into that now, but later Peter will follow Him. Peter will be martyred in Rome.

13:36, Continued – See John 12:26, and 21:18-19, where the Lord prophesies the death by which Peter will “follow Him”.

13:37 – What Peter promises but cannot do, the Lord does for Peter, and for you. Peter’s spirit is willing, but his flesh, like each of ours, is weak. While St. John remains with Jesus throughout His crucifixion, John does not die for Jesus.

13:38 – What the Lord prophesies is recorded in Scripture. See 18:25-27; Matthew 26:69-75 for what Peter does.

As chapter 13 draws to a close, the cross is ever nearer. To prepare the disciples for what will come, now unimaginable to them, the Lord begins the dialogue that will include the Great High Priestly Prayer. See 16:29-33. In chapters 14-16 the Lord teaches His disciples in the “Upper Room” dialogue, the High Priestly Prayer will follow in chapter 17.

**Read John 14:1-6**

14:1 – Here the Lord addresses all the disciples (the word “your” is plural in the Greek). Knowing what will occur, He bids the disciples “Let not your hearts be troubled.” That they not be troubled, that they have peace even during the violence that is to come, the Lord, in His mercy, gives them the Way to peace – “Believe in God, *which is to say* believe in Me.” (Braden) The Greek conjunction here can be rendered epexegetically. The Unity of the Trinity is a central theme of John. See 12:44. On the peace that He will give them, see verse 27.

14:2 – This assertion of our Lord is immediately connected to His consoling reminder “Do not let your hearts be troubled.” He is going away. Where He goes, they cannot follow (verse 36). And yet, they will follow (verse 36). So His leaving is for them, and for you. He has gone to prepare a place for them, and for you. See Psalm 23:6 for the same Promise.

The Greek word translated “mansions” is μοναὶ, which means “dwelling place” or “abode”. Most English translations render this word “place”. It occurs only twice in the New Testament. The other is in John 14:23. See its use there. This can easily be understood to refer to our heavenly bodies, which we will receive at the resurrection, and the place to which He has ascended, taking man’s Flesh unto Himself, through death, and into heaven. See 1 Corinthians 15:42-44; 2 Corinthians 5:1. Note how verse 2 connects to verse 3 and the resurrection.

The word μοναὶ also conveys the idea of permanence of dwelling. Lenski warns against “spiritualizing” this assertion of Jesus: “This figurative language is quite transparent. There is no need to spiritualize the concrete terms which the Scriptures use with reference to heaven, as thought they refer to a future condition. Our human minds cannot get beyond conceptions of time and space, hence the Scriptures always use these with reference to heaven, wisely leaving it to the great future when we shall experience just what eternity and the place of God’s abode is.” (970)

14:3 – Here the Lord promises to return. He does so with a conditional sentence. On His going away, see John 14:19, 16:16-20. If He goes and prepares a place for their benefit (and ours!), then He is coming again and will take them (and us!) to Himself, in order that where He is they (and we!) also will be. He has indeed gone. And He will indeed come to take us, to take you. See 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 for a clear description of what that will look like. The Lord’s Words are Words of comfort, for He will leave, and they will have only His Words of Promise to cling to, as we do.

**14:4 –** Having explained that He will go away, now He makes a promise: “And where I go you know the way.” This Words are Words of comfort. He has promised to return for them, to bring them with Him. Now He tells them that they know the Way. Faith knows the Way. And the Lord, the center and substance of our faith, will soon explain the Way to them.

The early Christians referred to the faith as The Way. So it is that the Didache, an early Christian document written between 55 and 100 A.✠ D. (while the Apostles were still alive!) begins “There are two ways, one of life and one of death; but a great difference between the two ways. The way of life, then, is this: First, you shall [love](https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09397a.htm) God who made you; second, your neighbor as yourself…” (Didache 1.1) Those of us who are in the Proverbs study recognize the “two ways” as a major theme of Proverbs, as seen in Proverb 12:28: “In the way of righteousness is life, And in its pathway there is no death.” (and many others in Proverbs and Psalms, see for instance Psalm 119:105.)

**14:5 –** We have seen that one of the marks of the Gospel according to St. John is that the Lord speaks in heavenly truths, those of earthly mind are befuddled by it. Remember the wine at Cana, Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman at the well, the Bread of Life discourse of John 6? Here Thomas responds to the Lord’s assertion that they know the way, indicating that he (and they) haven’t understood. Earthly reason follows the argument: if they don’t know where He is going, how can they know the way?

**14:6 –** In another great “I AM” statement, the Lord answers Thomas. He asserts four distinct Truths: 1) He is the Way. 2) He is the Truth. 3) He is the Life. 4) No one comes to the Father except through Him. He is the Way - See 10:7-9, Hebrews 10:19-20. This opens Proverbs and Psalms to us as well – the Way of Righteousness is Christ.

He is the Truth – see 1:17, 8:32, 17:17; Psalm 31:5, 40:10-11, 43:3; Ephesians 4:21; 2 John 1:3-4, and many, many more.

He is the Life – see 5:26, 6:35, 8:12, 11:25-26, 20:31; Matthew 7:14; Acts 3:14-15; Romans 6:23; Colossians 3:4; 1 John 1:1-2; Revelation 21:27; and many, many more.

Here Lenski, quoting Koegel, writes “He does not say, ‘I show you the way,’ like a second Moses, but ‘I am the way.’ Nor ‘I have the truth’, like another Elijah, but ‘I am the truth.” Not only ‘I lead unto life,’ as one of his apostles; but ‘I am the life.” (978) This statement of Jesus sums up His salvific work. The opposites – the way of unrighteousness, falsehood, and death, are the ways of this fallen world. He has answered Thomas’ question – to know Him is the know the Way, to know the Truth, and to have life, and to go where He goes.

**Read John 14:7-11**

**14:7** – In a continuing answer to Thomas’ question, the Lord expounds on the assertion “No one comes to the Father except through Me.” “If you have been knowing Me,” the Lord teaches (Braden’s translation), “also My Father you will know.” The “you” is plural in the Greek. Again we receive from our Lord a conditional sentence, what grammarians call a “mixed conditional sentence.” Here the sentence begins (protasis) with an “if”, but ends (apodosis) with a future indicative.

The result of having known Jesus is that they will know the Father. This links immediately to the thought that no one comes to the Father except by the Son. The Lord attaches a promise to this – “From now you know Him and have seen Him.” (Braden) See 8:19. This is a divine mystery. To know Jesus is to know the Father. See Ephesians 3:8-12. If you would see the Father, look then at Jesus. Note the perfect tense at the end of the sentence, a “bookend” with the perfect tense in the previous assertion. See Romans 5:1-2.

On this Irenaeus (d. c. 202 A.✠ D.) writes “The Son reveals the knowledge of the Father through his own manifestation. For the manifestation of the Son is the knowledge of the Father, since all things are manifested through the Word.” (*Ancient Christian Commentary*, 129)

**14:8** – Philip understands the bare meaning of the Lord’s promise, but not the mystery. He asks “O Lord, show us the Father, and it suffices us.” (Braden) He wants to see God. See 12:21 for a bit of irony. The Lord’s answer will delve into the Unity of the Trinity, and the mystery of the ontology of the only True God. See also John 8:18-19, where the Jews ask a similar question – there the Jews demand and test, here Philip begs.

**14:9** – In verse 7 the Lord said “If you have been knowing Me…” Here he identifies Philip as one who hasn’t truly “known” Him. See 12:45. To see the Son is to see the Father, for the Son is God Incarnate. So the Lord demands of Philip “How can you say ‘Show us the Father?’” See Matthew 17:17.

**14:10** – “Do you not believe…?” the Lord asks Philip. The “you” here is singular in the Greek. Again the Lord describes the Divine Mystery of the Unity of the Holy Trinity. On the Father working in the Son, see 8:28, 10:37-38. See Luke 22:42.

**14:11** – The Lord, having questioned Philip in front of the others, now returns to catechetical assertions that only faith can receive: “Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me.” The command “believe” is plural in the Greek – He is now addressing the Eleven again. The verbal force of the command is “continue believing”. If this is too high a knowledge for them, the Lord brings to bear a second witness – His works: “But if not, on account of the works themselves believe.” Again here the command “believe” is plural. See 5:36. Consider the major theme of the Lord’s teaching – the Divine Mystery of the Unity of the Holy Trinity, through that which is seen, and that which is unseen.

**Read John 14:12-15**

**14:12 –** Only faith can believe that to see the Son is to see the Father. But the one who has such faith will be given to do amazing things.

**14:12, continued -** Consider the many miracles of the Apostles – see for instance Acts 3:6-8, 5:14-15, and many others. See also John 1:50, 5:20-21. On this verse St. Augustine wrote “”He says that they will do greater works than he does himself, but it is all by his doing such works in or by them, and not as if they did them of themselves… But what, then, are those greater works? Was it that their very shadow, as they themselves passed by, that healed the sick? For it is a mightier thing for a shadow, than for the hem of a garment, to possess the power of healing. The one work was done by Christ himself, the other by them. And yet it was he that did both.” (*Ancient Christian Commentary*, 134)

Lenski writes of the “greater things”: “Can there be greater? Indeed, far greater: convert sinners by God’s grace, carry the gospel to the ends of the earth, save souls for life eternal, 4:35-38; 10:16; 12:24 and 32; and the story of Acts.” (988-989) See also Mark 16:17-18.

“Because I am going to the Father.” See John 16:28. The Son is going to the Father. His “going away” is through His Passion, His crucifixion, His death, and His resurrection and ascension. All the promises of the Gospel find their center in His salvific Work, and in the fruits of that work – so too His promise of the works of the Apostles. This promise He makes to them now, that they have hope in the coming dark days. Their ability to do “greater things” relies on their being given the Holy Spirit (15-17). So the Lord going to His Father brings the giving of the Holy Spirit, by whom they will do such miracles.

**14:13 –** See 2:23. Note the relationship between the Name and Christ – to believe on His Name is to believe in Him, so also here in 14:13 to ask in His Name is to ask through Him, which brings glory to the Father. The Son is the Way. No one comes to the Father except through Him.

To ask “in the Name of Jesus” is not a formulaic suffix added to the end of a prayer that insures that the prayer will be granted. To ask “in the Name of Jesus” is to ask having saving faith in Him, and to have His Name placed upon you. The one who has the Name of Jesus placed upon him, and who prays believing in Him, prays in accord with God’s will, because the Spirit leads the Christian to pray. Consider Matthew 18:5; Matthew 18:20; Mark 9:39-41; 1 Corinthians 1:14-15; Revelation 2:13.

Lenski maintains that this assertion of our Lord is not a continuation of “…because I am going to the Father” in verse 12 (989-990), the relationship between the two is undeniable. Only because of what Christ has done can we approach the Father. Lenski writes that “in My Name” means “in union with”, “in connection with… To pray in Jesus’ name naturally involves faith in the revelation, also that the petition abide in the circle of that revelation.” (991)

“That the Father be glorified in the Son” – see 17:1-5. Note the relationship between the Name, the glorification, and the work – that work which He finished and His Apostles continued.

**14:14 –** Rightly understanding verses 12-13, this promise of our Lord comes as no surprise. To ask in “Jesus’ Name” is to ask in faith, believing in Him, having His Name, asking in accord with His will. See 15:7, 16. See 16:22-23, and note the relationship between the two. See also 16:26. See 1 John 3:22.

**14:15 –** Note how the theme of our Lord Words has developed: In verses 10 and 11 the Lord taught that He does not speak on His own authority, but rather that the Father dwells in Him. He then exhorts Philip to believe in Him. That thought continues in verse 12, and there He attaches a promise to it, a promise that continues into verse 13, and is expounded in verse 14.

Continuing the thought, He now asserts “If you are loving Me, My commands you will keep.” Lenski prefers “precepts” to commands, because of Luther’s comments on this verse, in which he details Christ’s commands: “that you faithfully preach concerning me, have my Word and Sacrament laid upon you, keep love and unity among yourselves for my sake, and suffer with patience whatever on this account comes upon you… For I do not mean to be a Moses… but I give you such precepts a you can and will keep without commanding, if you, indeed, love me.” (Lenski, 995, citing Luther from the Erlangen edition of *Luther’s Works*, vol. 49, pgs. 131-132)

See 15:10; 1 John 2:5, 5:3; Matthew 25:34-40 for an example of keeping the Lord’s precepts out of love for Him.

The love that the Lord speaks of in this verse is not the love of friendship, but the unconditional love that He seeks of Peter in 21:15. He asks for it twice, Peter answers with a lesser love, so finally our Lord seeks that lesser love of Peter.

**Read John 14:16-21**

**14:16** – This promise is predicated on the love for Christ of verse 15. The first word of this verse is conjunctive (in the English it is two words, “And I”.) This joins the assertion of verse 16 to the condition of verse 15 – to the one who loves Christ another Helper will be given by the Father, at the Son’s request (“I will ask…”). The Greek for “Helper” is παράκλητον, “Paraclete” an “advocate” or “counselor”. The etymology of this word is forensic, it is “courtroom talk”. The Latin is “advocatus”, one who represents another or stands for another between someone and a judge – a “mediator”, or “intercessor”. (BDAG) Outside of John’s Gospel this word is not used in Scripture. The Lord identifies that Helper in the next verse.

That the Father will send “another” Paraclete implies that the Lord Himself is a Paraclete. See 1 John 2:1 for a use of the same word. On the sending of the Holy Spirit see John 7:39, 15:26, 16:7. For the work of the Holy Spirit see 14:26.

From whom does the Holy Ghost proceed? We confess that the Holy Ghost “proceeds from the Father and the Son”. The Eastern church confesses only that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father, and counts the *filioque* as a violation of Canon VII of the Ephesian Council of A.✠ D. 431 (which condemned any departure from the Creed of the First Nicene Council of A.✠ D. 325). The First Council of Constantinople in A.✠ D. 381 confessed only that the Spirit proceeds “from the Father.” The words “and the Son”, the *filioque*, were arguably added to the Nicene Creed by the Synod of Toledo in A.✠ D 589. The doctrine, however, is much earlier than the contested term. That the earliest Christians made this assertion see Matthew 10:20; Galatians 4:6; 2 Thessalonians 2:8, and finally John 20:22, where the Spirit is given by the Son. (Pieper, Francis, *Christian Dogmatics*, vol. I. 1950, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House. 415)

**14:16, Continued –** “Venerable” Bede, an 8th century English Benedictine Monk, historian, and exegetical and theological author, provides an interesting comment on the Procession of the Holy Spirit: “He will ask the Father through his humanity and will give [us another Paraclete] with the Father through his divinity.” (*Ancient Christian Commentary*, 137) This position is echoed in Lenski, quoting Luther:”…in v. 13, 14 “’I will do’ refers to the divine nature of Jesus, while here ‘I myself will request’ refers to his human nature…” (996)

Although the New King James reads “I will pray the Father…”, the Greek verb for “I pray”, προσεύχομαι,is not used here by our Lord. He rather uses the verb ἐρωτάω, “I ask”. The Son is “equal to the Father as touching His Godhead,” but “inferior to the Father as touching His Manhood”. (Athanasian Creed) The Son’s choice of verbs here lends weight to St. Bede’s argument. The Mystery of the Divine Equality of the Holy Trinity remains beyond our understanding. See Luke 24:49.

**14:17 –** Here the Lord teaches us more about the Spirit. See verse 26.

1. He is the Spirit of Truth. See 15:26, 16:13. To speak rightly of Christ is to speak Truth, for He is Truth See 14:6; 1 John 4:2-3; Romans 9:1. Thus He (the Holy Spirit) is the Spirit of Christ. See Romans 8:9; Philippians 1:19; 1 Peter 1:11.
2. The world cannot receive Him. See Matthew 16:23; Acts 19:8-9; 1 Corinthians 15:50; 1 John 4:5-6.
3. The world neither beholds Him or knows Him. See Romans 1:19-25; 1 Corinthians 2:11-16.
4. The believer knows Him. See 1 Corinthians 1:20-21; 2 Corinthians 4:13; Galatians 3:5-6; 1 John 5:4-9.
5. The Holy Spirit remains with the believer. See 16:7; Acts 20:28; 2 Corinthians 3:3.
6. The Holy Spirit remains in the believer. See 7:38-39; Romans 8:9-11; 1 John 4:4; Jude 1:20-21.

**14:18 –** Having the Spirit, they will not be “orphans”. This thought is connected to our Lord’s teaching that He is going away, See 7:33. This is a central theme of the Great High Priestly Prayer and the Upper Room dialogue. His giving of the Spirit is His coming to them, and He will come again – at the Resurrection. See John 19:20-26. And He will come again on the Last Day. See 14:3, 19, 28-29, and 16:19, 22. We live in that time, in God’s Kingdom of Grace, in this Adventide, in which He comes to us through His Mysteries, His Means of Grace. See 1 Corinthians 4:1.

**14:19 –** The life that they have in the Spirit is the life that He gives, and by the Spirit although the world does not see Him, they will see Him.Lenski admonishes here “’Because I myself live, you too shall live’ ought to be read as an independent sentence and not as the reason why the disciples will still behold Jesus.” (1003) To see Christ is to live, if that “seeing” is the “seeing” of faith – to see Christ as the Second Person of the Holy Trinity.

**14:20 –** “On that Day” refers directly to the Resurrection, the Day on which He will “come”. The life that He gives through the Spirit, the Spirit that dwells with them and in them, is a life of unity with the Triune God. On knowing God, see verses 7 and 10.

**14:21 –** In a seeming departure from His Words regarding the unity of the Trinity with the believer, the Lord returns to the topic of verse 15, and says “The one having My commands and keeping them, that one is the one who loves Me.” See Jeremiah 31:33. This is the sign of the New Testament. Although the Gospel according to St. John does not include an account of the Institution of the Sacrament of the Altar, here we have the results of the New Testament in His Blood. See Luke 10:26-28, noting the relationship between love and keeping the Commandments. See Romans 13:10.

That “having” and “keeping” of the Commandments is a sign of love for the Son. See verse 23. Now the Lord comes back to the unity of the Trinity with the believer, sealed in love. See 16:27, 17:23. This Union, or Communion, of the Triune God with His Church is frequently called the “Mystical Union”, the Church the “Mystical Body of Christ.” Note the relationship between love, the keeping of the Commands, and this Union in Galatians 5:22-25.

Lenski writes of John 14:21 “All the promises hitherto made in this chapter, each one grand and wonderful in itself, are so many evidences of something far greater, namely divine love. And this is subsequent love, which, when antecedent love has kindled faith and love in us, delights to show itself to the beloved in most intimate fashion.” (1007)

“I will love him and manifest Myself to Him” – The one who loves the Son is incorporated into the love of the Triune God. A sign of that love is that the Son makes Himself manifest to the believer. Lenski, concerned with “enthusiasm”, cites Gerhard pointing us to the manifestation of Christ in the Holy Scriptures, that there He manifest Himself to us in our ever-deepening understanding of Scripture. The Gerhard quote Lenski employs, however, includes quite a bit of “mystery” language: “…when they receive a living, believing impression of the divine love from the mystery of the incarnation; when they understand the greatness of their sins from the mystery of the passion, heartily lament them and are assured of their forgiveness; when they draw an earnest longing for heaven from the mystery of eternal life, etc.” (1008) Consider John 20:29.

**Read John 14:22-24**

14:22 – In verse 17 the Lord taught that the world could not receive the Holy Spirit. Judas (brother of James, also called Thaddeus or Lebbaeus [see Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18]; not Iscariot, he left in 13:30) questions the Lord combining that earlier assertion with the Lord’s promise to manifest Himself to the believer. See 7:4; Acts 10:40-41. The Lord will define His “manifestation” in the following verse.

14:23 – To love Christ, to keep His Word, is to be loved by the Father. The Lord promises that to such a one “We will come and make a dwelling with him.” See verse 18. God dwells in the believer, bringing eternal life – see 8:51. See Proverbs 8:17, where Wisdom speaks in the first person. See 2 Corinthians 6:16-17; Ephesians 3:16-19. Consider the implications of this, dear Christian!

14:24 – Continuing His answer to Judas, the Lord now describes the opposite – those who do not love Him. They will not keep His Words. They will break them. But the Words are not only the Words of the Son – they are the Words of the Father. See John 3:33-36.

**Read John 14:25-26**

14:25 – “These things…” Our Lord has just taught about the keeping of His Commands (15), sending of the Paraclete and His Work (16-17), His “leaving” and the Unity of the Holy Trinity (18-20), the love of God (21), the indwelling of God in the believer and the result of it (22-24). “These things…” He has taught in the time He has remained with them, which, as He explained in verse 18, is coming to an end. His leaving will cause the Paraclete to come, this verse introduces verse 26.

14:26 – First, the Lord reminds the disciples that while He is leaving, the Paraclete is coming. Here He teaches more about that sending – the Father sends the Holy Spirit in the Son’s Name. “That one”, the Holy Spirit, will teach the disciples, and through them the Holy Church. The substance of the Holy Spirit’s teaching will be to remind them, and us, of “that which” Christ has said. See 1 Corinthians 2:12-16; 1 John 2:20, 26-29; John 16:13. That this came to pass is recorded in John 2:22. This promise of the Spirit’s work would bring great comfort to the Apostles, see Matthew 10:19.

