

W^h world COULD NOT CONTAIN IT



A study of John's Gospel.

by: Chris Eppler

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Table of Contents

Lesson One - Introduction	Page 5
Lesson Two - Behold, The Lamb of God!	Page 9
Lesson Three - Seeking to Kill	Page 13
Lesson Four - To Whom Shall We Go?	Page 17
Lesson Five - Free Indeed	Page 21
Lesson Six - I and the Father are One	Page 25
Lesson Seven - Sign Seven	Page 29
Lesson Eight - The Last Supper	Page 33
Lesson Nine - The Crucifixion	Page 37
Lesson Ten - The Resurrection	Page 41
Lesson Eleven - Written So You May Believe	Page 45
Lesson Twelve - On the Shore of Tiberias	Page 49
Lesson Thirteen - The World Could Not Contain It	Page 53



This work has been made with the hope that together we can search the scripture and develop a greater understanding of it. Hopefully, it will make your study of this topic more edifying, more profitable, and more enjoyable. It is not intended to take the place of your responsibility to prepare for the studies. Please devote adequate time to the material before our study, so we can all be edified by one another (Hebrews 10:24–25).

All verse references are taken from the New American Standard Bible 1995 unless otherwise noted.

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the World COULD NOT CONTAIN IT Introduction

IN PREPARATION

Read John 1:1-18.

What does John 1:1 say about the nature of Jesus? What does Micah 5:2 add?

How does John 1:14 identify the Word? Who is the Word?

What did the Word do according to John 1:3? What two things did the Word bring? (1:4)

Since no one has seen the Father, what did the Word do for us? (1:18)

The World Could Not Contain It

“And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written.”

We start with where the book ends. The gospel of John ends with the words that if all that Jesus did were written in detail, the world could not contain the books it would take. This statement is interesting due to the fact that it is already amazing at what is recorded of Jesus. The Spirit’s indication that we do not know close to all of it is truly astonishing. We certainly have a Savior who loves us very dearly and One who spent His entire time on this earth doing work for our benefit!

Who and When?

These two questions are hard to identify and do not have an exact answer. As to who, it is traditionally accepted that the apostle John, the same apostle who wrote the epistles of that name and the same apostle who wrote the revelation is the author of the gospel by name of John. However, there is one big problem with this. The author never identifies himself. It is assumed that the author is speaking of himself when he speaks of a man as the one “whom Jesus loved”. Those passages are listed below.

- John 13:23 - He reclines at the table with Jesus.
- John 19:26 - Jesus gives care of His mother to this one.
- John 20:2 - Mary’s empty tomb report is given to this one.
- John 21:7 - This one sees Jesus.
- John 21:20 - Peter sees this one.

The case for John, brother of James, being the writer of the gospel is kind of a complicated one that involves at least one assumption. It is, however, a reasonable assumption. The case for



the World COULD NOT CONTAIN IT

Introduction

John's authorship is as follows.

- John 21:20-24 identifies the beloved disciple as the author of the gospel.
- Matthew 26:20 says Jesus reclined with the twelve, the beloved one being one of them.
- Jesus had an "inner circle" that included Peter, James and John.
- One would assume that one of the inner circle was the beloved apostle.
- Peter is specifically excluded as the beloved one at John 21:20.
- James died early according to Acts 12, before the book was written.
- This leaves John, James' brother, as the author.

While the assumption leaves something to be desired, it is reasonable to conclude that John wrote the gospel.

As to the when, that is more difficult. There are no chronological markers internally that would help us identify a date. It is generally assumed that the book was written late in the first century, in the 90's, as it deals with heresy that had not become a huge problem until later in the first century. However, some date the book between 50-70 AD as it does not mention the destruction of Jerusalem. The reality is that we do not know when the book was written exactly.

Why?

John's gospel is unlike the other three gospels. We call the others "synoptic" because when you put them together you have a synopsis of the life of Jesus. These three gospels have a purpose of giving the reader an understanding of what Jesus did and why the events that happened to Him happened. John's gospel was written for a different purpose. It is apparent from the first chapter that the author is seeking to prove the deity of Jesus. This is a theme that continues throughout the book. With the final verse he explains that there is much more that he could have written, but the world could not contain it all. He states his purpose for writing at John 20:30-31. It was written that his audience "may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" and that believing his audience "may have life in His name."

We may ask ourselves at this point, "Why write an entire gospel that directly persuades rather than just stating the facts as the other gospel writers did?" The answer is likely



the World COULD NOT CONTAIN IT

Introduction

found in the problems in the church that were taking place during the time that John wrote. During the first century a heretical sect known as “gnosticism” began to develop. It started fairly early, likely the result of beliefs tied with Greek philosophers and their followers. It was really taking form by the end of the first century and was fully developed by the mid to late second century.

So what is gnosticism? The word itself comes from the Greek word that meant “to know”. This was basically a sect of people who believe that they were in the know. That they had a divine understanding that others did not have. There main beliefs can be broken down into the following four points:

- The Creator (Jesus) is lower than the Father and is not a supreme deity.
- All matter, including the body, is inherently evil and is to be escaped.
- Scripture has hidden, encoded meaning that is the primary point and could only be understood by ones that had a secret wisdom.
- Jesus only seemed to be human, but He did not really come in the flesh.

While all of these beliefs are incompatible with scripture, it is with the last that we are primarily concerned. John as the last remaining apostle dealt extensively with this heresy. Consider I John 4:2 and II John 7. Both of these verses point out that the Spirit of God says that Jesus came in the flesh. II John 7 says that those that do not acknowledge this are the deceiver and the antichrist. This is exactly what the gnostics believed. It would seem that John’s epistles were written in part to answer the gnostic heresy and his gospel was written to prove this from Jesus’ life. Thus we see the focus being on proving that Jesus is the Son of God. John 21:9 and following records that after the resurrection that Jesus ate in front of the apostles demonstrating that He was indeed flesh and blood that eats and drinks.

The structure of the book further illustrates the purpose. Matthew is ordered around five discourses of the Lord. Luke is a chronological account. Mark speaks to a primarily Gentile audience. John, however, is not arranged in this way. There are essentially two halves of the book. The first half recounting seven miracles, called signs, that the Lord performed. The latter half recounting the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.



the World COULD NOT CONTAIN IT

Introduction

The seven signs are as follows:

- John 2:1-11 - Jesus changes the water to wine at Cana.
- John 4:46-54 - Jesus heals the son of the official at Capernaum.
- John 5:1-18 - Jesus heals the paralytic at Bethesda.
- John 6:5-14 - Jesus feeds the 5000.
- John 6:16-24 - Jesus walks on water.
- John 9:1-7 - Jesus heals the man blind from birth.
- John 11:1-45 - Jesus raises Lazarus.

These seven signs seem to rise in intensity to the finale of Lazarus. The raising of Lazarus was well known and was huge. He had been in the tomb to the point of decomposing. However, he was raised and healed. These seven signs are given as proof that Jesus is God! John then goes on after demonstrating who Jesus is to explain what Jesus did for us.

John 1:1-18

John identifies the Word as being Jesus at verse 14. He begins by saying that Jesus has always been and is the Creator. All things came into being by Him. As Micah says, He is from the days of eternity. We had never seen God, nor could we. Jesus came to show God to us. (John 1:15-18) He shined light on a dark world. The darkness could not understand it, but the light was there nonetheless. John 8:44 tells us that those of the world are of Satan and the darkness. The light was confusing to these that had decided to follow after the lies of Satan.

At verses 6-8 John speaks of John the Baptist. He had come to prepare the way for Jesus, but He was not Jesus. John points out that the Baptist was a great man, but he was not God. He was merely a messenger as Malachi 3:1 and 4:5-6 explain. Jesus said this Himself at Matthew 11:7-14.

We thank God for Jesus. He came to offer Himself that life would be available to us all. (John 1:9-13) May we all take advantage of His offer. May we be born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God! (John 1:13)

the World COULD NOT CONTAIN IT Behold, the Lamb of God!

IN PREPARATION

Read John 1:19 - 4:54.

What signs are worked by Jesus in this reading?

Where do the signs found in this reading take place?

What happened as a result of the signs that Jesus worked?

How did the success of Jesus in His preaching compare with the success of John? (John 4:1-2)

The Pivotal Verse

John the Baptist was being questioned by the Jews. Who was he? Who did he think he was? Why was he baptizing? John explained to them that he was not the Christ, nor was he Elijah, nor was he the Prophet of which Moses spoke.

What did John say he was according to John 1:23? What do you think this meant?

It is on the next day that the pivotal verse in our Bible is uttered by John the Baptist. He sees Jesus coming in the distance and he announces the following:

“Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

It is upon this statement that Jesus is announced to the world. Jesus came for the purpose of dying as an offering for our sin. Verse 30 is another proof of Jesus being God. John the Baptist was the cousin of Jesus and was six months older than Jesus. (Luke 1:36) Even though John the Baptist was older than Jesus, he says that Jesus pre-existed him.

The Calling of the Twelve (1:35-51)

John the Baptist testifies that Jesus was proved to him by God as the Messiah through revelation and then confirmation of the descending dove. As is recorded at John 3:30, John must decrease and the Lord must increase. This is immediately what happens. Two of John’s disciples leave him and follow Jesus.

Who was one of these disciples and who was his brother according to John 1:40?



What did this man do first?

Jesus is demonstrated to be God even in the calling of the apostles. At verse 47 we see Jesus calling Nathanael. This man is generally identified as the apostle otherwise known as Bartholomew. Philip went at verse 45 and reported to him that they had found the Messiah. When Jesus calls Nathanael, He shows him that He knows him. Nathanael is perplexed, but Jesus says that He saw him under the fig tree before Philip called him. This was apparently an instance of supernatural knowledge on the part of the Lord. Nathanael sees it as a miracle. Jesus seems to agree because He says at verse 51 that this was nothing. If Nathanael would continue to believe and follow, he would see far greater things.