**Read John 14:27-31**

14:27 – He is leaving them. But He does not leave them as orphans. He gives them the Paraclete. He gives them His peace. These two are immediately related, as is the love He promises in verse 21. It is the Spirit that brings the peace and love that God the Son promises. See 16:33, 20:19, 21, 26 (note especially the act of breathing on the disciples, Pastor will explain, see Genesis 2:7); Romans 5:1-5 (note the relationship between God’s peace and the giving of His Spirit); Colossians 3:14-15; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Thessalonians 3:16; 2 Timothy 1:7 (note especially how this is a promise to the ordained pastor, consider the previous verse – as it was true for those in the Upper Room hearing the Words of John 14).

The consequence of His peace is that we not let our hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid (in the Greek of this verse the word “heart” and corresponding verb (to trouble) is singular, an aorist imperative stressing action. The second verb (to fear) is a present imperative, passive {which can’t be easily rendered in English}, indicating a continuing condition). This promise is true for each of us to whom God has given His Spirit.

14:28 – This verse has two distinct, related parts. The first is that they heard our Lord promise to go away, and to come to them. Both verbs are in the present tense. The second thought is a conditional sentence, a “contrary to fact” statement. (The Greek construction contains an εἰ in the protasis and an ἂν in the apodosis) This means that they are saddened by His leaving, but should be rejoicing. Based on the Greek, we can translate “…if you were continually loving me, you would have rejoiced…” The point of their rejoicing ought to be – not His leaving – but rather His going to the Father. The reason for this is that “The Father is greater than Me.” In proper English we should say “The Father is greater than I”. For the student of Greek, the accenting on the pronoun is of interest.

14:29 – He is still with them. For their benefit He is warning them. When they see these things happening, their faith should be strengthened. See 13:19.

14:30 – The “ruler of the world” comes. Because he comes, the Lord will not speak many more things openly to them. He will focus on His “hour”, which draws nigh. See Revelation 12:9; John 12:31, Ephesians 2:1-2; John 2:4, 12:27.

The second half of this verse reads “…and in Me he has nothing.” While the devil is the “prince of the air” and the “ruler of the world”, Christ is not of the world. See 8:23,18:36. Christ is without sin, and so unable to be tempted or lied to by satan. The Lord already withstood all the temptation the devil could muster (Matthew 4:1-11). In Christ, we are “not of this world”, see 15:19. He has grafted us into His Kingdom, adopted us, redeemed us, saved us. Note also the unity of the Son and the Spirit in the work of our redemption, which separates us from this world – see 16:8-11. It is correct to say that the Christian is “in this world” but not “of this world”.

14:31 – Here again the unity of the Father and the Son is manifest. His hour comes. He is not of this world. But that the world may know… He testifies to His love for the Father, and His perfect, faithful obedience to the commands of the Father, His “active” and “passive” obedience. In verses 15, 21, and 23 of this chapter the Lord has taught the disciples to be obedient to Him. In verse 23 note the relationship between love and keeping His commands, evidenced here as His keeping of His Father’s commands is a demonstration of His love for the Father. Now He demonstrates perfect obedience as He says “Arise, let us go from here.” The Son does what the Father commands. See 10:18. See 18:1 (this is the Christ keeping the Father’s command), as He does in Matthew 26:46.

**Read John 15:1-4**

15:1 – Another great “I AM” saying. See our notes above on verse 6:35. There, He is the True Bread. Here, He is the Vine. See Isaiah 5:2 (Matthew 20:1ff, 21:33ff); Jeremiah 2:21; Ezekiel 17:7-8, 19:10-14; Psalm 80:9-20. While Scripture features many vines, only Christ is the True Vine. He is equal to the Father as touching His Divinity, but inferior to the Father as touching His Humanity, so it is the Father who is the Vinedresser. The Vine is about to be pruned (the Passion of the Christ).

15:2 – He is the Vine, we are the branches. The branches receive life and nourishment from the Vine. As Christ lives, so too those who live because of Christ. Those who bear no fruit are cut off, those who bear fruit are pruned, that they bear even more fruit. See Isaiah 37:31-32; Hosea 9:16-17; Matthew 3:10, 7:18-20, 15:13, 21:19; Romans 7:4-6; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 5:9; Colossians 1:3-6; Hebrews 12:11; and many more.

While pruning isn’t enjoyable for the tree, the Vinedresser knows that it will bring forth a more bountiful crop. While it is not evident in the NKJV translation, the word translated “prunes” actually means “cleans” (καθαίρει, from καθαίρω). This is important to understanding the next verse.

15:3 – Unlike the branches that bear no fruit, the disciples need no pruning (cleansing). The Word which He has spoken to them is efficacious. See Romans 10:8-10, 17. On the disciples being “clean”, see John 13:10, Act 15:8-9.

15:4 – Here the Lord expands the Vine/branch metaphor in order that the disciples learn and bear fruit – by remaining in Him, because He will remain in them. See 6: 56, 63 (references from the marginal notes of the GNT) Here the Lord compares the relationship of the disciples and Himself to the Vine and branches – no fruit is possible apart from the Vine, indeed no life is possible apart from the Vine. See 2 Corinthians 3:4-6. So justification is by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ, worked through His Means of Grace, and sanctification is by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ, worked through His Means of Grace. In that way you remain in Him. See 1 Corinthians 1:30.

**Read John 15:5-8**

15:5 – Another great “I AM” saying, repeated from 15:1. See our comments there. In 15:1 the stress was the relationship between the Father and the Son, here the stress is the relationship between the Son and His redeemed. See Romans 7:4, 8:8-11; 1 Corinthians 12:27;

15:6 – Cut off from the Vine, the branch cannot survive, much less bear fruit. The fire is the consuming fire of the Last Day. See Matthew 3:10 (note the relationship between failing to bear fruit and being burned), 7:16-20; Ezekiel 15:1-8.

15:7 – In verses 3 and 4 the Lord established a relationship between cleanness and His Word. The one in whom His Word remains is clean. See Jeremiah 31:31-34; Romans 10:8-10; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 John 2:14. This is the work of the Holy Spirit, as the Lord has just promised to His disciples in 14:26. To the Lord remaining with the one in whom His Words (τὰ ῥήματά) remain, the Lord now adds a promise: “That which you desire ask, and it shall be unto you.” (Braden) See 14:13-14, 16:23-24; James 4:3. By the indwelling of Christ, the one who has His Spirit and His Words is led to ask in accord with the will of God, the prayer that God is glad to hear and grant – “…Thy will be done.” St. Augustine writes “For when someone abides in Christ in this way, is there anything he or she can wish for besides what will be agreeable to Christ? When they abide in the Savior in this way, can they wish for anything that is inconsistent with salvation?” (*Ancient Christian Commentary*, 169) See Hebrews 13:20-21.

15:8 – Just as what the believer filled with Christ asks is in accord with God’s will, just as the fruits of the believer abound, so is God glorified in that asking and granting. “…that you bear much fruit, and you be my disciples.” The Greek subjunctive construction doesn’t translate easily into English. The Father is glorified *in that* they bear much fruit, and *in that* they become Christ’s disciples. See Matthew 5:16.

**Read John 15:9-11**

15:9 – Here the unity of the Father and the Son is further revealed. See John 3:35. Just as the Father loved the Son, “I also loved you (pl)”. Although the verb “loved” is in the past tense, His love for them hasn’t ceased. They are to “Remain in My love.” In the next verse He will explain how this comes to pass.

15:10 – To love Christ is to keep His commands, just as He loved and kept the Father’s commands. See 8:29, 14:23-24, 14:31.

15:10, Continued – Note the durative sense of keeping Christ’s Commands, and remaining in His love. It is not a “one time thing”, rather it is the life of sanctification. His Commands are “not grievous”, see 1 John 5:1-5. That we live the life of sanctification, He gives us His Spirit to conform our will to His will for us. See Romans 2:12-16. And example of this is found in 2 Corinthians 8:1-5. Consider also Romans 6:1-5, 6-11, 12-18. It is by the power of the Spirit that remain in His love. The outward sign of this is our desire to observe and keep His Commands. This is especially true of His “New Commandment”. See John 13:34-35, which the Lord will reiterate in this chapter.

15:11 – Although the world perishes around us, although we daily struggle with the world and our sinful flesh, still we have joy. See John 3:29, 16:24, 17:13. Christ’s joy is “in us” through the indwelling of His Spirit, and by the hope and comfort His Gospel promise brings. The disciples are “troubled” – 14:1, 27. Here He offers them, and us, a joy that surpasses human understanding, a joy that overcomes our troubles. See Philippians 4:6-7; 2 John 12.

“These things” – Certainly the entirety of the Upper Room Dialogue is to be understood here, but most especially the “things” He has spoken regarding His “going away” and His “coming back”, regarding Himself as the Vine, and the love of God.

**Read John 15:12-17**

15:12 – Here again we have the “New Command” of Maundy Thursday, as discussed above in our comments on 15:10. It is the keeping of this Command that shows that we remain in Him, because He is love. See 1 John 4:10-21, noting especially verses 10, 11, and 16.

15:13 – The greatest love is here manifest. In that love, this is what He will do for you. This He has promised – see Genesis 3:15; Psalm 16:9-11; Isaiah 53:8-9; John 10:11-18; 1 John 3:16.

15:14 – Those in whom His love dwells (vs 12) are His friends, who by virtue of the indwelling of His love observe His Commands. See John 8:31. Note how this defines the Church – See Matthew 12:50. This verse is a conditional sentence, a general statement of truth. What is the “condition”? What is the outcome? Here we have His promise.

15:15 – In verse 14 the Lord called His disciples “friends”. The Greek word is “φίλοι”, a “loving friendship, see John 21:15, which the Pastor will explain. Here He now expounds on calling them friends – a slave doesn’t know what his lord is doing. The Lord has made known to His disciples all that He has heard from the Father. See John 3:11. He has told them clearly what He is doing, making them friends rather than slaves. See James 2:23, where “friendship” with God is directly linked to faith.

15:16 – The purpose of the Lord making known everything the Father told Him to His disciples is expressed here: that they go forth and bear fruit, fruit which remains. This the Lord connects to their ability to pray directly to the Father.

The Lord chose them, they did not choose Him. What is Luther’s Explanation to the Third Article of the Creed? See John 3:11. He chose them to bear fruit. See Matthew 28:19—20. You, dear Christian, are the fruit. As this section began, Christ is the Vine.

15:17 – With this verse, the Incarnate Lord summarizes the relationship between His commands and the directive that the disciples “Love one another.” This theme of love began in verse 12 of this chapter, but was given for the first time in 13:34. Hence, the plural “these things” can easily refer back to everything the Lord has said since He gave them the “New Command.” The immediate referents, of course, are the sanctified life they will have by the power of the Spirit He will send, the indwelling of the Word, and the Blessed Union between the Church and her Head, the life-giving, life-sustaining relationship between the Vine and the branches. We note that prayer is included in the life of sanctification, as in verse 16. The command “love” in the present tense in the Greek has a continual sense, to “love and keep loving”.

**Read John 15:18-21**

15:18 – Having finished His discourse on love, the Lord now teaches the disciples about hate. In Him there is love. In His Church His love abounds. But it is not so with the world. The world will hate them, and us. Inasmuch as we are His branches, the Holy Church, the fallen world will hate us. Here the Lord warns them, and us, that we not be taken by surprise by the world’s hatred – it hated Him first. See 7:2-7, 17:14-16; Matthew 10:21-22; 1 John 3:11-16, where the Beloved Disciple repeats the Lord’s teachings to the Church. The rapidly increasing spiral into perversion and godlessness we see in our nation is not a random collapse of morality – it is the fallen world’s orchestrated attack on the Church.

15:19 – Continuing on the theme of the world’s hatred for Christ and His Church, the Lord reminds them that they are “in the world but not of it”. The worldly are loved by the world. But the Lord’s “choosing” of the disciples has set them apart from the world. The Pastor will explain He will testify of Me.

27 "And you also will bear witness (Joh 15:26-27 NKJ)the etymology of the Greek word for “Church”. See 8:23-24, 17:14-16 (as above); 1 John 4:1-11, noting there the connection with love, which repeats the main theme of this section of the Gospel according to St. John. Also note that the antichrist is behind the attacks on the Church.

That the Lord “chose” the disciples is clearly recorded in Scripture, see Matthew 4:17-22, for example. This also introduces the doctrine of election, the same Lord’s choosing of you – see Ephesians 1:3-7.

15:20 – “Remember…” our Lord exhorts. Remembering is active. It means to recall and consider, and to act. The Word He directs them to remember is that “the slave is not greater than his master.” See 13:16; Matthew 10:24. Remembering that, they will understand the persecution they suffer is a result of their relationship to Christ. As the disciples remember His Word, it will cause them to obey it, to keep it, and to proclaim it to others. That is the role of the Church in this fallen world. Those who will hear the Apostolic doctrine are of Christ. Those who will not are of the world. See Hebrews 4:11-13; John 8:51.

15:21 – But not all, in fact, most, will reject their Word, which is to reject His Word, which is to reject Him, which is to reject the One who sent Him. Note that the disciples will be persecuted “because of My Name”. Lenski writes “…here the significant term τὸ ὄνομά μου denotes the revelation by which Jesus is made known. By His “Name” or revelation He comes to men, He and all that He is and has for men. Thus, we believe in His Name, confess His Name, pray in His Name, and, as we are now told, suffer because of His Name. Always it is His NAME.”

15:21 Continued – Note that “all these things” they will do to them on account of Christ’s Name, and note why: because they do not know the One who sent Him. Matthew 5:11, 10:22. Christ is the Sent One of the Father, the Apostle of the Father. This is a major theme of the Gospel according to St. John. See 4:34, 5:24, 5:30, 5:37, and many more in John.

His Name is “I AM”, as we have seen in the several great “I AM” statements. On believing in His Name, see 2:23. To believe on His Name is to believe that Christ is fully Man and fully God. To believe that is to believe rightly in God, which is to believe in the One who sent Him. On His Name R.C.H. Lenski writes “Here again the significant term denotes the revelation by which Jesus is made known. By his “name” or revelation he comes to men, he and all that he is and has for men. Thus we believe I his name, confess his name, pray in his name, and, as we are now told, suffer because of his name. Always it is his NAME.” (1059)

**Read John 15:22-26**

15:22 – See 9:41, Romans 3:1-2. Our Lord here speaks to Jews about Jews. The Messiah is promised from the very first Book of the Bible. He is richly described in many Old Testament Books, Books which the Jews had, studied, and even memorized. When He “came and spoke to them”, they were to have recognized Him. Since they did not recognize Him, and more, now persecute Him, they are guilty of sin, and they are without excuse. See John 6:36; Romans 1:20-21.

15:23 – The equation the Lord posits here is clear – to hate Christ is to hate the Father who sent Him. See Luke 10:16-17, noting the work the Apostles did among those who believed in His Name, and the power of His Name. See John 5:20-23. Here again the great Mystery of the Holy Trinity is revealed.

15:24 – As in the previous verses, here too: He did the works prophesied of old, the works only the Messiah could do. See John 7:31, 11:47. They did not believe the works, so they have sin. To reject the Son is to reject the Father. See 10:37-38.

15:25 – “They hated Me without cause” is Ἐμίσησάν με δωρεάν in the Greek, “They hated me freely/undeservedly/without reason.” These are the Words of Psalm 35:19 and 69:4. Read Psalm 35:18-24, considering these Words in the context in which our Lord applies them: to Himself. Do the same with Psalm 69:1-4, which describes the growing persecution of our Lord. Note how our Lord describes where these Words are written: “…in their Law”. They are Jews. They should know better. Note here also the “wide” sense of the Word “Law” – the entire Old Testament.

15:26 – The Jews should have known Him but didn’t, because of the hardness of their hearts. But the Twelve receive a different promise here – when the Paraclete comes, the One Jesus will send to them from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, the One who proceeds from the Father, that one (the Spirit) will witness concerning Him. It is by the Spirit that one rightly knows Christ, which is to say rightly believes His Divinity. The work of the Spirit is to testify, to witness, to Christ. See John 14:16, 16:7; 1 John 5:6. Pastor will explain about the “Johanine Comma”. ‘

**Read John 15:17**

15:17 – The thought here is not to be separated from the thought in verse 16: “He will testify of Me. And you also will bear witness…” The Spirit will testify (μαρτυρήσει) of Christ. For that He will be sent. The Apostles, however “And you also bear witness (μαρτυρεῖτε)”. Although our translation renders this a future tense verb, it is not. It is a present tense verb. Because of the class of verb (εω contract), the form in Greek is ambiguous, and could be a present indicative or a present imperative, second person plural. It is not, however, a future tense verb.

The promise that the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, will bear witness of Jesus, is expressed in the future tense because it is a reference to Pentecost and the post-Pentecost Apostolic preaching. In addition to the Spirit, the Apostles “also” are witnessing, because they have been with Him from the beginning. Lenski writes of the grammar and chronology here “In view of this qualification of the disciples Jesus can well use the present tense, ‘and you, too, (already) testify’ as witnesses who were always with me and continue with me even now.”

The conjunctive “also” means that the testimony of the Spirit and the testimony of the Apostles is the same testimony – testimony of Jesus. See Luke 1:1-3, 24:46-49; John 21:24; Acts 5:30-32; 1 John 1:1-4, 4:13-15 (note here the presence of the Holy Spirit, as in the verse at hand).

**Read John 16:1-4**

16:1 – “These things I have spoken/proclaimed to you in order that you not be caused to stumble.” The Lord spoke these things openly. The reason He spoke them is for the protection of the disciples. Now they know. When the things come He has foretold, they should be ready. By the Spirit, they will be, even unto death. See 13:19; Matthew 11:6, where “offended” is the same verb translated here “caused to stumble”. Fr. Braden will recount R. C. H. Lenski’s treatment of this verb. You, dear Christian, have “these things”. You have Holy Scripture. You have the preaching of the Gospel. You too, by them, and by the Spirit that works through them, should not be caused to stumble.

16:2 – Literally “unsynagogued they will make you”. See 9:22; Matthew 10:21-22. If you are following in the Greek, you’ll note an unusual symbol in the critical editions of the text – an asterisk. That sign means that ancient versions of the text ended chapter 15 after the words “out of the synagogue”, and chapter 16 began with “But an hour comes…” (see the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th ed, pg. 85)

The things that cause stumbling include death. Our Lord warns that an hour comes when all those who kill Christians will think they offer worship to God. Here, honoring the Greek, Lenski translates “…yea, the hour is coming that everyone who kills you shall think he is making an offering of service to God”. St. Stephen would soon be martyred, as would St. James, son of Zebedee. That hour came to the Apostolic Church also in the persecutions of Nero (64), Decius (250), and Diocletian (303, the most severe).

16:2, Cont. - Even now, though, there are those who think that killing Christians is worship to their god or gods. As we near the Day of Judgment, that persecution will escalate. See Galatians 1:13; Acts 17:1-7.

16:3 – Here our Lord gives the reason for the persecution of the Church – they know neither the Father nor the Son. See 8:19; Acts 13:26-29; 1 John 3:1; 1 Corinthians 2:6-8. This same ignorance is clearly visible in our society today.

16:4 – Again here, as in verses 1 and 2 of this chapter, the Lord reminds the disciples that His reason for telling them these things is so that they are prepared, and not caused to stumble when these things come to pass. See again 13:19.

Preparing to leave, the Lord identifies to His disciples why He is telling them these things now: He was with them, now He is going away.

In 15:27 the Lord told the disciples that they had been with Him “from the beginning”. Here He employs the same term, saying He had not told them these things “from the beginning”. See 17:12. If you are using the ESV text, note how the text divides this verse.

**Read 16:5-11**

16:5 – The Lord is preparing them for His “departure”. This thought began in 13:31, although consider 12:23 and 13:7. He has repeatedly identified Himself as the One Sent from the Father. Now He teaches them that He is returning to the One Who sent Him. See 7:33, and verse 28 of this chapter. And “not one of you”, the Lord says “is asking Me ‘Where are you going?’” See 13:36-38, 14:5. While they felt sorrow over His leaving (verse 6), they weren’t interested in the Father to Whom He returned. Lenski opines “So here Jesus is leaving, his going to his Sender means so much to the disciples, and yet none of them requests one word of this precious information.” (1079)

16:6 – The Lord reads their hearts. He knows they sorrow.

16:7 – In 14:16 and in 15:26 the Lord promised the Holy Spirit. Here again He reiterates that when He goes, He will send the Paraclete. His speaking has caused grief to fill their hearts. But they should rejoice, because He speaks the Truth to them, and His “leaving” is to their advantage. If He doesn’t go, the Paraclete won’t come. If He goes, He will send Him to them. See the testimony of John in 1 John 3:24; and Acts 2:33.

16:8 – The Paraclete will testify of Jesus. He has told them that several times. But that testimony has consequences. Now He articulates the work of the coming Paraclete, the Comforter: He will convict the world concerning sin, concerning righteousness, and concerning judgment. In the very act of setting the Church apart, in the work of calling, gathering and enlightening the whole Christian Church on earth (where does this language come from?), in the act of calling the Church out of the fallen world, the fallen world that remains is convicted. The Church is declared Holy in the Blood of Christ, the world that remains outside of the Church, the world that knows neither Christ nor the Father, remains in sin, and dies in sin. See John 8:24.

If these sections of the Gospel according to St. John seem very familiar to you, it is because they give us the great Gospel Readings of Eastertide:

20:19-31 – Quasimodogeniti, the First Sunday after Easter

10:11-16 – Misericordia Domini, the Second Sunday after Easter

16:16-23 – Jubilate, the Third Sunday after Easter

16:5-15 – Cantate, the Fourth Sunday after Easter

16:23-30 – Rogate, the Fifth Sunday after Easter

15:26-16:4 – Exaudi, the Sunday after the Ascension

14:23-31 – Whitsunday, Holy Pentecost

16:9 – To “not believe” in Christ is sin. Although the modern church has devised monikers to describe many different spiritual conditions (unchurched, dechurched, not yet churched, soon to be churched, spiritual but not religious, undecided, “nones”, seekers, C & E Christians, etc.), Holy Scripture knows only two categories: sinners and saints, the damned and the saved. So will it be on the last day. See Revelation 3:15-16. See 3:18, 8:24, 15:22.