What are the greater things that Nathanael would see according to John 1:51?

The Wedding Feast - Sign One

The first of the seven signs is found at chapter two of John. Jesus is at a wedding feast with His mother at Cana. Surely turning water into wine was nothing for the Lord. It was a huge deal to the ones involved, however. It was a terribly embarrassing thing that by some accounts could even lead to legal action to run out of feast at a wedding feast! Jesus' mother appeals to Him to help the man out. No one seems to know about the sign in the text except for Jesus, His mother, and the servants.

How much wine did Jesus make? (John 2:6)

This miracle required the faith of the servants. They filled the waterpots that were used for purification with water. Then, in these pots that people used to wash with, was the wine



that they were to serve to the master. They were no doubt amazed by the miracle, but they were also just as likely to be nervous as they brought the waterpot wine to the headwaiter. The headwaiter did not know the story, so he went to the bridegroom to rebuke him for saving the best for last.

Why does John say that Jesus performed this sign in Cana? (John 2:11)

Jesus Cleanses the Temple (John 2:13-25)

After leaving Cana and going to Capernaum, Jesus went to Jerusalem for the Passover. Upon witnessing what was taking place, Jesus drove all the money changers and people selling goods from the temple. The Jews were angry. Who did He think He was? This is essentially what they asked Him at verse 18. They wanted to know what sign He would show them that would demonstrate His authority for doing what He did.

Why did Jesus run them out according to John 2:17?

What sign did Jesus offer as proof of His authority?

What were many people doing during the feast as a result of His signs?

Was Jesus entrusting Himself to His followers? Why or why not?



Behold, the Lamb of God!

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He Came to Jesus By Night

John 3 records Nicodemus coming to Jesus to ask who He was. Nicodemus knew that He must be someone from God because of the signs that He was working. Jesus' reply was with regard to the kingdom. One must be born again of water and spirit to be a part of the kingdom.

What does Jesus say and what is His point at John 3:8?

Jesus then goes on to explain that He has come to this earth to die for the sins of man. All people will be drawn to Him and if they look upon Him in belief, then they will live! Jesus is the light that had been sent from the Father and all that loved that light over the darkness would be saved.

The Woman at the Well

John 4 begins with Jesus preaching to the woman at the well. The apostles were shocked that He would speak to a Samaritan woman, but Jesus came to save the lost! The woman understood much, but misunderstood also. Jesus explains that He offers the water of life and those that come to Him will never thirst again.

The Officials Son - Sign Two

Jesus returns to Cana where He encounters a royal official whose son was sick. The man asks the Lord to heal his son. Jesus tells him to return to his home; his son has been made well. The next day as the man is nearing his home, his servants meet him to tell him that his son was well. After asking when, the man knows that his son was made well the same hour that Jesus told him the son was well! The man and his whole household believed as a result of this sign that Jesus worked. The first sign that Jesus worked was done in the presence of others. They could see what was happening. No one witnessed the official's son being healed, but Jesus did it nonetheless. This sign demonstrates that Jesus had power over this world, near and far. Nothing was outside of His reach. He did not have to touch, He merely spoke and it was so!

the World COULD NOT CONTAIN IT Seeking to Kill

IN PREPARATION

Read John 5:1-47.

Did Jesus work whatever signs He wanted?

Why do you think the lame man gave Jesus up?

Do you think that the illness of the lame man was due to sin?

What do you think the “worse” thing was that would happen if he continued to sin?

The First of the Opposition

John 5 records for us the first of the Jews trying to stand against what Jesus is doing. Verse 18 says that they were seeking “all the more to kill Him”. The fame of Jesus has built enough at this point that He is becoming a problem for the Jews. Miracles are being worked, His word is being confirmed, and people are following after Him. This opposition is in response to the third sign that John records.

The Lame Man - Sign Three

Jesus is now back in Jerusalem for another feast. At the pool of Bethesda Jesus will work His next sign. There are many people with various infirmities that are waiting by the pool.

What unusual thing were they waiting for? (John 5:3-4)

How long had the man been ill and why was he unsuccessful in being healed?

What does Jesus command the man to do?

John seems to have purpose as he reveals these seven signs. The first at Cana showed that Jesus had power over the elements. The second at Cana showed that Jesus had power regardless of location. The miracle demonstrates that Jesus is superior to angels. He has no need of a pool or anything else. He can speak



and it will be so.

What do you think would be involved in healing a man who was lame for 38 years?

Seeking To Kill

The Jews were not happy with the man. He had been healed on the Sabbath and was found by them carrying his pallet on the Sabbath, which they saw as a violation of the Sabbath. The man responded that he was merely doing what the one who healed him had commanded him to do. This man had simple faith. Surely a person who had the authority to command his illness to be gone also had the authority to tell him to carry his pallet. The Jewish officials did not see it this way! They wanted to know who healed him, but Jesus had not told him and slipped into the crowd after healing the man.

What did Jesus tell the man when He later found him in the temple? (John 5:14)

After this exchange the man knows who healed him. He then goes to the officials to tell them who the man was that healed him. The Jews then begin persecuting Jesus because He was doing these things on the Sabbath. Jesus' response is great. He explains at verse 17 that His Father is working which they wanted, thus He was also working. John gives us this verse as another proof that Jesus claimed to be equal with God. Though many today do not seem to see this statement as Jesus confirming His equality with God, this is absolutely how the Jewish officials of His time saw it!

What two reasons does John give for the Jews seeking from this point on to find an occasion to kill Jesus? (John 5:18)



Was Jesus really breaking the Sabbath?

Foreshadowing Lazarus and Beyond

Jesus begins His defense at John 5:19-23. He explains that He only does what the Father has shown Him to do. He is not acting on His own initiative. Namely, the Father was showing what signs Jesus was to work. (John 5:20) Jesus explains that there are still greater works to come. What could be greater than healing a man who had been lame for 38 years? How about raising the dead! It would seem at verse 21 Jesus is indicating that they would see the dead raised. They were going to see Lazarus brought back after being dead for four days. They were going to see the graves opened when Jesus was on the cross. If they would believe as a result of these signs, they would see themselves raised to a resurrection of life on the last day!

Who was given all judgment according to John 5:22? What does this mean?

Why was this position given to Him? Who was His honor equal to?

Beginning at verse 24 the conversation turns to the final resurrection. The people would get a few tastes of resurrection while Jesus walked upon the earth, but it was only a precursor to His power that would reclaim all from the grave.

Whose voice would call the dead out of the graves? (John 5:25) _____

What do you think the Jews listening to this thought of this statement?



the World COULD NOT CONTAIN IT Seeking to Kill

What does verse 29 say will determine a person's destination?

Whose initiative does Jesus act on according to verse 30? _____

Testimony

John begins to record the words of Jesus as He speaks of what testified of Him. Jesus was not just a prophet. He was not some man. He is God! He acknowledges that Him saying that He is the Son of God is not worth much as far as testimony is concerned. (5:31) However, it is not His testimony alone.

He had received the testimony of John the Baptist. This was a man that was greatly respected by the people. So much so that the Jews had to tread lightly to keep from offending the people by speaking against John. (Matthew 21:25-26) Even the men to whom Jesus is speaking rejoiced in the light of John the Baptist for a time. (John 5:35) The people saw John the Baptist as a prophet and as John has already recorded, John the Baptist made clear that it had been confirmed to him that Jesus is the Christ.

Jesus had testimony that was even greater than John the Baptist. He had the testimony of the Father. The Father was giving Him works to do that confirmed what Jesus was teaching. (5:36) There were many prophecies in the Old Testament that the Lord was fulfilling. One would think that these men who prided themselves on knowledge of the word would recognize Him. However, they did not. They were ignorant of the Law and they ignored the signs. Jesus pointedly tells them at verse 38 that they do not have the word in them because if they did they would believe in Him. Certainly this was an angering statement to the Jewish officials to whom He was speaking! It gets worse. Jesus then tells them that not only do they not have the word in them, but they also do not have the love of God! (John 5:42) At verse 43 Jesus explains that if someone other than Him came by his own authority, they would accept him. This is basically where the Jew has remained to this day. In the end, it was not Jesus that was accusing them. It was Moses. It was the Law that they held so dearly that showed them to be people in rebellion. May we believe!

the World COULD NOT CONTAIN IT To Whom Shall We Go?

IN PREPARATION

Read John 6:1-71.

What were they people going to do to Jesus by force?

Why would the apostles leave Jesus and go to Capernaum?

What had been given to Jesus that He would not lose? (John 6:39)

What difference did the true manna have from the wilderness manna? (John 6:58)

Hard Lessons

John 6 is a very important chapter in the Bible. Jesus explains the importance of the word and living by it. However, the statements made by Jesus are difficult ones to accept. Especially the original audience to which they were spoken. They had been following Jesus up to this point, but it was easy. Now that their faith is challenged, they must decide if they truly believe and will continue to follow or if they will abandon the Lord and His teachings. Sadly, many chose the latter. When asked whether they would abandon Him also, the apostles, attributed to Peter, wisely replied, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life."

Feeding 5000 - Sign Four

Jesus has gone to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, known as Tiberias. He had been performing signs such as healing the sick and as a result there was a large crowd that was following Him. Jesus went up on the mountain and sat down with the disciples. Upon seeing the crowd, Jesus asked Philip where they would buy bread for this crowd.

Why did Jesus ask Philip this?

What was Philip's answer? Did he get it?

As Jesus feeds the 5000 with the five loaves and two fish, we see that there was absolutely no shortage. Andrew estimated that even with 200 denarii, they would only be able to get a



The World COULD NOT CONTAIN IT

To Whom Shall We Go?

for each person. However, when the Lord broke the five loaves and two fishes, the text says that each person got as much fish as they wanted. Even after giving each person as much as they wanted, there were still 12 baskets of remnants that could not be eaten. This miracle demonstrates that Jesus was not taxing Himself to work a miracle. He was not barely eking a miracle out. Jesus was able to perform a sign abundantly to whatever degree was needed, even beyond what was needed! There was no limit to His power. John uses this lesson to confirm that Jesus is indeed God and is in no way limited by the physical world.

What does verse 14 say the people said in response to this miracle?

Walking On Water - Sign Five

Verse 15 tells us that Jesus withdrew from everyone and was on the mountain alone. The apostles got into a boat and started across the sea for Capernaum. It had become dark and Jesus had not returned. Matthew 14:22-23 says that the Lord told the apostles to go to the other side of the sea and He would send the crowds away. The apostles row three or four miles on rough waters when they see something. Someone is walking on the water and is coming toward them. Matthew 14:26 says that they thought it was a ghost. However, Jesus calms them by telling them that it is Him. In Matthew's account we read of Peter walking on the water also, but this is not the point John is trying to make. The apostles believe and receive Him into the boat.

There is even a smaller miracle that is worked according to verse 21. What is it?

Through this sign Jesus demonstrates that He is above the laws of nature. He is able to walk on water. When He wills, according to Matthew 14:32, the wind stops. He is in complete control of this world. Matthew's account tells us that the faith of those in the boat was bolstered by witnessing this miracle.



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To Whom Shall We Go?

The next day the crowd is perplexed. They do not know where Jesus is. They knew that He had not left in the boat with the apostles and they had not seen Him return to them. The crowd then got into some small boats and went to the other side. They found, not only the apostles, but also Jesus! How did He get there unnoticed? It is upon this lack of faith that Jesus brings the multitude to a spiritual crossroad.

Eat My Flesh and Drink My Blood?!

We may be inclined to think that the crowd rowing across the sea to Jesus was a great sign of faith. We would be wrong. Jesus knew the hearts of these people and why they were doing what they were doing.

Why does Jesus say at 6:26 that they had come to Him?

Should we expect to accomplish something Jesus could not with people? _____

John 6:28-29 are important verses. So often we encounter people that would tell us that belief is not a work and works are not necessary for salvation. However, notice here that Jesus defines belief as a work. He tells them that they need to work for the bread that lasts, not for the food that perishes. They ask the Lord what the work is that is the work of God. Jesus responds by saying that believing in Him is the work they must do. Jesus Himself says that belief is work that we must do!

The Lord has done amazing things in the presence of these people. They came to Him because He was healing their sick. Then when they gather around Him, He feeds 5000 people with five loaves and two fish. One would think that this would be enough. However, after Jesus tells them the work that is necessary for them to do, they want to know what sign He can give that shows He has the right to say what He was saying! They say that God gave their fathers manna from heaven. This would seem to be belittling the miracle Jesus had just worked feeding them all. However, Jesus explains that they have manna from heaven in their presence. Him! They had just failed to recognize it.



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To Whom Shall We Go?

Verse 35 should be seen as parallel to John 4:13-14. He is telling this crowd the same thing He told the woman at the well. If they would partake of Him, they would never hunger or thirst again! It was by the will of the Father that this was so. The Father had sent Jesus to them and He was the answer. Sadly, most did not see it.

What was their reaction to these statements of Jesus? (John 6:41-42) Why?

What do you think it means to eat the flesh and drink the blood of Jesus?

These statements definitely perplexed the Jews. "How could this be?", they asked. As a result, they balked at the statement. "Who can listen to it?" (John 6:60) There would be another proof that He was from Heaven. It would be when He ascended back from where He came!

Verse 65 can be a little confusing. He has proclaimed several times in this chapter similar statements. Many look to this passage and think that we only come to the Father if He works on our hearts supernaturally to do so. However, what has he spoken of repeatedly? The word. Partaking of His flesh and blood and believing in Him all comes through His word. Verse 65 is simply saying that the Father has called them through the word. The signs that He had been working were to confirm what He was speaking. The Father granting that they come is just a way of saying that some would be drawn by the word and others would ignore it. It is a statement of the heart of the person, not of the will of God.

Verse 66 is very sad. Many withdrew from Him and did not continue in His teachings. How often do we see this today. Someone that hears the words of life and obeys them, but as the further teachings and repentance required becomes more difficult, the faith is abandoned. We must strive to have the attitude of Peter. If we left the Lord, where would we go? There is nowhere else where the truth can be found.

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Free Indeed

IN PREPARATION

Read John 7:1 - 10:21.

How many times does the text say that Jesus words caused a division?

How often does the reading say that Jesus was spared because His time had not come?

Why do you think John would mention that His time had not come?

Why were the people unwilling to publicly proclaim Christ?

The Sheep's Benefit

Jesus tells the crowd at John 8:31-38 that He has come to make people free. The Jews are incensed! They have never been a slave to anyone! However, Jesus explains that all who are guilty of sin are slaves of sin. His mission was to free people through the truth. They may have felt that they were free, but if they would follow the teachings that Jesus was giving them, they would be free indeed. However, they would have to innocently trust in Him as a sheep trusts in it's shepherd.

Another Feast

At chapter seven we encounter another feast. This time it is the feast of booths. Jesus has been unwilling to walk about in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him. Jesus' brothers, however, were not concerned. They are trying to get Jesus to go on to the feast.

What do they tell Him at John 7:3-4?

Why were they telling Him this according to John 7:5?

What is the response of Jesus?

What did Jesus do after they left?



the World COULD NOT CONTAIN IT

Free Indeed

Over and over again Jesus has said that He is teaching what the Father gave Him to teach. It is almost as if the Jews did not hear these words at all. They just go right ahead with their foolishness as though Jesus had not given an answer at all. They were angry with Him still for healing on the Sabbath and they are trying to find a reason to seize Him and kill Him.

What example does Jesus give at John 7:19-24 to validate His healing on the Sabbath?

We can hear the frustration in the Savior's voice at John 7:28. He cries out what He has been saying to the Jews repeatedly. While the officials may not accept His teaching, the crowd is listening. Verse 31 tells us that many in the crowd were believing. They recognized that the signs Jesus was working confirmed who He was. They could not conceive of someone coming later and somehow working more signs than Jesus was. It was obvious to them that He was from God and was different than an average prophet. Verse 45 and following shows that there was division amongst the ranks of the officials. The officers would not arrest Jesus because they recognized that He was teaching in a way that was previously unheard of. As Mark writes, He taught as one having authority! The end of chapter seven has a familiar person. It is Nicodemus who speaks up on behalf of Jesus, though he is ridiculed for his trouble.

The Adulterous Woman

The adulterous woman of John 8 is only found here. She is brought in by the Jews having been caught in the act of adultery. They are trying to trap Jesus by setting Him up to deny the command with regard to adultery that is found in the Law. However, Jesus turns the tables on them as we would expect Him to do. He simply tells them that if anyone has no sin, then they are free to cast the first stone. They are at least honest enough to acknowledge that they are not without sin and they leave. It is important to note that Jesus is not telling the woman that she will not lose her soul for adultery. He is simply saying that He is not going to throw a stone at her either. As to her sin, Jesus tells her plainly that she must quit sinning. She is forgiven, but must produce fruit.



the World COULD NOT CONTAIN IT

Free Indeed

Where I Am Going...

Beginning at John 8:21, Jesus begins to tell the Jews that they cannot go where He is going. Jesus is going to go to Heaven. He is going to conquer death and ascend back home. However, these hard-hearted Jews will not be able to go there. The only way that will happen is if they believe that Jesus is the Son of God and continue in the truth. If they will just do this then they can be freed from bondage to sin. Sadly, these people are so deceived they do not even realize they are in bondage.

The conversation turns to Abraham at this point. They proudly proclaim that they are Abraham's children, to which Jesus replies that if they were truly Abraham's children they would be doing the deeds of Abraham.

What did Abraham do according to John 8:56? What does this mean?

What is Jesus response to Him living after Abraham? What does this mean?

What was the reaction of the Jews and why?

The Blind Man - Sign Six

The ninth chapter begins with the sixth sign. Jesus heals a blind man. This man had not become blind, but was blind from birth. The disciples are trying to figure out why the man was blind. They assume it is because someone sinned. Jesus tells them that it was for this very moment where God could be glorified. Jesus tells us the point to this miracle Himself. Before healing the man, He says that He is the Light of the World. He gives this man sight as a figure of the spiritual work He is doing. Just as this man can now see, so will those people spiritually who trust and serve Him.



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Free Indeed

Once again Jesus has healed a man on the Sabbath and once again it has caused an uproar. They must have been annoyed when they inquired of the formerly blind man what happened and he said that Jesus simply rubbed clay on his eyes. Could this be seen as work in violation of the Sabbath? The man's parents are brought in and they testify that he had been blind from birth, but they will say nothing else for fear of being kicked out of the synagogue.

Certainly what stands out is this man's understanding. It would seem that he gained spiritual sight in addition to his physical sight. The Jews are calling Jesus a sinner and so forth. The man wisely tells them that he has no idea about whether the man sins or not, but that he now can see. At verse 31 the man becomes annoyed himself and tells the Jews that this is a miracle unlike any other that has been performed and that God does not hear the prayer of sinners. It is obvious to this man that the Father heard Jesus and that these signs indicated He was from the Father rather than a sinner. The Jews are unwilling to listen to the man and ridicule him as they did Nicodemus. Here is a blind man who now sees and a bunch of seeing Jews that are actually blind.

Good Shepherd

Chapter ten records the Lord explaining that He is the shepherd of the sheep. It is really just another way of Him saying the same things that He has been saying. Those that are His know His voice and follow Him. Those that are not will not listen to Him and continue in rebellion against Him. He makes very clear through this illustration that He is the Christ who was going to draw all the sheep that will listen to Him. Yet many still feel that He is not speaking plainly and want Him to simply say that He is the Christ.