16:10 – Christ is the Righteousness of God. See Romans 1:17 (why is this pericope important to the Church of the Reformation?), 3:21-22; 2 Corinthians 5:21. It is Christ our Righteousness (Romans 5:21) that brings the perfect righteousness of God to us. It is Christ who is the center and substance of the Holy Gospel. Without Christ, man has no righteousness. See John 20:29.

16:11 – Note the tense of the verb – the ruler of this world “has been judged.” He was judged in his casting out. See Isaiah 14:9-19; Revelation 12:7-12. See John 12:31.

**Read John 16:12-15**

16:12 – In His omniscience, He has much to teach them. But they are mortal, incapable of Divine knowledge. He knows what comes, they cannot bear what He will endure. Without the Spirit, they could never endure what the Church would suffer in the coming persecution.

16:13 – Thanks be to God, the Spirit will come, the Spirit of Truth. The word of the spirit of this world is the lie. Note the relationship between the Lord’s Words here, and in John 8:44-47, 14:15-17. While the coming Spirit will convict the world by sundering the Church from the world, He will guide/lead the Church in all Truth, which is to lead the Church to Christ. See 14:6; Psalm 25:4-9; Romans 8:26-27.

The Spirit does not speak from Himself, but He speaks that which He hears. See 14:10-11, 14:26. St. Ambrose writes “…that is, not without the participation of the Father and myself. For the Spirit is not divided and separated but speaks what he hears… This means he shall not speak without me. For he speaks the truth, he breathes wisdom. He does not speak without the Father, for he is the Spirit of God. He does not hear from himself, for all things are of God… Therefore what the Spirit says is the Son’s, what the Son has Given is the Father’s.” *On The Holy Spirit*

16:14 – The Truth that the Spirit will lead the disciples into is the Truth the Son gives, indeed the Truth the Son is. See John 14:6. Now note the progression of verses 13-15 in this chapter – the Spirit will lead them into all Truth – that Truth is received from Christ, who is Truth, and who is glorified by the Spirit’s proclamation – and that Truth is from the Father, for the Son is begotten of the Father. This the Spirit will receive from the Son and announce to the disciples. That is the work of the Spirit – to reveal Christ. In that revelation, the revelation that Jesus Christ is God, the Son is glorified. See 8:54.

16:15 – The marvelous unity of the Holy Trinity is testified to here. All things which the Father has are the Son’s. From those things the Spirit receives and announces His message. Gregory of Nazianzus (a fourth century Bishop of Constantinople, and with Basil the Great and St. John Chrysostom is one of the great theological Fathers of the period) writes: “All things that the Father has are the Son’s. And… all that belongs to the Son is the Father’s. Nothing then is peculiar to any person, because all things are in common. For their being itself is common and equal, even though the Son receives it from the Father.” (*On the Son, Theological Oration*, *Ancient Christian Commentary*, 209.)

Our theologians distinguish between the inward acts (*opera ad intra*) of the Holy Trinity, such as the begetting of the Son and the procession of the Spirit, and the outward acts (*opera ad extra*), such as creation. Regarding the inward acts we distinguish but do not divide the persons. Regarding the outward acts we attribute them to the whole Trinity. This mystery can be seen in verses 13-15 of this chapter. See also John 17:9-10.

**Read John 16:16-18**

16:16 – Continuing on the theme of the Spirit and His work after Christ “leaves”, the Lord explains to His disciples what will come to pass. For a little while they will not see Him, but again in a little while they will see Him. This is a direct reference to His three days in the tomb. The Lord used similar language as He referred to His ascension, see 7:33.

16:17-18 – Here St. John, one of the disciples, reveals the discourse between them as they ponder the Lord’s Words. See Luke 9:45. They do not understand what He means, although He has already explained it in verse 7 of this chapter. Interestingly, in verse 7, the verb translated “It is to your advantage” (συμφέρει) also means “it brings you together”. The Apostles will enjoy the blessed unity the Spirit gives to His Church. But first they will be scattered.

**Read John 16:19-22**

16:19 – While St. John records the dialogue of verses 17-18 as spoken between the disciples, the Lord knows their hearts. His repeating of their question was surely surprising to them.

16:20 – The world is not like the Church. Here the Lord explains that for the “little while” they do not see Him, the world will rejoice, while they weep and mourn. Consider the horror they experienced as their Lord and Master, for whom they left everything, was falsely accused, wrongly convicted, and crucified. See Luke 5:33-35.

16:20, Continued – The verb used in the Greek for “lament” (wail - θρηνέω) is the verb used for those who mourn a death. See Luke 23:27. That, the deepest and most heart-felt mourning, will become the greatest joy (χαρά). See Matthew 25:1. The depths of human emotion will be experienced by His disciples at His death, as will the heights of human rejoicing at the Good News of the Lord’s resurrection. The world, however, will do the opposite. See Revelation 11:10.

16:21 – The Lord likens what the disciples will experience to a birth. The travails of birth are some of the most painful a woman can experience. See Isaiah 26:17. But the joy of the newborn son eclipses the suffering of labor. See Luke 6:21, 1 Peter 1:6-7.

16:22 – The disciples begin to feel the first pangs of grief as the Lord tells them He is going away. Their grief will grow throughout His Passion. Then for three dark days they will not see Him. But then their joy will be greater than any earthly grief, for the Lord promises “Again I will see you.” See 20:20; Luke 24:51-53; 2 Corinthians 4:17. For those who await the coming of the Lord who came, and will come again, that joy will be the joy of the Last Day. See Isaiah 66:13-16.

**Read John 16:23-24**

16:23 – In the day that they rejoice, their relationship to God will be different. During the three years they were with Him they addressed their requests to Him. But He came to reconcile men to the Father, the One who sent Him. See 14:20. Here the Lord gives the formula for Christian prayer – to the Father, in the Son’s Name. See 14:13-14; Ephesians 5:20; Colossians 3:17. It is by the Spirit that we pray rightly. See Romans 8:26-27. Consider the Collects appointed to the Sundays of the Church Year, Advent being the exception. The Lord will expand on this in verses 26-28.

On His Name, see 20:31; Matthew 1:21; Mark 9:39; Acts 2:38, 19:5, 19:17 (17 times in Acts); 1 Corinthians 1:2, 6:11; 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12; 1 John 3:23.

16:24 – While they were with Him, they didn’t ask anything in His Name. But after His resurrection, He will be in His State of Exaltation, and will always and fully use both His Divine and Human natures. See Philippians 2:9-11. Knowing that He is in His Glory means that we too will rise, and we will be where He is, the fulfilment of all joy. See 15:11.

**Read John 16:25-28**

16:25 – Just as the time is passing in which they asked Him directly, so too is the time for figurative language passing. See 10:6. The hour comes in which He will no longer speak in dark sayings, rather He will boldly (free and fearless speech) make known to them (announce) concerning the Father. In verse 29 the disciples use similar language. See John 11:11-14 for an example of this.

16:26 – The work of the Son is to reconcile the world to the Father. See 2 Corinthians 5:18-19. The Father, Son and Holy Ghost are all worthy of our prayers, and have the power to answer our prayers. But the Christ’s work is that the barrier be removed, the veil torn. See Matthew 27:51.

16:26, Continued – “In that day”, the Lord says. In verse 25 the Lord teaches that He has spoken (in a continual sense) in παροιμίαις, in sayings like parables that can’t be understood by the unbelieving. See John 10:6. Here the Lord refers to His use of parables throughout His “earthly ministry”. So here, the “day” He points to marks a new relationship between God and men, one in which men will appeal directly to God. Of that day Lenski writes “…after Pentecost, the petitions directed to the Father by the disciples in Jesus’ name will not need the support and the intercession of Jesus in order to be granted by the Father.” (1103) The death and resurrection of Christ, and His ascension and sending of the Holy Spirit, have changed our relationship to God.

Our Lord is not directing us *to not pray in His Name*. See 16:23-24, 2:23, 14:13. Nor is He saying that He will no longer be our Intercessor with the Father. See Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25; 1 John 2:1-2. He is saying that, after His crucifixion, resurrection and ascension, and after the sending of the Holy Spirit, He will not have to pray for us, rather the Father Himself will hear us because of Christ.

St. Augustine’s understanding of “that day” makes this a bit easier: “In that future world, when we have reached the kingdom where we shall be like Him… what will we have to ask for when all our desires will already be satisfied with good things?” (from Augustine’s commentary on Matthew 11:27, cited in *Ancient Christian Commentary*, 218-219)

16:27 – The conjunctive “For” expounds on the reason that the Lord will not need to intercede for us: because the Father loves us. He loves us because we have loved His Son, and believed that He came from the Father. See 14:21.

16:28 – Here the Lord reasserts what He has already taught: He came from the Father, and has come into the world. Now His dialogue points His hearers to what is to come: “Again I leave the world and I go to the Father.” In His Upper Room dialogue He is teaching them of His departure. See Luke 9:30-31, where the Greek word ἔξοδον (exodus) is used for the Lord’s “departure”, word that carries the meaning “departure from this life” as well. By this explanation understanding is granted to His disciples, their response makes this clear.

**Read John 16:29-33**

16:29 – The disciples understand. No longer are His sayings dark to them (see verse 25). His speaking is clear and bold. In verse 30 their confession reveals this.

16:30 - The attribute of omniscience is recognized, a divine attribute. See Peter’s response in 20:17. Note the imputation of divine wisdom in 1 Corinthians 2:16; 1 John 2:20.This omniscience includes the ability to read the hearts of men, that He has no need that anyone ask Him, for He knows what they are going to ask before they do. See 2:24-25; Matthew 6:7-8.

Now the disciples confess what the Lord has been teaching them all along: “By this (His demonstration of omniscience) we believe that you came forth from the Father.” The Greek verb translated “came forth” is ἐξῆλθες, which is also “came out of.” See 17:8.

16:31 – All modern versions of the Bible translate this as a question, “Now you believe?”. Lenski rejects this, holding it to be declarative, which some versions of the text support.

16:31, Continued – Consider the NKJV “Do you now believe?” Translated in this way it would seem that the Lord is being critical of their confession. St. Augustine translated this as a question, writing “Finally, He reminds them of their weak tender age in respect of the inner man.” (*Ancient Christian Commentary,* 223) So too St. John Chrysostom: “He shows them that now, when they say they believe, they really do not yet believe, nor does He accept their words.” (*ibid*) Compare to the NIV “You believe at last!”, which better captures the sense of the statement given the context. Lenski translates “Now you do believe”, as an indicative statement of fact.

The disciples last words to their Lord (verse 30) were “Now we know that Thou knowest all things and dost not have need that one inquire of Thee. By this we believe that Thou didst come forth from God.” Given their answer, Lenski writes “How can Jesus here express doubt about their believing?” (1109) The disciples here confess back to the Lord the very Words He spoke to them in verse 28. Pastor will express the meaning of the Greek word which means “confess” (ὁμολογέω). At the same time, in the next verse the Lord seems to refer to actions that stem from unbelief. The following statement He will make, however, calls on their faith.

16:32 – That hour, the hour that was to come, has come. See 7:30. The Lord goes to Gethsemane. At Golgotha they will leave Him alone. See 2:25. They will be scattered as the Shepherd is stricken. See 21:17.

16:33 – He is the Prince of Peace. He gives a peace that the world cannot give. See 14:27. Believing, asserting that He knows all things, and that He came forth from God, they will have peace even in the face of the greatest tribulation. St. Augustine writes that they will have peace not only because of their confession, but from all His Words in the Upper Room and High Priestly Prayer. (*Ancient Christian Commentary,* 224)

The opposite of the peace He gives is the tribulation of the world. By faith, even when assailed by the fallen world, they will still have His peace. Here the Lord warns them. They will have tribulation. Over against what the world brings, He gives them a command: “Take heart!” The verb He uses, θαρσέω, means “to be firm or resolute in the face of danger or adverse circumstances, be enheartened, be courageous”. (BDAG 444) For other uses of the same word, see Matthew 9:2, 22; Mark 10:49; Acts 23:11. So too is this a Word for us, as we are assailed by the world.

Our Lord gives the reason that they are able to take heart in the face of tribulation – “I have conquered the world.” He is victorious over the world. The word “conquer” in the Greek is transliterated and used for tennis shoes – “Nike”. He conquers the world in His perfect, sinless life; in His atoning death; and in His glorious resurrection and ascension. Note the past tense He uses, see Revelation 13:8 (Greek); Ephesians 1:4. But that Victory He does not keep to Himself. See 1 John 5:4. In this Truth we have peace.

**Read John 17:1-5**

17:1 – Having completed His discourse to the disciples, the Lord now begins what is called “The High Priestly Prayer.” He goes before us to God, He stands between us and the Father, offering intercession for us.

What the Lord had spoken He had spoken clearly. See 16:29. Now there is a significant change. Previously He had spoken to the disciples. Now He raises His eyes to heaven, and begins the prayer with “O Father, the hour has come.” The shadow of the cross has been upon Him since His birth, but now the cross is in sight. His request to His Father is couched in reverence and respect, beginning in the vocative case. On lifting up His eyes, see Matthew 14:19; Mark 7:34 (where the Greek verb is different).

St. John Chrysostom writes “…He himself turns to prayer in order to teach us that in our testing we are to leave everything behind and flee to God.” (*Ancient Christian Commentary*, 227)

“The hour has come.” See John 2:4, 12:27, 13:1; Mark 14:41. For this He took on Flesh. St. Augustine writes “It was not the time, therefore, that drove Christ to His death, but Christ who selected the time to die” (*Ancient Christian Commentary,* 227-228)

“Glorify your Son…” See John 7:39, 12:28. Although according to the world crucifixion was a shameful death, therein is the glory of God revealed. See 1:14, 13:30-32. Lenski attributes this “glorification” to the resurrection and ascension, not to the crucifixion (1116), but see the note in the new Study Bible. See 1 Corinthians 1:18; The “Christ Event” as seen by the Prophets of Old began with His Holy Incarnation, and extended to His ascension. His path to the glory He had before His Incarnation was through the cross. See Hebrews 12:2. Through perfect life, suffering and death, through His active and passive obedience, through His redemptive work, the Son brings glory to the Father.

17:2 – Note the blessed Unity between the Father and the Son: The Father gives the Son authority over all flesh. The Son gives eternal life to those given Him by the Father. On the authority of the Son, see Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:22. This can only be true of God. Our Confessions expose this fact in the Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article VIII (the Person of Christ): “[these] are not created gifts, but divine, infinite properties; and yet according to the declaration of Scripture, these have been given and communicated to the Man Christ” (*Concordia Triglotta,* 1033).

So we confess that the Son is equal to the Father as touching His divinity, inferior to the Father as touching His manhood. Thanks be to God, that our Lord prayed aloud, so that this is revealed to His disciples, and through them to us.

The Son gives eternal life: see 5:24, noting its relationship to the following verse. In 17:2 this is a cause/effect: the Father gives the Son authority over all flesh, *in order that* He give them everlasting life. Note that the doctrine of election is also revealed here – to whom does the Son give eternal life? How does this come to pass? See John 6:39-40. See also John 6:44.

17:3 – Here our Lord reveals again how the eternal life He referred to in verse 2 is gained. See 14:6; 1 John 5:20. The grammatical device called “epexegetical καί“makes “the only true God” and “He whom you sent, Jesus Christ” equal.

17:4 –The Father is glorified by the Son on earth through the perfect completion by the Son of the work the Father gave the Son to do. See 4:34; Hebrews 5:8-9. That work is finished on the cross, see 19:30. Since that work is “finished”, the Son prays that He be glorified according to the glory He has had with the Father since the world was (vs.5). This is a revelation of the Divine Mystery of the Holy Trinity, and proof that the Son “is equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, and inferior to the Father as touching His Manhood.” (The Athanasian Creed) During His State of Humiliation God the Son did not empty Himself of His divine glory, He veiled it, although it was sometimes seen (the Transfiguration).

17:5 - The Lord’s prayer to His Father has thus far focused on the work He has done on earth. Now (“Now”) He turns His Words towards the glory He will have again once in heaven. But that glory is only achieved through the cross. See verse 24 of this chapter. How does this verse relate to John 1:1? 1 John 1:1-2? See also 7:39, 8:54.

**Read John 17:6-8**

17:6 – The Lord will give the reason for His prayer for the Eleven in verses 6-10, the prayer will follow in verses 11-19. The Son “made manifest” the Name of God to the men who the Father gave Him out of the world. See Psalm 22:22. How does Psalm 22 begin? The Name of God is a revelation of God and His grace, not a mere moniker. The Second Person of the Holy Trinity appears as the Name of the Lord. See Genesis 21:33; Exodus 33:19; 2 Chronicles 6:10, and many more. In Christ the Name of the Lord is manifest. Note how the second half of this verse connects to the first. The Son made manifest the Name to them, to those who were the Father’s that He gave to the Son. As proof that He manifested the Name to them, they have kept His Word. That is the response of faith to the grace of God. By the Son’s revelation of the Father, they know Him. Knowing Him, they do the things that please Him. They strive to do His will, which is to keep His Word. The Son offers it as proof to the Father. By their works you shall know them. (Matthew 7:20)

17:7 – To know the Father, to keep His Word, is to believe that all the things of the Son were given Him by the Father.

17:8 – It is the Words given the Son from the Father that the Son gave to the Eleven. They received them, for faith always receives the Word of God. Receiving that Word, they know truly that the Son came from (came out of) the Father and they believe that the Father sent Him. This is a major theme of John’s Gospel – Christ the Apostle of the Father. See 11:42, 16:27, 17:3.

**Read 17:9-12**

17:9 – The verb in the Greek is not “pray” but “ask” (ἐρωτάω). Our Lord is indeed praying, but He prays “I ask concerning them”. He first prayed for Himself. Now He prays for His disciples. Later He will pray for the Church. Note that here He does not pray for the world. The reason why? Because they are the Father’s. See John 6:37.

17:10 – Note the Unity of the Father with the Son – all things that the Son has are the Father’s. In this the Son is glorified, because of the blessed Unity of the Holy Trinity.

17:11 – The Lord, with cross and tomb in full view, leaves the world to go to the Father. See John 8:21-25. The Christian is “in” this world, but not “of” this world. We are citizens of God’s Kingdom. The *Letter to Diognetus* (of unknown authorship, unknown recipient, found in a single manuscript attributed to Justin Martyr, penned c. 130 A.✠D.­­), says “In a word, what the soul is to the body, Christans are to the world. The soul is dispersed through all the members of the body, and Christians throughout the cities of the world. The soul dwells in the body but is not of the body. Likewise, Christians dwell in the world but are not of the world.” (*Ancient Christian Commentary*, 244)

“I kept them in Your Name” – the verb for “kept” means to carefully attend to. It is also used frequently of “keeping” the Law. “…those whom you have given Me.” Note that here the NIV and ESV make it the Name that is given, not the disciples, reflecting a variant in the Greek manuscripts. See 18:9.

Note that in the previous verse the Name of God is given to God the Son. Here He describes His work as having “kept them in Your Name”, the Name that the Father gave to the Son. Where the Name is, God is. This “keeping” is equivalent to that of 18:9. See verse 2 of this chapter, 6:37, 39. On the Unity of the Father and the Son, see John 10:30. This blessed Unity is extended to us in Christ. See verses 21-23 of this chapter. We have Communion with one another, and we have Communion with God.

17:12 – Our Lord again asserts what He has done. The second verb “kept” is derived from a Greek word that means “guard” in the sense “to keep from escaping”.

In the Greek the word translated here as “lost” is more accurately “destroyed” (ἀπώλετο). The word translated “perdition” is, in the Greek, from the same semantic domain (ἀπωλείας). This gives us a deeper understanding of what it means to be “lost”. See Isaiah 57:4 (which uses the same Greek verb in the LXX); 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4. That the “son of perdition” be lost is, according to the Word of the Lord, a fulfilment of Scripture. See Psalm 55:12-13; Zechariah 11:12-13; Matthew 27:9; John 13:10-11.

**Read John 17:13-16**

17:13 – Jesus, who came from the Father, goes to the Father. This is a major theme of the Gospel according to St. John. See 16:28. The Words of the Lord are to work joy in the disciples, His joy. See Psalm 16:8-11; John 16:24.. That joy the Eleven would share with the world. See 15:11; 1 John 1:4 (what things does John write? See verses 1-3).

17:14 – Those who have the Word of God are hated by the world. Remember our Lord’s words in verse 11. See 15:18-21. The Christian lives this reality every day.

17:15 – The Gospel has not yet been preached “to the ends of the earth”. The Holy Church will continue the work that Christ finished – bringing His forgiveness and salvation to all the elect. This verse translated woodenly reads “I do not ask that you raise them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil *one*.” He is the prince of this world. See 12:31, 14:30, 16:7-11; Ephesians 2:1-3.

17:15 Continued – The theme of the Church in the world continues through verse 18, in which the Sent One of the Father, the True Apostle, sends His disciples into the world as His Apostles. The attendant prayers ask that the Church be protected and strengthened as they take the Gospel of Christ to all men. See Matthew 6:13, 1 John 2:13-17, 5:18.