Jesus tells them that He is the doorkeeper for the sheep. Nothing gets in or out without His approval. Jesus tells them that He is the Good Shepherd who is willing to lay down His life for His sheep. A hired hand would not do this. He is telling them that He is not just a prophet, but is God and the sheep belong to Him. He tells them that He has other sheep that He will be bringing in. The Gentiles will be brought into the fold. It is certainly a beautiful picture that vividly depicts the love and care Jesus has for His people. May we trust in the Good Shepherd to give us life and give it abundantly!

the World I and the COULD NOT CONTAIN IT Father are One

IN PREPARATION

Read John 10:22-42.

What do you think Jesus meant when He said He and the Father are one?

What do you think the Jews understood it to mean?

Why do you think Jesus celebrated Hanukkah, being that it was not a commanded feast?

How do you think Jesus feels about the Jews at this point?

The Feast of Dedication

With verse 22 of chapter 10 we come to another feast. This feast is in the winter time and is known as the Feast of Dedication. This Feast of Dedication was mixture of scripture and history. Today this feast is called Hanukkah.

Dedication refers to the scripture part. II Chronicles 7:5, 9 talks about the dedication of the altar where they observed seven days and then had a seven day feast. "Dedication" is used to refer to the consecration of the temple at Numbers 7:10-11, the altar of Solomon's temple at II Chronicles 7, and the altar of the second temple at Ezra 6:16. It is from these dedications that this feast derived its name, though not a feast that had been commanded by God.

The Hanukkah part is one that comes from Jewish history. This was to celebrate the Maccabean victories that took place during the years of silence from 165-164 BC. Judas Maccabeus drove out the Syrians, rebuilt the altar, and rededicated the temple. (NET Notes at John 10:22) This feast is a chronological marker. The events prior to this took place around the feast of tabernacles or booths that would have been in the autumn. We are now at winter time. Thus from verse 21 to verse 22 approximately 2 months has passed. As we are seeing, the book is organized around the feasts as time stamps. Of course, totaling up all the time that is covered in the gospel, we find that it is of just a short amount of the life of Jesus. While it is true that a couple months has passed with Jesus leaving Jerusalem and then returning, the topic of discussion is still the same. Dealing with Jesus! The Jews have been waiting as indicated by John 10:24. "How long will you keep us in suspense?", they ask. Does He claim to be the Christ?



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I and the Father are One

The Good Shepherd Continued

Jesus told them a number of things that the officials found to be cryptic during the autumn at the Feast of Booths. He never said He was the Christ, but He did say He was the Good Shepherd, whatever that meant.

What do they request at John 10:24?

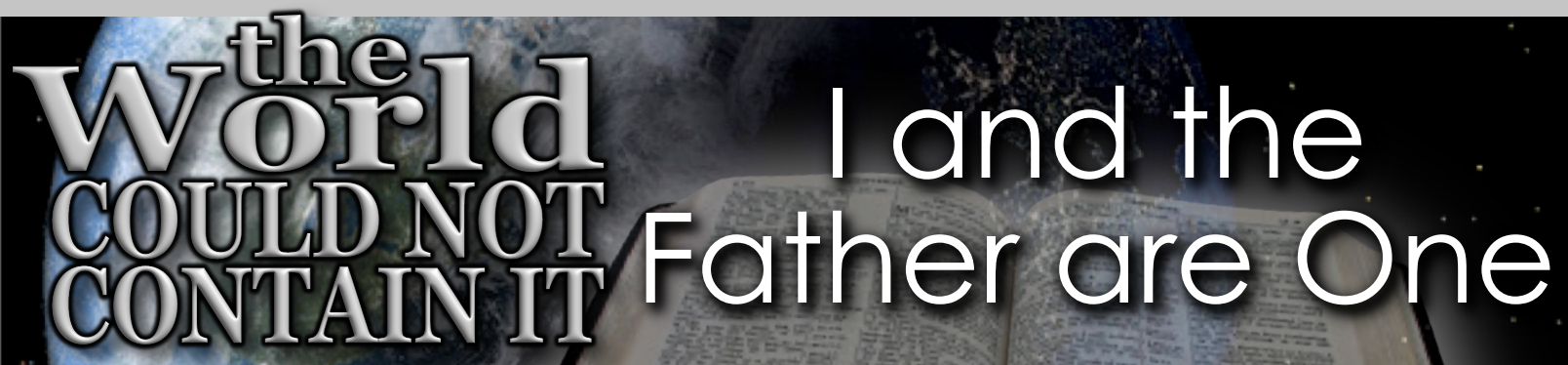
What is Jesus' response at verse 25?

Jesus had to feel like He was caught in a rerun. John has made clear at this point that Jesus told them He was the Christ and proved it in many ways, yet they were hard-hearted and continually rejected the rather plain teaching Jesus was giving. Verse 25 seems to smack of exasperation. "I told you, and you do not believe me." It has similar tone to the blind man when He grew weary of their inquisition.

Jesus now gets back to the sheep illustration. They do not understand because they are not His sheep. They have had two months to think about the sheep illustration at this point, but they still do not seem to get it. They may feel proud to not be counted as His sheep, but Jesus explains the problem with that thinking.

How does verse 27 say the sheep of Jesus act?

What benefits do the sheep of Jesus receive according to verse 28?



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I and the Father are One

What is the Father able to do according to verse 29? What does this mean?

Is there anyone that can remove us from the hand of the Lord? If so, whom?

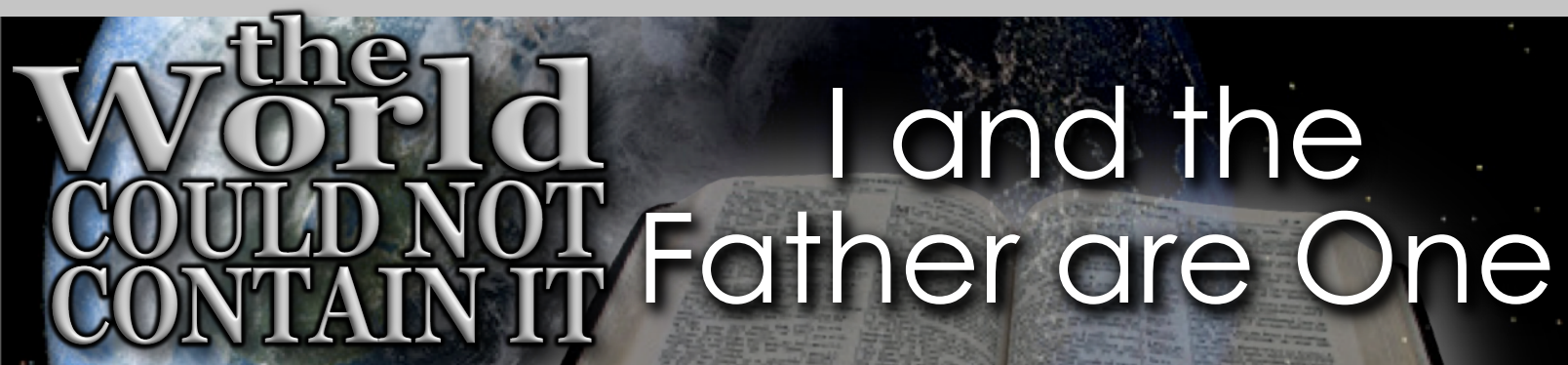
After Jesus talks about what He does for the sheep and what the Father does for the sheep, He speaks plainly once more. He says at verse 30 that He and the Father are one. Many read this and think that Jesus is simply saying that He and the Father are in agreement. However, notice the reaction of the Jews. They pick up stones to stone Him. Why? Because they see this claim for what it is. He is claiming deity!

You Are Gods?

Jesus turns the argument around on these Jews very quickly. They are about to stone Him for claiming that He is of the Father and they are one. He has worked verifiable sign after verifiable sign for a long period of time now. He simply asks them for which miracle are they going to stone Him. In other words, He has abundantly confirmed His words through these signs, so the only way they should be stoning Him is if He was faking the signs. If He was just pulling the wool over the eyes of the audience as though He was some sort of illusionist.

How do the Jews reply at verse 33?

They well understood that His statements made Him out to be God. Jesus uses another argument against them at this point. He quotes Psalm 82:6 which says, "I said, "You are gods, And all of you are sons of the Most High." The word that is translated "god" is "elohim". It does not mean deity necessarily as Psalm 82:7 talks about how these gods will die. The point of the Lord seems to be that even if He did say He was God, it could be a



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I and the Father are One

scriptural usage as is found in Psalm 82:6. Essentially they are so ignorant of what they are saying and what Jesus is saying that they could not determine between a proper usage of the word or an improper usage. They are acting impetuously, foolishly, and in hatred. Jesus explains that He has been sanctified and sent into the world by the Father and it would be foolish to call Him a blasphemer for using a word that the Psalms uses of all the righteous.

If I Do the Works of My Father

Jesus finally boils it all down for them. They have no argument or case against Him unless they can prove that He is not doing the works of the Father. He has done no wickedness. He has not broken the Sabbath, only their traditions. He had done much good for people. He has taught truth to them as one having authority. He has verified it all with signs that could only come from the Father. They needed to honestly evaluate Him. If He had not been doing the works of the Father, then they should not believe in Him. However, if He was doing the works of the Father, they needed to leave Him alone.

Jesus seems to really try to reach out to these hard-hearted people. He tells them in verse 38 that it is okay if they do not believe in Him. Some people only needed to hear what the Lord said. Others wanted signs. Jesus is begging them to not believe Him if that is where they were at, but at least honestly evaluate the signs He was working and believe in the signs. They were tangible proof that what He was saying about Himself and the Father was truth. Sadly, they respond by trying to seize Him once more. They would not be moved.

There is a sharp contrast that takes place at verse 41-42. Jesus leaves their presence and goes to the place where John was baptizing people. Jesus had just finished begging the Jews to at least believe Him because of the signs and they would not. At 41-42 we find many people who came to Jesus that had heard John the Baptist. He had not performed any signs for them, but the words that he spoke about Jesus had proved to be true and that was enough for them. The Jews ignored Jesus and His signs. Many of these people believed in the Lord at the Jordan without a sign or testimony of Jesus. How sad when the people who should have known the Law were blind to its teaching while the common man who was not as well-studied and educated put their simple, trusting faith in Him.

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Sign Seven

IN PREPARATION

Read John 11:1 - 12:50.

What had Mary done for the Lord?

Who had a problem with what Mary did and why?

What is the response of Jesus to the objection that is raised?

Who else were the Jews seeking to kill after Lazarus is raised?

The Climax

John uses the seven signs he chose to demonstrate that Jesus is indeed God. This was laid against a backdrop of the officials denying what Jesus was saying. Their denial truly looks foolish when compared with the signs that verified what Jesus was saying and the many people who were convinced by them. John has been building to the climax that is Lazarus through the preceding six signs. He has demonstrated a number of things through the signs that he selected.

- Jesus is more powerful than angels.
- Jesus can heal even from a distance.
- Jesus can abundantly provide the needs of His sheep.
- Jesus can give a person what they never had.
- Jesus has power over nature and the elements.

However, this all pales in comparison to Lazarus. Through Lazarus He will demonstrate that He has power over death!

Lazarus

Lazarus was the brother of Mary and Martha. He fell gravely ill so his sisters sent word to Jesus to inform Him.

How do they refer to Lazarus at John 11:3?

Why do you think Jesus waited two days before leaving?

After waiting for two days, Jesus tells the apostles that they all should go once again to Judea. The apostles are concerned with the Lord's safety and try to convince Him to stay away from



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Sign Seven

there since they were seeking to stone Him.

What do you think Jesus meant by His reply at John 11:9-10?

At this point Jesus is aware that Lazarus has died. He uses the euphemism “fallen asleep” to convey this to the apostles, but they do not get it. They are confused by the Lord saying that He is going to wake Lazarus up. Finally the Lord just plainly tells them that He is not speaking literally. Lazarus is dead. This is a smaller miracle that is related to the larger. They are some distance away at this point, yet Jesus knows what has happened to Lazarus. This demonstrates a supernatural knowledge.

What do you think Thomas meant by his statement at John 11:16?

Lazarus has been dead for four days by the time the Lord arrives at Bethany. Bethany is located about two miles from Jerusalem according to verse 18. Due to its close proximity, there are many coming from Jerusalem to see Lazarus.

What does this tell us about Lazarus?

So far, all involved do not understand the power Jesus has for resurrection. The apostles have been confused by it and now so is Martha. She makes a statement at verse 21 that is the same Mary would make a little later. If Jesus had been there, Lazarus would not have died. They think that Jesus only had the power to prevent death and give hope of resurrection on the last day. Jesus explains at verse 25 that He is the resurrection and the life. He is about to demonstrate that He has power over death and can recall Lazarus from the grave. This is a physical illustration of a spiritual lesson. Jesus says at verse 25 that



if someone believes in Him they will live even if they died. This would be literally done with Lazarus, but it was a figure of the spiritual state all that believe in Him. Though we experience physical death, we will live!

Verses 33-37 really comes into focus after we have examined all the gospel leading up to it. So often people wonder, "Why would Jesus cry?" After all, He knew where Lazarus was and knew that Lazarus was about to come back. Jesus sees the scene of all the people that loved Lazarus. John has demonstrated all the struggles Jesus had. People that were angry and rebellious and did not have love as Jesus plainly told them. Now the Lord beholds this scene where people are pouring out love for dead Lazarus and his sisters. It is such a contrast with the hardness He has been witnessing, He is moved by it. Some of the Jews understand that this is motivated by love. Others want to know why Jesus did not keep Him from dying. The answer is the same as it was for the blind man. This has happened so that God may be glorified!

Jesus commands that the stone be rolled away. Martha protests saying that there would be a stench after four days. Jesus, however, is not concerned. He is about to raise and heal this man. The stench makes the sign all the better. It shows that regardless of condition, the Lord can raise a person. Not only is life back in them, they are restored to their previous state. After Lazarus is raised, many that witnessed the scene believe.

Not everyone is pleased. The Jewish officials convene to figure out how they are going to deal with Jesus. They are worried that they will lose the nation to the Romans if people keep following after Jesus like was happening. Pilate understands later that the Jews delivered Jesus up due to envy. That seems to be the case all the way back here.

Who is Caiaphas? What does he say? Why does he say it? What does it mean? (11:48-53)



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Sign Seven

The Last Passover

Chapter twelve brings us to the Passover that would conclude in our Lord's death. The Jews are seeking to kill Jesus so overtly at this point that people wonder if Jesus will even show up for the Passover. Not only do they want to kill the Savior, they also want to kill Lazarus. It is evident that Lazarus being a well-known person already, now his fame has exploded. There is even some extra-biblical evidence that the disciples began to hide Lazarus to try to protect him from those that sought his life. Of course, as long as he lived he would be a testimony to the power of Jesus because there was no doubt that this man was dead and it had been witnessed by many.

The Triumphal Entry

Jesus enters the city riding on a colt as a fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9. The people joyously shout "Hosanna"! They recognize Jesus as their king. Write on the line below the reaction of the Pharisees to this display.

At verse 23 Jesus shifts gears. He has said many times so far in this gospel that His time had not yet come. At John 12:23 He now says that His time is here. He is going to die and bear much fruit. This is a lesson to the disciples and it is a lesson to us. Jesus tells them that they must hate their life in this world to gain eternal life. We must not get tied up in the things of this world. Jesus and His kingdom must come first!

Jesus was only seeking to glorify the Father and His plan for mankind. Jesus prays when He becomes troubled and asks for the Father to glorify His name. The Father answers from Heaven as an encouragement for the Savior and a proof to the people. The time has come for the world to be judged. Satan is going to be cast out. Jesus is going to pay the price to deal with sin! He begs them to walk in the light, but sadly most do not. Verse 37 says that many would not believe Him and then verse 42-43 says that the rulers were believing in Him but would not confess Him because they loved the praise of men. Jesus cried out in the midst of enemies that He had come to save the world. May we ever be willing to boldly cry out confession of His name, regardless of who is there to hear it!

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The Last Supper

IN PREPARATION

Read John 13:1 - 17:26.

What is meant by the devil putting the betrayal in Judas' heart?

What does Jesus mean at John 14:18?

What were the apostles to remember if they are hated?

What will the world do while the apostles grieve?

Passover

John's gospel covers three, possibly four, Passovers. The Passover referenced in our text is the last Passover before the Lord is slain. All of the teaching from chapters 13 - 17 takes place at the last supper. This would have been the Thursday night before the crucifixion.

Chapter 13

Verse one of this chapter explains the mindset of Christ. He knew it was time for Him to leave this earth. He spends this last night before His crucifixion with and loving those that were His. It is a very sweet picture. Jesus is about to suffer, but He enjoys these last few moments of time before His suffering with His disciples.

What does Jesus do for the apostles at the supper?

Why does verses 12-17 say Jesus did this?

Who protests and what is the response of Jesus?

Modern denominationalism has the church backwards. It is seen as an organization where the elite stand on the shoulders of the lowly and are supported by them. Jesus is trying to show the apostles that the church is opposite of this. The saints stand on the shoulders of He and the apostles. They are head servants.



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The Last Supper

Jesus mentions at verse 10 that not all of them were clean. This is a reference to Judas. Jesus knew who was betraying Him. Jesus indicates that Judas is the one that is betraying Him with a morsel of bread. However, it is still cryptic enough that the other apostles do not understand what is going on.

What do verses 28-29 say the apostles thought?

Jesus told the Jews earlier in chapter 7 that they could not go where He was going. They thought that He was talking about suicide. It is astounding that they could not piece together His statement with their plans to kill Him. Those hard-hearted people surely could not follow Him. Now at chapter 13:33 Jesus tells the apostles the same thing and even alludes to what He previously told the Jews. However, there is one big difference. There would come a time when His followers would be able to come to where He was going. (13:36)

Chapter 14

Jesus is about to glorify the Father. It is going to happen through an avenue that will be terrible for Him and terrifying for His followers. Jesus tells them to not be troubled in verse 1. He is going away for a purpose. He is going to prepare dwelling places for them! He wants them to be with Him. Thomas, in his ever doubtful way, responds negatively.

What is the response of Thomas?

What does Jesus tell Thomas?

After all this time the apostles still do not understand the Father. John stated in the first

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The Last Supper

chapter that Jesus came to the world to show us the Father. If they would just look to Him, they would see the Father. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. Jesus is doing the will of the Father. If they look to Jesus, they see the Father. Jesus then tells them plainly what they must do.

What does John 14:15 say they must do?

Who does Jesus say He was sending after His departure and for what purpose?

Chapter 15

Jesus tells the apostles that they are the branches, He is the vine, and the Father is the vinedresser. Each branch bearing fruit must be pruned and it will bear more fruit. At verse 3 Jesus tells them that they are “clean” through the word. This word clean simply means that they had been pruned. The dead was cut away that more fruit could be born. Verse 6 seems to be telling of Judas specifically. He is a branch that was in the Lord that was about to be cut away and burned. Verse 10 is another passage explaining what He expects. They must keep His commandments if they love Him. John says this over and over.

What would the apostles have to do to make it through what was coming? (John 15:12)

What were they to remember when they suffered?

Chapter 16

Things were going to get difficult for the apostles. Jesus says at verse 1 that He was telling

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The Last Supper

them these things so that they would not stumble. They were about to lose their way of life. They were going to be cast out of the synagogue. Even worse, they were about to be killed by people who thought they were doing the will of God when they killed them. This would seem to allude firstly to the time of the dispersion of Acts 8. It sounds just like what Paul was going to do.

At verse 29 the disciples finally understand what Jesus is saying and believe Him. Jesus seems perplexed that it is at this point they believe! However, it is easy for them to say this at this point. Things are about to become much more difficult for them.