17:16 – Our Lord is not “of” this world. His Kingdom is not limited to this world. So those who are His do not belong to this world. They are “in it, but not of it.” The Holy Church is populated with men who are strangers and foreigners here. We Christians have different morals and mores, we act, speak and think differently, and we are reviled and hated by the world. See 8:23, 15:19. Our comfort is that the Kingdom of God is eternal, and this fallen world will soon pass away with those who are “of it.”

**Read John 17:17-19**

17:17 – He is not from the world, those that are His are not from the world. The proof of this is their sanctification, which comes by the Word of Truth, placing that Truth inside of them. See Psalm 119:140-142, 158-160. Some manuscripts read “sanctify them in Your truth.” Notice here the relationship between Truth (14:6) and sanctification. The falsehoods of the world war against sanctification. Note also that there is One Truth – the Word of God. Pastor will explain the theological terms *norma normans* and *norma normata*, the “norms” of faith, practice, teaching and life. The Greek verb translated “sanctify”, ἁγιάζω , means “to make holy” or “to set apart for God” (Lenski 1146). How is this true of the Christian?

17:18- He is not from this world. But He is the Apostle of the Father, the Sent One (see 9:7, where “Siloam” comes from the Hebrew *Shiloach*, from שָׁלַח ). As He was sent, so He sends the ones He has redeemed out of the world. They will continue the work He finished, taking the Good News of Christ crucified, risen and ascended to the ends of the earth. This is the purpose of verse 15. See John 20:21-23. See Hebrews 2:10-15. His sending of them is the means through which you hear the Gospel and receive His Gifts.

17:19 – He who is without sin, He who alone is Holy, He who is God, He who alone sanctifies, will set Himself apart. This is sacrificial language by which He refers to His cross. He is Priest and Sacrifice. He will set Himself apart as the One Sacrifice pleasing to God the Father in payment for the sins of the world. Note that our Lord says “On their behalf I sanctify Myself…” It is through His death on the cross and His miraculous resurrection that you are “set apart” from the world, that you are declared holy before God. See Romans 5:17, 6:3-5; Revelation 20:6 (Pastor will explain).

Notice that the imputed holiness of the Christian is “in truth”. We are sanctified in the Truth, for His Word is Truth, and so sanctified we are such in truth. God declares us righteous for Christ’s sake, and when God speaks, it is. See 2 John 1, 4 and then 3 John 1 for the difference (Lenski).

**Read John 17:20-26**

Our Lord’s prayers for His disciples are now expanded to include “all those who believe in Him through their Word. He prays for the Holy catholic Church. See John 10:16.

17:20 – Read verse 9 of this chapter. Not only the Twelve, not only those who believed in Him at the time of the prayer, but also all those who would come to believe in Him through the Word of the Apostles – these are the Father’s, entrusted to the Son. On those who would come to believe, see 20:29. This should bring great comfort to the Christian. Your Lord prayed for you, you who come to faith by the Holy Spirit through the proclamation of the Apostolic Word, before He went to the cross. St. Cyprian writes “The Lord’s lovingkindness, no less than his mercy, is great in respect of our salvation in that, not content to redeem us with h his blood, he in addition prayed for us…” (*Ancient Christian Commentary,* 255).

17:21 – Here is the substance of the prayer our Lord prayed for you: “In order that they all be one, just as You, Father are in me and I in You…”

“That they all be one…” is the Lord’s prayer for the perfect unity of the Holy catholic Church. See His prayer in verse 11 for the same. How is this accomplished? See Galatians 3:26-28. The unity of the Church is directly connected with the Unity of the Father with the Son. See 10:38. This is nowhere more true than in the Mass, see Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 1:9. This helps us understand 2 Corinthians 6:14 better. See Ephesians 2:2-9, noting the unity (fellowship) in verse 9. See Philippians 1:3-6; notice the roll of the Spirit in this Unity in Philippians 2:1-2. See 1 John 1:3, 6-7. The fellowship here described is the fellowship you have – unity with the Holy Church, as you are members of the Body of which Christ is Head. See Colossians 1:18-22.

“In order that also they be in us, in order that the world believe that You sent me.” (Braden) In this way we are in God, as we believe that the Father sent the Son. God the Son as sent by God the Father, and believing that Jesus Christ is that Son, is a major theme of the Gospel according to St. John.

17:22 – The blessed Unity of the Church is described here by our Lord as having the glory that God the Father gave to the Son. See 1:14, 10:30, and the first verse of this chapter. Lenski writes “It cannot be our oneness for the glory given us is to produce the oneness. It is impossible to dissociate the glory the Father has given to Jesus from the glory mentioned in v. 1 and 5. This is the eternal glory which the Logos had before the world was, the uncreated and essential glory of God, consisting of the sum of the divine attributes…. They received it by the indwelling of Jesus by which they were made partakers of the divine nature, II Pet. 1:4; II Cor. 3:18; Heb. 12:10; I John 3:2: This our glory, received from Jesus, is invisible while we are in what we may call our state of humiliation; the consummation at the time of the Paruousia will reveal it in all its excellence, Rev. 3:21. In Rom. 8:30 ‘them he also did glorify,’ is an exact parallel to our passage…” (1159-1161). The result of being given His glory is that we are One just as the Father and the Son are One. See Deuteronomy 6:4.

17:23 – Here the Lord further expounds on the Unity – “I in them and You in Me, in in order that they be perfected into one…” (Braden) This is the Lord’s description of the Mystical Union, the Union of Christ with His Church, worked through the indwelling of His Spirit through His Mysteries. Consider the prayer prayed by the Pastor when the water is added to the Chalice: “O Lord, who marvelously created and more wondrously redeemed human nature, by this Sacrament make us partakers of Your Divine Nature.” (or in an older form: “…grant that He who was made partaker of our humanity, may make us co-heirs of His divinity…”).

The result clause, ”in order that”, introduces the reason that the Holy Church be perfected into One: that the world know that the Father sent the Son, and that the world know that the Father loves the ones who believe in the Son through the Word. See verses 20-21, 3:35-36.

17:24 – Here your Lord prays for you. He prays “O Father, that which you have given to me, I desire that where I Myself AM those also be with Me…” (Braden, noting that Lenski expounds on “I desire” as an expression of the will of the Son, which is the will of the Father, “He and the Father are in perfect accord” 1165) Here the Lord sees through His arrest, trial, crucifixion and resurrection, and looks forward to His Ascension, asking that the Holy Church be taken up with Him into heaven. See 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18. See 6:37, 12:26, and 1 John 3:2. Thanks be to God, we who have been declared holy by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ will be with Him for eternity. This is our Christian hope.

The result clause again explains why the Lord desires this: “in order that they see My Glory, which You have given to Me, because you loved Me before the foundation of the world.” (Braden) Echoing the first verses of the Gospel according to St. John (do you remember what they say?), the Lord refers to His Divine Glory, for a time hidden in His State of Humiliation, but to be revealed to the Holy Church when we see Him in Glory, which is to say when we see Him in heaven. But that glory is achieved through cross and tomb – see verse 5 of this chapter.

17:25 – After an adversative conjunction (Lenski treats this και as “both”), again our Lord addresses His Father in the vocative case: “O Righteous Father…” See Luke 18:19. Having referred to the foundation of the world, the Lord proclaims that “the world did not know You”. See Romans 1:20-21. All men have a knowledge of God through “natural revelation”, but that knowledge is not a saving knowledge,

“But I knew You”, the Lord declares. See Matthew 11:27. That knowledge the Lord gave to the Church, so that “…these knew that You sent Me.” Christ as the Apostle (Sent One) of the Father is a major theme of the Gospel according to St. John.

17:26 – The Name of God is the sum of His attributes. Where God’s Name is, there God is. The Son “made known to them Your Name and I will make known, in order that the love with which You loved Me *be* in them, and I in them.” (Braden) Again here the Lord refers to the Mystical Union. See Matthew 18:20, and our notes above on verse 23 of this chapter. See also John 15:9-11. St. Augustine comments “For in one sense He is in us as in His Temple. But in another sense, He is also in us because we are also part of Him, since, when He became Man and our Head, we became His Body.” (*Ancient Christian Commentary,* 263.)

That is our Lord’s final prayer of the Great High Priestly Prayer. Having prayed this, the Lord goes, His disciples following, to be betrayed, arrested, and crucified. Lenski writes “In these three closing verses Jesus expresses his assurance that the Father will hear him. It is like a grand ‘Amen, amen, Yea, yea, it shall be so!’ The purpose and the object of Jesus and of his work shall be attained.” (1171)

**Read John 18:1-3**

18:1 – “After saying these things” – St. John moves us from the High Priestly Prayer to what the Lord has promised is soon to come.

18:1 Continued – The Shepherd leads His flock. He leads them to the place of His arrest. But see Zechariah 13:7. The Lord leads them out “beyond”, or “through and beyond”, the Brook Kidron. The brook only carried water after rain, and was dry between rains. It runs through the Kidron Valley, the valley to the east of the Holy City.

The Kidron Valley is important to the history of Israel. Although this is the only mention of the Kidron Valley in the New Testament, See 2 Samuel 15:23, 30; 1 Kings 15:13; 2 Kings 23:4-6; 2 Chronicles 29:16, 30:14. The Kidron Valley was the place that the idolatries of Israel were disposed of. Now the True Israel, bearing the sins of the world, crosses over it. In Him the idolatries of Israel will be disposed of. He is the true Scapegoat. See Leviticus 16:8-10.

The “garden” is, of course, Gethsemane. See Matthew 26:36. Gethsemane is located at the base of the Mount of Olives. The name “Gethsemane” is from the Aramaic word for “oil press”, an implement appropriately located at an olive grove. Lenski writes “This, then, was a ‘garden’ in the sense of a grove of olive trees which had the equipment for making olive oil, was fenced with a stone wall, stone being plentiful.” (1173) Hence the Lord “went in” to the garden.

18:2 – Here the name “Judas” is made one with “the betraying one”, See John 6:64, 70-71. “…many *times* Jesus gathered there with His disciples.” See Luke 21:37. That Judas “comes” see 13:27, 14:30.

18:3 – Judas took with him a “cohort”. The same word is used in Matthew 27:27. Lenski says that the word points “to the cohort of Roman soldiers which garrisoned the castle Antonia near the Temple, a force of 600 men in all.” (1174) Addition with Judas were from men the chief priests, and the assistants (Lenski translates “underlings”) of the Pharisees. They will appear again in verses 10 and 26, where they are called “servants”.

The description of what they carried, “torches and lanterns and weapons”, indicate that it was growing dark, and that they were prepared to take Him by force. See Luke 22:47-53. The Greek word here translated weapons, ὅπλων, is also used for “implements” or “tools”, and is sometimes translated “armor”, see Romans 13:12 and 2 Corinthians 6:7, but see also Romans 6:13 and 2 Corinthians 10:4. The crowd is large, armed, and prepared to take Him by force.

**Read John 18:4-6**

18:4 – According to His Divine Nature, the Incarnate Second Person of the Holy Trinity knew all things. In His State of Humiliation He did not always nor fully use His divine powers. But here the Evangelist reminds us that although He will submit to the violence of sinful men, still He could use His divine powers, in this case the power of omniscience: “Therefore Jesus, knowing all the *things* coming upon Him…”).

Although He knew, still He “went out and said to them “who are you seeking?”. He did not say this for His own benefit, rather for those with Him. Lenski contrasts the Lord’s “going out” here with His “going in” in verse 1, indicating that the Lord came outside of the stone wall of the garden to meet the mob.

18:4, Continued – That the Lord knew all things that would come upon Him, see 13:1-4. The events of the Upper Room took place in the shadow of the cross, as did the entire life of the Incarnate Lord on earth. His “knowing” would extend through His arrest, trial, suffering and death. See 19:28. St. Cyril of Alexandria wrote “The place was a garden, typifying the paradise of old. For in this place, as it were, all places were recapitulated and our return to humanity’s ancient condition was consummated. For the troubles of humanity began in paradise, while Christ’s suffering, which brought us deliverance from all the evil that happened to us in times past, began in this garden.” (*Ancient Christian Commentary*, 265)

The unbelieving Jews had always sought Him for the wrong reason. See 6:26, 7:19, 8:21.

18:5 – The Jews answer “Jesus the Nazarene”. Their description is specific. See 1:45; Matthew 2:23; Luke 2:39, 4:34; Matthew 21:11; John 19:19.

The Lord answers them by speaking the Divine Name, that Name which is too holy to pronounce, and using that Name as His own. See our study notes on 1:12, page 9 of this study. The reaction of the multitude shows that they understood. See the excursus in the ESV study Bible on pgs. 1784-1785. The Lord will speak the Name “I AM” three times (Holy, Holy, Holy) in front of the multitude that has come to arrest Him.

Judas, one of the Twelve, now stood with the mob. The Lord had given him over to the devil. See 13:27. Although Judas’ identification of the Christ would be by secret sign, occult, hidden, done in darkness, the Lord’s confession of who He is is clear and unambiguous. He confesses clearly, for all to hear. He came to His own, but His own received Him not, 1:10-11. See also 12:37-41.

18:6 – The crowd has two choices. If He uses the Divine Name sinfully, they must stone Him according to the Law. If He speaks the Divine Name rightly, and is indeed God, they must worship Him. See Genesis 4:26, Exodus 20:7.

St. Augustine writes “With no other weapon than his own solitary voice uttering the words “I Am,” He knocked down, repelled and rendered helpless that great crowd, even with all their ferocious hatred and terror of arms. For God lay hidden in that human flesh, and eternal day was so obscured in those human limbs that he was looked for with lanterns and torches to be slain in the darkness. ‘I Am’, he says, and throws the wicked to the ground. What will He do when He comes as judge, who did this when giving Himself up to be judged?” (*Ancient Christian Commentary*, 268)

His Divine power is obvious. Even His enemies cannot deny it. But the power with which He spoke, driving the multitude back and to the ground before Him with a Word, He will willing put off as He allows them to arrest Him, mock and blashpeme Him, torture Him, and crucify Him.

**Read John 18:7-9**

18:7 – Unafraid, clearly and publicly confessing who He is, He asks again. Lenski quotes Luther: “Here we may learn what an abominable thing an obdurate heart is, in order that we may learn to abide in the fear of God. They feel themselves falling to the ground, but they do not recede in their hearts from the intention and evil purpose… These are hearts of utter steel and adamant. And the rogue Judas, the evangelist tells us, also stood with them, is so obdurate and hard and falls to the ground with the rest; yet he is not moved that he should think: Man, quit defying him who hurls us all back with one word.” (1182-1183)

They answer, “Jesus the Nazarene”. See John 19:19.

18:8 – The Lord clearly reiterates His first answer. His Words are without confusion and understood by all: “I told you that I AM.” See our notes on 18:5ff. More than confirming who He is, He advocates for His disciples. “If you seek me, let these go to depart.” (Braden) In His death He does the same for you – He dies in your place, that you live.

18:9 – His plea for His disciples was the fulfilment of prophecy. See 6:39. The same is true of you – He has not lost one of those given Him by the Father.

**Read John 18:10-11**

18:10 – The Lord was being betrayed into the hands of those who would crucify Him. See Matthew 16:21-23. Here too Peter, seeming bold and faithful, was actually opposed to the Father’s will. Only St. John records the servant’s name – Malchus. See Matthew 26:47-54; Luke 22:47-51.

The sword here is a μάχαιρα, a short sword. It was not the long ῥομφαία of Luke 3:25, or of the Apocalypse (1:16, 2:12, 2:16, 6:8, 19:15, 21). Several commentators state that the short sword could be easily concealed under a cloak.

18:11 – The Lord rebukes Peter, telling him to sheath his sword. The Lord’s next words take us to Gethsemane: “The cup which the Father has given to me, shall I surely not drink it?” (Braden) A few manuscripts include the word “My” before “Father” (as translated into English, in Greek the word order is reversed).

Origen, in his commentary on St. Matthew’s account of Peter striking the servant with his sword, writes that the Lord told Peter to put his sword (the sword of violence) away because He would soon give him a better sword, the Sword of the Spirit, the Sword of Peace. (*Ancient Christian Commentary*, 271) The True King did not come to take an earthly kingdom with violence or by armies. His Kingdom is not of this world. See 18:36.

**Read John 18:12-14**

18:12 – Now the cohort (see 18:3) does its work. The “commander” named here is a χιλίαρχος, the “head” or “ruler” of 1000. The cohort is at his command. The underlings of the Jews assist. They seize Jesus together and they bind Him. The verb used here for “to arrest” (seize, grasp, apprehend) is used in Luke 5:9 for “catching” fish. The Lord does not resist.

Matthew 26:56 records a fact not recorded by John.

Twice He told them clearly who He was. Now He goes to do that for which He came. See Matthew 20:18.

18:13 – They led Him away to Annas (Ἅννας) first. He was the father-in-law of Caiaphas (Καϊάφας), who was the chief priest of that year. In verse 24 Jesus will be sent by Annas to Caiaphas. Their preparation for His betrayal and arrest is chronicled in Matthew 26:3. For the Synoptic account of His arrest, see Matthew 26:57-68 (note that Annas’ involvement is not chronicled in the Synoptics – only in John).

The high priest or chief priest was the head of the Levitical order of priests (see the institution and vestments in Exodus 28-29, first given to Aaron). The high priest served as “superintendent” of the Tabernacle and Temple worship. He was the only priest allowed in the Holy of Holies, and that only once each year. (*ODCC* 768) vSee Leviticus 16:1-3. On Aaron’s sons Nadab and Abihu see Leviticus 10:1-2. See also the mention of the chief priests in the ESV Study Bible on pg. 1556, which allows for “other temple officials” in the designation.

Annas had served as chief priest from 6-15 A.✠ D. He was deposed by the procurator Valerius Gratus, the Roman Prefect of Judea under Tiberius Caesar Augustus (reigned from 14-37 A.✠ D.) for nine years. Gratus was replaced by Pontius Pilate. Annas was succeeded by Caiaphas. Annas, however, apparently retained at least referent authority among the Jews (probably among the more conservative/traditional/strict), and although deposed by the Roman government he was still called “High Priest”. See Luke 3:2; Acts 4:6. (*ODCC* 71)

Caiaphas is the high priest before whom Jesus would actually be tried. He served as high priest from 18-37 A.✠ D. The Concordia Study Bible (NIV, 1641) note indicates, without citing a source, that Jewish law required that the trial and sentencing of the accused be done on two different days, which necessitated a double interrogation, hence Annas and then Caiaphas, which would have made the trial seem more legitimate.

18:14 – “Caiphas was the one who plotted with the Jews that it is profitable *for* one man to die on behalf of the people.” (Braden)  The word translated “plotted” (συμβουλεύω)is also translated “consulted together/advised/gave advise”. See John 11:48-53, and our notes there. After such a prognostication, a clear reference to the avoidance of punishment by the Roman government, would a fair trial be possible? They would offer up Jesus in their stead, but completely reject His Vicarious Atonement. Although the system was a religious system, it is clear that the trial was political.

**Read John 18:15-18**

18:15 – As the Lord is led away, going willingly (see Isaiah 53:7), Simon Peter and “another disciple” followed. The “other disciple” is generally held to be St. John, the author of the Gospel account at hand (see Matthew 26:58, where the “other disciple” isn’t mentioned). The “other disciple” was “known to the high priest”. That apparently allowed him to enter into the courtyard of the high priest.

18:16 – Peter did not enter into the courtyard, but rather stood by the door outside. The “other disciple” asked the doorkeeper to let Peter in.

18:17 – The servant girl that kept the door recognized Peter as one of Jesus’ disciples.

18:17, cont. – In 13:37 Peter made a bold assertion. Here he denies Christ. We shouldn’t be too hard on Peter. It was clear that the Christ, his Lord, might be put to death. That very well may have meant death for His disciples as well, since they would have been considered part of the insurrection for which the Roman government would take away Jewish rule (see our notes on 18:14 and the references there). See Matthew 26:41.

18:18 – St. John chronicles an interesting fact – as the Lord, now under arrest, begins to be subject to a sham trial, Peter stands with the servants and underlings of the Jews. St. Augustine explains that Peter did so because it was cold, it was the “vernal equinox”, but St. Ambrose disagrees, writing “If we consider the season, it could not have been cold. But it was cold where Jesus was not acknowledged, where there was none to see the light, where the consuming fire was denied. Peter stood beside the brazier, because he felt he was freezing. Evil is the …flame that night. It burns but does not warm.”

The vernal equinox occurs on or around March 20, and marks the beginning of spring in the northern hemisphere.

The “fire” in Greek is ἀνθρακιὰν, not a simple fire, but a “charcoal fire”. The word only occurs twice in the New Testament. See John 21:9 for the use of the same Greek word.

**Read John 18:19-24**

18:19 – The first question of the high priest is twofold. He desired to know about Jesus’ disciples, and His doctrine. This line of questioning would be in pursuit of a finding of heresy.

18:20 – “Jesus answered him: ‘I openly have spoken to the world, I always taught in synagogue and in the Temple, where all the Jews come together, and in hiddenness I have spoken nothing.” (Braden) See Luke 4:16. The Church is charged to do the same - St. Paul would do the same Acts 26:26, and would exhort Timothy to do so also, 2 Timothy 4:2-5. See our Lord’s prophecy in Matthew 10:18-20.

18:21 - There was no need for them to ask Him, His teaching was public and widely reported. He had many hearers who knew His doctrine well. See Luke 19:47-20:2

18:22 – One of the “underlings” standing by gave Him a “blow”, or “slap to the face”. This word only occurs three times in the New Testament, all three in the account of His trial and torture – see Mark 14:65 and John 19:3.