What does Jesus say is going to happen at John 16:31-33?

Chapter 17

This chapter contains Jesus prayer for unity. It can be divided into three parts.

1. Jesus prays for unity with the Father. (17:1-5) He has come to this earth for the purpose of what He was about to endure. He has submitted Himself to the will of the Father completely and now prays that they be glorified together.
2. Jesus prays for unity between the apostles and God. (17:6-19) Jesus has now spent three years with these men preparing them for what was about to happen. He is going to leave this earth and they are to be entrusted with the kingdom upon the earth. Verse 17 sums up His prayer on their behalf. "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth." Jesus prays that these men continue to do as He had instructed them even in the face of inevitable persecution.
3. Jesus prays for unity between believers. (17:20-26) Jesus want the believers to be examples. He has been trying to demonstrate the Father through Himself up to this point. After He is gone, it will be up to believers to show, not only through word, but also deed the Father. How often do we see brethren trying to uphold the truth, but they do not get along? Jesus knows that the world will only see if believers are united!

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The Crucifixion

IN PREPARATION

Read John 18:1 - 19:42.

What reason does Jesus give Peter for putting his sword away?

How is Peter able to get into the court of the high priest?

What does Peter do while in the court warming himself?

What can you find about what scourging involved?

His Glory

John spent the first half of His gospel demonstrating the power and deity of Jesus. He is seeking to prove through the facts that Jesus is God. In the second half John recounts the events that show Jesus' glory and approval of the Father. He is about to accomplish what He came to this earth to do. He is going to be exalted through the most humbling experience a person of His time could undergo. (Deuteronomy 21:23; Galatians 3:13)

I Am

At the beginning of chapter 18 we find the betrayal of Jesus. It is a rather peculiar situation when told by John. Some of these details are only found in this gospel.

Who is with the mob? _____

How does the mob react when Jesus identifies Himself?

This reaction is peculiar. At first glance, nothing out of the ordinary seems to be taking place. However, notice the word "He" at verses 5, 6, and 8. Many Bibles put this word in italics. Other translations just put a note in the cross references. This word is an addition. The translators put it there to help us understand that Jesus is talking about Himself. Read the passages without the "He". It becomes very interesting when compared with John 8:58. We would probably miss the point of the passage in John 8 if it said, "I am He". This is likely what happens to us in John 18. Jesus' statement is not just that He is Jesus of Nazareth, but "I Am" is an indication that He is God. Whether their reaction was due to their realization of Him



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The Crucifixion

being God or as a result of some force that came from Jesus, the point seems to be clear. They are about to arrest God!

Further credence is given to this when we see how Jesus is the one in control of the situation. Normally the mob is in control. However, on this occasion they cannot even stay upright. Then Jesus demands the safety of His companions and it is granted. Then Jesus heals the slave's ear and Peter is not arrested. One would think that at the very least Peter would be taken along with Jesus, but this is not the case. Jesus is the one in control of this situation because He is the "I Am".

No Need To Question

The apostles came to the realization at the end of chapter 16 that there was no need to question Jesus. The officials certainly did not see it this way. However, Jesus is done with their questions. At 18:19 the high priest questions Jesus. However, Jesus is unwilling to answer as he wants. Jesus merely explains that all His teaching has been done openly. If they had found nothing with which to charge Him up to this point, Jesus is certainly not going to continue to answer their questions. The officer nearby wrongly strikes Jesus who has been convicted of nothing. Of course, nothing that takes place in these "trials" is according to the Law anyway.

Before Pilate

At John 18:28 Jesus is taken from the high priests to Pilate. Pilate is the Roman governor in the area. The Jews will not enter the Praetorium with the Gentiles because they would then be unclean and could not partake of the Passover. Since they would not come in and make their charges known, Pilate goes out to them.

How do they answer Pilate's request?

How does Pilate respond?



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The Crucifixion

Why do the Jews need Pilate to rule in their favor?

How does Jesus respond to Pilate questioning His kingship? What does this imply?

Pilate is a man who seems to want to act fairly, though he ultimately does not. Yet he is a man who is in despair. Jesus speaks of the truth and Pilate replies with, "What is truth?" Pilate is certainly not convinced of Jesus' cause, only His innocence. How sad to be a person that does not even believe that truth can be found. He certainly stands in contrast to the followers of Jesus and even the opponents of Jesus. These were all people who believed in Jehovah to some degree and they recognized that truth comes from Him. Pilate has no such mooring.

To Golgotha

While Pilate seemingly understood what Jesus was saying about His kingdom, Pilate's men are seemingly glad to ridicule and torture Jesus. They put a crown of thorns on His head and a purple robe on His back and begin to slap Him in the face and hit Him on the head. Pilate seems to think that torturing Jesus might be enough for the Jews.

How do the Jews react when Jesus is brought out before them in the robe and crown?

What does verse 8 say is motivating Pilate's decisions? _____

What is the source of Pilate's power over Jesus? _____

What do the Jews say of Pilate if he were to release Jesus? _____



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The Crucifixion

The Jews are so intent on killing Jesus that they are even willing to side with Caesar! This is a shocking statement made by the Jewish people. Pilate turns Jesus over to them to be crucified and He is taken to Golgotha, the Place of a Skull. Against their wishes the signage over Jesus' head calls Him their King. They wanted it changed, but Pilate was unwilling. I would imagine that in the times to come that sign likely stuck in the mind of many of them. They were indeed crucifying their King, which would become very apparent soon, culminating in Peter's words at Acts 2:36.

What do the soldiers do at the foot of the cross? _____

What does Jesus do for His mother upon the cross? _____

What do they give Jesus when He says He is thirsty? Why is this significant?

What happens after He drinks it? _____

The crucifixion account of John is quite abbreviated when compared to the others. However, he adds the details about Jesus being dead while the other two were not. He explains that he witnessed these things and testifies of them. His point being that just as with Lazarus, there was no doubt that Jesus was dead. There is no swooning here!

After this, Joseph of Arimathea gets permission from Pilate to retrieve the body of Jesus. He lays Jesus in his own new tomb. Nicodemus comes with myrrh and aloe for the burial. They take the body of Jesus and wrap Him in linen and spices as was the custom of the Jews. It is quite interesting to consider who buried Jesus. Here are these two men who have been convinced by Jesus but remain secretive about it due to fear. They would not follow Him in life, but in His death they are willing to take care of the body of Jesus.

Certainly Jesus loved us more than we can imagine to undergo what He did. May we confess Him so that He will confess us before the Father!

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The Resurrection

IN PREPARATION

Read John 20:1-29 and I Corinthians 15.

What proof of the resurrection does Paul begin with?

If Christ was not raised from the dead, is there hope for us?

Who does Paul compare Jesus with at I Corinthians 15?

What is the last enemy to be subjected to Christ?

The Foundation

We finally come to the moment that would become the foundation of all that the saints believe. Without the resurrection we are a pitiful people. (I Corinthians 15:12-19) There have been efforts by people over the years to try and serve Christ without all the “supernatural stuff”. Sometimes people try to follow the morality given while ignoring the miraculous.

Thomas Jefferson is famous for having made his own version of the Bible. It excluded all miracles, most mentions of the supernatural, statements of the deity of Jesus, and the resurrection accounts. He wanted to follow the doctrine of Jesus while refusing to believe in the supernatural.

This is simply impossible. As Paul points out in I Corinthians 15, we serve Christ in vain if He stayed in that grave. There is no point to serving Him, no point to the Bible, and no point to morality in this life if Jesus stayed in the grave. If Jesus stayed in the grave, then there is no resurrection, no judgment, and we can all just do what we want. There certainly is no salvation as I Peter 3:21 points out that our salvation is based upon the power of the resurrection! Just as John witnessed His death, He also witnessed Jesus alive after death.

The First One There

Mary Magdalene, along with the other Mary per Matthew 28:1, is the first at the tomb on the first day of the week. This would be the Sunday after Jesus’ crucifixion on Friday. She comes to the tomb only to discover some things that are shocking. Her reaction is to immediately go to Peter and the beloved disciple to tell them what she has found at the tomb.



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The Resurrection

What does Mary find at the tomb? _____

When does Mary get to the tomb? What do you think this indicates about her?

What does Mary report to the men that she thinks has happened?

Which man enters the tomb first? _____

What do they find that contradicts Mary's estimation of what has happened?

In light of John 20:8-9, what do you think the disciples were doing on Saturday?

Mary is at the tomb, but does not go in. She simply stays outside weeping. Although Peter and the beloved disciple have found evidence in the tomb that would seem to prove that Jesus had not been removed, Mary still thinks that His body has been stolen. After a Sabbath day filled with mourning Jesus, she weeps with sorrow upon sorrow while thinking that the body has been stolen. When she looks in she sees two angels in white sitting at the head and foot of where Jesus had been. They want to know why she is weeping and she tells them. She apparently did not understand they were angels or at least thinks that they are in agreement with her about what has happened.

Jesus now makes His appearance and it is to Mary. He asks her why she is weeping and she does not recognize Him. She thinks that He is the gardener and perhaps He is the one that has moved the body.



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The Resurrection

It is peculiar that she does not recognize Him. Apparently Jesus was concealing Himself from her eyes in some way. However, when He calls her name she recognizes Him and begins to cling to Him after calling Him teacher.

What do you think Jesus means when He tells her to stop clinging to Him?

Mary receives quite an honor. She is the one who sees the resurrected Savior. She is the one that gets to tell the apostles that He is alive. Her tender love for Jesus as demonstrated by her weeping for Him at the tomb speaks to the great impact Jesus had on those that walked with Him. Hopefully the account produces similar emotions in us. A deep love for our Savior and what He has done and mourning when He has been rejected and abused.