The Lord, of course, had spoken nothing against the High Priest. His assertion was accurate and true – He taught openly in the synagogue and in the Temple, where all the Jews gathered, and many heard and understood Him.

18:23 – “If badly I have spoken, bear witness concerning the bad. But if well, why *do* yousmite Me?” (Braden) The form of the verb is a second person singular, indistinguishable in English but clear in most languages. Jesus directs His Words to the one who struck Him.

18:24 – Jesus, being bound, is sent by Annas to his son-in-law Caiaphas, who succeeded his father-in-law as High Priest after Annas was removed by civil law. See our notes on 18:13.

Compare 18:13 with Matthew 26:57 and Mark 14:53. Annas is not mentioned in the Passion accounts of Matthew, Mark or Luke. In Matthew the events of Gethsemane (26:36-46) are followed immediately by Jesus being led to Caiaphas, as we see also in Mark 14:53ff. Luke has the Gethsemane account followed by 22:54, where the Lord is led to “the high priest’s house”, but Peter’s denial supplants the record of the events there. Luke continues after Peter’s third denial with the assembly of the council at daybreak (22:66).

The Gospel of John does not record the trial of Jesus before the Sanhedrin, “both the trial in the night and the confirmation of the sentence at a second session early in the morning. John, then, has nothing to add to the accounts of the synoptists on these proceedings of the Sanhedrin. John intends to contribute only the account of the action before Annas, which the synoptists omit. Matt. 26:57 follows the action before Annas; we also see that Luke 22:54 is identical with John 18:13, and that Luke 22:63-65 happened at the close of the trial at night and is all that Luke records of this trial.” (Lenski, 1205-1206)

On our Lord before the Sanhedrin, see Matthew 26:57-67. Notice that in John 18:24 Annas sends our Lord to Caiaphas, then in verse 28 of the same chapter the Jews lead Him from Caiaphas to the governor’s palace, but the events in between aren’t chronicled by John. Compare also Matthew 26:55 and John 18:20, which further suggest a conflation of the accounts. On Annas and Caiaphas, see Luke 3:1-2.

**Read John 18:25-27**

18:25 – In 18:17 Peter denied Christ the first time. The Lord had prophesied that Peter would deny Him three times, see 13:38. The second and third denials are recorded here by John, after the high priest questions Jesus. Matthew collects the denials and recounts them together, see Matthew 26:69-75. Mark and Luke do the same (Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:54-62).

We learned in verse 18 that there was a charcoal fire built, and that Peter stood by it warming himself. This verse continues that scene, St. John having inserted the account of our Lord’s questioning by the high priest. Peter was the “chief” of the disciples. Here, when questioned, he replies “I am not.”

18:26 – John alone contains these details. See Matthew 26:73-75. John has first-hand knowledge of who servant is, unidentified by the synoptic authors. He is a servant of the high priest, a relative of Malchus, another detail that only John includes (18:10, see Matthew 26:51).

18:27 – St. John simply articulates that Peter denied the Lord again. The denial complete as prophesied, the rooster gives the appointed sign (13:38). As at the birth of our Lord, “The ox knows its owner and the donkey its master's crib” (Isaiah 1:3), so now the rooster.

**Read John 18:28-32**

18:28 – “Then they lead Jesus from Caiaphas into the Praetorium, and it was early morning, but they themselves did not enter into the Praetorium in order that they not be defiled but eat the Passover.” (Braden) The Greek verb “they lead” is in the present tense here, a nuance called the “historic present”. “Early morning” is πρωΐ in the Greek, simply “early”, a reference to the third and last watch of the night, from 3:00 – 6:00 a.m.

18:28, Continued – Lenski (1210) comments that the events before the Sanhedrin probably didn’t occur in the hall of assembly in the Temple, where they would usually have been held. Apparently in the days of Jesus’ arrest the Sanhedrin met elsewhere. See Matthew 26:3.

The Praetorium was the headquarters of the *Praefectus Praetorii*, an official of the Roman Empire who served as “supreme administrator and judge of a region.” (*Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 447) The prefect or governor frequently also lived in the Praetorium. In the text at hand the Praetor is Pilate, the governor. Lenski opines that since Herod’s palace was occupied (Herod was there), the Praetorium must have been the castle Antonia. The castle Atonia was a “citadel”, built by Herod the Great for the protection of the Temple. Herod’s patron was Marcus Antonius, relative and supporter of Julius Caesar, hence the castle name.

Roman courts were open from dawn until sunset (Lenski 1211), so the events that occurred during the night were against Roman and Jewish law. For the Lord to have been brought to the Praetorium, it would have to have been at or after daybreak, when the Sanhedrin would have arrived at the death sentence, and then taken to Pilate.

While the Old Testament includes no Law preventing a Jew from entering a Gentile building, this was apparently an extension of the Law in Pharisaical Judaism.

Regarding the Passover, we should remember that the Lord “ate” the Passover with His disciples on Maundy Thursday. The Passover, however, was not a one day affair. It was a week-long observance that included a number of meals. It culminated in the Passover Sabbath, which, taking our text to refer at this point to Good Friday, would be the following day. Lenski adds that the *Chagigah,* a continued eating of the Paschal Lamb, occurred also on Friday, the 15th day of Nissan, and was a favored feast by the Jews. (1214) We should remember that the Jews who came to Jerusalem for one of the great Pilgrim Feasts would have made Jerusalem a very full and busy city at this time. This no doubt figures into the Roman authorities yielding to the Jewish demands that the Lord be crucified.

18:29 – The Jews unwilling to enter, Pilate, the governor, goes out to meet what must have been a large crowd. See Matthew 27:11-14. Pilate’s question to the Jews is quite specific, and legal in nature: “What charge are you bringing against this Man?” (majuscule mine) He asks as one appointed to judge.

18:30 – The Jews do not answer Pilate’s question. They provide no specific charge, although see Luke 23:1-5. Here they respond “If this One were not doing evil, we would not have handed Him over to you.” (Braden) The verb for “hand over” is also used for “to betray”. Judas is the “hander overer”, as in Matthew 27:3. The same word, in the form of a noun, is used for “tradition” – that which is “handed down.” See 1 Corinthians 11:2.

18:31 – Hearing no clear charge, Pilate refuses to judge. “You (pl.) take Him yourselves and according to your law you judge Him.” He is innocent. The charges are false. Their Law, if properly observed, would find the same.

18:31, Continued – “The Jews said to him we are not authorizedto put anyone to death.” (Braden) The Jews were able to make judgments under “their law”, see Acts 18:12-17. But under the *Pax Romana* the Jews, as they themselves say, had no authority to impose a death sentence or put to death. They were not allowed to crucify. That was reserved for Roman law and its judges, although there were apparently exceptions (see 19:6 and Acts 7:54-60). Lenski adds “All that the Jews could inflict was expulsion from the synagogue and scourging with rods up to a certain number of blows.” (1218) Although the Lord has not been tried, and although the Jews have still not answered Pilate’s question, they are not waiting for a verdict. In their minds He has already been sentenced: death. And all this they do standing outside, so that they are not defiled and can eat the Passover (verse 28).

18:32 – The Jews predetermined sentence is the fulfilment of Jesus’ prophetic Words (John 3:14, 12:32-33), and indeed of many Old Testament prophecies See Genesis 3:15; Deuteronomy 21:22-23 [Galatians 3:13], Isaiah 53:4-8; Psalm 22, etc. The Lord knew the whole time what sort of death He would die.

**Read 18:33-37**

18:33 – Having gone out and spoken with the Jews, now Pilate goes back in to the Praetorium. Although John does not record the specific charges made by the Jews, Luke records what the Sanhedrin wanted to charge Jesus with. See Luke 23:1-3. Here Pilate responds to the last charge Luke records by asking Jesus “Are you the King of the Jews?” See John 19:19. In asking this question, Pilate has begun the “trial” and is gathering information by which to judge. For someone living in the Roman Empire under the *Pax Romana* to claim to be a king broke Roman law.

18:34 – See the Matthean account (27:3-11) for events not recorded by John. Note how that account begins and ends, correlating with our Johannine account. In John’s record, the Lord does not give a direct answer to Pilate’s question. Christ is indeed King, and Pilate has no authority over Him except that which Jesus allows. See John 12:13. Here Jesus speaks Words not recorded in the Synoptic Gospels, which only record the final dialogue between Pilate and Him. See Luke 23:4. This is a trial. The Lord’s question is germane to Pilate’s judgment – does Pilate have evidence of this, or is it based on hearsay?

18:35 – At first Pilate’s response “I am not a Jew, am I?”, seems disconnected to Jesus’ question. But Pilate cannot give answer to the Lord’s question, for if he did he would have to admit that he had no real evidence, only gossip and rumors. So Pilate responds in a very similar way to the Jews’ assertion in verse 30.

18:36 – The Lord’s answer is directly to the point. In verse 33 Pilate asked “Are you the King of the Jews?” The Lord responds “My Kingdom is not of this world. If My Kingdom *were* out of this world, my underlings would have continually striven in order that I not be handed over to the Jews. But now My Kingdom is not from here.” (Braden) On “striven”, ἠγωνίζοντο, see Luke 13:24, 1 Corinthians 9:25; Colossians 1:29; 1 Timothy 6:12. Pilate has used the Jews’ actions as an accusation against the Lord. The Lord responds by describing what His subjects would have done.

18:37 – The word that the NKJV translates “then” is Οὐκοῦν, which occurs only here in the New Testament, and is not used in the Septuagint. It is a combination of the negative particle (“not”) and the word “therefore”. Citing extra-Biblical literature of the first century, the BDAG Lexicon translates it “so then” – which would mean that we translate this verse “So then, You are *a* king?” This is a natural response of ignorance of who Christ is to His assertions about His Kingdom and His servants (verse 36). See 12:13.

The Lord turns Pilate’s accusation into a confession – “You say that I am King…” He did not “usurp” His Kingship (Lenski, 1233), but He has been born King – see Matthew 2:2. But before His birth by the Virgin He was– He has come into the world (St. Augustine, *Ancient Christian Commentary* 291). He is the Eternal God, Incarnate. The purpose of His miraculous birth, the purpose of His Coming into the world, is that He bear witness to the Truth. See 5:33, 8:40, 8:45, 14:16. See 14:6, 17:17 – He has come into the world to give us knowledge not of all Truth, but of the Truth necessary to our salvation, the very Truth He saw and heard with His Father (Lenski, 1233).

“Everyone who is of the Truth hears My voice.” (Braden). The Greek preposition here translated “of” is woodenly “out of”, that is to say that Truth makes them His. They have literally come from “out of the Truth”. This distinguishes the citizens of His Kingdom from the citizens of all other kingdoms. Those who are of the Truth hear His voice, because He is Truth. See 8:47; 1 John 2:21. So it is today.

On Jesus’ coming into the world, see 3:19. On hearing His voice see 10:3.

**Read John 18:38-40**

18:38 – Pilate’s answer would be well received today, as our society has come to believe in “relative truths” – that which is true for you may not be true for me. This includes facts as clearly revealed as gender – and truth. As with Pilate, as with the Jews who would soon cry “Crucify!”, the fallen world regards the Christian Truth as fable. In Pilate’s terse response our Lord is proven true – those who are of the Truth hear His voice, Pilate did not hear.

Pilate finds “not one cause” in the Man, and states that publicly to the Jews. Under Roman law there is no cause to hold Him, there is no valid charge against Him. That is a fact Pilate will state thrice – here, and see 19:4 and 19:6, perhaps a parallel to Peter’s denial…

18:39 - Continuing in his address to the Jews, having declared our Lord innocent, Pilate reminds them of their custom. He is a true politician. He is seeking a way out. He doesn’t want to displease the Jews, but Roman law doesn’t allow him to charge and condemn Jesus. Pilate reminds them of the custom of releasing a prisoner on the Passover. He gives them a choice between Jesus and Barabbas. The problem, of course, is that Jesus isn’t a prisoner. He hasn’t been charged, He hasn’t been found guilty or condemned to punishment. It is wrong for Pilate to offer Him as a choice over against a convicted criminal. Consider Matthew 27:18, and the account that follows regarding Pilate’s wife (27:15-25), and Luke 23:13-25. The Synoptic Authors provide additional information. Pilate’s title for Jesus, “King of the Jews”, will provide the epithet on the cross as well.

18:40 – See St. Peter’s Words in Acts 3:13-14. Βαραββᾶς is the Greek for the Hebrew בָּר אָ֖ב which means “Son of the Father”, see Mark 14:36; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6. The form “Abba” was apparently a common Aramaic or Chaldee form of the word employed in prayer. The form is absent in Patristic literature (BDAG 1). The sinless Son of the Father would die, the sinful son of the father would be set free.

**Read John 19:1-5**

19:1 – The Greek word for what was done to Jesus means “to whip, flog or scourge”. See Matthew 10:17, 20:19, 23:34; Mark 10:33-34. Consider the Christology of Hebrews 12:6, where the same word is used. Cyril of Alexandria writes “Jesus was scourged unjustly so that he might deliver us from the punishment we deserved. He was beaten and struck so that we might beat Satan, who had beaten us, and that we might escape from the sin that that cleaves to us through the original transgression.” (*Ancient Christian Commentary*, 297) We spare ourselves here the cruel details of the effect of flogging on the human body, but our Lord was not spared.

Commentators point out that the scourging may have been an attempt by Pilate to save Jesus from crucifixion – the Jews cried “Crucify!”, Pilate had Him flogged. Lenski writes “After briefly telling us that Pilate’s attempt to save Jesus through Barabbas saved only Barabbas through Jesus, John tells us, not that Pilate ordered Jesus to be crucified, but to be scourged.” (1243) See Luke 23:16.

19:2 – In keeping with the accusation that Jesus is a king, anticipating the epithet to be placed on the cross, the soldiers mock Him using profane symbols of a monarch. See Matthew 27:26-31 for the Synoptic account of the events.

19:3 – The Greek verbs reveal the repetitive nature of the Greek imperfect tense – “And they repeatedly came to Him and were continually saying ‘Hail the King of the Jews! And they repeatedly gave Him blows.” (Braden) Although the aorist is used for “repeatedly gave blows”, Lenski opines that here the aorist stands for the imperfect. (1248) Compare this to John 12:13.

19:4 – “And Pilate went out again outside and *said* to them ‘Behold, I lead Him to you outside, in order that you know that I find not one cause in Him.” (Braden) I have italicized the word “said” because in the Greek it is in the “historic present”. Like Peter’s denial, three times Pilate will repeat that he finds no cause in Jesus for His arrest, torture and crucifixion – 18:38, 19:4, and 19:6.

19:5 – As Pilate presents our Lord to the menacing crowd, He has been flogged and vested in a crown of thorns and purple robe. Matthew 27:28 identifies the robe as “scarlet” in color. Matthew calls the “robe” a “cloak”, a specific reference to an old, worn out soldier’s cloak, a cast off mantle, its color darkened with age. (Lenski 1248) The effects of the scourge would have caused a dark crimson reddening of any cloth garment.

“And he said to them ‘Behold the Man’.” The Latin is *Ecce Homo*, also the title of a graphic statue depicting a torn and battered Christ.

19:5 Continued – Pilate could have easily have announced “Behold the King”, or “Behold God”. Both would have been true. The former would have been in keeping with the charge that would mark the cross. The latter would have been in keeping with the Jews’ charges, see John 10:33. But our Lord stood before them in His State of Humiliation. Seeing, they could not see (Matthew 13:13). To the eye without faith, He appeared to be simply a defeated, despised, shamed Man. So His use of the Name “Son of Man” for Himself in the New Testament, see Matthew 17:22-23. . As promised, God provided the Lamb, see Genesis 22:7-8, where the Word translated “burnt offering” is עֹלָה in the Hebrew, “whole burnt offering”. In Genesis 22:14 the English translations render “God will provide”, but the Hebrew reads “God sees”. God saw. And now, before Pilate and the angry Jewish mob, God provides the Lamb. He stands helpless, bloodied, silent.

**Read John 19:6-11**

19:6 – Pilate had announced that he found no cause for conviction in Jesus. Here he says it for the third time (18:38, 19:4). He had already said that the Jews should take Him and judge Him according to their law, for He had not broken Roman law. But the Jews had already decided on a punishment that exceeded their authority. See 8:31. Now Pilate sees the chief priests and the underlings crying “Crucify, Crucify”. The Greek Σταύρωσον is an aorist active imperative, stressing action. Again Pilate repeats his plea that the Jews take Him. Again he repeats that he finds no cause for condemnation in Him. A petty despot, still Pilate is cognizant of the strictures of Roman law. Lenski writes “Pilate, indeed, regards Jesus as innocent. But it is less his sense of justice as a judge that prompts his motive in the case of Jesus or at any time, than his pride which refuses to be bowed into the dust before these despicable Jews. He, the great Roman procurator, will not let these Jews dictate his verdict.” (1253) Pilate, however, will yield to the Jews in an attempt to avoid an unpleasant report of him being returned to his Roman superiors.

19:7 – Until now, calling Himself a King and stirring up trouble were the charges. Now the Jews invoke the Levitical blasphemy laws. See Leviticus 24:13-16. Pilate, as a Roman official, would have had no interest in the Jew’s religious laws. He is, of course, as they well understood, the Son of God. See Matthew 4:3, 8:29; Mark 1:1; John 5:17-18; Mark 15:29.

19:8 – St. John records an amazing fact. Pilate had been afraid, now he was more afraid. An ethnic uprising and a demand for an unjust death were dropped in his lap by a people with which he had trouble before. See the horrible event testified to in Luke 13:1.

The history of the Jewish people under Roman rule is germane here. In the Year of the Lord 6, the Jews demanded the removal of Herod Archelaus as ruler (ethnarch) of Samaria, Judea, and Idumea. Archelaus was the son of Herod the Great. The transition provided the opportunity to restructure the governance of the region. Judea was made a Roman province, Caesarea Maratima the capital. Rome provided a prefect for the region, who was subordinate to the Governor of Syria. Pilate was made procurator in the Year of the Lord 26. After a turbulent reign, in 36, Lucius Vitellius, Governor of Syria, removed Pilate from his position citing misgovernment. He was deposed and recalled by the Roman government, and according to

19:8, Continued – Church historian Eusebius, Pilate took his own life. (See the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, “Pilate, Pontius” (1287); and Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History* 2.7)

Here R.C.H. Lenski opines: “As a pagan of the Roman world Pilate took ‘God’s Son’ in a pagan sense, namely that in Jesus one of the gods or of the demigods had appeared among men…Skeptic though Pilate was, laughing at the old mythological stories with the rest of the educated and sophisticated Roman world, like all men of this type his skepticism was no armor against secret superstition. This thin armor was now pierced.”

19:9 – Pilates “going in” and “going out” continues here, as he addresses the Jews who would not enter the Praetorium for fear of becoming unclean for the Passover. Here Pilate goes back in, after having heard the Jews say “He makes Himself the Son of God”. Afraid (verse 8), Pilate demands of Jesus “From where are you?”. But Jesus will not answer. See 8:23, 9:29, 18:36; Matthew 15:54-55; Luke 23:6. On not answering, 700 years before the trial before Pilate, the Prophet Isaiah foretold it. See Isaiah 53:7, then Luke 23:9.

19:10 – “Then Pilate said to Him ‘To me you are not speaking?” (Braden) The Greek verb translated “speaking” means to “speak openly”. The stress in Pilate’s voice is evident. While Pilate was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife told him that Jesus was a “just Man”. Pilate had heard that He worked miracles. Now the Jews have revealed that Jesus called Himself the Son of God, at the same time they are demanding that Pilate have Him crucified.

Pilate pulls the “authority card”. “Do you not know that I have authority to free You and I have authority to crucify You?” (Braden) The Greek word translated “authority” (“power” in some translations) literally means to have “a state of control over something”, or “freedom of choice”. See the same word in Matthew 7:29, 10:1, 21:23, 28:18. All authority is given to Him, not Pilate.

19:11 – “Jesus answered him: ‘You would not have, not even one, authority against Me if it had not been given to you from above.” (Braden) In the Large Catechism Luther explains of the Fourth Commandment “In this commandment belongs a further statement regarding all kinds of obedience to persons in authority who have to command and to govern… also from antiquity the Romans and other nations called… their national rulers and overlords *patres patriae*, that is, fathers of the entire country…” (LC, Fourth Commandment, Latin enumeration 141-142). The authority of civil government is God-given, and included in the Fourth Commandment. See 3:27, Acts 2:23; Romans 13:1-5.

**Read John 19:12-16**

19:12 – “Out of this Pilate kept seeking to loose Him.” (Braden) On “Out of this” see John 6:66. “As a result of this” would be smoother English. Pilate’s response to the overwhelming lack of evidence against Jesus, and his personal fear, was to seek to let Him go free. The form of the Greek verb “sought” indicates continual or repetitive action in the past.

The Jews, failing in their religious challenge, now level a political challenge. See our notes above on 19:8. If Pilate had reason to fear before, it was now multiplied. “If you loose this one, you are not a friend of Caesar. Everyone making himself a king speaks against Caesar.” The Jews were no fans of Caesar. But here they argue philosophically, politically. See our notes on 19:8. Pilate wanted to maintain a good relationship with Caesar, the Jew cries threaten his position and livelihood. If Pilate won’t convict Him on heresay and inuendo, if Pilate isn’t concerned with Jewish religious Law, then perhaps threats of falling out of favor with Caesar will get for the Jews what they desire – the death of the Christ by crucifixion. Noting their objection that He calls Himself a King, see 12:13, then Luke 23:2 – but see Matthew 22:20-21.