Before the Twelve

Jesus reveals Himself to the apostles beginning at verse 19. There was certainly tension in the city after the events that unfolded over the last few days. The apostles are not meeting publicly any longer. They meet in a room with closed doors because they fear the Jews. Certainly the officials had proven themselves to be a bloodthirsty group of people that would stop at nothing to maintain their power and station.

As we would expect of the Savior, His first words to them are, "Peace be with you." Though they were in a terrible situation where persecution was likely, Jesus calms them. He lets them know that everything is going to be just fine. They had seen Him still the sea with similar words, "Peace be still." Now He is here to calm them.

What does Jesus offer as proof of His identity? _____

Why do you think that John would include this fact in the gospel?



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The Resurrection

He Breathed On Them

After offering proof to them that He was indeed the resurrected Savior and was in the same flesh that was crucified three days prior, Jesus does something unusual. John 20:22 says that Jesus breathed on them. It is unclear exactly what this entailed, but it likely was the first time they had ever had this happen to them! The purpose that Jesus gives for doing this is that they receive the Holy Spirit. However, it does not seem that it is at this time that they receive the Spirit. It would appear that the Spirit does not come until Acts 2, which was Pentecost, about 50 days later.

Why then did He breathe on them? It seems that this was to signify to them what was going to happen. When the Spirit did come in Acts 2, the sound was as of a mighty rushing wind. Jesus is essentially making an illustration. The Helper that He has promised is coming. They just need to maintain the course until He comes.

He then says something else cryptic at verse 23. Does this passage mean that the apostles could forgive or not forgive by their will? At Mark 2:7 the observers recognize that forgiveness of sins is a power that is reserved for God. It would seem that Jesus must be telling them something else in this passage. If we compare it with Matthew 16:19 and Matthew 18:18, the structure is similar. Those passages simply mean that the apostles would only recognize on earth what the Father has declared from Heaven. It would seem reasonable to conclude that the same thing is meant at John 20:23. The apostles would recognize whatever forgiveness that the Father recognized in Heaven.

Thomas

There was one of the apostles missing during all this. Thomas. Thomas, as we have seen previously was a skeptic. He explains that He will not believe unless he personally sees the wounds of Jesus. On this occasion Jesus accommodates him eight days later. It is good that Thomas now believes, but would have been better if he would have believed without seeing. Thomas is kind of a representative of the audience to which John is writing. Though he skeptically looks at the Lord in doubt, the proof is always there for him. If Thomas doubted in the Lord's presence but was convinced, surely a person born later that doubted could be convinced also.

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IN PREPARATION

Read John 20:30-31.

What was Simon trying to do in Acts 8?

What had Simon observed upon the arrival of Peter?

What does Peter mean by “no part or portion” in this at Acts 8?

What was going to cease according to I Corinthians 13?

Miracles, Signs and Wonders

God has two ways that He works with mankind. The first of which is providence. Providence is when you are in need of food and the Lord works to provide that food through natural means. Maybe he has someone bring food over unexpectedly or something of that nature. It is God working to provide for us inside the laws of nature. This should make us think of Matthew 6. Jesus speaks of how the Father provides for the lilies of the field and the birds even though they do not know what they are doing to prepare. He takes care of them through the natural order. Jesus then informs the disciples that if they will just trust in God, He will take care of His people in similar fashion. We will have food to eat and clothes to wear. It is important to understand this manner of the Lord’s working. There are many that think that the Lord can only act through violated the laws of nature, but this is simply not the case. There is also a tendency today to mislabel providence as a miracle.

Secondly, God can work through the supernatural. This is when you need groceries and one minute the cabinets are empty, the next the cabinets are full. This is when the blind are suddenly made to see, the lame suddenly walk, and the dead are raised. Jesus is no longer on this earth to perform the miracles that He did and His apostles who had the power to do this and to pass the ability on are now all gone. With the death of the last apostle and the last person they laid hands on also came the end of the age of miracles worked through the hands of men. (See I Corinthians 13 and Acts 8:18-19)

Three times in our New Testament we see the phrase, “miracles, signs, and wonders.” (Acts 2:22; II Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:4) We may wonder what this phrase means, as it



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to reference the same event. They are really just three words that are describing different aspects of miracles.

- **Miracle** - This is defined as an event that is not explicable by natural or scientific laws. We tend to use this word very loosely today. In modern English it usually just means an event that is hard to explain, such as when someone survives a bad car wreck that would have seemingly usually claimed the person's life. However, in the Biblical usage, it is talking about something that takes place verifiably outside the laws of nature. A person causes a person blind from birth to see. Or a person breaks five loaves and two fishes and feeds 5000 people. The word miracle refers to power or might that is necessary to do this.
- **Wonder** - A wonder is another word for a miracle, but it references a different aspect of the supernatural event. This word identifies the reaction that a supernatural event causes in the mind of the observers. When Jesus healed the lame man or brought Lazarus from the grave, there was no doubt a miracle had just taken place and the people were astonished. The officials were at a loss to explain it. This is very unlike the supposed "miracles" of today. They do not produce wonder because they are not verifiable and they are not observable. This is by design because they are merely trickery to fool people. Bible miracles caused wonder!
- **Sign** - It is with this word the John is primarily concerned. Seventeen times in the gospel is the word sign found. John uses this word of the supernatural events because that is the aspect that he is primarily concerned with. John is trying to prove that Jesus is who He said He was. He begins by recording words of Jesus where He claimed to be God. Then he set out through verifiable signs to confirm the words. "Sign" speaks of the confirming aspect of the supernatural event that.

It is truly amazing to read about all the supernatural works that Jesus did and that His apostles worked through His power. I would love to live in the time, or at least visit, when these signs were being worked. However, we live in a time when these things have ceased. It does not mean that God is not working today, merely that He works through providence rather than miracle. We must be careful and not put God into a box of only being able to work through violating the laws of nature.



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Many Other Signs

John 20:30 says that Jesus worked many other signs that are not recorded. This is truly an astounding statement because there is a large number of miracles of Jesus that are recorded in the four gospels. This just really demonstrates the power of Jesus. In reality, one sign would have been sufficient to confirm all His words. However, that is not what God did. He patiently worked many signs, mainly to satisfy a people that were constantly calling for a sign. As we have seen, they would ask for a sign immediately after Jesus had just worked one.

When Jesus fed the 5000 with the five loaves and two fishes, this miracle demonstrated the way the Lord can go beyond all that we need. He is not limited in the miracles that He works. He provided food for them and they could have all the fish they wanted. Then, after they had all ate their fill, 12 baskets were collected of the remaining fragments.

This is the same case for John's words here. Jesus did not just do one sign. Jesus did many signs. As a matter of fact, Jesus did so many signs that the Spirit did not need them all to take care of His purpose. Jesus' miracles are not all recorded in the gospel of John, nor are the recorded all anywhere else. What a truly exciting time to have lived.

What about us? Do we tend to put Jesus into a box by underestimating what He can and does do for us? May it never be! Jesus has done wonderful things for us and He continues to intercede on our behalf today. (Hebrews 7:25)

Why Were They Done

Modern supposed "miracles" are nothing like what was being done in the first century. I knew of a denomination that claimed at a revival to have miraculously put fillings in woman's mouth, among other things of this nature. One thing was very apparent from listening to people who went there and from reading the newspaper updates of the revival. These people were primarily focused on the physical. It was not about the spiritual purpose of the Lord. It was about what He could give me. New fillings. A longer leg. So forth. While it is true that people were benefitted by the miracles of Jesus, it is clear that this was not the primary purpose of the miracle.



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John explains at 20:31 the purpose for the miracles. He had recorded them so that they would believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. The miracles were signs that were designed to confirm the words. When Jesus worked these miracles, it was to teach certain lessons and to show that He had the authority to say the things that He was saying and do the things that He was doing. This was the case for Jesus and it was also the case for the apostles.

Consider Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5.

What was the plan of Ananias and Sapphira?

What did they do to God as they worked their plan?

What happened at the feet of the apostles?

What was the reaction of the saints? (Acts 5:11-13)

We also note at Acts 5:14 that as a result of the power being displayed there were many believers turning to the Lord. This gets to the end game of the miracles that is identified by John. John says that these things were done and recorded so they would believe in the Lord and by believing inherit eternal life! It is clear that the physical focus of the modern day “miracles” is completely off. It is not about the physical. It is not about getting fixed. It is not about living forever. The miracles were about confirming the word so people would believe and then get to Heaven!

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On the Shore of Tiberias

IN PREPARATION

Read John 21:1-23.

Who is listed as present on the shore?

Why do you think that the apostles could not recognize Jesus?

Why do you think Jesus wants to have breakfast with them?

What does verse 23 teach about jumping to conclusions?

Tiberias?

We may wonder what exactly the Sea of Tiberius is. This is actually a strong proof that the gospel was written later in the first century. The sea is what we normally refer to as the Sea of Galilee. Sometimes it is called Chinneroth like in Joshua 11:2 and sometimes it is called Genneserat which is simply the Greek form of the Hebrew Chinneroth. However, later in the first century it became known as the Sea of Tiberias. Tiberias was established in 20 AD in honor of the third emperor, Tiberius. As time went by and Tiberias grew, the sea began to be associated with the town. This did not really get widespread until later in the first century. So the events in John 21 are taking place on the shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Going Fishing

Peter decides at verse 3 that he is going to go fishing. However, as often is the case with us today, they catch nothing. They were out fishing for much of the night. It is not until daybreak that the events with Jesus begin to unfold.

What do they see on the shore when daylight comes?

What does He say to them?

What happens?



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On the Shore of Tiberias

It is important to note at this point that the seven miracles in the first half of the book are not the only miracles that are recorded. There are a few others, but the seven in the first half are called signs and are there to prove the point that Jesus is God. That is, they are where they are for a purpose. The miracle found at the end of the book is certainly important, but it is there for a different purpose. It showed the apostles that He was indeed the Lord. It also provided what was needed for the Lord's next demonstration to them.