19:13 – The “judgment seat” (βήματος in Greek), Lenski translates “tribunal”. He explains “a moveable platform with several steps, on which was placed the judge’s chair (or several chairs if more than one judge held court, or if notable persons were invited to sit with the judge.”) see Acts 18:12. Pilate was seated in the judgment seat because he was about to render the official verdict. Read Matthew 27:19-26 for the Synoptic account. “The Pavement”, Λιθόστρωτον, is an area paved with a mosaic of stone. The Aramaic Γαββαθα is of uncertain meaning, but includes the sense of a hill or raised place. The Hebrew word for a “hill” is הַגִּבְעָ֔ה

19:14 – Having given the exact location (the Judgment Seat at the Pavement, Gabbatha), now St. John gives the exact day – the Day of Preparation. See Luke 23:54; Matthew 27:62-63 This would have been the Friday before the Passover Sabbath. The Passover Sabbath was the 14th day of Abib, the first month of the old Jewish calendar. Later, because of Babylonian influence, the name Nissan was assigned to the same month. See Leviticus 23:5-6; Deuteronomy 16:1-8; Mark 14:12. The Day of Preparation was Friday before the Passover Sabbath, and afterwards the week of Unleavened Bread was observed. See Mark 15:42.

The “sixth hour” was noon according to Roman time, see Matthew 27:45-46, Mark 15:25 (and 33-34), and Luke 23:44, where “Jewish time” is cited. The “trial” took place at daybreak, around 6:00 a.m. Our Lord was crucified at 9:00 a.m.,(Jewish “third hour”), at noon darkness covered the land until 3:00 p.m.

“Behold your King”. Pilate, responding to their cries that Jesus made Himself King, again presents the Christ to the Jews – the first time he said “Behold the Man” (19:5). But the charge of being “King” would inform the epithet of the cross.

19:15 – The Jews cry out “Ἆρον ἆρον”, “Raise *Him* up! Raise *Him* up! Crucify Him”. (Braden) The word I have translated “Raise *Him* up” is an aorist imperative active second person singular form of the verb αἴρω, “I lift up” or “I raise up”. See 8:59; Matthew 16:24. It can also mean to “take up and remove”, see 1:29, 11:39, 11:48, 16:22. Note the KJV translation of Luke 23:18, a present imperative form of the same word.

To simply translate “Away” ignores the upward motion contained in the basic meaning of the verb. Note that the NKJ and ESV supply “with Him” in an effort to make “Away” make sense. The NIV has “Take Him away”, but the verb “take” does not occur here. Similarly my translation adds “Him”, but with the aorist imperative “Raise up!” See also Acts 21:35-36, noting the upward motion of the verb. Consider the implications of this upward motion in the use of the same verb in 1 John 3:5.

The second command of the Jews is “You crucify Him.” (Braden). Pilate’s response is “Shall I crucify your King?”, a rhetorical question given the repeated commands of the multitudes. The point is to assign responsibility for His crucifixion to the crowd, not to Pilate. Still, we confess that He was “…crucified under Pontius Pilate…”

Note the response of the chief priests (plural): “We have no king except Caesar.” (Braden) Here the Jews, who did not like Caesar, are willing to call him their king, if Pilate will crucify the One they called “King of Israel” at His Triumphal Entry.

19:16 – “Therefore then Pilate betrayed Him to them in order that He be crucified.” (Braden) The verb παραδίδωμι can me “I hand over” or “I betray”. In participial form, it can mean “one who betrays” (ὁ παραδιδούς Mathew 26:46), or “that which is handed over/down”, “tradition”, see Matthew 15:2 (παράδοσις). While Pilate clearly “handed Him over”, his act was one of betrayal. The Lord broke no Roman law, the Lord broke no Jewish Law. The purpose of Pilate’s betray of Him is “in order that He be crucified.”

The versification here is awkward. The critical text continues “Then they received Jesus” (Braden) Lenski translates literally “They, therefore, took Jesus over.” (1277) Compare the NIV “So the soldiers took charge of Jesus.”, ESV “So they took Jesus”. See Matthew 27:23-26. The “they” to which He was handed over are the soldiers, as in Matthew 27:27. Fr. Braden will explain the several variants of the end of verse 16.

**Read John 19:17-22**

19:17 – “And bearing Himself the cross, He went out into the *place* being called ‘Place of a Skull’, which is said in Hebrew Golgotha” (Braden). See Matthew 27:32-33; Mark 15:16-22. In Latin (Vulgate) “Calvariae locum”, from which is derived our word “Calvary”. Lenski writes that it was “a place called that of the Skull” because “undoubtedly because the hill had the shape of a cranium…” (1279).

Here Clement of Alexandria writes “Isaac… is a type of the Lord, a child as a son. For he was the son of Abraham, as Christ was the Son of God, and a sacrifice as the Lord, but he was not immolated as the Lord. Isaac only bore the wood of the sacrifice, as the Lord the wood of the cross.” (*Ancient Christian Commentary,* 308).

On His bearing the cross, see Isaiah 9:6.

19:18 “where they crucified Him, and with Him two others on either side, Jesus in the midst.” (Braden) Lenski remarks on the brevity of the account “Events so tremendous, words so brief and so restrained. Who guided the mind and the heart of these writers to write in this astonishing manner?” (1279). On His crucifixion with two criminals, see Isaiah 53:12. See Matthew 27:33-36 for the Synoptic account. Although they are not identified in Scripture, Mark 15:27 identifies those crucified with Jesus as “robbers” or “thieves”.

19:18, Continued – Luke 23:32-33 describes the placement of the thieves. Luke records the Words of our Lord immediately before He is crucified, see Luke 23:27-31. There Lenski explains “The green wood is Jesus in his sinlessness, the dry wood the Jews of Jerusalem in their sinfulness which had reached a state where it was ripe for judgment.” (*Luke*, 1129). See Psalm 1:3; Jeremiah 5:14; Jude 12; and Ezekiel 20:45-48.

St. Cyril of Alexandria writes “The two criminals who hung by Christ’s side symbolize the two nations who were about to be brought into close contact with him, namely the children of Israel and the Gentiles. And why do we take condemned criminals as the type? Because the Jews were condemned by the Law, for they were guilty of transgressing it. And the Greeks were condemned by their idolatry…” (*Commentary on the Gospel of John,* 12, in *Ancient Christian Commentary*, 310)

St. Augustine writes “Even the cross, if you consider it well, was a judgment seat. For the Judge was set up in the middle with the thief who believed and was pardoned on one side and the thief who mocked and was damned on the other. Already then he signified what he would do with the living and the dead: some he will place on his right hand, others on his left.” (*Tractates on the Gospel of John,* 31.11, in *Ancient Christian Commentary*, 311).

19:19 – Pilate’s questions to Jesus during His interrogation varied, but His Kingship was a major theme. See 18:33-39. Here that accusation is nailed to the cross above Him (the “written notice of the charge against Him”, Mark 15:26): “Jesus the Nazarene, the King of the Jews”. See 1 Samuel 16:13-14; 2 Samuel 2:4, Isaiah 9:7. The true Shepherd King of Israel, David’s Son and David’s Lord. See Psalm 110:1 (the first “LORD” is the Divine Name, the second “Lord” is the Hebrew “Adonai”); Matthew 22:43-44.

Lenski comments “That is the remarkable thing about Pilate’s superscription: it names no crime what-ever, it only records a most significant title. In three languages and thus to all the world it shouts out the great title of Jesus.” (1283)

On “the Nazarene”, see Matthew 2:23; John 1:45-46. While Matthew’s citation of prophecy is difficult to find in the English, the Hebrew word נֵצֶר (“Branch”) gives us a clue. See Isaiah 11:1. This is especially true as He hangs on a “tree”. See Psalm 80:15; Isaiah 4:2, 60:21; Jeremiah 23:5, 33:15; Zechariah 3:8-9, 6:12-13 (note here the Two Natures). Now consider John 15:1-6 in light of these verses.

Compare 19:19b to Matthew 27:37; Mark 15:26; Luke 23:38. What did the epithet say? Lenski explains “Since the writing was drawn up in three languages, the slight variations in the reports of the evangelists are easily explained. John alone has ὁ Ναζωραῖος, so that we may conclude that this word appeared only in one of the languages.” (1282) INRI reflects the Latin (*Rex*), INBI reflects the Greek (Bασιλεὺς). מֶּלֶךְ Is the Hebrew word for “king”. The Hebrew word for “Jews” is יְהוּדִי. The word “Nazareth” does not occur in the Old Testament, so the Hebrew isn’t certain, but in modern Hebrew it is נָצְרַת. In Hebrew, then, the inscription would be ינמי “YNMY".

19:20 – See our comments above regarding the three languages in which the epithet was written. The place where the Lord was crucified, Golgotha, was near, but outside, of Jerusalem. The True Scapegoat was sent outside, away, covered in sin, lest the “camp” be defiled. Note how these Old Testament passages point forward to the crucifixion of Christ: Exodus 29:14, 33:7; Leviticus 4:11-12, 4:21, 24:14, 24:23; Numbers 5:2-4, 15:3-36; Deuteronomy 23:10-14. Now read Hebrews 13:11-14.

19:21 – The chief priests protest. “What enraged the high priests was the publicity of the inscription among the Jewish crowds.” (Lenski, 1283) It is as they said - they have no king but Caesar. They reject the Christ as King. They will not be His subjects. They will not be of His Kingdom. St. Augustine wrote “The title placed over His cross, on which was written ‘The King of the Jews,’ showed that they could not keep Him from being their king even by His death.” (Sermon 218.5, *Ancient Christian Commentary*, 311)

19:22 – The Jews brought Jesus to Pilate because they could not crucify. Pilate had the authority to do so. By that authority, Pilate also hung the sign on the cross. The Jews were powerless to change it.

Lenski speculates that the Jews, learning of the inscription, hurried to the Praetorium to ask Pilate to change the epithet, and that Pilate would not even come out to speak to them, but sent his answer. Lenski bases this on the fact that this verse does not indicate Pilate gave his answer “to them”, but rather simply that he answered.

Read Genesis 3:15; Galatians 3:13.

**Read John 19:23-27**

19:23 - See Psalm 22:18, Matthew 27:35; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:34. John alone distinguishes between the “outer garment”, τὰ ἱμάτια, and the “tunic”, τὸν χιτῶν. τὰ ἱμάτια is plural, frequently translated “garments” (sash, sandals, turban). The outer garment was cloak-like or mantle-like (see 1 Samuel 28:14; 1 Kings 19:19; 2 Kings 2:8; Psalm 109:29), the inner garment was worn close to the skin. From John’s description, the outer garment or garments was/were divided, the inner garment left intact. The outer garments were divided into equal parts by soldier, and lots were cast for the tunic. See the speculative study note on 19:23 in the ESV Study Bible. Lenski agrees with the Study Bible note, saying that the Lord could not have carried the cross fully vested without a sash, into which His cloak would have been tucked to allow walking under the weight. (1286)

Here in John we learn that it was four soldiers that effected the crucifixions. “…this garment was seamless, woven from the top on through, all as one piece. A tunic woven in such an exceptional way would be made of the best material and thus be quite valuable…” (Lenski, 1287) .

St. Cyprian wrote “This sacrament of unity, this bond of a unity inseparably cohering, is set forth where in the Gospel the coat of the Lord Jesus Christ is not at all divided or cut. Rather, it is received as an entire garment, and it is possessed as an uninjured and undivided robe by those who cast lots for Christ’s garment who should instead put o Christ.” (“The Unity of the Church”, *Ancient Christian Commentary*, 313-314).

19:23, Continued – If the clothing was divided into four equal parts, one per soldier, we can safely infer that there were four soldiers assigned to Jesus’ crucifixion.

19:24 – John understands the fulfilment of Scripture. See 5:39. The pericope that John cites is Psalm 22:18. Consider the image painted by Psalm 22:12-18. Note the construction “In order that the Scripture be fulfilled… therefore the soldiers did these things.” Recall John 5:39. See Luke 24:27, 32.

On the “casting of lots”, see the use of the same verb (λαγχάνω) in Acts 1:17 and 2 Peter 1:1, then in Luke 1:9. John 19:24 is the only other use of this verb in the New Testament, which is to say that it is only used four times in Holy Scripture. A different verb is used in Matthew 27:35, Mark 15:24, Luke 23:34, and Acts 1:26, which helps us to understand the meaning here. The word for “lot” is κλῆρος, which means a small pebble or stick thrown to aid in decision-making, or the “portion” received as the result. (BDAG 581)

19:25 – St. John, who was there, chronicles the other faithful that remained at the “side of the cross of Jesus” – His mother, His mother’s sister Mary of Klopas, and Mary Magdalene. All the others, beside John, had apparently fled in fear.

St. Jerome writes “The Mary who is described as the mother of James the less was the wife of Alphaeus and sister of Mary the Lord’s mother, the one who is called by John the Evangelist ‘Mary of Clopas’, whether after her father or family or for some other reason.” (*Ancient Christian Commentary,* 318) If that is true, as this author holds, then Mary of Clopas, wife of Alphaeus, is also the mother of St. Matthew, see Mark 2:14, which makes the Apostle St. James the Less’ authorship of the Epistle that bears his name quite likely.

19:26 – John records the event in which he himself was participant. The Lord, seeing Mary and John, gives her to him, and him to her. This verse, together with Matthew 27:46, fulfill Genesis 2:24. In that light, consider Matthew 19:5-6. Thanks be to God, nothing can separate the Bride from her Bridegroom. Luke 23:46, together with His giving away His mother, means that the Lord’s perfect keeping of the 4th Commandment is complete.

On the “disciple whom He loved”, see John 13:23.

As He gives His mother away, His time has now come. See John 2:4.

19:27 – “from that hour the disciple took her into his own *things*.” Lenski translates “And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.” (1300-1301). He explains “What must we understand by “εἰς τὰ ἴδια?” Evidently it is *in domum suam*, ‘to his own home’. It is reported that John had a house at the foot of Zion hill in Jerusalem, and that Mary lived there for eleven years, and that only after her death did John to preach in the whole world.” (1301) An ancient document, of the New Testament Apocrypha, *The Passing of Mary,* agrees with Lenski. The tradition of the Church, however, is that after the Ascension, Mary followed St. John to Ephesus, where she lived until a natural death. The Council of Ephesus in 431 A.✠ D. alludes to a church in Ephesus dedicated to Mary, where Marian piety was especially strong. (Note 32 in *Ancient Christian Commentary,* 319)

**Read John 19:28-30**

Consider the Synoptic account of these events in Matthew 27:48-50.

A picture containing text, book

Description automatically generated

19:28 – Consider the Synoptic account of these events in Luke 23:36-46.

According to the understanding of this author, our Lord spoke seven times from the cross. I believe He spoke the sayings recorded in Holy Scripture in this order:

Now it was the third hour, and they crucified Him.

*(Mark 15.25)*

“**Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”**

*(Luke 23.34)*

**“Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.”**

*(Luke 23.43)*

“**Woman, behold your son! Behold your mother!”**

*(John 19.26-27)*

Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land.

*(Matthew 27.45)*

“**My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?”**

*(Matthew 27.46)*

**“I thirst!”**

*(John 19.28)*

**“It is finished!”**

*(John 19.30)*

“**Father, into Your hands I commit my Spirit.”**

*(Luke 23.46)*

19:28, Continued – In the depths of His State of Humiliation, He who divided the waters above from the waters below, He who placed the seas and the rivers, He who can alone give Living Water, now thirsts. See Psalm 22:14-15, 69:21, 63:1 (again here the marginalia of the NA28 brings the commentary of the fathers); John 4:10-14.

St. Augustine writes “The Samaritan woman at the well found the Lord thirsting, and by Him thirsting, she was filled. She first found Him thirsting in order that He might drink from her faith. And when He was on the cross, He said, ‘I thirst,’ although they did not give Him that for which He was thirsting. For He was thirsting for them.”

He knew all along what would come upon Him, now He knows “all things are completed”. See 4:34, 18:4. The Greek word here translated “accomplished” is τετέλεσται. The same verb is translated “fulfilled” in the second half of this verse. The same word is translated “finished” in John 19:30. We will treat the word more fully there.

“In order that the Scripture be fulfilled…” See 5:39; Luke 24:32, Acts 13:29.

19:29 – “A vessel had been laid full of sour wine.” (Braden) St. Matthew and St. Mark record that the Lord received a drink, John alone records that He asked for it. (Lenski) Let not Matthew 27:34 be confused with Matthew 27:48 (Mark 15:36). The Myrrh, which would work to deaden pain, the Lord refused. The sour wine He accepted. Lenski comments “The ὄξους is the cheapest kind of sour wine, commonly served to soldiers…” (1306)

19:30 – On the sixth day, after making man, the pinnacle of His creation, God declared His creation “Very Good” (ט֖וֹב מְאֹ֑ד , Genesis 3:31). The creation was “finished”, “complete”. Now, on the sixth day, the Friday we call “Good”, man’s day (Revelation 13:18), the redeeming work of the Messiah is “finished”. The New Creation is ushered in. See 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15; Revelation 21:5-6 (Who thirsts here? Who gives to drink?).

As the life leaves Him, His head drops. St. Luke records the utterance of our Lord in 23:46. Here St. John has “He gave up the Spirit” (Braden). The word “His” does not occur in the Greek text, The English translations of this verse (“He gave up His Spirit”) are influenced by Luke’s record in 23:46. Fr. Braden will explain the Greek words there. See Psalm 31:6; Acts 7:59; 1 Peer 4:19. Then see John 4:34; Luke 12:50 (note the Greek there). Jesus’ Spirit was not taken from Him, He gave it up. See 10:18. See John 15:13. Now is the heel of the Seed bruised, see Genesis 3:15. The death of our Lord on the cross came at 3:00 p.m. (the “ninth hour”, see Matthew 27:45).

**Read John 19:31-37**

19:31 – The concern of the Jews was not the murder of an innocent Man, even a Man that some believed to be the Promised Messiah. Their concern was ceremonial cleanness. See 11:55; Matthew 15:3. Cyril of Alexandria writes “The Jews strained out the gnat while they swallowed the camel. They completely discounted the most outrageous and awful of all crimes against God, while they exercised the greatest diligence with reference to the most paltry and insignificant matters, showing their folly in either case.” (*Early Christian Commentary*, 326)

Lenski writes that the “Jews” here were the Sanhedrists (1312). See Deuteronomy 21:22-23, Joshua 8:28-29, 10:26-27. The Sabbath of Passover Week was the highest Sabbath for the Jews.

The breaking of the legs was intended to hasten death. St. Augustine writes “…their legs were broken in order to bring about their death, which then allowed for them to be detached from the tree. Otherwise, their continuing to hang on the crosses would defile the great festal day by the hhorrible spectacle of their day long torments.” (*Ancient Christian Commentary*, 326)

19:32 – St. John, and eyewitness, records the chronology of the horrible act. This record seemingly makes impossible some commentator’s assertions that after having been given to Mary, St. John and Mary left Golgotha.

19:33 – What is recorded in verse 31, the Lord’s death, was apparent even to the soldiers. There was no need to break His legs, which was the fulfillment of Scripture. See Psalm 34:17-22

19:34 – To test whether the Lord was dead or not, “one of the soldiers with his lance pierced His side…” (Braden) The English word “lance” is a cognate of the Greek word used here, “λόγχῃ”.

Again here John records the events as a eyewitness: “…and straightaway Blood and Water came out.” (Braden) Clinically, the new ESV Study Bible note on this verse explains the physiology – “…the spear pierced the pleural cavity near the heart…” (1822). The presence of blood and water mingled there was a sure sign of death. But it is not lost on the Christian that both Blood and Water are present in the Sacraments, the Mysteries of God (1 Corinthians 4:1), the Means by which God’s grace is poured out upon His people, by which the benefits of Christ the Crucified are applied to His people. That spear thrust would also prove to be a mark of the resurrection of our Lord, a witness to Thomas, and to all who hear the Gospel that records the event. See 20:20.

19:35 – St. John, the eyewitness, interjects his personal testimony. Note the similarities of this testimony with that of 1 John 5:6. The purpose of the Gospel is more than simply to create an historic record, although it is that. But as John writes “…in order that you believe..”

19:35, Continued – Of the interjection John makes into his account of the death of Christ, Lenski writes “So weighty is what John reports that he, too, now does something entirely exceptional. No evangelist, and not even John in the rest of his Gospel, breaks the narrative to address his readers personally and to assure them in regard to his testimony. Yet now John does this.” (1317) But see 20:31; 21:24, and 3 John 1:12.

The tradition of the medieval Western church is that the soldier who pierced the side of the Lord with a spear was named Longinus. Luther rejected this as fable. (*AE* 69.266)

Theodore of Mopsuestia (Bishop of Mopsuestia [north of Syrian Antioch, d. 428 A.­✠ D.) asserts that John’s personal testimony is meant to prove as true only the flow of Blood and Water from the Lord’s side, since only John saw it. (*Ancient Christian Commentary*, 329)

The Blood and Water testimony is an historic record of fact. But the effects are not lost by the Christian. It is by Water (Holy Baptism) and Blood (Holy Eucharist) that the Christian enters the Body of Christ, the Holy Church. That which issued forth from the spear thrust bring forgiveness, salvation and life to men dead in sin. And forgiven, restored, those men enter the Body of Christ through the spear thrust. It is the gateway to eternal life in heaven. (Braden. Luther says this, but I couldn’t find the quote).

In *AE* 69.267 (Luther’s *Sermons on the Gospel of St. John, Chapters 17-20*), Luther associates John’s testimony with the “Johannine Comma” of 1 John 5:6-8, which stands as an assertion of Luther supporting the veracity of the text. Pastor will explain.

19:36 – The subordinate conjunction “for” (γὰρ in the Greek, a post-positive) links verse 36 directly to verse 35. It is a continuation of the same thought – John’s personal interjection is directed towards that which came before (Blood and Water), but extends to that which follows – two Scripture verses that prophesy, and are immediately fulfilled by, the events of the death of the Lord. The Greek New Testament provides Exodus 12:10, 46 as parallel passages here. See Psalm 34:20; Numbers 9:12. Consider the implications of this typology – See John 5:39-40.

19:37 – Again here St. John shows that the whole of the Old Testament points to Christ and His Atoning Work. See Zechariah 12:10. See also Revelation 1:7.

**Read John 19:38-42**

19:38 – See Matthew 27:57-58; Mark 15:43-45; Luke 23:50-54. This verse asserts several important things. It is Joseph of Arimathea that goes to Pilate to ask for Jesus’ Body. Joseph was a disciple of Jesus. Joseph was a “hidden” disciple of Jesus, for fear of the Jews. See 7:13, 9:22, 20:19. Pilate granted Joseph permission. Then Joseph went and “took away” His Body. Lenski writes “When all the eleven but John had fled, when all who had believed and confessed were giving up their faith (Luke 24:21), this man’s faith rises out of its secrecy with full power and heroism!” (1324)

19:39 – After the Body of Jesus had been taken away, then came Nicodemus. (Lenski, 1327) We meet Nicodemus in John 3:1 (read 3:1-3). He was a “man of the Pharisees, a ruler of the Jews”. That he came to Jesus by night is significant, it suggests that he was afraid to come while it was light. The language here “at the first”, suggests that Nicodemus came many other times to Jesus. See 7:50.

Nicodemus brought a “mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds.” The Greek has λίτρας ἑκατόν, a hundred Roman pounds. We note that the Concordia NIV study Bible translates “about seventy-five pounds”. The Concordia ESV study Bible translates “about seventy-five pounds”. See John 12:3, where it appears to be liquid. BDAG specifies that a λίτρα is “327.45 grams” (597), which is .72 American pounds. A hundred of these would be 72 pounds. The amount of spices reflects a royal burial, see 2 Chronicles 16:14 (Asa, king of Judah).

Lenski comments that the myrrh Nicodemus brought was powdered, “made of the aromatic gum resin, exuding from the gray odorous bark of the *balsamo-dendron myrrha*; it was also used extensively by the Egyptians for burial purposes. Mixed with the myrrh was aloe, the Hebrew *ahalim*, a powdered wood, most highly prized for the delightful odor which it releases when the wood decays.” (1327-1328)

19:40 – While John doesn’t mention Nicodemus bringing the burial cloths, see Luke 23:50-54. Lenski speculates that Joseph of Arimathea brought the linen strips by prior arrangement. (1327) See John 11:44. There we also see the “custom of the Jews” in preparing a body for burial. Mary had already anointed Jesus for burial, see Mark 14:3-8, John 11:2.

The practice of preparing the body included repeated wrappings of the linen strips, with the aromatics sprinkled liberally between layers. A special “sudarion” (Greek σουδάριον, John 20:6-7), or larger cloth for covering the head, was used as well as the cloth strips. Compare with Matthew 27:59, where the word “cloth” is singular, perhaps referring to a burial shroud placed upon the body before it was wrapped. This cloth is the σινδόνα, see also Mark 15:46. The lexicon identifies this as “fine linen”. Thus was the body prepared – see Psalm 16:10; Acts 2:31.

Bede writes “It has come down as the custom of the church of consecrating the Lord’s body not on silk or gold cloth but in a clean linen cloth.” (*Exposition on the Gospel of Mark*, 4:15, in *Ancient Christian Commentary*, 334). So also does incense today mark the presence of the Body of Christ, hence its liturgical use.

19:41 – St. John gives a detailed account of the location of the tomb. See Matthew 27:59-60; Luke 23:50-54. Matthew explains that it was Joseph’s tomb, hand-hewn by Joseph himself, yet unused.

19:42 - Above we have already considered the Day of Preparation, and the Deuteronomy 21:22-23 requirement for the burial of the one hung on a tree. John’s Words seem to indicate a hasty, yet reverent, burial. That the women would come to the tomb to complete the work on Sunday in the “darkness of the morning” is further indication of the hasty burial. See Mark 16:1; Luke 24:1.

**Read John 20:1-4**

Lenski writes “Those who deny the bodily resurrection of Jesus have arrayed against them not only the four evangelists, but the entire New Testament, plus the prophecies of the Old. They are answered in the most decisive way by Paul, first, on the fact of the resurrection, in I Cor. 15:3-11, and, secondly, on the significance of a denial of the resurrection, in v. 12-19. If Christ is not risen from the dead, we have no Christianity, no Christian faith and hope, and no Christian Church in any sense of the word; for then we have no Christ, no Redeemer, no Savior, and no Lord.” (1332)

Faith rises in excitement at the account we are about to study. John faithfully recorded in the previous chapter that the Lord died and was buried. The text before us asserts a Divine Miracle. By it a cosmic change is wrought. By it sin, death and the devil are vanquished. By it death itself is put to death, and a life that cannot be taken away is freely given to all those who believe these Divine and Holy Words.

20:1 – The Greek text here is idiomatic: “Τῇ δὲ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων”, or “And on/in the first of the sabbaths”. Lenski reports that the Jews had no name for weekdays, and that “sabbaths” could refer to a week (1333), so the first day after the Sabbath would have been Sunday, the first day of the new Jewish week. Consider the Synoptic accounts in Matthew, Mark and Luke. Matthew 28:1 has “Ὀψὲ δὲ σαββάτων, τῇ ἐπιφωσκούσῃ εἰς μίαν σαββάτων”, or “and late on the sabbaths, in the dawn of first of sabbaths”. Mark 16:1 has “Καὶ διαγενομένου τοῦ σαββάτου” or “and having passed through the sabbath”. Luke 24:1 has “τῇ δὲ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων ὄρθρου βαθέως” or “and on/in first of the sabbaths of deep dawn” (on ὄρθρου see John 8:2 and Acts 5:21). Translations: Braden. We accept the NKJV “Now on the first day of the week”, noting that it is a paraphrase of the Greek.

The Greek switches to the present tense at this point, what we call the “historic present” used in relating accounts of events. As to the time at which this occurs, John continues “Μαρία ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ ἔρχεται πρωῒ σκοτίας ἔτι οὔσης” or “Mary Magdalene comes early darkness yet being” (Braden). They set out for the tomb before the sun was up. She came “to the tomb”, the same tomb identified in 19:42. The women brought spices to finish the burial process, see Mark 16:1.

She, Mary Magdalene, “sees the stone having been removed out of the tomb.” Some versions of the Greek have “Miriam”, and some add “from the door” after “tomb”. While John’s Gospel doesn’t mention the stone being placed, see Matthew 27:66; Mark 15:46 (note there the women); but see Luke 23:52-56.

20:2 – Mary’s response shows her excitement and confusion. She sees the stone removed. “Then she runs and she comes to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved and says to them…” (Braden) On “the disciple whom Jesus loved” see 13:23, 19:26. On Simon Peter and “the other disciple” see John 18:15. John is referring to himself.

Mary says “They took away the Lord out of the tomb and we do not know where they placed Him.” (Braden) Read the Synoptic accounts in Matthew 28:2-7; Mark 16:3-7; Luke 24:2-8.

20:2, Continued – Although Mary Magdalene doesn’t know where the Lord is, there is no doubt – the tomb is empty. See Luke 24:23-24, and then our Lord’s response to His disciples in Luke 24:25-27.

Interestingly, while the critical text does not list a variant here (20:2), Augustine writes “Some of the Greek codices have, ‘They have taken my Lord,’ which may likely enough have been said by someone with a stronger than ordinary affection of love than simply that of a relationship of a handmaid. However, we have not found it in the several codices to which we have had access.” (Ancient Christian Commentary, 339) The Vulgate as we receive it includes “…*et dicit eis tulerunt Dominum de monumento et nescimus ubi posuerunt eum.*”

20:3 – Responding to Mary Magdalene’s report, Peter and John “went out and began to go into the tomb.” (Braden) Note that ἤρχοντο is an imperfect form of the deponent verb, here rendered as an inceptive. It is the following verse that supports this treatment of the verb. The ESV treats this as a continual action, also an acceptable rendering of the imperfect verb. Lenski translates similarly: “…and they were running together…” (1339).

20:4 – Here we have the account of the footrace of faith. Having begun to go to the tomb, Peter and John run. John “ran ahead swiftly of Peter” (Braden) and came first into the tomb.

**Read John 20:5-10**

20:5 – This exact description is that of an eyewitness, in this case it is the testimony of the one who records the account. St. John, arriving at the tomb, bent over to look into the tomb. Lenski rejects this sense of the verb, translating instead “Having glanced in…”, writing “The entrance required no stooping; in fact, stooping would prevent the vision of the linen bands, lying flat on the floor of the casket-like place hewn out for the body.” (1340) The illustration in the ESV Study Bible (1823), and the note on this verse, seem to contradict Lenski.

When he looked, he saw “the linen cloths being laid” (Braden) See 11:44 (the Greek word for gravecloths is different there, but note the inclusion of the *sudarion*), 19:40.

20:6 – Presumably because he was older (St. John lived until around 100 A.✠ D.), Peter lost the race, but was the first to enter the tomb. Peter also sees the gravecloths “being laid” (Braden, rendering the deponent verb in a passive sense).

20:7 – Here is a perfect example of the versification of the text interrupting the narrative. The *soudarion* is seen by Peter at the same time as the gravecloths. Note the accurate and detailed description: “…also the sudarion, which was upon His head, not with the linen cloths being laid, but apart, having been folded into one place.” (Braden) The description reveals a careful, reverent placement of the gravecloths and the *sudarion*. This would not be the case if one “woke up”, removed the cloths themself, and exited the grave. Nor would thieves have taken such care. Nor would the faithful, as alleged by the chief priests and the Pharisees – see Matthew 27:62-66.

20:8 – Now John, who had won the race but not entered the tomb, comes inside. “…and he saw and he believed.” (Braden) He believed that the Lord had risen, just as He said. Matthew 28:6.

20:8, Continued – Lenski (1344) recounts that Rome uses John’s reluctance to enter the tomb before Peter arrived as proof of Peter’s supremacy as the first Pope. But note Luke 24:12 – While John “saw and believed”, Peter left wondering to himself what had happened. Rome avoids this, according to Lenski, by saying that what John believed was what Mary Magdalene had said – they had taken away the Lord’s body and she didn’t know where it was. They use verse 9 to support this position. The plain sense of the text refutes this position. Rome’s position is based on St. Augustine’s treatment of the text in his “Tractates on the Gospel of John) (120.9), (*Ancient Christian Commentary*, 341).

20:9 – While their understanding of Scripture was not yet fully developed, it is the position of this commentator that John ”saw and believed” that Jesus had risen from the dead. St. Cyril of Alexandria writes “As yet they did not meet Christ risen from the dead, but they infer his resurrection from the undle of linen clothes, and from that time on they believed that he had burst the bonds of death, as Holy Scripture had long ago proclaimed that He would do…” (*Ancient Christian Commentary,* 341). Consider the clarity of the Lord’s prophecy in Luke 18:31-34, of which John was a hearer. Now John believes. Believing, there was still much learning to do to understand that Christ is the Center of all Scripture. See John 5:38-40. Remember that this is the same John! 20:8 is his confession of faith, 20:9 is his confession of a limited understanding of the greatest miracle of all time. See John 2:22. They would, however, come to understand more. See Luke 24:24, 32, 44-48; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4. We have the fulness of the Gospel, we would say that we believe, and yet there is so much more for us to learn – just like Peter and John!

20:10 – They saw that He was gone. Peter marveled. John believed. There was nothing more to do at the tomb. It was empty. The spices the women brought were useless. This study accepts the variant ἑαυ, found in the Majority Text, which gives the meaning “their own” homes. Without the variant John would be saying “Therefore the disciples went away again to *them*” (Braden), as in what is recorded in Matthew 28:8. The Majority Text variant and Luke 24:12 (see the Greek there) inform our translation of this verse in John.

**Read John 20:11-13**

20:11 – See Mark 16:9-13. The appearance of the risen Lord to Mary Magdalene first and alone is not recorded in Matthew 28:1-8 or Luke 24:1-10. In John’s Gospel it is a major event. Remember that Mary Magdalene had discovered that the tomb was empty, and then ran to tell Simon Peter and John (20:1-2). They ran to the tomb, apparently more quickly that Mary Magdalene could (Lenski, 1347). They saw and left, now Mary Madgalene arrives at the tomb. Still confused and convinced that someone had removed the Body, she weeps. As she weeps, she bends over and looks into the tomb (see the treatment of the Greek word in 20:5.

20:12 – The time for weeping is past. See John 16:20. Mary Magdalene sees something that wasn’t given to Peter and John to see: “two angels in white being seated, one at the head and one at the feet, where the Body of Jesus had lain.” (Braden) See Luke 24:4; Mark 16:5. While the Synoptics mention only one angel, Lenski explains “one spoke for two” (1350-1351).

20:12, Cont. – It is not surprising that angels, multiple angels, appear at the site of the resurrection of our Lord. Angels surrounded Him in heaven before His Incarnation (Isaiah 6:1-2; Ezekiel 1:23-24). They surrounded Him at His birth (Luke 2:12-14). They were available to Him, and ministered to Him, during His earthly life (Matthew 4:6, 11; Mark 26:53.) They attended to His ascension, and prophesied His Return in Glory (Acts 1:10-11). They now surround our risen and ascended Lord as He reigns in heaven (Revelation 5:11-14). That multiple sightings of angels occur around His resurrection reveals Him to be King of heaven and earth. (Acts 7:48-49; Revelation 12:1-3).

20:13 – Both angels speak. They say to her “O Woman, why *do* you weep?” St. Gregory writes “The very declarations of Scripture that excite our tears of love wipe away those very tears by promising us the sight of our Redeemer again.” (“Forty Gospel Homilies, 25; in *Ancient Christian Commentary*, 344) It is notable here that the angels interact with her on a personal level. They appear to her. They are seen by her. They speak. They react to her sorrow. The ask her a question, which she answers directly to them. Compare her answer here with her exclamation to Peter and John in verse 2.

**Read John 20:14-18**

20:14 – He is risen! Here we meet the first appearance of our Lord after His resurrection. “After she had said these things, she turned unto the things behind *her*, and sees Jesus standing, and she was not knowing that it is Jesus.” (Braden) The Scripture does not explain why she did not know that it was the Lord. Lenski writes “The text offers no answer, and for this reason we might pass these questions by. But we are not ready to have them ruled out as improper questions, improper because Jesus’ Body is now in a glorified state and is recognized or not recognized as He alone wills.” (1353) Lenski cites Luke 24:16.

Our fathers in the faith saw Mary’s journey in darkness to the tomb, and her search for the Lord on Easter morning, and the Lord’s appearance to her, prophesied in Song of Songs 3:1-5. (Rufinus of Aquileia, d. 411. Theologian, historian, and translator of Origen’s [d. 253] writings.) *Ancient Christian Commentary,* 344). In this regard note our Lord’s command to Mary in verse 17. The fathers also saw Song of Songs 2:9-11 as a prophesy of the Visitation.

20:15 – The risen Christ makes Himself visible to her. He speaks to her, addressing her sorrow. The angels have no other Word than the Word of Christ (verse 13). But to that Word He adds “Whom do you seek?” God, who is omniscient, often addresses His creatures by questions. See Genesis 3:9-13; Matthew 22:12, 26:50. The angels’ question in Luke 24:5 echoes the Lord’s question here.

Mary Magdalene believes Him to be the gardener. The tomb, after all, was located in a garden. See 19:41-42.

Mary’s response is “O Sir, if you have borne Him *away*, tell me where you have placed Him, and I will take Him away.” (Braden) The nuance of the verb ἀρῶ is “I will take up and remove”. Mary still thinks that she will have to carry a lifeless Body.

20:16 – The Lord reveals Himself as risen to Mary Magdalene first. Matthew and Luke do not record this account, but see Mark 16:9-11. He does so simply by speaking her name. She immediately recognizes Him, responding in Hebrew, “Rabboni”, which means “my exalted teacher”. See 10:3-4; Mark 10:51; Matthew 23:8.

Note the parenthetical translation interjected by the Evangelist – “…which is *to* say ‘O Teacher’”. Although translated as an infinitive, the Greek verb is simply a present indicative passive third person singular form – “which is being said”.

Some versions in verse 16 have added “and she ran toward Him *in order* to touch *Him*…” (See the critical apparatus on this verse).

20:17 – The Lord responds to Mary’s recognition of Him. His response is a strong negative imperative in the present tense: “Do not *be touching* Me.” (Braden) See the Authorized Version, and Matthew 9:20, 17:7, 20:34 (among many). Lenski translates “Stop clinging to Me…”, as in the ESV. Compare with the NIV “Do not hold on to me” (the NIV does not capitalize the pronoun). The Greek has a different verb for “to cling”, **κολλάομαι,** see Romans 12:9. The verb here is **ἅπτομαι,** which means “touch” or “take hold of”, and calls for the genitive case in its object. In this later sense the translation “cling” is appropriate. (Note that Lenski gives several other verbs that could have been used and their meanings, 1360.)

The ESV study note is quite interesting here: “Mary was holding on to Jesus, but He asked her to let go of Him.” (1825). Lenski agrees, saying “As Mary recognizes Jesus, the first impulse of her heart is to seize hold of him whom she had lost and feared not to find again….. She clasps him as her own, never to lose him again.” He also comments “The first word Jesus here utters has been variously understood.”

The Lord explains the reason for His command: “…for I have not yet ascended to the Father.” (Braden) See 3:13. Several of the Fathers assert that the resurrection of Jesus isn’t “perfected” until He ascends to the Father (Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, in *Ancient Christian Commentary*, 348). The NIV Study Bible says “The meaning appears to be that the ascension was still some time off. Mary would have opportunity to see Jesus again, so she need not cling to him. Alternately, Jesus may be reminding Mary that after his crucifixion she cannot have him with her except through the Holy Spirit.” (1646). Lenski rejects the second assertion.

To His command and explanation, the Lord adds another command: “…but go to My brothers and say to them ‘I am going up to My Father and your Father and My God and your God.” (Braden) See 16:28. St. Paul explains Psalm 68:18-19 for us, see Ephesians 4:4-10. See Matthew 12:48-50; Romans 8:29.

20:18 – Mary does as the Lord commands. That is what faith does. See Psalm 22:22; Hebrews 2:11-12. Do you remember how that Psalm begins?

**Read John 20:19-23**

20:19 – In verse 10 I disagreed with most translations, indicating that my preferred meaning would be ““Therefore the disciples went away again to *them*”. Where are they now in this verse?

20:19, Continued – The Greek in 20:10 means literally “to their own”. I propose that “their own” or “them” is a reference not to their individual houses, rather to the other disciples. It would be a natural reaction for them to want to gather with “their own., as they are here, a description of the evening of the Day of Resurrection – the “first day of the week” according to Jewish counting. “For fear of the Jews”, see 9:22.

The Lord enters the room, locked, and stands in their midst, and says “Peace to you”. Note the Lord’s Words to them in verses 21 and 26 of this same chapter. See John 14:27. The disciples were in the locked room because of fear. Peace is the opposite. He brings them a peace that the world cannot give. And that same peace He brings to you, you who believe in Him. That peace is found in what Christ did for you – see 14:28-29. That peace comes through faith in Him.

20:20 – Note the chronology of events in Luke 24. The women speak to the Apostles regarding what they had seen (10). Peter goes to the tomb, and leaves marveling (as discussed above) (12). The appearance of the risen Christ on the road to Emmaus (13-32). The two disciples go to tell the others (33-35). The risen Lord appears to them as they are gathered (36-49). That brings us to the account at hand.

For faith the Word of Christ is enough. But here He gives them visible proof – “And after having said these things, He showed the hands and the side to them.” (Braden) His Promise is sure. See Matthew 20:18-19; Luke 18:31-34. In Luke 18 they did not understand. Now they do, thanks be to God! See Luke 24:6-8. On “peace”, see Mark 4:39, 5:34, 9:50; Luke 2:14, 7:48-50, 8:48, 19:41-42, and many, many more. That peace the Apostles would give to others. See 1 Corinthians 1:3, and many more.

“Therefore the disciples rejoiced upon seeing the Lord.” (Braden) Lenski renders the Greek causally (rather than temporally, as I have above), “The disciples, therefore, were glad because they saw the Lord.” (1367).

20:21 – “Then Jesus said to them again ‘Peace to you.’” (Braden) Having received His peace, the disciples now become Apostles. Just as He was the Apostle of the Father, now they are sent by Him as His Apostles. Note the verb change here in the Greek.

He sends them to take His Peace to others by the forgiveness of their sins. On Sunday, April 4, 1540 A.✠ D., Luther preached this text. We who observe the historic lectionary read and preach the same text on the same day, *Quasimodogeniti*, the First Sunday after Easter. Luther writes “The Lord shows thereby what He has accomplished with His resurrection. He says that He has instituted a kingdom that is not to deal with money, gold, and whatever concerns this temporal life and getting and acquiring. That kingdom He already established at the beginning of creation… After this comes another government. It is twofold: the Law, which Moses instituted, and the other, which the Lord here institutes when He says ‘Those whose sins you forgive…” (“Sermons on the Gospel of St. John, Chapters 17-20”, in *Luther’s Works,* vol. 69. Ed. Christopher Boyd Brown. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House. 2009. Pages 428-429.)

See Matthew 16:16-20, 18:18. Together with this pericope in John, these texts constitute the Lord’s Institution of the Office of the Keys, the Office of the Holy Ministry.

20:22 - “And this having said, He breathed on them and said to them ‘Receive *the* Holy Spirit.” See Genesis 2:7. Pastor will explain the Hebrew there: וַֽיְהִ֥י הָֽאָדָ֖ם לְנֶ֥פֶשׁ חַיָּֽה׃ It is by the breath of God (“He breathed on them”) that the first man is “animated” (Lat. *Anima*). Man lives because of the breath of God. Man has a God-given soul. Here the same breath that animated Adam is breathed onto the disciples, that they restore men to life by exhaling that breath as they preach the Saving Gospel, and as they say “I forgive you all your sins”. See Ezekiel 37:9.

20:23 - How do the texts in Matthew 16, 18, and this pericope differ? What does the Lord give here that He doesn’t give in Matthew 16 and 18? When will He give it? See John 7:37-39, Luke 24:49. See Acts 2:1-4. Our risen Lord taught and worked miracles for 40 days, and then ascended into heaven. On the 50th day, Pentecost came, a Jewish feast, the 50th day after the Passover Sabbath.

“If you forgive the sins of anyone, they have been forgiven them, if of anyone you bind they have been bound.” (Braden)

In Matthew 16:19 the Lord ties the giving of the Office to the Kingdom of Heaven. Luther writes “No one can express what an ineffable kingdom this is, that you can open heaven and close hell with a single word. We do nothing but say, ‘I remit your sins, not on my own behalf, but in the stead of Christ the Lord’ for He says: ‘You shall not remit sins on your own behalf, neither should you so retain them. But this is how it should happen: ‘I send you as the Father sent me.’ I have done nothing out of My own zeal and devotion. But the Father sent Me for this purpose. This is the mandate I give to you also until the end of the world, that you may know that you do not do it of your own authority, but by the mandate of the One who sends you…’” (Luther’s sermon on John 210:19-29, preached April 4, 1540 A.✠ D., as above) So the Pastor says “In the stead and by the command of My Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” The Pastor is a man “under authority”, see Matthew 8:9. The Pastor is the “servant”, which is what “minister” means – to serve. How is the formula for Private Absolution different than the formula for “public absolution?”

**Read John 20:24-29**

20:24 – While the previous account occurred on the Day of Resurrection (see 20:19), this account comes afterward, bridging the week between Sundays (by Jewish reckoning the “day” began at sunset, and was 24 hours long, see Genesis 1:5), placing the events of John 20:24-29 on the Sunday following the resurrection. We meet Thomas first in the Gospel according to St. John in 11:14-16. See also 14:5. Notice the primacy of Peter, and the exaltation of Thomas, in 21:2 (compare to Matthew 10:2-3).

20:25 – “The other disciples said to him ‘We have seen the Lord.” Note how similar this is to Mary’s words in verse 18. Note John’s testimony to the Church in 1 John 1:1-4. “Unless I see… I shall surely not believe.” (Braden) This assertion has earned Thomas the moniker “doubting”. But this is too harsh. Thomas here is only citing the very Words John uses to describe what the others saw in verse 20.

20:25 Continued – Consider Origen’s (d. 253 A.✠ D.) commentary on this passage: “Thomas seems to have had some precision and carefulness about him, which is shown also by what he said. He most likely did not believe those who said they had seen the Lord. It could have been an apparition, like what had happened in Matthew. I think this was the feeling of the other apostles too…” (*Ancient Christian Commentary, 368*) See Matthew 24:5; Matthew 14:26; Luke 24:39-43.

Note the specificity (following Origen, above) of Thomas’ assertion: “Unless I see in His hands the *print* of the nails and thrust my finger into the *print* of the nails and thrust my hand into His side, I shall surely not believe”. (Braden) Note the Greek τὸν τύπον (“a figure formed by a blow or an impression”) occurs twice here. It is alternately translated “mark”. We have already considered (above) our Lord’s actions in verse 20.

20:26 – The account of St. John moves immediately to the next Sunday. While the Greek has “after eight days”, according to Jewish counting that would be the same day the following week. Lenski writes “Since in all such counts the final day is included, the time is again Sunday.” (1382) Now Thomas is with the other disciples. Note the similarity here between this verse and verse 19. St. John does not record any events of the intervening week.

20:27 - Note our Lord’s Words to Thomas and their similarity to Thomas’ assertion in 25. Although not there physically, the Lord heard, the Lord knows. Thomas demanded to see. The Lord’s command to Thomas is “do not be unbelieving but believing”. See Hebrews 11:1. The adjectives “unbelieving” and “believing” are derived from the verb “I believe”, which Thomas uses in verse 25. This could also be translated “Do not be unfaithful, but faithful”. For uses of the same word, See Revelation 21:8 (use by John); Matthew 17:17; 1 Corinthians 7:14-15 (3x); 2 Corinthians 6:14.

20:28 – Whether Thomas carefully demanded specificity, or refused to believe, now he believes. The commentators are split on whether Thomas actually did what the Lord commanded, or simply fell to his knees and confessed. Consider St. Augustine: “He touched His flesh, he proclaimed His divinity. What did he touch? The Body of Christ. Was the Body of Christ the divinity of Christ! The divinity of Christ was the Word; the humanity of Christ was soul and flesh. Thomas could not touch the soul, but he could perceive it, because the Body that had been dead was moving about alive…” (*Ancient Christian Commentary,* 373). Thomas’ confession is among the clearest statements of the Divinity of Jesus Christ in the New Testament. See Matthew 16:16-17. The margin notes in the Greek New Testament show Thomas’ confession to be parallel to Psalm 35:23-24.

The highest Christology is expressed in Thomas’ confession. The Pastor will explain the importance of the nominative case used for both “Lord” and “God”. Consider Thomas’ identification of Jesus as “God and Lord” in light of Matthew 4:4, 10; Matthew 22:37; Luke 1:15-16, 68; Luke 20:37; compare with John 11:27.

20:29 – See 1:50; 1 Peter 1:3-9. We remember that Peter would have been in the room to hear Thomas’ confession, as is stated in verse 26.

20:29, Continued – Note the similarities here with the Lord’s Words to Nathanael in 1:50 (just read). In Matthew 8:10 and 15:28, the Lord addresses those who believe without seeing, and praises there faith. Here Thomas is given to see, his faith is not praised by the Lord. (Lenski 1391) See 2:23. In this verse, we learned that those who do not see and yet believe are blessed. In 12:37-41, we meet those who saw but did not believe.

So take heart, you who believe and do not see. Great is your faith. And soon, when your Lord comes, you will see greater things!

**Read John 20:30-31**

20:30 – Here St. John interjects a personal note to those who receive the Gospel of Jesus Christ that he recorded by the Spirit’s power. This is his “closing summary” of the Lord’s life, which he begins in eternity and takes to His Incarnation (1:1-14). John chronicles “the beginning of signs that Jesus did” in 2:11. From there to this section, John records the life, death, resurrection, and events immediately following the resurrection, ending with the Sunday after. But the Lord did and said many more things, which John knew, but did not write. Here St. John gives a defense for the scope of his account: “Therefore many and other signs Jesus did before His disciples, which have not been written in this book…” (Braden) The Greek word translated “signs” can be understood as “miracles”. See 21:25. The verse at hand (20:30), and 21:25, serve as “bookends”. See 19:35.

20:31 – Having noted that Jesus did and said many additional things, St. John explains why he recorded the things that he did: “But these have been written in order that you (pl) believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and in order that believing you (pl) have life in His Name.” (Braden) With these Words John numbers you among those who have not seen and yet have believed. Note John’s confession of who Jesus is – compare with Peter’s confession in Matthew 16:16 and Thomas’ confession (verse 28).

To “have life in His Name” is to have His Name, the Name you received in Holy Baptism. See 5:24, 1 John 5:13. Jesus Christ is the Name of God. See Exodus 6:3, 23:20-21 (note here that “Name Christology” and “Angel Christology” meet); Numbers 6:27; Judges 13:18-22; 1 Chronicles 22:8 (note here that “Name Christology” and “Word Christology” meet. John opens his Gospel account with “Word Christology”); Isaiah 43:7; Malachi 4:2 (which closes the OT); Matthew 23:39; Acts 2:21, and many more.

**Read John 21:1-5**

John’s account of the post-resurrection Words and miracles of Christ continues. “After these things”, John writes, a reference to the week following the Lord’s rising from the dead. “Jesus again manifested Himself to the disciples on the Sea of Tiberias.” (Braden) See 6:1. As He had before, so now again will He show Himself to the Apostles that they come to better understand who He Is. “And He manifested Himself thus” (Braden).

The factual nature of John’s account is evident in the list of witnesses he provides:

21:2 - “Simon Peter and Thomas the one called “Twin” and Nathanael the one from Kana of Galillee and the *sons* of Zebedee and two others from out of His disciples.” (Braden) In Matthew 28:10 tells the women “…go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me.” See also Mark 16:7. So there, at the Sea of Tiberias, the Sea of Galilee, they do see Him, according to His Promise.

21:3 – The men were fishermen. They had left their nets to follow Jesus for three years. Now they returned to their old way of life. See Matthew 4:18-20; Luke 5:1-6. But it would not last long. Their labors yielded only empty nets.

21:4 – The dark, fruitless night has past. Now it is morning. And there, on the seashore, stands the risen Christ. But they don’t recognize Him. See 20:14; Luke 24:16. So it is when we trust in our own works.

21:5 – The Lord addresses them as “children.” He asks them “You don’t have anything to eat, *do you*?” Pastor will explain the Greek syntax. The Greek προσφάγιον literally means “toward eating”. It only occurs here in the New Testament. Some lexicons simply translate it “fish”, which is a different word group. In the context of their empty nets, the meaning is clear. See Luke 24:41. Here their answer is simply “No.” So it is with our works.

**Read John 21:6-9**

21:6 – “Cast the net into the right *side* of the boat, and you will find.” (Braden) The word translated “side” is literally “part” or “portion”. See Luke 5:4-7. “Therefore they cast, and *they were* no longer strong *enough* to drag it from the multitude of the fish.” (Braden)

21:7 – The miracle opened their eyes. The disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter “It is the Lord!” Now they recognize Him. See 20:18 (contrast with 20:14). “Therefore Simon Peter, after hearing that it is the Lord, the outer garment he cast around himself, for he was naked, and he cast himself into the sea.” John’s testimony regarding Peter’s actions is only possible for an eyewitness. (Lenski, 1407) Peter jumped in.

21:8 - The other disciples, including John, remained in the boat (the little boat), and by means of that boat they dragged the net full of fish to the land. They weren’t far out, only 200 cubits away. A cubit is about 18”, the length of a forearm. The distance was about 100 yards. But the Lord would have no need of their fish, miraculous catch or not.

21:9 – “As they up onto land they saw a charcoal fire laid, and fish laid on it and bread.” On the charcoal fire see 18:18. On the fish see 6:9, 11, where the same Greek word is used. On the Lord’s gracious provision, see Psalm 104:27, 145:15-16, 147:9; and Matthew 24:45. Their full nets bore testimony that He is the Good and Gracious Giver of all things. Although He didn’t need their fish, He did not want them to go to waste.

**Read John 21:10-14**

21:10 – The Lord does not cook their fish. He commands them “Bring from the fish which you caught now.” (Braden) Simon Peter will respond, but the Lord will feed them from His own fish. 21:10, Continued - Lenski writes here “Everything is ready for a meal! How did all this get here? …the fire, the fish and the bread are here through the miraculous power of Jesus.” (1409). Although the Greek New Testament (NA28) references Luke 5:6 in the marginalia for verse 11, Lenski asserts “Those who seek to combine Luke 5 with this section of John’s Gospel are here completely upset. In v. 13 the article τὸ ὀψάριον settles the question as to whether the roasting fish was one fish or several, enough for seven men. The debate on this point overlooks the singular ἄρτον (Joh 21:9).”

21:11 – Note the exactness of the account. There were 153 fish. The commentaries of the Fathers of the Church are a bit wild here. Consider St. Augustine: “All therefore who are sharers in such grace are symbolized by this number, that is, are symbolically represented. This number has, besides, three times over, the number of 50, and 3 in addition, with reference to the mystery of the Trinity; while, again, the number of 50 is made up by multiplying 7 by 7, with the addition of 1, for 7 times 7 make 49. And the 1 is added to show that there is one who is expressed by 7 on account of his sevenfold operation. And we know that it was on the fiftieth day after our Lord’s ascension that the Holy Spirit was sent…” St. Gregory is a bit more pithy: “Why was Peter the one who brought the net to land? Our holy church had been entrusted to him.” (*Ancient Christian Commentary*, 381-382)

Perhaps a better way to see this account is that it is a precursor to the fulfillment of the Lord’s Promise in Matthew 4:19. In that way, the net that doesn’t break can be seen as the Gospel, by which the Holy Church is captured out of death and dragged into life, as She is brought to Christ, who feeds His Church of Himself.

21:12 – “Come, eat breakfast” (Braden) the Lord bids them. Only the fish He has miraculously prepared could be served, theirs were still raw. “But not one of the disciples dared to examine Him, “Who are You?”, because they knew that it is the Lord.” (Braden)

21:13 – See John 6:11. The Good Shepherd feeds His Flock. He still does so today. A few minor, later versions of the Greek manuscripts include here “after having blessed, He gave…”, harmonizing this verse with the accounts of the Institution of the Holy Eucharist. See Acts 10:39-41. Note that in Acts 10:41 the Lord eats too. See Luke 24:41-43.

21:14 – “This *was* already *the* third *time* Jesus was manifested to the disciples *after having* been raised from the dead.” (Braden) See John 20:19, 26 for the two preceding times the Lord was manifested to His disciples.

**Read John 21:15-19**

21:15 – “Therefore when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus says to Simon Peter “Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me more than these?” (Braden) Note that the Lord calls him “Simon”, and does not use the name “Peter”, which He Himself gave. (Lenski) See Matthew 16:16-18. Notably, here the Lord does single out Simon Peter from the rest of the disciples. The Lord’s question to Peter employs the verb ἀγαπᾷς. You can see the word “agape” in the Greek form.

21:15, Continued - “Agape” is the highest form of love, unconditional love. See 15:9-10, 17:24-26; Romans 5:5, 12:9, 13:10; 1 Corinthians 13:13; 2 Corinthians 5:14; Galatians 5:22, and many more. Peter’s answer, while including “Yes, Lord…”, fails to include that “agape” love, employing rather the Greek verb “φιλῶ, a lesser form of love, “affection”, which occurs in the first person present indicative active only four times in the whole of the New Testament, three of which are in this pericope. The fourth is in Revelation 3:19. For other uses of the verb, see Matthew 6:5, 10:37, 23:6, and interestingly Matthew 26:48. See Romans 16:16 for a related form. The “kiss” was a sign of filial affection. The “holy kiss” was a liturgical action, performed during the Service of Holy Communion, demonstrating the love and unity of the Church. See 1 Corinthians 16:20 (Note the use there of Μαρανα θα. The “love” in this verse is filial love); 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:26; 1 Peter 5:14.

The Lord responds “Feed My lambs”. The word for lambs occurs in Luke 10:3. Outside of that occurrence, the word only occurs in Johanine writings, 28 times - here, and 27 times in Revelation. In the Apocalypse the word refers only to Christ. See Revelation 5:6, 6:1, for example. On feeding the lambs, see Isaiah 40:11; Acts 20:28. In addition to this account being the three-fold restoration of the “chief of the Apostles” (see the Lord’s prophecy in Matthew 26:34, the three-fold denial in 18:17, 25-27), it is unquestionably a “commissioning” of St. Peter. The Lord commends His Flock, the Holy Church, to Peter.

21:16 – The Lord’s question, and Peter’s answer, repeat the same forms in this verse. St. John, interjecting “again”, identifies it as the “second” time the Lord asked. Note that “more than these” is omitted in Christ’s second question. Christ’s directive here, though, is different: “Shepherd my sheep.” (Braden) The redundancy is evident in the English as in the Greek. Peter is to do the work of a shepherd, which is “to shepherd” the “sheep” belonging to Christ. The word for “sheep” is the common word used for sheep. See 2 Samuel 5:2. See Matthew 9:36, 10:4; 18:12; Hebrews 13:20; and of course John 10:1-16. See 1 Peter 2:25, considering that it is the same Peter here…

21:17 – Having twice used ἀγαπᾷς, but having received φιλῶ twice in response, the Lord now asks if Peter φιλεῖς Him. The Lord changes his question to match Peter’s two previous answers. It is a “downgrade” of the love the Lord seeks. “Peter was grieved that He said to him the third *time*: “Do you have affection for me?” (Braden) Peter’s answer reveals his lack of understanding of the depth of the Lord’s first two questions: “O Lord, You know all things, You know that I *have affection for* you.” (Braden) The Lord’s directive is again here: “Feed My Sheep”. The three-fold restoration is complete. The Lord shows Peter “agape” love, even if Peter is incapable of it.

21:18 – Now having given Peter his commission, the Lord prophesies: “Amen, amen I say to you, that *when* you were younger, you *habitually* girded yourself and walked where you desired. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and bear *you* where you do not desire.” (Braden) That this prediction of the Lord not remain a mystery, St. John interjects “This He said signifying by what sort of death he will glorify God.” (Braden)

21:19 – See a similar interjections in 12:31-33 and 18:31-32. The interjection by John here is more than an explanation, although it is that. It has personal consequences for John, of which we will learn in verses 20-23. “After having said this, Jesus said to him ‘Follow Me.’” (Braden) After foretelling the type of death Peter would die, the Lord commands him, the Chief of the Apostles, to whom He has given the Keys to the Kingdom of Heaven, to follow Him. See 13:36.

Christ would go to the cross. Peter would follow and be martyred, but not so John. Note that John’s interjection asserts that Peter’s death would glorify God.Read what Peter writes in 1 Peter 4:16-19. The tradition of the Church is that Peter was martyred in Rome under the persecution of the Church by Nero, around the year 64.

Many early Church Fathers testify to Peter’s Ministry in Rome, including Ignatius of Antioch (110 A.X D.), Dyonisius of Corinth (170 A.X D.), and Irenaeus (189 A.X D.).Eusebius of Caesarea (303 A.X D.) writes “[In the second] year of the two hundredth and fifth Olympiad [A.D. 42]: The apostle Peter, after he has established the church in Antioch, is sent to Rome, where he remains as a bishop of that city, preaching the gospel for twenty-five years” (*The Chronicle*)*.*

Tradition (not Scripture) records that Peter, who was to be crucified, asked to be crucified upside down, for he was not worthy to die as did his Lord.

**Read John 21:20-25**

21:20 – “Having turned, Peter sees the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also reclined at the supper upon His breast, and said ‘O Lord, who is the one who betrays you?’”(Braden) Apparently when the Lord directed Peter to “Follow Me”, Peter did so, and John followed them. (Lenski 1432) Lest there be any question, the identification of John, who here writes of himself, is quite complete, see John 13:21-28. This ties the Lord’s love for John to the Institution of the Sacrament of the Altar.

21:21 – “Therefore having seen him Peter said to Jesus ‘O Lord, and what *about* this *one*?” The Lord has foretold Peter’s death. Perhaps out of love for John (Lenski, 1434), who follows them, Peter asks what will happen to John.

21:22 – “Jesus says to him ‘If I desire him to remain until I come, what *is it* to you? You follow me.” The command Jesus gives “…follow me” is a present imperative, with the continual sense “you keep on following Me.” See John 1:43, where the Lord speaks the same Word. Would that we all receive the Lord’s directives in this way – praying that His will be done, going in His Way, putting aside our personal doubts and concerns.

21:23 – Here we see John’s careful explanation of the Lord’s Words concerning himself: “Then this word went out into the brothers that ‘that disciple is not dying.’” (Braden) The sense of the statement is that “he is not going to die”, although John writes in the present tense. To whom did the word go out? See Acts 1:15.

Now John clarifies: “But Jesus did not say to him ‘he is not dying’, but ‘if I desire him to remain until I come, what *is it* to you?’” (Braden) John desired that there be no confusion about him.

21:23, Continued – The tradition of the Church is that John, after the Ascension, took Mary with him to Asia Minor, where he served as the Bishop of the Churches there (see Revelation 2 & 3). John was imprisoned on the Isle of Patmos for his testimony of Jesus (Revelation 1:9), during which he received the Revelation of Jesus Christ, (note that Revelation is singular!) but he was released and died a natural death. His commemoration, the Feast of St. John, Evangelist, is observed on December 27 each year. The paraments are white, signaling that the Church does not believe him to have been martyred.

21:24 – “This is the disciple, the one who witnesses concerning these *things* and the one writing these *things*, and we know that his witness is true.” (Braden) See John 19:31-35, where St. John attests to the facts of our Lord’s death in a similar fashion. The veracity of the Scriptural account, the Divine Inspiration of Holy Scripture, is fundamental to our faith. John’s testimony here brings comfort and certainty.

21:25 – “There are also many other things which Jesus did, which if written *one by one,* I imagine the world *could* not contain the books written.” (Braden)

See 20:30-31.

X X X

*Soli Deo Gloria*