There are actually a couple different miracles that make up this miracle. Firstly, there is the miracle of the fish. They had spent an entire night out fishing and had no luck whatsoever. Jesus then tells them to cast once more, even specifying what side of the boat to cast. Secondly, there is the the number of the fish. This was an amazing haul. These men were fishermen and yet they did not see catches like this. It was such a large catch that a second boat had to be used to help the first boat bring in the catch. Thirdly, the net was apparently strengthened. John makes mention of the fact that the net was not torn. (John 21:11) Mending nets was a normal part of the life of a fishermen. It would be expected that the net would break with such a large catch of large fish, 153 total! However, the net is not harmed. John seems to indicate that this was out of the ordinary also. Certainly all those fish would have been a sight to behold.

Jesus Eats

When the apostles get to the shore, they find Jesus there with a fire going and food already laid on the fire. Jesus asks them to bring Him some of the fish that they had just caught. Consider the following:

How many times has Jesus appeared to them? _____

Why would Jesus find it so pressing to eat with them?

Although they may of had a tendency to question the Lord about His identity, they do not



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On the Shore of Tiberias

this time. His proof has been enough. It seems that the apostles were still in shock up to this point. They had a hard time believing that it was really Jesus after having witnessed the atrocity that was brought upon Him.

Feed My Sheep

Who does Jesus question at John 21:15-19? _____

What does Jesus want to know? _____

What is his reply? _____

Why do you think Jesus has this exchange with the apostle?

Jesus gives Peter some information at verses 18-19 that the average person may not want to hear. Jesus tells him through a figure how he is to die. He tells Peter that when he was younger he dressed himself and went where he wanted to go. However, when he was older, there was going to come a time when he would not dress himself and he would be taken where he did not want to go. He says that Peter would stretch out his hands. This is telling. Verse 19 makes clear that Peter was being told what kind of death he was going to endure.

These words must have hit home with Peter after he had just witnessed the Lord's death. While we do not have scriptural record of Peter's death, there is early tradition that indicates how he died. It is said that he was slain under the reign of Nero in the mid 60's. Tradition says that he was crucified. However, when the time came for him to die, he requested that he be crucified upside down so as not to die in the same manner as the Lord. While this is tradition, it is an early tradition and there is not much reason to think it is spurious. It seems to fit with the Lord's words that are found in John 21.

It is important to note two things that Jesus says to Peter. First of all, the death is said to be



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On the Shore of Tiberias

how he will glorify God. The terrible deaths these men endured are hard for us to see as glory. However, it is upon the blood of men like Peter and other early saints that the church was able to grow and be established. (Revelation 6; 20) Dying for the cause of Christ is an honorable thing that gives glory to God when we are steadfast to the end. It was in time of persecution that James wrote in chapter one for the saints to realize that endurance leads to receiving a crown! God is glorified and he glorifies us when we confront whatever opposition is thrown our way.

Secondly, Jesus tells Peter, "Follow Me!" No doubt the ordeal that Jesus had just been through was running through Peter's mind. However, even though the road ahead was going to be rough, he needed to just stay the course and follow Jesus. We would do well to remember these two simple words. When our life gets difficult, we need to just follow Jesus and trust in His love and care.

The passage then goes on to record the reaction of Peter. He turns around and sees the beloved disciple following them and asks the Lord about him. "What about this man?" It is interesting that Peter's first inclination was to get information about one of the others. Peter receives a sharp reply as is often the case in his exchanges with the Lord. Jesus basically tells him that it is none of his business. If Jesus wants the beloved disciple to remain until the end of time, what is that to Peter. Jesus tells him that he is distracted. "You follow Me!" Peter did not need to worry about others. He had plenty of difficulty ahead to worry about himself.

What rumor began to circulate about the beloved one?

How does John clear this up?

Jesus loves us and was preparing shepherds to tend us sheep to the end of His ministry.

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IN PREPARATION

Read John 21:24-25.

To What time in Israel's history does I Corinthians 10 refer?

What were the blessings that they all shared?

What does Paul identify as the rock from which they drank?

What is he referring to? Water or something more?

The Second Epilogue

John's gospel is interesting as it has two epilogues. We looked at the first two weeks ago when John recorded that there are many other miracles he could have written, but the ones included were sufficient. With this final lesson we consider in detail the final epilogue of John's gospel.

He has just finished identifying the author as the beloved disciple. We conclude that this is likely John. He has declared in this final chapter that Jesus was raised from the dead and He was still in that fleshly body that He was in before His death. The body was raised! Jesus proved that He was never just a spirit in human appearance, but was flesh and blood that ate, drank, wept, etc.

In this setting John finishes the book with these words:

"And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written."

This gets back to the idea previously mentioned. Jesus did beyond all we could think or ask. So much has been done by Him that the earth could not contain it all if it had all been written down. While it is possible that John speaks with hyperbole here, it is also possible that this is literal. If we were to take into account all that had been done while on the earth, in preparation to come, and in the creation, the world certainly could not contain it all!

This seems to make the final point for John to his audience. There is no doubt that Jesus is God. He came to this earth as



God in the flesh. All His works go infinitely beyond whatever proof a person could desire of the Lord.

Synopsis

If we just take all that is said about Jesus in the Old Testament and then what is said of Him in the New Testament, we have much writing there. Then when we consider that His redemption of mankind is the thread that ties the entire Bible together, we realize that the entire Bible is about the work of Jesus, along with the Father and the Spirit.

Considering All He Has Done In Creation

John begins by telling us that Jesus was there in creation. Not only was He there, it is by him that all things came into being. Genesis 1:26 shows us that Jesus was there at the time of creation. It is not the Father only. He speaks to someone else. It is someone that is a creator, not a creature. It is someone that is going to take part in the creation. The picture becomes clear when we see the Spirit involved with creation as He moves over the surface of the waters.

The Father, Son, and Spirit are generally categorized by the roles that they tend to play. You have the Father as the architect. Genesis 1 says that He spoke and it was so. John 1 pictures Jesus as the carpenter. He is the one that is carrying it out. The passage says that all things came into being by Him! Then you have the Spirit as the finisher, moving over the surface of the waters.

The complete power and authority of God is mind-boggling. There is book after book written by men about what we know of our universe, yet our knowledge is still essentially nothing. We know very little of what is out there. If the earth is as full as it is with our books, imagine if Jesus dumped His knowledge of creation into books and stored it in the earth. It would not fit! Certainly His knowledge is thorough and complete.

Considering All He Has Done In Preparation

Not only did Jesus take part in creation, He has also taken part in the redemption of mankind prior to His coming. Philippians 2 says that He existed in Heaven in the form of



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of God. That is, He is God. Paul then goes on to say that He emptied Himself. This shows that Jesus was part of the planning. It was by His choice that He was willing to come. He certainly did not have to, but He chose to empty Himself to complete the will of the Father. We can turn to I Corinthians 10 to see that Jesus was active even during the days of Moses.

John records Jesus' words at John 8:58. "Before Abraham was born, I am." Jesus predates Abraham. What was He doing? At I Corinthians 10 we see the answer. The Israelites were wandering around in the wilderness. As the Old Testament says, they received their water from a rock that Moses would strike and water would come from it. However, Paul explains that this was also a symbol. He says that the rock was Jesus Christ. Essentially it is the same thought as the words that Jesus spoke to the woman at the well in John 4. He had living water that was available. That is, the words He was speaking could give a person eternal life. This was also the case in the wilderness. The people were being led by Jesus. His words, the water of life, were available to them if they would just obey them.

Sadly, the majority of them did not. They chose to ignore His command against fornication. They ignored His command against idolatry. They ignored His command against grumbling. They ignored His command against testing God. As a result, they did not receive the life in the promised land they could have had. Instead they received death right there in the wilderness. An entire generation died wandering in the wilderness for those 40 years.

As we consider this passage, we realize that Jesus has always been there working through the word. When Adam and Eve were told what to do, that was Jesus. When Abraham was told what to do, that was Jesus. When Noah was told what to do, that was Jesus. As John 1 makes clear, Jesus is the word! He has always wanted people to have life and has made it available through His word to all people of every time in one form or fashion. Of course, ever since the fall, it all was looking forward to and in light of what He was going to do when He came to this earth. There were many works of Jesus that were done before He ever even came to this earth. We do well to consider His love and care before coming and making the ultimate sacrifice.



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Considering All He Has Done In The Flesh

This brings us back full circle to the point that John is making with His gospel. It is what it is all about. There were people of His day that were denying the work of Jesus. They denied Him coming in the flesh at all, though His name was Immanuel, meaning God with us.

Jesus came to this earth and lived a hard life. John records for us how there was the constant pressure of what He had come to do. He tells His mother in chapter 2 that His time had not yet come. Over and over we see Him repeating that line. Jesus knew why He was here, as did John the Baptist as evidenced at John 1:29.

Beyond that pressure, there was the rejection that He endured. His own people rejected who He was. That was true of the Jews as a whole, but it was even true of His siblings. As we have read, His brothers tried to prompt Him to go into a situation where He might die just to try and prove a point that He was not really who He said He was. How terrible it was for the Lord to see the state of His people as they rejected Him and the life that He was trying to bring to them. It would seem that the contrast in those that were with Lazarus is part of what made Him weep.

Then, on top of all these works, Jesus suffered the cruel death of the cross. The scourging, the beating, the humiliation, the agony of the cross. All works that Jesus did for us. Paul says at Romans 5:8 that His great love is demonstrated by the fact that He did all this for us while we were yet sinners with no promise that we would turn to Him!

After this, Jesus was resurrected and continued to work with the apostles to see to the success of the infant church. After this, He sent the Spirit to come to the earth to finish the work that needed to be done.

These are just the works we know about. There is much more that we do not know. It is truly mind boggling just to think of all these things. May we take the lesson John teaches to heart. The world itself could not contain all the things the Savior had done. Our Lord loves us and if we will listen to the testimony of John and the others, we can have life!

This book belongs to:
