

The Gospel of John: A Chapter by Chapter Study

Introduction

This book is the recording of Jesus through the eyes of the apostle John. There is almost zero dispute as to the authorship. John does not name himself in this account but leaves little doubt to his authorship in the details recorded. John may not have mentioned himself by name because of the Christian persecution. He may have even been actively sought after as the last living disciple of Christ when this was written.

The primary belief is that John wrote this account towards the end of his life, perhaps even just a few years before he recorded his Revelation around 90-95AD. There is an argument for dating this book around 50-70AD but there is no certainty as John himself does not provide any dates proving when he wrote it. It is traditionally accepted that John wrote all five of his works (his gospel, his three letters, and his revelation) all within a few years of each other making these books the last to be written to complete the Holy Bible.

Even with an earlier date attributed to its writing which most consider doubtful, the gospel of John is the last to be written of the four gospels. It is well thought out and put together with the intention of introducing readers to God the Son. This book is written in chronological order, although it does reference things in some chapters which won't happen until later chapters. It is also more focused on the *intent* of Christ instead of the events of Christ. The other three gospels record what Jesus did and what happened to Him while John records why Jesus did certain things and why things happened to Him. This book also differentiates itself from the other three gospels in the way it emphasizes numerous times the link between God the Father and God the Son, establishing the deity of Christ. The first three gospels tend to focus on Jesus' ministry in Galilee while John focuses on what Jesus did in Jerusalem. It is also written in a more artistic fashion than the other gospels which does not mean it is any less true. The artistry of this book lies in its duality of being both simple to understand and being so deep in thought that it becomes hard to fathom. This gospel also contains what is considered to be the most famous verse in the bible and the summary of the bible as a whole in John 3:16.

John eloquently answers some of the most common questions surrounding Christianity.

- Who: Who is the Bible about? John 1:1.
- Why: Why does the Bible exist? Why do we exist? John 3:16
- What: What is the Bible about? What does God want us to do? John 13:34
- How: How do we get to see God? How do we get to Heaven? John 14:6

Chapter 1

V1-5

What does "the Word" refer to in the opening statements?

There is a double meaning here. "The Word" is the ancient Hebrew way of referring to God Himself. The modern translation would be simply "God." John used the word "Logos" here which is the Greek translation of "The Word" but also carried a deeper meaning to the Greeks. To them, "Logos" is the power that set the world in order and made the world go 'round. It could be defined as "Ultimate

Reason” that controlled all things. John is introducing the Greeks and the Jews to this Word that they’ve sought after.

Why are there two definitions of God? The Word was God and the Word was with God?

Here John introduces us to two aspects of the same thing. How can the Word be with itself? John is trying to define God as God yet show that The Father is still God and Jesus is still God while being two separate entities. This is the beginnings of the definition of the trinity.

Some religious sects translate this passage very differently by ignoring the common Greek language structure. This verse is sometimes mistranslated, “In the beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god,” which removes the deity of Christ. This is considered by most Greek scholars to be one of the grossest misinterpretations of the Greek language ever recorded.

The word “comprehend” or “overcome” in verse 5, depending upon which translation is used, is difficult to translate directly from the Greek which is why some bible translations may differ so greatly in their wording. The idea of the root word from Greek conveys an idea of taking something and claiming that something as its own. The darkness can neither take nor claim the light.

V6-13

These verses talk about John the Baptist as the precursor to Jesus. John was not “the light” but he pointed to “the light”.

What does it mean in verse 10 when it says, “...the world did not know Him?”

The Creator came into this world which He created, and His own creation did not recognize Him. This speaks to how far the human race has fallen from the purity of God.

V14-18

Why does John use the phrase, “the Word became flesh?”

This is another phrase speaking to multiple audiences. The Docetae was a sect that believed Jesus only appeared as a ghost or phantom, not in physical form. The Greeks would think of their own gods such as Zeus or Hermes and consider them physical super-men. But for Logos to become flesh was incomprehensible. The Jews would also have a hard time accepting that God, the Creator of All Things, would humble Himself to walk amongst such wretched creatures as humans. God the Son became human, lived with us, and showed the glory and unending grace of God to witnesses giving first-hand accounts. John leaves little room for interpretation with his wording.

V19-34

John the Baptist had become a popular figure in his time and had gained a following among the people of Jerusalem. This warranted the attention of local Jewish leadership and they questioned him and his motives.

What was so significant about John performing baptisms?

The Jews practiced baptism as a ceremonial cleansing, but it was only performed on Gentiles who wished to convert to Judaism. John performed baptisms on Jews and Gentiles alike saying that no one, not even the Jews, were worthy of He who was coming.

The untying of a sandal strap was considered to be the duty of the lowest slave in a household. John the Baptist said he was not worthy to even perform this task for Christ.

Jesus arrives in verse 29. This is not recorded with exact detail, but it is believed that this is the first appearance of Jesus after His baptism by John and after His 40 days in the wilderness.

V35-51

This section begins the gathering of the twelve. The first two disciples are Andrew and one who is not named, but is presumed to be the author, John. This would imply that Andrew and John were both followers of John the Baptist and met Jesus at the earliest point in His ministry. One reason why it is believed that the unnamed disciple is John is because John records in verse 39 when this took place. John records the very moment he met Jesus for the first time. Andrew is fascinated by Jesus and gets his brother, who will be known as Peter, to join them.

The next day they all travel to Galilee. Jesus had met Philip previously as recorded in other gospels, but this is the moment that Jesus called Philip to follow Him. Philip invites Nathanael who is skeptical because of the place of Jesus' birth. Nazareth was not looked upon with favor in those days. Jesus quells Nathanael's skepticism with a compliment.

What does the phrase, "Under the fig tree, I saw you," mean?

This phrase was used by Rabbis to describe meditation on the scriptures. Jesus is saying that He knows the heart of Nathanael because of his prayer time! Jesus promises his disciples, John, Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael that they will see great things.

Chapter 2

V1-12

This is the recording of the first miracle of Jesus, the turning of water into wine.

What is the significance of running out of wine?

There are at least two significant social implications regarding the serving of wine at an event. When throwing a party and inviting guests it was important to provide for those guests. Wine was one of the most important features of a party as this would allow the attendees to feel relaxed and happy. To not provide enough of anything but especially wine would be a major social disgrace which would follow the hosts the rest of their lives. Additionally, the Jews believed wine to be a symbol of joy. To run out of wine at a wedding would be the social equivalent of admitting that the bride and groom were not happy and cast a shadow over their marriage.

Mary knows her son and knows that he is capable of great things but has not seen a miracle yet. She is anxious for one, but she does not press Jesus, only asks if He would help. Jesus replies to her respectfully with the female honorific but does not call her "mother" at this time. Some believe this implies that his relationship is changing from mother/son to human/savior here.

Mary displays her faith in Jesus with the simple line, "...whatever He says to you, do it." These words are still applicable today.

The servants were probably conflicted. They were told to obey Jesus and follow His instructions, but Jesus told them to take the water to the headwaiter. They may have been fearful at this point to have the headwaiter taste water to serve to the guests. Imagine their relief and even shock as the headwaiter praised the good tasting wine. The first witnesses to the very first miracle of Jesus were servants.

V13-22

This marks the first Passover during the ministry of Jesus. Passover is one of the biggest festivals for the Jews and many made the trek to Jerusalem to celebrate it. It is estimated that over 2 million Jews inhabited the city at this time. Jesus has His first audience of a large size in the temple. It is important to note here that the recording of the cleansing of the temple is different here than the other gospels as this is the *first* time that Jesus performs this task. Jesus will do it again just before His crucifixion, although John will not mention this in his gospel.

What is the significance of making a whip or scourge of cords?

This is not easy to understand in modern times as a scourge of cords is not commonly used. Jesus took *time* to make a whip. He thought it out, calmly put together His weapon of choice and then drove the moneychangers out of the temple. Jesus did not wildly thrash about with an out-of-control anger. He was angry, but He was in control and knew what He was doing.

Jesus also waited until Passover to drive out the money lenders. The money lenders had been there for decades, maybe even centuries. This was nothing new. Jesus likely had seen them before. Passover is about cleansing. Jesus had a purpose for the timing of this event. The people of the temple had probably never heard of Jesus before, but they knew who He was now. Jesus speaks of his upcoming resurrection here, as well.

V23-25

These verses speak so much to the character of Christ. There are several commentaries on this small section.

- Jesus knew that he had created a stir with the cleansing of the temple and the witnesses were in awe of Him. The people knew of Him, but they didn't really know Him.
- Jesus knows our hearts. He knows how superficial, doubting, and even wicked we can be. Yet He still loves us.
- Jesus does not need man's approval.

Chapter 3

V1-21

This is the conversation between Nicodemus and Jesus. Nicodemus is an open-minded Pharisee who is curious about Jesus and wants to learn more. What Jesus says to him is not going to sit well with the Jews. The Jews held a certain belief that as the People of God their place in Heaven was automatically assured. They were only waiting on the Messiah to come to complete prophecy. Notice that Nicodemus calls Jesus "teacher". Nicodemus is a high-level Pharisee that sits on the Sanhedrin. For him to call an uneducated carpenter Rabbi would be unheard of and shows the faith of Nicodemus.

Read Ezekiel 11:16-20

The Jews believed the New Covenant was made up of three promises: the re-grouping of Israel, the spiritual awakening of the Jews, and the coming of the Messiah to rule over the whole world. The difficult part for them to accept was that none of these things had happened yet. The Jews believed they had already regrouped after the Babylonian captivity since the days of Ezra and Nehemiah and they believed the forming of the Pharisees was the spiritual awakening. They were simply waiting on the Messiah to conquer Earth! Jesus is going to upset those beliefs with everything in this conversation. He explains to Nicodemus that salvation is for *everyone*. He also would shock the Jews by saying that none of the promises of the New Covenant have been fulfilled yet. Jesus IS the New Covenant!

What does the phrase, "unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom..."?

There are several possibilities but no definite answer. There are those that think that Jesus may be referring to baptism, but there is no biblical foundation for this. The most likely possibilities are that Jesus was referring to a physical human birth when a mother's water breaks before birth or that water here represents the Word of God meaning someone must follow the teachings of God and have the Spirit of God in them. There are other possibilities, but no one is certain.

In verse 13, Jesus makes it very clear that He has the authority of God to speak on these things. This would be enlightening to Nicodemus and blasphemy to the other Jews. But in stating everything here, Jesus has changed the course of the world. This is the summary of everything the Jews have been striving for. Some consider this to be the summary of the Bible as a whole. The New Covenant is about to be fulfilled and everything the Jews have come to know will be changed.

- Jesus is God.
- The regrouping will be everyone coming together under Him.
- The spiritual awakening will be the Holy Spirit entering those that believe.
- The Messiah will rule, but not in the way the Jews think He will. Death will be conquered.

V22-36

This is the last recorded testimony of John the Baptist before he is imprisoned and executed. Notice that the disciples of Jesus are also performing baptisms. John may have started this trend, but Jesus is continuing it. In chapter 4 it states that Jesus was not personally baptizing people, but His disciples were.

Some of John's followers seem distraught that others are doing what John started. John gives his followers his opinion. Verse 30 can be used as advice to followers of Christ even to this day. John paved the way for this to happen. He knew what his job was, and he was successful at it. He has opened the door for the coming of the Messiah.

What does it mean by, "...the Spirit without measure" in verse 34?

The Jews believed that the prophets of the Old Testament were given the Holy Spirit in small doses. Jesus has the entirety of the Holy Spirit and gives that entirety freely to those that believe. This is another revolutionary statement for the Jews.

Chapter 4

V1-6

Jesus is becoming a popular figure at this point among the disciples of John as well as other interested parties. Jesus knows that a confrontation with the Pharisees is inevitable, but He wishes to delay it for now and leaves Jerusalem for Galilee by way of Samaria. Jesus takes His disciples on a road trip and they arrive in Samaria at about noon.

Who are the Samaritans?

The shortest route between Galilee and Jerusalem was through a town called Samaria. This was inhabited by unclean Jews. When Babylon conquered Jerusalem, they took captive all of the desirable personnel in three waves (see studies on Ezekiel and Jeremiah). Any people that were deemed unfit to serve in the kingdom of Babylonia were left behind. These undesirables were left with almost nothing and no one. They began to intermingle with the surrounding regions and intermarried outside of the Jewish nation. Over time, their customs and culture began to show signs of an impure Jewish religion which caused them to be shunned from the Jewish community. Pious Jews would often take a longer route between Jerusalem and Galilee so as not to defile themselves with the dust of Samaria.

The Samaritan capital of Sychar is where Abram first arrived in Canaan and where God promised Abram that this land would be for him and his descendants. Both Abram and Jacob built altars to God here and Jacob's altar is why there is a well with his name attached to it. This is also the city that is believed to be the final resting place of Joseph after his remains were brought out of Egypt.

Jacob's Well is still providing water to this day.

V7-30

There are several unspoken things to note here.

- It is the middle of the day which is an unusual time for people to retrieve water from the well.
- This woman comes alone. It was customary for women to go to the well in groups.
- It was highly unusual for a Jew to speak to a Samaritan.
- It was against custom for a rabbi to speak to a woman (even his own wife) in public, let alone a Samaritan woman. Jesus was being recognized as a rabbi already so this would cause a stir even among His own followers.
- The term "living water" was used to describe a spring that bubbled up out of the ground. Jesus turns this common term into a Christian metaphor for a spiritual quenching. This would build on what Jesus said to Nicodemus in John 3:5.

The historical significance of this place is not lost on either the woman or Jesus. The woman references the history and Jesus uses it to His advantage to show the woman something she hasn't seen before: a way to fill a void. Jesus refers to the emptiness that is inside everyone. Everyone tries to fill their life with something whether it be money, family, work, or material possessions, but Jesus says the only thing that can fill that void is God, the Living Water that will end your thirst.

The woman doesn't understand what Jesus means at first but when Jesus confronts her immorality with kindness she begins to comprehend.

What is the point of the woman bringing up where worship is conducted (verse 20)?

This could be either an evasive question to change the subject or it could be a sincere stumbling block for this woman, but it is a legitimate question. This was one of the sources of contention between the Samaritans and the Jews. The Samaritans believed that Moses had an altar on Mount Gerazim which they believed justified their worship outside of the temple. This is one of many reasons why the Jews considered the Samaritans to be a heretical cult. They also only recognized the Tora (the first five books of the bible) as scripture and denied the rest of the Jewish teachings and scripture. Jesus answers her bluntly but kindly. Not only does He provide her a contradiction to her beliefs, but He informs her that a time is coming when these contradictions won't matter. He corrects her current beliefs but gives her hope in what is coming.

As the disciples return, they are perplexed by seeing Jesus with a Samaritan woman of ill-repute. They also don't question Him. They already know that He has a purpose for everything that He does, and they respect Him enough to trust His actions even if they don't understand.

Notice that John is recalling this conversation as a third party. He wasn't there when Jesus talked to this woman. He only returned to see her speaking to Him, along with the other disciples. Jesus only told the disciples enough to quell their curiosity. There may very well have been even more to the conversation between Jesus and this woman.

She is so excited by what she has heard that she goes to tell her neighbors what has been told to her and who it is that told her.

V31-42

What does Jesus mean when He says, "I have food to eat of which you do not know?"

There are multiple commentaries on this section. The primary take-away is that Jesus has a source of completion other than worldly consumption. Following the will of God can bring true happiness. Seeking worldly satisfaction will never fill the void that we all have. This does not mean that Jesus never ate or drank. He presumably just drank some well-water from the Samaritan woman. It is just a reminder to keep God's will first above all else. And Jesus was ready to do His Father's will.

What does the phrase, "There are still four months and then comes the harvest," mean?

This is a proverb that roughly translates to "do not be in a hurry." Jesus was telling His disciples to ignore that saying. The waiting is over and now is the time to act. There are people that want to know the message of Love. Jesus was telling His friends that even these Samaritans are to be included in this message. The harvest that they were waiting for was right here in Samaria! Because of one conversation with a woman, their travel plans were delayed for two days while they talked to these unclean heathens of which the Jews turned away in disgust.

V43-45

What does it mean by, "...a prophet has no honor in his own country?"

Galilee is where Jesus was raised. The people knew Him as the son of Joseph and Mary. They were already familiar with Him, but as He was as a child, not the teacher that He is at this point. It would be hard for some of these people to accept Him as more than the son of a disgraced mother who was with child before she was wed.

What are the things which the people saw Jesus do at the feast?

This is in reference to John 2:23. This was the Passover where Jesus drove out the money changers and then performed unspecified “signs”. Many of these Jews would have been in Jerusalem for the Passover and Jesus’ name would have been recognized by those from Galilee.

V46-54

This section is the story of Jesus healing a boy. There are a few stand-out features of this story.

- Capernaum was roughly 20 miles from Galilee. This nobleman came to Jesus as fast as he could from a distance.
- It is tradition that the nobleman or ‘royal person’ was an officer of Herod Antipas.
- Jesus seems curt to the nobleman here, but not without purpose. Jesus knows that miracles will not change a heart. Jesus is more concerned with this man’s heart than his son.
- Jesus tests this man’s faith by healing his son from a distance. The man now needs to trust that it has been done and perform the entire return trip before seeing with his own eyes. But he does it faithfully! He even stops overnight to rest before returning home to confirm his son’s health. He believed that Jesus did what He said He would.
- Once the nobleman is home, he and his household believe in Jesus.

The closing of this chapter refers to the healing of the boy as the second sign. This is the second miracle that Jesus performed in Galilee, the first being the turning of water into wine. This is also the second miracle that the book of John records. This does not mean that there weren’t other miracles in between these two signs. This is just the way that John notes the miracles of Christ.

Chapter 5

There appears to be several months between chapters 4 and 5 and almost a year between chapters 5 and 6 in the book of John.

V1-18

Jesus heals a man at the Pool of Bethesda. There are some significant points to be found here:

- This healing takes place on the Sabbath
- This healing takes place during an unspecified festival which would mean that the temple would be crowded
- This healing takes place just as those who wish to be healed are ready to jump into the pool at the first sign of bubbling
- The pool is most likely (John alludes to this but does not say it directly) surrounded and crowded by people who are eagerly awaiting bubbles so they can jump into the pool
- Instead of healing everyone at the pool, Jesus heals this one person
- This man had been ill for 38 years, but when he heard the command to get up and walk, he did it faithfully

Jesus could have easily used this as an opportunity to form an army of faithful servants by healing everyone at the pool. But Jesus has an agenda, and this is not it. He finds a man who sincerely wants to be healed and singles him out. And instead of sticking around to take credit and praise, Jesus walks away into the crowds.

It's interesting to note that no sooner had this man been healed than he was being harassed by legalistic Jews for carrying his mat, something which he hadn't been capable of doing for decades. As soon as you find joy, there will be someone who wants to steal it from you.

Apparently, healing on the Sabbath is a more severe crime than carrying your mat on the Sabbath. This offense to Jewish legalism would further the persecution of Jesus. It is actually a stoning offense to carry anything on the Sabbath according to Jewish law. Healing on the Sabbath would also come with a death sentence.

Why did Jesus wait to find this man again and warn him of the dangers of sin?

There is no specific reason given, but there is much speculation. Perhaps Jesus wanted this man to see that his miracle was real and long-lasting. This would give more impact to the warning of eternal damnation.

Despite Jesus' concern for this man's eternal life, he still reports back to the Jews on who it was that had healed him. There are numerous possible explanations for this including intimidation or maybe being threatened with stoning unless he could produce his healer. Whatever the reason, the Jews now knew who their wrath should be focused on.

When they confront Jesus, He only stirs up their wrath even more by claiming to be equal to God. Now they can accuse Jesus of heresy.

V19-24

This declaration by Jesus defines the new religion of "Christianity": Christ the Son is the same as God the Father. These are powerful statements that the legalistic Jews could not comprehend and would see as blasphemy. If only they would have looked at what Jesus offered instead of seeking refuge in their own legalistic viewpoints. Jesus offers them freedom from judgement and eternal life! They seek only to persecute Him.

V25-32

Jesus further declares Himself as God as someone who not only rules over death but is Life. He is the judge of the living and the dead. And His judgement is just and pure as the judgement of God. Jesus does not back down from the Jews, astonished as they may be at this proclamation. He shockingly, unapologetically offers them truth. Their God stands right in front of them.

V33-47

This closing section offers the Jews the references of Jesus, as it were.

- John the Baptist
- The Works of Jesus
- God the Father
- The Scripture

What does Jesus mean when He says that the Jews were willing for a time to rejoice in the light of John the Baptist?

The Jews actually welcomed news of the coming Messiah. Either John would be right, or he wouldn't. Regardless, the Jews found him mostly harmless and even hoped that he was right. They wanted a

Messiah that would free them from Rome. It never occurred to them that the Messiah would free them from sin. The Jews only started decrying John the Baptist when they found him claiming Jesus as the Messiah.

This would also blind them to the works of Jesus which would also be a witness to Christ. Instead of a miraculous worldly victory, Jesus offered miraculous compassion and healing. The Jews weren't looking for this at all.

Jesus also offers the testimony of God the Father which is a veiled insult to the Jews saying that they do not know Him like they should.

And they do not know the Father like they should because they misinterpret the Word of God which Jesus offers as His fourth witness.

Jesus gives this list of witnesses to inform the Jews that they may be adhering to the law, but they are not paying attention to God! Another remark which the Jews would find unforgivable.

Chapter 6

Almost a year has passed between chapters 5 and 6. Jesus will choose all twelve of His disciples and deliver His Sermon on the Mount, not to mention other numerous miracles, healings, and teachings in between these two chapters. Jesus is a popular figure in the region at this point. John the Baptist would also be executed just before the events of this chapter. Chapter 6 takes place during the third year of the ministry of Jesus, which is often referred to as the "Year of Opposition".

V1-14

All four Gospels record the feeding of the five thousand. What John doesn't record is that this is a large gathering that were continuing to follow Jesus based on His ministry and healing of the sick. This crowd had been following Jesus and listening to His teachings all day, even skipping the normal meal hours.

What is the purpose of Jesus testing Philip?

There is no specific answer, but the most likely answer comes from Philip's response. Philip had apparently been keeping track of how many people the teachings of Jesus had accumulated. And Philip knew how much it would cost to feed them. He was also probably aware that even with enough money, there would be nowhere to buy that much food. Philip was concerned about the logistics of the situation. Jesus wanted him to be aware of the God in the situation.

Andrew brings a young boy with barley loaves and two small fish. Andrew knows this is not enough. He brings this boy to Jesus anyway knowing what Jesus is capable of. Barley was considered a poor man's food, hardly sufficient to feed livestock. This would indicate that this boy was probably from a poor, lower class family.

Jesus calmly has the crowd sit down and proceeds to perform the miracle of feeding thousands from almost nothing. It is often noted that this passage records five thousand men, not including women and children, which it is already recorded that there are children present as this is where the food comes from. Estimated numbers of the crowd range between ten thousand and twenty thousand.

John does not record *how* Jesus performed this miracle. Jesus took the loaves and fish, gave thanks to the Father, and broke the pieces for eating. The fragments that this passage refers to are not half-eaten

bits of food, but the broken pieces passed around for eating. Jesus broke this food and put it in a basket for distribution. Whether He continuously broke off more and more food from the same wholes that were given to Him or whether these pieces multiplied in the basket as He placed the food in them is not made clear in this Gospel. Luke and Mark lean towards Jesus continuously pulling pieces apart but this is not certain. This miracle happened casually and almost unnoticed except for the immediate people involved. But it was noticed. And the word spread that Jesus had done it again.

V15-25

This is the account of Jesus walking on the water to His disciples. Matthew and Mark also give their own account, but Matthew is the only one to mention that Peter walked out of the boat to go to Jesus.

This happens immediately following the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand and the followers of Jesus decide that He should be their king. Jesus seeks to be alone and let the fanfare die down. This is another example of the character of Jesus sticking to His agenda and not succumbing to the worldly desires of man.

Why did the disciples decide to cross the sea without Jesus?

This is one of many reasons why it is important to study and research the Bible. Both Matthew and Mark confirm that Jesus urged His disciples to leave both Him and the crowds and cross the sea. Without these other accounts, John's description would leave the reader wondering.

John does not spend much time on this incident and is vague on the details. A storm occurs on the sea, the boat is threatened, the disciples see Jesus walking out towards them and once Jesus enters the boat, they quickly appear at their destination. One wonders if this happened so fast that John wasn't sure how to retell this story.

Although the disciples were first-hand witnesses to this miracle, the other followers from the previous day all arrive at the destination only to find Jesus had beat them even though they knew that He did not enter the boat. This leaves them in wonder and awe, yet none of them knew He had walked on water.

It is interesting to note that they traveled across the sea to Capernaum so they could attend the teachings at the synagogue the next day. This will be mentioned later in the chapter (verse 59).

V26-40

Why did Jesus answer the crowd's question (verse 25) this way?

Jesus knew that the reason He has amassed such a gathering is because of the miracles He had performed and even providing free food just the day before. The people wanted more miracles which provided for *them*. Instead of answering their question, Jesus used these miracles to teach them of something more.

Why do the people ask Jesus this second question in verse 28?

The verbiage used in this question can be thought of as, "what works must we perform in order to get you to perform for us?" Everyone expected to have to work for salvation. All they needed to do was believe.

The crowds' third question comes in verse 30. They wanted to see more miracles. Some were genuinely interested in Jesus, but some were just interested in the magic tricks or filling their own stomachs. This becomes evident in verse 34 when they ask Jesus to always feed them. Jesus replies with a well-known statement: "I am the bread of life." This goes back to chapter 4 when Jesus tells His disciples that He has food of which they do not know. He is asking the crowd to put God first in their lives, above everything else including hunger. The reward for this would be the filling of the spiritual void which Jesus also taught the Samaritan woman.

V41-58

The Jews in the crowd began asking more religion-oriented questions. Jesus claimed to be from Heaven, but He had grown up with parents (parents of ill repute, at that) and many had known Him as a child. Jesus confuses them even more by saying His body is food and His blood is drink. This is something else that modern Christians take for granted, but this would be a new concept to all that were listening, including the disciples. No one knew that Jesus was predicting His own death and resurrection. Accepting the coming sacrifice as a gift from God would be the key to eternal salvation.

V59-65

John does not state this specifically, but this entire confrontation probably took place inside the synagogue where the crowd had followed Jesus. Jesus used this time to deliver a question-and-answer sermon in a formal setting. At the end of His lecture, many were left confused and didn't understand what Jesus was saying. Even His own disciples were having difficulty comprehending His meaning.

Why did Jesus ask, "Does this offend you?"

Jesus is making it painfully clear that the truth shall not be covered by politeness or hurt feelings. The truth is worth fighting for, being offensive for, and worth dying for!

This is the first reference to the betrayal of Jesus. Verse 64 also refers to "they...who did not believe." There were those that followed Jesus that did so out of mere curiosity, not because they placed their faith in Jesus.

V66-71

Jesus knew from the outset that His ministry would be unpopular. It didn't serve the "self" of the follower, it served the God of the follower. Most people can't get to God because their "self" is in the way. When the crowds depart, all that is left are the twelve disciples. And even then, Jesus knows that there is still a "self" that will disappoint Him.

Chapter 7

V1-9

Chapter 7 begins by saying that Jesus remained in Galilee for a little while because of the persecution from the Pharisees. Jesus would appear again in the temple at the Feast of Tabernacles, also known as the Festival of Booths or Festival of Tents. This holiday was a week-long festival that was to remind the Jews of God's faithfulness during their time in the desert after their escape from Egypt.

Most of Jesus' ministry to this point has been performed in Galilee, which the Jews of Jerusalem considered to be "ghetto". This was another reason the Pharisees felt spurned. Jesus wasn't healing and preaching to the rulers and politicians. He was reaching out to those who had been looked down upon.

This made the Pharisees out to be hypocrites and showed their true colors. Jesus is now being actively sought after by the Jewish leaders for His arrest.

Here, Jesus' own brothers didn't believe the things He was saying or even doing. It appears as though the family of Jesus is getting ready to make the trek to Jerusalem for the feast. They are asking Jesus to prove He is the Messiah by going into Jerusalem to perform miracles there. It is not clear if any of His family witnessed Him perform miracles, but it appears that only His mother, Mary, was on His side. It is assumed that His father, Joseph, has passed on but there is no mention of his life beyond Jesus' childhood.

In verse 8, some translations differ on the use of the word "yet". Jesus did go to the festival, just not at the same time as His family. There is an indication in the original wording that He did not go "publicly" or "at this time".

What did Jesus mean when He told His brothers that "the world cannot hate you" (verse 7)?

Jesus' brothers did believe in good and evil, but they stuck to what the world taught them about it. Jesus was upsetting the modern teachings and exposing the hatred and hypocrisy of those who established the social norms. Jesus is telling His brothers that they have resigned themselves to what the world teaches them.

V10-18

Jesus does go to the festival, but with a delay and possibly a different route. There is no mention of whether Jesus is even with His disciples or not.

Jesus is notably absent at the beginning of the feast and there is talk of Him and where He's at. This gives us reason to believe that at least some of His disciples went ahead and told Him that He was being discussed. Jesus starts teaching at the temple and is doing so with great knowledge, much to the surprise of the Pharisees and Rabbis. Jesus replies to their shock by saying that if they had actually read and studied the scriptures then they would know that He is who He says He is not by His own claim, but by His Father's.

V19-31

Here, Jesus reveals that the Pharisees are seeking to arrest and even kill Him for healing a man on the Sabbath. Some of the general public, mostly those not from Jerusalem, are not aware of this and are shocked to hear it. Jesus argues His point to the crowd by saying that circumcision is not only permitted but commanded to be performed on the Sabbath. Why wouldn't healing a man be permitted?

Those from Jerusalem knew that the Pharisees wanted Jesus arrested and this caused a stir in the crowds as they argued over the Jesus that each side "knew."

What do the crowds mean when they say, "We know where this man is from" (verse 27)?

There was a belief among the Jews of the time that the Messiah would magically appear out of nowhere. This was not scripturally based, but it may have come from such prophets as Ezekiel seeing God in visions. Since Jesus had been born here on Earth, He did not meet this criterion.

Why wasn't Jesus arrested here?

The Jewish leadership was anxious to arrest Jesus but did not do so at this point. There are those that think it may have been the crowds that deterred them but there is also an aspect of the supernatural here. The Jewish guards were taught to not care what the crowds demanded, only what the Pharisees and, supposedly, God wanted.

The crowds that gathered around Jesus for the past couple of years had seen numerous miracles performed. They had also seen kindness, mercy, compassion, and an utter disregard of what people thought of Him. If Jesus is not the Messiah, then the coming Messiah would have a high bar set before him! Even in this massive crowd of mixed feelings Jesus was winning followers.

V32-39

Jesus then lets everyone know that His time is short and that He cannot be found (physically) afterwards. This is not so much a prediction of His death and resurrection, but of His ascension into Heaven after His resurrection. We as Christians take this statement for granted, but at the time this would have been very confusing to the Jews.

The last day of the feast is significant here for several reasons:

- The final day of the Festival of Booths is the last feast-day of the Jewish year.
- This is the last feast for Jesus in Jerusalem before His final Passover and crucifixion.
- For many of the Jews, this would be the last time they hear from Jesus as a free man speaking to the multitudes.

Jesus gives this final mass-gathering speech to those that will listen. One of the rituals during the first seven days of the Feast of Booths is to have water poured over the altar as a reminder of God providing water in the desert. On the eighth and final day of the festival, no water is brought out as a reminder to pray to God for provisions. Jesus contrasts this by asking the crowds to pray to Him as the Living Water which will quench their thirsts. Either He is the Messiah, or He is committing blasphemy.

V40-53

The last day of the feast was in disarray. The people tried to make sense of what they heard and were even seeking the credentials of Jesus! Some looked for any reason not to believe in the One who stood before them. Even the officers of the court did not want to confront Jesus. They were astounded at His words.

What does the phrase, "Are you also from Galilee?" mean?

The Pharisee Nicodemus from chapter 3 offers a small defense for Jesus, but he is quickly mocked by his peers. Galilee was considered the low-class region of the Jews and was often looked down on and made fun of. Being from Galilee would be a stain on a résumé. Something that the Pharisees overlook in this mocking statement is that Jonah the prophet was from Gath-hepher, which is in Galilee.

Verse 53 is the opening sentence to the story of the adulterous woman. Some translations include this entire story at the end of chapter 7, but most record it in chapter 8.

Chapter 8

Some translations include verses 1-11 at the end of chapter 7 instead of the beginning of chapter 8. If your translation has this in chapter 8, then the last verse of chapter 7 is the opening to this story. Some

translations exclude this passage all together. There is much dispute as to the authorship of this section. Traditionally, it has been attributed to John, but there are arguments for Luke, Jude, Simeon or even some unknown author. The authenticity is in little question, but as to when this took place and who recorded it, those answers are up in the air. This is the most likely placement, but it is far from certain that this is where it belongs.

The reason for the exclusion is the interesting part. Early in the first or second century, some Christian scholars came to the conclusion that this passage portrayed Jesus as being too lenient on or even condoning adultery and decided it was in the interest of the people to not have this included as a passage in the Holy Bible, which was still being formed and debated up until the council of Nicaea in 325 AD. The council wisely decided to include this passage but at this point it was unclear of the original authorship and location in the gospels.

V1-11

As with some of the previous stories in this gospel, the author eludes to certain things without clearly stating them. This scenario presented to Jesus is most likely a case of entrapment. Leviticus 20:10 clearly defines adultery as a capital offense for both parties involved. The Jews also had strict requirements for confirming the act of adultery so as to not mistakenly execute innocent people. There had to be at least two witnesses to the actual event. As such, it was extremely rare to carry out any executions due to adultery. It is also interesting to note that the man caught in the act was not brought before Jesus. The general belief held by most scholars is that the Pharisees paid a man to engage in sexual relations with a known prostitute and paid two other men to spy on the encounter so that the woman could be properly accused and executed. Then they brought the entrapped woman before Jesus so they could entrap Him!

What did Jesus write on the ground?

The most accurate answer is no one knows. There are multitudes of speculation on this topic but no clear answer. The original Greek word used here can even mean “to draw” as well as “to write” so Jesus could have just been doodling stick figures for all we know. All speculations are simply the guesses of the readers.

Why did Jesus stoop down and write in the sand at all?

The picture provided here is that the Pharisees interrupted the teachings of Jesus, threw this woman on the ground in front of Him, proclaiming that this woman had been caught in a sinful act, and yelling at Jesus to make a decision. Instead of letting them bully Him, He waited patiently for an opening to address those that sought to find fault in both He and the woman. He stoops down so that He is on eye-level with the accused woman. Once there was an opening, Jesus shows the mercy of God that we are all to exemplify. Once He shows this mercy, He goes back to writing on the ground as if nothing has happened. Instead of catching Jesus, Jesus catches them.

What does the phrase, “He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first,” mean?

There is the obvious meaning of showing someone mercy because everyone is guilty of something, but there is another meaning which is not so obvious by modern standards. Under Jewish law the witnesses to the crime were to be the first to commence the execution. The witnesses were to cast the first stone. Jesus was asking the Pharisees to present the witnesses to this crime in order to expose their entrapment! Jesus was not saying the woman was innocent or that no crime had been committed. Quite

the opposite. He exposed the plot which would also expose the makers of this plot. Jesus takes this opportunity to show the Pharisees how they should have been acting all along. Mercy, not entrapment, is the act of the righteous. Jesus could have simply said, "Let the witnesses cast the first stone," which would have been sufficient to expose the Pharisees. Instead, He adds, "He who is without sin." This would cause the witnesses to reflect on their own actions. It is also interesting to note that Jesus not only shows mercy to the woman, He shows mercy to the Pharisees as they all leave. He could have exposed them and rebuked them even further. Jesus had an audience in the temple and this public exhibition was going His way. Instead, He lets them all contemplate what they've done and speaks no more about it.

V12-30

If the previous story of the woman caught in adultery is placed properly, then this would indicate that Jesus resumed His teaching after the incident. There are still Pharisees observing the teachings of Jesus so this would indicate that either these Pharisees were not involved with the entrapment or that the previous story is misplaced chronologically.

What is the significance of the Light of the World in this passage?

This message takes place immediately following the Feast of Tabernacles where the care of God over the newly freed Israelites is celebrated. One aspect of this care was the pillar of fire that God provided to the Jews as they wandered the dessert. Jesus is comparing Himself to this same form of caring, not just for the Jews, but for all mankind. This would not be a new concept as there are several Psalms that refer to the Word of God as a form of light.

The Pharisees try to find another method to discredit Him. They ask Him for proof or, at least, witnesses. Jesus offers the witnesses of The Father and The Son. He also blatantly calls them out on their lack of understanding of who God is.

Why do the Pharisees ask, "Where is your Father?"

This is a not-so-veiled reference to the supposed infidelity of Mary, of which the Pharisees were sure to hear about and use against Jesus. In this culture, it would be an insult to question a man's paternity.

Why does John mention that this conversation took place in the treasury?

This is one of the most open, public places in the temple. The Pharisees were clearly aware of Jesus' presence and popularity and may have been afraid of backlash from the people if they tried to arrest Him here.

Why do the Pharisees ask if Jesus intends to "kill himself?"

According to Jewish culture, suicide is one of the gravest forms of sin. The lowest levels of Hades were reserved for those that took their own lives. The Pharisees are either trying to insult Jesus, trying to twist the words of Jesus, or both.

Notice in verse 24 that some translations add the word "He" to the phrase, "If you do not believe that I am He." The closest translation would be to say, "I am" or "I am who I say I am." This is a claim to deity. Jesus is once again trying to convince the Pharisees that their God stands before them, but they will not

listen. Notice that even though the Pharisees would not believe Him, the last verse of this section shows that many others did believe in Him.

V31-47

Jesus tells them that sin has kept them in bondage. The bondage of guilt and shame, the bondage of having to repeatedly repent and offer sacrifices at the temple, and the bondage of the Mosaic law. Jesus is letting them know that this new covenant will free them from sin. All they need to do is believe.

What do the Jews mean when they say, "We...have never yet been enslaved to anyone..." in verse 33?

There are several characteristics that can be taken from this conversation. First, there is a great display of pride. The history of the Israelites is riddled with captivity and the Jews were under Roman rule while this conversation took place! There was a sense of national pride that blinded them to their need for freedom. Second, whether this stems from pride or something else, was a sense of denial. They did not need freedom from their current slavery or from the bondage of the law or from sin because they were good enough. They hadn't done anything so bad that warranted the wrath of God so why would they need to change? This same attitude harkens back to the days just prior to the Babylonian captivity.

What do verses 35-36 mean?

Every kind of slavery on this planet can be escaped from in some manner. Freedom can be attained through rebellion, fleeing, revolting, uprising or many other various means. Our own actions can free us from this type of slavery. Sin is a permanent slavery and can only be escaped through Jesus.

Jesus lets them know that just because they are Jews doesn't make them right. The Jews think that simply abiding by the Mosaic law will justify them before God, but they have neither studied nor followed the Word of God. They are blinded by their national pride and believe that they are the "chosen people" because God showed them favor up to this point. But the New Covenant will change this. All will be chosen and accepted by God, but this means the Jewish way of life will come to an end. If they had truly studied the Word, they would not be surprised at this. This is an intense and heated conversation, as confirmed in verse 41 where the Jews once again take a jab at the mystery surrounding the parentage of Jesus. Jesus rebukes them by calling them children of Satan since they do not keep the teaching of Moses or God in their heart.

V48-59

When Jesus confronts them with the blackness of their own hearts, their pride will not allow them to see their own sin and they accuse Jesus of being possessed and of being a Samaritan, the despised, Jewish-offset cult that the "proper" Jews looked down upon like dogs. This conversation is turning into an argument.

Read what Jesus says in verse 51 and what the Jews say Jesus said in verse 52. What are the differences?

Jesus did not say that Christians will never "taste" death. Jesus said that they will not have to "see" death. The literal translations make this out to be that what Jesus said is that believers will not have to stare death in the face. The Jews twist His words and say that Jesus claims that believers will never die. This is the result of the heated tension of the conversation. The Jews are trying to find a way to make Jesus seem impossible and blasphemous. These detailed observances are an indicator that John must have witnessed this conversation first-hand.

The Jews are incensed at this point, resulting in a fiery exchange at the end where they ask if Jesus is greater than Abraham. Jesus responds by telling them that if they truly knew God, they would know Him, because He is the "I am" (verse 58). And this leads to the Jews wanting to stone Him.

Chapter 9

V1-12

Why do the disciples ask this question in verse 2?

There were many spiritual debates and beliefs in this time and region because of the "enlightenment" of the Greeks and the intermingling of cultures. The Jews were not immune to such philosophical wanderings and had even embraced them to a degree, which caused the formation of the Jewish "parties" of the Pharisees and Sadducees. One of the most debated topics was the cause of birth defects such as blindness. It was often thought that sin led to ailments, but this made it difficult to explain diseases in children or even the unborn. Some of the more common explanations were:

- The soul sinned before being sent to Earth as a child
- The person sinned in a previous life and was reincarnated with an ailment
- A baby sinned in the womb of its mother
- The parents of the baby had sinned
- The punishment was for a sin that this person would commit later

The disciples looked to answer this question with the Messiah right in front of them. Instead, Jesus points them away from the cause and leads them into the action of loving them regardless of their predicament.

What does Jesus mean in verse 4 when He says, "...night is coming when no one can work?"

This will not be stated until verse 13, but this is yet another healing that takes place on the Sabbath. Jesus knows His time is short here on Earth. He wants to reach as many as possible and performing a healing on the Sabbath is another nail on the cross, as it were. Still, He heals this man and shows His disciples how to care for others, even those who may be accused of great sins. There are other debatable explanations for this statement, but this is the most commonly held definition.

Why does Jesus use spit and dirt in verse 6 to heal this man?

There is no singular explanation for this particular method of healing, but it is often noted that Jesus never stuck to just one method. The gospel of Mark records two other instances of Jesus using spittle (7:33 and 8:23), but then there is the instance of healing the official's son without even being present (John 5:46), not to mention the feeding of the five-thousand and the raising of Lazarus from the dead. One commentator pointed out that maybe Jesus was trying to prevent people from believing in the "method" and make them believe in God. Another popular belief is that Jesus intended to aggravate the Pharisees with this method. "Kneading" was one of the forms of work that was strictly forbidden on the Sabbath so working with mud or clay would fall under this category.

It is interesting to note here that Jesus does most of the work in this healing but does require the afflicted man to go to the specified pool and do what Jesus says. This man must have faith and follow the instructions of Jesus to be healed. Sometimes Jesus will ask us to do things in order for His work to

be done. This isn't because He can't do it on His own, as is made evident by other miracles that were performed, but because He wants us to demonstrate our faith for any number of reasons.

This is also a significant event in the bible because this marks the first occasion that any man born blind had their site restored. Many believe this is the fulfillment of the prophecy in Isaiah 35:5 and that this would start with the Messiah. This would also explain why it was so hard for the public to believe that this had taken place. Instead of accepting the evidence in front of them, some chose to believe that this was simply a person that looked like the blind man.

V13-34

In the first couple of verses, the Pharisees are divided because Jesus has "sinned" according to their law, yet a blind man is healed and now sees. One commentator put it in these terms: The Jews had turned the law of the Sabbath into a burden rather than a day of rest. Jesus was showing them the flaw in the law.

Note that there appears to be a small group of Pharisees that are actually supporting Jesus. Whoever this group is and however big or small they are, they will not be seen again after this.

The Jewish leaders are in such a heated debate over this healing that they call on the parents to confirm that this is their son and that he was born blind. They are so busy looking for evidence to disprove Jesus that they don't see the evidence of who He really is.

Why do the parents respond this way in verse 23?

The threat of excommunication from the Jewish temple and way of life had been clearly issued to all of the people concerning Jesus (see verse 22). In this culture and in this age, this would be a drastic change. It would have negative impacts on religious, social, and even economic lifestyles. Instead of siding with him, the parents leave the burden solely on their son. They could have simply stated that they did not know who healed him, but they try and redirect the glaring eyes of the Pharisees off of them.

The Pharisees demand an answer from the man once again. The man had already given them an answer, just not one that they wanted to hear. Just like the lame man that was healed, this should be a time for joyous celebration. Instead, the Jews excommunicate him for not siding with them. The man has been banished.

V35-41

It is not clearly stated here, but this blind man had probably been an outcast all of his life, as would any man born with a defect. Remember, the Jews believed that deformities came from sin. Now that this man had been healed, he had been rejected even more so from his own religion. He had been cast out of the temple. And Jesus sought him out. When everyone else fails you, Jesus will still stand with you.

What does Jesus mean in verse 41 as He rebukes the Pharisees?

One of the few requirements to become a Christian is admitting our sin. By the Pharisees saying that "they see," they were saying they were sinless. Only if they were willing to admit that they were so blind as to not acknowledge the evidence in front of them would they be able to be saved.

Chapter 10

V1-6

This is the parable of the Good Shepherd that Jesus tells those that remain with the healed blind man from chapter 9. He is speaking directly to those Pharisees that exiled this man for being healed on the Sabbath and then claiming that Jesus was the Healer.

What does Jesus mean by using an example of a door for a shepherd?

There is a right way to lead the people of God and a wrong way. Leaders that truly follow God will show love, mercy, and servitude. False leaders will have come to leadership through other means such as deception and manipulation and their character will be riddled with corruption.

Why does Jesus use the illustration of a shepherd?

This was not an uncommon comparison, but there are many intricacies involved with this description.

- A shepherd must be “called” into service. This is the calling from the Holy Spirit, who is the doorkeeper in this parable.
- The sheep respond to the shepherds’ voice. There is a familiarity and even an intimacy here that the sheep would listen to and obey the shepherd.
- A good shepherd is gentle, responsive, and does not abuse his role as a leader.
- The shepherd leads his sheep by example (traveling from pasture to pasture) and does not drive them with a whip or harsh words.

V7-21

Jesus reiterates this parable and goes more in depth when he sees the confusion of the Pharisees.

What does it mean to be the “door of the sheep?”

In this time, shepherds would have pens where the sheep would stay for protection while they slept. These pens had only one entrance, but often did not have a gate. The shepherd would sleep in the gate posts and essentially become the door which kept the sheep in and wolves out.

Jesus is harsh with these Pharisees after they excommunicated the healed man. He calls them thieves and robbers in verse 8. This implies that the “leaders” of God’s people have done nothing but take from their flock, manipulate them for personal gain, and lord their authority over the people.

The followers of Jesus no longer recognize the Pharisees as good leaders but see them as the deceivers that they are. The “sheep” have a new, abundant life that satisfies them through their freedom from sin and even freedom from slavery to the Pharisees’ law.

Were shepherds supposed to sacrifice themselves for their flock? Was this a requirement of the period?

Read 1 Samuel 17:34-37

This is the story of David the shepherd asking to fight Goliath. On his résumé is the killing of animals to save his flock. This is not a common event. This shows responsibility, servitude, and even a sacrificial heart.

Jesus speaks of an exemplary shepherd. It would be rare for any person to give up their life for their flock. But Jesus goes above and beyond by saying that as a Good Shepherd He will lay down His life for His followers. This would be a remarkable example for a shepherd. If we as sheep are following a god who just wants to rule over us and flaunt his authority, then why follow him? Jesus is saying that the sheep should have a reason to follow the shepherd and that reason is a relationship based on love. This statement from Jesus, this parable of rebuke to the Pharisees is the foundation of Christianity and separates Christianity from all other world religions. This would be a new concept for the Pharisees. They would once again debate over the claims of Jesus as the Messiah.

V22-30

There are at least a couple of months between verses 21 and 22. Chapters 7 through 10:21 all take place during or immediately following the Feast of Tabernacles around the September time frame. 10:22 starts Hanukkah in late November/early December. This is another Jewish festival in the temple, but Jesus is not teaching at this time, merely attending the celebration. Still, the Pharisees seek Him out to challenge Him and try to find a reason to arrest Him. The verbiage suggests that they were waiting for Him and surrounded Him so that He would have to confront them.

Jesus does not give them a direct answer because He knows they are trying to trap Him, but He has stated on numerous occasions going as far back as John 3 that He is the Son of God.

- John 3:13
- John 3:15
- John 5:19-23
- John 5:39
- John 6:38
- John 6:48
- John 7:28-29
- John 8:12
- John 8:29
- John 8:42
- John 8:46
- John 8:58
- John 9:37
- John 10:9
- John 10:11
- John 10:17-18

The Jews are hoping that He will say He is the “king of the Jews” so that they can charge him against Roman laws. Jesus rarely refers to Himself as Messiah because this has political and military connotations. This is not what Jesus is about. Instead, He shows them miracles, teaches scripture, and shows mercy, compassion, and love to those that want it. Yet they do not believe.

Jesus does enrage them in verse 30, though, by saying that, “I and My Father are one.”

V31-39

Instead of turning Him over to the Romans for declaring Himself a king, the Jews are now ready to stone Him for blasphemy. Jesus begins a battle of wits.

Read Psalm 82 with focus on verse 6.

What does Jesus mean by referring to this quote in verse 34?

Psalm 82 refers to the Judges as “gods” because they changed the fate of men. This is also similar to the wording in Exodus 21:6 and 22:8-9. This would be a clever theological debate among educated rabbis had this not been heated in a possible stoning. There are different commentaries with different ideas on this passage which only confirms how debatable this passage is even now. Some of the more interesting takes on this passage are:

- The Judges represented the divine will of God and were called upon by God. How much more so with Jesus?
- The use of “gods” in Psalm 82 is a metaphor, but still scriptural. Jesus uses this to expose the ignorance and inconsistency of the Pharisees.
- There is a deeper meaning to this term showing that God and Man can be one and that Jesus in the form of a man could still be God so long as He fulfilled the prophecies.

It is not stated how Jesus gets clear of the Pharisees and it is likely that not even John knows. At least John if not all of the disciples were witnesses to this encounter but the mechanics of how it happened became lost in the furor.

V40-42

The closing of this chapter talks about the further ministry of Jesus. There is much that takes place before Jesus will return to Jerusalem in chapter 11. Luke devotes 7 whole chapters to this period between John 10 and 11.

Chapter 11

There is not a clear timeframe of when this chapter takes place, but the end of the chapter says that Passover is approaching. This would be the Passover of Jesus’ crucifixion.

V1-16

Who are Mary, Martha, and Lazarus?

This is a family that Jesus is very close to, although John does not go into great detail of how or why. Even though these are close friends, Jesus remains where He’s at for two more days because He has plans.

When does Mary anoint Jesus as is mentioned in verse 2?

The book of John is in chronological order but was written much later than most of the other books of the New Testament. John is referencing something which takes place in chapter 12 and hasn’t happened yet in this chapter.

What does Jesus mean in verse 9 when He asks the disciples. “Are there not twelve hours in the day?”

Jesus is saying that His time is drawing short and that the “workday” is almost over. The disciples knew that Jesus was being sought by the Jews in Jerusalem so traveling anywhere near there would mean arrest or worse for Jesus and possibly His followers. No doubt some of them were relieved when Jesus didn’t leave right away to tend to Lazarus. They are shocked when Jesus does finally decide to go.

What does “Didymus,” the other name for Thomas, mean?

This is the Greek word for “twin.” Both Thomas and Didymus mean “twin” in different languages. This is not a biblical reference, but it is an old Christian tradition that Thomas looked strikingly similar to Jesus and earned the name “Twin” for even being mistaken for Him on occasion. However, most scholars believe that Thomas may have had a twin sibling or had a similar appearance to a family member which earned him this name. There is no certainty in any of these speculations.

Thomas shows rigid loyalty here and suggests to the rest of the disciples that they go with Jesus even if it means their death. This is a stark contrast to how most of them would behave during the trial and execution of Jesus.

V17-27

Why is the fact that Lazarus had been in the tomb four days significant (verse 17)?

There was a Jewish superstition that held that a soul waited around its own body for three days after a person had died. On the fourth day, there was no hope of resuscitation. Jesus was hoping to break many of the Jewish beliefs including their take on the New Covenant, how the Messiah would appear and what His purpose was. This upcoming miracle would be another way of dispelling a myth and proving that He is the Messiah. Jesus is getting the Jews to question their own faith and look towards Him.

Mary and Martha are saddened by the loss of their brother, but they are also disappointed in Jesus because they believed that Jesus could heal Lazarus had He arrived before their brother died. Even so, Jesus offers them comfort and asks them to keep believing, which Martha is fully prepared to do. But believing that Jesus is the Messiah and believing He can raise the dead are two different things to Martha.

In verses 25-26, Jesus offers another take on the crux of what is now the Christian belief system. To know Jesus is to know Life. To believe in Jesus is to defeat death. Knowing Him and believing in Him are two of the key components to Christianity.

V28-46

What does Mary mean by telling Jesus that Lazarus wouldn’t have died if He had been here (verse 32)?

John quotes Mary but does not say what her tone or expression were like. This could have been an admonishment or true regret that Jesus wasn’t present. There is no way of knowing.

What is the difference between the crying of Mary and Martha and the crying of Jesus?

The Greek word for “weeping” used for Mary and Martha are more closely associated with wailing loudly. The Greek word for “wept” in verse 35 is an inward grief. Jesus was saddened, but not uncontrollably and probably not for the same reason. Jesus knew that He could raise Lazarus. Some commentators think He was discouraged by the doubt of those that He considered close to Him. Other

commentators believe that He may have been angry, not so much towards the mourners but towards death for claiming still another human victim. Jesus was going to battle.

Jesus' prayer makes it clear that He was praying to the Father but praying aloud for the benefit of those around Him. Those that were present were witnesses to what many consider to be one of the greatest miracles recorded, second only to Jesus resurrecting Himself.

This is not the first time that Jesus has raised the dead. The other three gospels record the raising of the daughter of Jairus (Matthew 9:23-26, Mark 5:35-43, and Luke 8:49-56) but the girl had just died and many tried to claim that she had been sick and merely sleeping. Here, Lazarus had died, been wrapped and prepped for burial, and laid in a tomb for four days with many witnesses including Jewish officials who would "validate" the death. There would be no dispute about this miracle.

It is interesting to note that John is the only gospel to record this miracle found in this chapter. This is possibly because the other Gospel's were written while Lazarus was still alive, and they may have been afraid of repercussions if this was openly recorded. The Jewish leaders already wanted Lazarus dead after he was brought back to life because it discredited them and proved Jesus right. The Jews were still trying to steal people's joy after they had been healed, cured, or brought back to life!

V47-57

The closing to this chapter is a conversation among the Pharisees, possibly relayed to John by Nicodemus or Joseph of Arimathea, Pharisees who were quietly followers of Jesus.

What does Caiaphas mean by saying that "...it is expedient for you that one man die for the people, that the whole nation not perish" (verse 50)?

Jesus was a popular figure in this region and His popularity was growing. The raising of a dead man would raise unwanted curiosity from not only the Romans, but other interested cultures, as well. This is an early insight into the character of Caiaphas. By logical, political, and worldly accounts, Caiaphas was right. To sacrifice one man in order to save a nation made sense. But as high priest, it was not the job of Caiaphas to think politically or worldly. His job was to think mercifully and gracefully. As it turns out, Jesus was thinking in the same way but for different reasons. Jesus was going to save all for eternity. This marks the beginning of the pre-meditated plot to kill Jesus. Many had wanted to kill Him before, but now there was an official plan to commit murder.

Chapter 12

V1-3

This is just days before Passover and both Jesus and Lazarus have become prominent names in Judea. Crowds seek them both out to see the miracle that Jesus performed. The Jewish leaders are incensed at the followers the Messiah is gaining and the unwanted attention that the raising of a dead man brings.

This dinner is apparently a celebration feast for Lazarus being revived and to show gratitude to the One that raised him. Both Matthew (26:6-13) and Mark (14:3-9) also record this event, but John omits the fact that this supper is being held in the home of Simon the leper. Matthew and Mark, on the other hand, omit that this is Mary that does the anointing and that this supper is a celebration of Lazarus being raised from the dead. This is probably for the same reason that only John records the raising of Lazarus from the dead. This helped protect the identity of Lazarus and his family.

What is the significance of Mary washing Jesus' feet?

Mary is grateful for the gift of her brother being brought back to life. Although the washing of an important guests' feet is not uncommon, this task would usually be performed by servants or the lady of the household if no servants were on hand. Performing this task during the meal, using costly perfumes to accomplish the cleaning, and drying the feet with one's hair are all very unusual. This would be considered a humble and extravagant gift. It was also against Jewish custom for a lady to unravel her hair in public. Mary ignored social graces when it came to her love of Jesus.

It is interesting to note the picture of Mary that the Bible paints of her:

- Luke 10:39: Mary learned at the feet of Jesus
- John 11:32: Mary fell at the feet of Jesus before He raised Lazarus
- John 12:3: Mary honored Jesus by washing His feet

V4-8

Of the three gospels to record the anointing of Jesus by Mary, only John calls out Judas by name as being the one to oppose the use of the perfume in this way. This is also the only place in the Bible that points out that Judas not only betrayed Jesus but stole from the treasury of the disciples. It is not made clear why none of the other gospels mention this.

John makes a quiet comparison between Mary and Judas here. Mary loved Jesus and had no problems expressing that love in opulent ways. Judas was critical of Mary for loving Jesus *too much*. Notice that Jesus was not critical of the love Mary showed, but critical of the judgement that Judas gave.

Although not biblical, it is possible that this is the same perfume that was used sparingly to prepare Lazarus for burial and possibly other deceased family members, as well. This may have been a family fortune meant to honor their dead over time with the passing of each family member. Mary used all of it on Jesus.

V9-11

This celebration has drawn attention and is no longer a private affair as those who want to see the risen Lazarus and the miracle-worker Jesus come to lay eyes on the pair. This has also drawn the attention of Jewish leaders. It is not mentioned directly, but these Jews were most likely Sadducees as they didn't believe in resurrection. A resurrected Lazarus shattered that belief. Instead of questioning their own beliefs, they would rather kill the proof against those beliefs.

V12-19

Jesus enters Jerusalem with the crowds praising Him as one who can raise the dead.

What is the significance of the palm branches?

Since the time of the Maccabees (roughly 164 BC) the palm branch has been a symbol of Jewish patriotism. The crowds were welcoming Jesus into Jerusalem as their king.

What does the word, "Hosanna" mean?

Hosanna is translated as "save now." The crowds were wanting to be rescued from the tyranny of Rome.

Why use a donkey to ride in on?

The use of a donkey is two-fold. One, this fulfilled the prophecy in Zechariah 9:9. Second, arriving on a horse would be a military symbol. Riding in on a donkey was a sign of peace, like a priest, a negotiator or even a merchant. This would be in stark contrast to what the crowds were wanting of Him.

The timing of this arrival is also interesting to note. This is not mentioned in the gospels, but Jewish law required that a Passover lamb live with the family for three days prior to the sacrifice. It is estimated that over 250,000 lambs would be in Jerusalem at this time with the different families that traveled to the holy city for Passover. Jesus, the ultimate sacrificial lamb, was surrounded by sacrificial lambs!

V20-26

It is believed that a couple of days have passed between verses 19 and 20. It is also believed that this is the time when Jesus would drive the moneychangers out of the temple again (Mark 11:15-17).

Who are these Greeks that want to meet Jesus?

There is no clear definition of who these people are other than just Greeks, but there are many possibilities. Since they came up to worship at the feast, they may have been Jewish converts. They also may have just been curious tourists to meet the One who can raise the dead.

What does Jesus mean with His response, "the hour has come?"

In John 7:30 and 8:20, it says His hour had not yet come. Jesus now says His hour has come meaning that His sacrifice is near. The fact that He waited until the Greeks are seeking Him could be taken as Him intentionally waiting to show that He would die for the whole world, not just the Jews.

Jesus uses a metaphor to explain His own death and the life of those that choose to follow Him. A plant cannot rise out of the ground without a seed being buried.

What does Jesus mean by saying, "He who loves his life loses it and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal" (verse 25)?

The sense of this statement can sometimes be lost in translation. We are not called to "hate" life, but we must recognize that our life here on earth is temporary and should not be seen as the eternal goal. If we recognize that this life is sacrificial, just as Jesus' life is sacrificial, then our eternity is secure in Jesus. Likewise, if we choose to pursue what the world has to offer, we will never be filled or whole. We will always have an emptiness or a void that we can't fill. Choosing the world instead of Jesus means that void will remain for eternity.

V27-36

Jesus speaks aloud of His troubled heart about His upcoming crucifixion. Instead of asking the Father to relieve Him of this task, Jesus asks instead for God to be glorified. The Father acknowledges this prayer loudly and publicly. Jesus already knows the answer but informs those around Him that this was more for their benefit than for His. This is the third time God speaks audibly in the presence of Jesus and those surrounding Him (Matthew 3:17, Matthew 17:5, John 12:28).

What does the word "lifted" mean in verse 32?

The original Greek word has a double meaning just as it does in the English language. Jesus would be raised up on the cross but would also be exalted in Heaven upon His death.

What do the people mean when they ask Jesus about how the Christ remains forever (verse 34)?

Most Jews of the day didn't have access to the written scriptures and relied solely upon the teachings from the rabbis. Most "feel good" teachings neglected to mention the suffering of the Christ (Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53), so they were not aware of these prophecies.

V37-43

John gives a narrative here about the lack of knowledge and the hardening of hearts, much like the Jews in the time of Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Isaiah. He also mentions that some of the rulers who did know the scriptures believed in Jesus, but their love of the world and their position of authority would keep them from following Him.

V44-50

This would be the final speech Jesus would give to the public before His execution. It is a final plea to turn from sin and believe in Him as the fulfillment of prophecy and as God. It would be a hopeful message as judgement would be a common aspect of the Jewish culture. Jesus is eliminating the need for judgement as the final sacrifice. Accepting Jesus is accepting salvation and doing away with judgement, ritual sacrifice, and slavery to sin.

The Last Supper

Of the four gospels, John spends the most time on the Last Supper. While Matthew, Mark, and Luke devote 13-25 verses to this event, John records the words of Jesus in the next five chapters. John had decades to contemplate what Jesus said and see the results of the conversation that took place. It is important to note that although John records the words of Jesus, it is highly unlikely that he recorded every piece of the conversation. The next five chapters concentrate on what Jesus said and the impact those words had on the future lives of the disciples and all Christians who seek God's words. The Last Supper is significant in that this is the "flipping of the switch" from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant. Jesus gives the Golden Rule three times, informs His followers that we "are not of this world" three times, and mentions the coming of the Holy Spirit at least three times in this account. While there were certainly other words exchanged, John records the highlights of the words of Christ and the significance of what was said.

Chapter 13

V1-11

John is the only gospel to record the washing of the disciple's feet by Jesus.

What is the significance of the washing of feet?

John 1:27 records the testimony of John the Baptist as him not being worthy to untie the sandal of Jesus. Taking care of someone's feet was the job of the lowliest of servants. Untying a sandal would be just above the job of washing feet, although sometimes those two jobs went hand in hand. Jesus is leading by example and showing that the heart of God is a servant's heart. Jesus took the time to interrupt His own supper, lay aside His outer garments, gather the necessary clothing for the job and fill a basin with water before He proceeded to wash the feet of His friends. It was an inconvenient, dirty, humbling, lowly job. Jesus did it anyway. Jesus knew what was coming. He knew the pain and suffering that must be endured. Yet He still took the time to display the Love of God to His best friends.

What does Jesus mean in verse 10 by saying, "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet..."?

Peter unknowingly gives an example of what it means to be a saved Christian. Once we are saved, we are no longer slaves to sin. This does not mean we won't sin again. As Christians, we don't need to be "saved" every time we commit a sin. We are still saved. We just need to ask forgiveness for our missteps.

V12-20

Jesus gives an object lesson to His disciples about being a servant. Jesus was a leader not because He commanded armies or ruled a nation. Jesus was a leader because He served those around Him with mercy, compassion, and love. His own disciples had argued about who was the "greatest" friend and who would sit at the right hand of God (Luke 22:24) just moments before entering the room! Jesus showed them who was greatest by performing the acts of a servant. Then Jesus asked them to do the same.

Jesus ends this object lesson by referring to Psalm 41:9 concerning His betrayal. Jesus loved even Judas to the end for he was still reclining at the table and had his feet washed by Jesus. The same clean feet that would carry him to the Pharisees in deceit.

V21-30

It is common knowledge even among non-Christians that Judas betrayed Jesus. But to the disciples in the upper room eating the Passover supper this would come as a surprise that one of the twelve would deceive them. They were in complete shock. John does not mention himself by name, but he was reclining next to Jesus and, apparently, Peter next to him. Peter asks John to ask Jesus who it is. Jesus answers John, but not all the disciples were privy to this information. Jesus dispatches Judas and not all of the disciples know why. Some are guessing that Judas is being sent on an errand of some sort.

V31-38

With Judas on his way to betray Jesus, the New Covenant was set in motion. Jesus uses the word "glory" five times in the first couple of verses of this section. The disciples would not understand what this meant until after the resurrection. To them, there was no glory in hanging on a cross.

The "golden rule" is given here. The New Covenant did away with many things, but the culmination of the Old Testament laws was still of a loving God. What the Jews missed was the love that was supposed to come from those laws. Jesus was repurposing His followers with the original intention in mind.

The chapter closes with Jesus revealing to Peter that he would deny Jesus despite his trying to convince Jesus otherwise.

Chapter 14

Chapter 14 continues with the discussion between Jesus and the 11 disciples. Judas Iscariot had already left to betray Jesus at this point.

V1-4

Why would the disciples be troubled?

Jesus had just told them that there was a traitor among them, that they would deny Jesus soon, and that Jesus was leaving them. Jesus is trying to bring His friends comfort and reassure their faith. He speaks of

what awaits them in the “afterlife” and encourages them to see past what this world has to offer. He also speaks of His return, which can be taken in many ways: His resurrection, the coming of the Holy Spirit, and His return at the end of the age.

V5-6

Thomas innocently asks Jesus how they are to follow Him. Jesus answers with one of the most important statements in all of Christianity and all the world. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. This single statement not only replaces the old covenant with the new covenant but informs all of humanity that the only way to be saved is Jesus. This is a stark contrast to the ritualistic Jews and to all other religions in general. If John 3:16 is the “why” of the Bible, John 14:6 is the “how”.

V7-14

Jesus knows that His disciples still need encouragement and that their faith will not completely manifest until after the resurrection. He shows patience in answering Philip’s question and does His best to describe the Oneness of the Father and Himself. He says this knowing that they may still not fully understand until after they see Him alive again after His crucifixion.

V15-24

The way the world will know who the Christians are is by the love they show and their adherence to the Word of God.

Who is “the Helper” in verse 16 and why would Jesus mention this now?

This is the reference to the Holy Spirit which would guide the disciples after the ascension of Jesus. Jesus knew that the disciples were confused and discouraged when Jesus told them He was leaving them. This was His way of comforting them by offering them a glimpse of what was to come.

Notice the use of the word “forever” in verse 16. In the Old Testament, the Spirit of God would fall upon someone and then leave once the necessary task had been accomplished. This would no longer be the case. One aspect of the New Covenant was that God would always be with us and the Spirit would never leave us.

What is the significance of the word “orphans” in verse 18?

In the Hebrew culture, a teacher was called “father” and the students were called “children”. When the teacher died, those students became “orphans.” The disciples were ready to follow Jesus for the rest of their lives. They had only been following Jesus for roughly three years or less, in the case of some of them, and now Jesus was leaving them. They did not understand what was happening. We do not know the ages of the apostles (Peter is believed to be in his 40’s or later and John is in his 20’s), but it is believed that many of them may have been older than Jesus, yet they still saw Him as a father figure.

Judas Thaddeus asks a meaningful question here and the wording of the question is important. He asks how Jesus will “manifest” Himself to them. This word in the original language means “to reveal” or “make plain.” The disciples were confused by what Jesus was saying. They were trying to nail down His words and understand as best they could.

Jesus continues the same theme as the previous verses by telling Judas Thaddeus that He will be revealed in the actions of His followers. This will reveal the Holy Spirit to those that are seeking. This was a concept that the disciples still didn't understand and wouldn't until after the resurrection.

V25-31

These verses portray a complete picture of the trinity. The Son asks the Father to send the Holy Spirit. Jesus promises that the Holy Spirit will help them remember what He said and use that to continue their training as disciples and to do great things.

What was the mood in the room during this conversation?

This was a difficult conversation as Jesus again says, "Let not your heart be troubled." There was probably a lot of sadness, confusion and maybe even anger in the room as Jesus told them He was leaving them. They did not yet understand the "why" of what He was saying.

The closing of this chapter sees Jesus trying to move forward with God's plan and go to the Garden of Gethsemane. But the disciples still had many questions, and they would not get to the garden until chapter 18!

Chapter 15

V1-11

This third chapter of the last supper contains nothing except the words from Jesus. These words are spoken to the remaining eleven disciples as Judas had already departed. This first section speaks to how the disciples (and all Christians) should be branches of Christianity.

This is an apt metaphor as it describes the "fruits" of our labor. As Christians, our lives and words should be examples to those around us. Jesus has already stated that the world will know us by our fruits (Matthew 12:33). This concept would be familiar to the disciples.

Jesus also makes it clear that those who are corrupt or false followers will not make it to Heaven. A true Christian will have a heart for God and will grow on the vine.

What are the implications and the importance of the wording in verse 7?

There are many that point to this verse and say that God doesn't answer prayer because "I didn't win the lottery" or "I didn't get my way." Jesus isn't saying that you will get whatever you want as a weak or lukewarm Christian. Jesus is saying that true followers who have their heart's desires in God and their faith in God will have their prayers answered. Still, the faith of most Christians today falls short of this promise. Verse 8 says that God is glorified in the answering of prayer. Are we asking for things for our glory or are we seeking answers to prayer for God's glory?

V12-17

Jesus repeats the golden rule twice (verses 12 and 17) here (John 13:34) and reiterates that this is a commandment, often considered "the eleventh commandment." He even goes so far as to say that our lives should be sacrificial in obedience to love (verse 13). Notice that Jesus gives this commandment three times (a sign of completeness) during the last supper, albeit spread out over the course of conversation.

What does Jesus mean when He says, “no longer do I call you servants...” (verse 15)?

The teacher/student relationship for Jewish rabbi was not one of friendship. It was often equated to slavery, even requiring limits to be put in place as to what lowly tasks a student should and should not perform for their mentor. Jesus is raising the bar for the relationship with God as one of friendship or family instead of king and servant.

Verses 16 and 17 allude to the fact that these remaining eleven disciples get to hear words directly from the mouth of God that no others got to hear from the source with their own ear. This is why the four gospels exist. Jesus chose these men to spread the love of God worldwide. And some of them even wrote their thoughts and memories down to share for generations and centuries.

V18-27

This is obviously the statement where the phrase “not of this world” comes from. As Christians, we are called to be above the desires and approval of humans. As our heart is in Heaven, our life is in Heaven.

What does Jesus mean when He says, “If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin...” (verse 22)?

There are examples in the Old Testament of God showing mercy to those that did not know the Jewish law (1 Samuel 6 concerning the Philistines’ possession of the Ark of the Covenant is one prominent example), but to those that have the knowledge of the law they also know they are responsible for their own actions. With the coming of Jesus and the New Covenant, the Jews had to learn a new way of living and worshipping God. But many would not accept this.

The closing of this chapter is the third time during this supper that Jesus mentions the coming of the Holy Spirit, but not the last. The Spirit of God would help the disciples and all Christians to show love to the world.

Chapter 16

V1-4

What is the significance of the word “stumble” in verse 1? (Some translations say “fall away” or “prepare for rough times”)

The original word used here doesn’t refer to something which might accidentally cause you to trip. It means more like a tripwire which would be intentionally put in place to snare you. Jesus is warning the disciples that non-believers will try and catch them in their words and deeds. Even those that think that what they are doing is right in the eyes of God will cause believers to stumble. In fact, most of history since the time of Jesus shows that the persecution of Christians comes from other religions or even Christian sects. It has only been since the 20th century that Christians have been mostly persecuted by atheistic or communist states.

Why did Jesus wait to tell them this?

While Jesus was physically present on the earth, the world would focus their attention on Him. Once He had departed, His followers would become the targets.

V5-15

Read John 13:36 and John 14:5. Both Peter and Thomas asked this very question in verse 5, but it's the phrasing that's important. In both instances, the disciples wanted to know what would happen to *them* after Jesus left. They didn't ask Jesus what would happen to *Him*. Jesus knew that the disciples were discouraged by the words of their Teacher. They did not know their fate. But Jesus knew their future and what was coming for them. The Holy Spirit would be with each and every one of them wherever they went. Instead of them gathering around Jesus, the Spirit would gather inside of them.

Jesus knew their hearts and that they wouldn't be able to comprehend what was coming in the next couple of days. But they would understand on the third day.

The word "convict" in verse 8 has a much broader meaning in the original Greek. The original meaning also carries the words "expose", "refute", and "to convince".

The closing of this section is yet another definition of the Holy Trinity. The Spirit bears witness to Jesus. Verse 15 is another declaration of equality among the members of the Trinity.

V16-22

Here, Jesus tries to explain what is coming but the disciples have a hard time understanding what He means. There is confusion and probably more than a little fear. They would grasp His meaning only in hindsight.

What does Jesus mean when He says, "no one will take your joy away from you" in verse 22?

With the resurrection and the defeat of death, the disciples and all Christians would understand what it means to have a joy that is unshakeable. The knowledge of salvation and victory cannot be taken away.

V23-28

What does Jesus mean in verse 23 when He says, "In that day you will ask Me nothing"?

When the disciples have their salvation and joy, they will need no further answers. They will be speechless in their relationship with God.

Verse 23 also contains the idea behind praying in Jesus' name which no one has done before. The disciples, who were Jews, would continue praying to God but with a new name attached. The non-believing Jews would find this heretical.

Jesus says that He has spoken to the disciples in parables and figurative speaking, but that time is over. He is telling them plainly that God loves them, and He is God.

V29-33

What is the disciples' reaction to Jesus telling them about speaking figuratively and what does it mean?

The disciples seemed to understand better what Jesus was saying and even seemed more confident in the fact that Jesus was the Messiah. But Jesus warns them that they will lose hope once again in just a short amount of time. Jesus even says they will abandon Him.

Chapter 17

This is still the conversation in the upper room during the last supper, but there is somewhat of a transition here. Jesus concludes the supper with a prayer to the Father. In fact, many commentators consider this to be the greatest prayer found in the entirety of the bible. It is also one of the most commented chapters in the book of John and the bible as a whole. Chapter 17 is the last chapter covering the last supper in John and it is devoted solely to this prayer.

V1-5

What is the posture of Jesus while He is praying?

Verse 1 states that Jesus lifted His eyes to heaven. This would be the common form of prayer in the day as opposed to the modern world's form of bowing the head to pray.

Jesus asks for glorification from God so that God may be glorified. This would be different from the way that we as Christians should pray as we are not God and do not need glorification. Jesus' glory would come from His death on the cross.

Verse 3 is a monstrous verse in the weight it carries over the bible and Christianity. This is a reiteration of John 14:6.

What are the implications of the phrase, "all whom You have given Him" in verse 2?

God the Father has given the believers to the Son. The original word here is used twice in verse 2. It means "to bestow a gift." Jesus has given a gift of eternal life to the believers just as the Father gave the believers to Jesus as a gift. It is rarely thought that we as Christians are a gift to Christ but is something we would do well to remember.

V6-12

What does Jesus mean when he says in verse 6 that He "manifested" the name of God?

This is a summary of the ministry of Jesus. He didn't just teach the Word of God. He lived and displayed the Word of God in His actions.

Jesus also expresses how the disciples were a gift from God. Both the Father and the Son chose these 11 disciples (Judas had departed in chapter 13 subtracting himself from the twelve). Despite their human flaws, the disciples were still a work of God. They had been used by Jesus and would be used for the rest of their lives to bring glory to the name of God.

With His friends listening on, Jesus singles out His disciples to the Father and prays for them specifically.

Verse 10 is another, although more private declaration of equality with God.

Verse 11 is another affirmation of the Father and Jesus being One but also includes the desire for God and humans to be One. This furthers the teachings of the creation having a true relationship with the Creator.

Who is the "son of perdition" and what does that phrase mean (verse 12)?

Judas was the one that was lost. But the English translation leaves something out of the original wording. A more fitting translation may be, "none of them is lost except the one who was supposed to

perish.” Judas was fulfilling prophecy from Psalm 41:9 and 109:8. King David being betrayed by Ahithophel was a precursor to Judas’ betrayal of the Messiah.

V13-21

Twice in this section Jesus calls His followers “not of this world” which when added to John 15:19 makes this the second and third times He says this. This is a firm reminder to the disciples and all Christians that the world is a distraction from the heart of God.

Why does Jesus pray that the disciples and, in turn, Christians should not be taken out of this world (verse 15)?

Jesus is the cure for the sin of the world. But the world would not know it except for those that teach the cure. We are not in this world to suffer. Suffering is merely a possible side-effect of being a Christian. Christians are in this world to spread the joy of Christ. Jesus set this example by spreading mercy, compassion, and love during His ministry. His suffering was a result of that ministry.

What does the word “sanctification” mean and what are the implications of verse 17?

To sanctify is to set apart. Jesus is praying that His followers be separated from the evil one and the sin of this world. We are sanctified by truth which is found in scripture and the teachings of Jesus. Even though we are still in this world, the truth (see 14:6) will set us apart.

Verses 20-21 are a reiteration of God wanting a relationship with us. He does not want us to be slaves to an unloving deity. He wants love just us He loves us!

V22-26

Verse 22 is the third time in this prayer that Jesus expresses the desire to be one with us just as He and the Father are one (verses 11 and 21). John confirms the teachings of Jesus with a sense of completeness in stating things three times.

Verse 23 states the desire of Jesus for the world to know that He loves us just as the Father loves the Son. This is a love that is hard to fathom especially knowing the sacrifice that Jesus is about to make.

Jesus closes this prayer with the statement that the world does not know its creator. But Jesus knows the creator and came to bridge that gap. Sin has so engulfed us that God found it necessary to confront us face-to-face to get us back on track and aim us towards an eternity in love and glory.

Chapter 18

V1-14

Jesus and the remaining eleven disciples leave for the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36 and Mark 14:32). This was a well-known place to these companions and Judas knew he would find them there.

What is significant about the Brook Kidron (verse 1)?

This creek is the drainage from the temple. During Passover, it would be flowing red from the blood of the sacrificial lambs.

What is a “detachment of troops?”

The original language used has at least 3 meanings. It is not clear which meaning is used here but this can mean a “cohort” which is 600 men, an auxiliary cohort which had 1000 men consisting of 240 cavalry and 760 infantry, or it could mean a “maniple” which was around 200 men. In any of these cases, it was overkill for what actually took place, but shows how serious the Pharisees were in capturing Jesus.

This is not clearly stated in this Gospel, but the Jewish leadership was apparently expecting some sort of resistance which is why they sent not only temple guards but Roman soldiers, as well.

What happened in verses 5 and 6?

Jesus uses the phrase “I am” again here as He has done before. But this time there is a Holy event. Jesus declares Himself divine and this declaration has some power behind it as those who come to arrest Jesus fall before Him. This let’s not only the disciples know He goes willingly but shows those who are arresting Him that they are only arresting Him because He is letting them. Notice in verse 8 that Jesus says the same phrase again but this time everyone is allowed to stand on their feet. This is further indication that Jesus is in complete control. This would give considerable weight to His request to let His disciples go free.

Why does Peter have this reaction and cut off a person’s ear in verse 10?

John does not state the “why” of what happened, and John is the only one to mention that it is indeed Peter who performs this act in the gospel accounts. The speculation is that Peter was trying to prove himself to Jesus (see Matthew 26:35). Jesus had warned Peter that he would deny Him very soon. Perhaps Peter was trying to show his faith in a brave and stupid way. That bravery would be short lived.

John calls this servant, Malchus, by name. Some believe that this is because Malchus became a follower of Christ after these events. The Gospel of Luke (22:47-53) is the only gospel that records that Jesus miraculously healed Malchus and restored his ear. This would be a compelling reason for Malchus to believe that Jesus is the Messiah.

It is an interesting aside here that Peter was not arrested for striking one of the arresting parties. With the troops falling at the feet of Jesus and the healing of the servant, this could be considered a third divine intervention. These supernatural events in this short span of time could be taken as a sign of how serious the spiritual realm is while observing this arrest.

Jesus is arrested and taken to the high priest. The transition from Old Covenant to New Covenant is in motion.

V15-24

This is not stated and is less certain than other locations where John refers to himself in the third person, but it is believed that John himself is the other disciple that went in to the home of the high priest due to the details added into the narrative. It is also not known how John (or another disciple if that is the case) had connections strong enough to make it into the presence of this meeting. Regardless, these connections allowed Peter to be shown into the courtyard where his first denial takes place. Peter takes a place among the arresting party instead of trying to stand closer to Jesus.

What does Jesus mean in verse 21 where He tells Annas to question those who He taught?

This is not a redirection as it might seem to modern readers. This is Jesus pointing out that for a legal proceeding to take place, witnesses must be present to accuse the defendant of wrongdoing. The Jews resort to violence as a response instead of producing witnesses. With still nothing to accuse Jesus of, He is sent to the high priest for a Jewish trial.

V25-27

In these 3 short verses, Peter completes his denial of knowing Jesus. The rooster crowing signals that this would be early morning, indicating that they had been up all night.

What is the significance of verse 26 identifying the slave as a relative of the one whose ear Peter cut off?

This single verse implies that this is either John inside the courtyard with Peter since these details would be very specific knowledge to have or an indication that Malchus did become a Christian and had a relationship with the disciples later on and passed on this information. Or it could indicate both factors.

V28-40

John does not go into any specifics with the meeting between Jesus and Caiaphas, but this meeting would have been during the morning in a more official capacity. When Caiaphas is done interrogating Jesus, He is then sent to the Romans.

Notice how the Sanhedrin stands in self-righteousness by not entering the Praetorium, but they bring an innocent man before Pilate for crucifixion.

Verse 28 is often pointed to as a chronological problem for the bible. The Last Supper took place on Passover, yet the Jewish officials were trying to remain "cleansed" so that they could partake in the Passover supper. There are several plausible explanations, the most prevalent being that Passover started the previous evening and would last throughout the day. The Sanhedrin would be expected to participate in many functions of the temple during Passover so some of them may have already eaten a Passover supper while others were performing their duties in the temple and waiting for the following day to have their Passover meal. Another explanation is that John may have been referring to the Passover as a festival of 7 days rather than the initial day. Regardless, using this verse as a point of contention or an example of inaccuracies in the bible is easily dismissed. There are other chronological discrepancies between John and Mark that would carry more weight than this verse.

John introduces us to Pilate in verse 29. The bible itself does not go into great detail on the character of Pilate, but historians have strong evidence of who he was. He had married into the family of Caesar Augustus (Caesar's granddaughter) and had attained his status and influence that way. He was a ruthless and cruel ruler and cared little for his subjects. He was given this position out of necessity of his wife and it was still considered a lowly position as far as Roman hierarchy is concerned. The Jews had every confidence that Pilate would not refuse them.

There is more to the conversation between Pilate, the Sanhedrin, and Jesus. John even leaves out the appearance of Jesus before Herod Antipas (believed to be between verses 32 and 33). But John focuses on the highlights here. It is not certain where this narrative came from since it is unlikely that John himself was present before Pilate.

What is the significance of the Jews reminding Pilate that “it is not lawful for us to put anyone to death” in verse 31?

The Jews actually did perform executions by stoning (see Acts 7 and the stoning of Stephen and even John 8 where the Jews were ready to stone the adulterous woman). Whether this was a legal execution or if the Romans simply overlooked this practice is a source of much speculation. But for a crucifixion to be performed, that would require approval of the Roman officials.

Read Deuteronomy 21:22-23. The Jews wanted Jesus to hang so that the curse of God would be on Him, not knowing that by placing that curse upon Him would mean salvation for all that believed. Death by stoning would not have accomplished the task of defeating this curse.

Why does Pilate ask Jesus if He is King of the Jews (verse 33)?

Pilate is expressing some doubt here about who Jesus really is. He has seen many revolutionaries and troublemakers brought before him. Jesus does not fit this description. Although Pilate can be cruel and indifferent, he is trying to determine what is really going on here. He is trying to find out if the Jews might be mistaken about this Man.

Why does Jesus respond to Pilate’s question with a question (verse 34)?

Jesus is going to give an honest answer but wants to know the source of the question so that Pilate can be certain of the answer. If Pilate is asking the question of his own accord this would mean that Pilate is looking for a political answer and that Jesus seeks the throne of Caesar. If Pilate is asking on behalf of the Sanhedrin, then the answer would be an affirmative response that God is the ruler of the Jews, which is the answer that Jesus provides.

What is the significance of Pilate’s last question, “What is truth” (verse 38)?

There is much speculation on this simple response. It is most likely a cynical answer, dismissing the spiritual beliefs of the Jews and possibly of all cultures. It could also be used here as an end to a philosophical conversation that Pilate did not wish to engage in. He was simply determining a man’s innocence or guilt, not debating the origins of the world. It could also be a sign that Pilate had a questioning heart about a dismal world, a world which he lent his own indifference and cruelty to. There is no way to be certain what Pilate meant, but certainly no end to the discussion surrounding the purpose of this question.

Pilate returns to the Jewish leaders with not only a “not guilty” verdict, but a verdict of complete innocence finding no fault whatsoever in Jesus. Pilate’s indifference and his desire to keep the peace in this region allow the Jews to continue with their judgement despite his own findings. If Pilate were a just man, he would have kept Jesus from being executed but peace comes before justice in his mind.

John closes this chapter with the releasing of Barabbas for Passover instead of Jesus. Pilate could have easily selected Jesus for release, yet he left it up to the crowds to choose in order to maintain the precious peace.

Who is Barabbas?

John does not go into much detail other than to say that Barabbas was a robber. The other gospels record that Barabbas was an insurrectionist, a Jewish “freedom fighter” of the time. The Romans would

see him much like a terrorist, but the Jews would see him almost as a hero because of his rebellion against the Romans. Other gospel accounts tell us that the Sanhedrin bribed the crowds to select Barabbas, but it wouldn't have taken much persuasion as the people could only see the current political world instead of the Godly spiritual eternity.

Chapter 19

V1-3

There are many different perceptions of Pilate who we're introduced to in chapters 18 and 19. Some think Pilate may have been trying to save Jesus by having Him scourged instead of executed. Most tend to think Pilate was simply indifferent and was offering to keep the peace rather than execute someone, but if it came to execution then what would the scourging matter? Whatever it was that was in the mind of Pilate it only served to cause further suffering for Jesus.

The Romans were exceptionally good at finding the right people for the right job. The soldiers who carried out such forms of punishment were usually cold-hearted, abusive, or psychotic. For them to treat Jesus in this manner would be in keeping with their dark character.

Scourging, as well as most other forms of Roman punishment, were performed in public. Whether John was present or not, there would be no end of witnesses to corroborate the account of this event.

V4-7

Why does Pilate tell the Jews to take Jesus and crucify Him themselves (verse 6)?

Pilate brings Jesus out in His battered and bloody state and declares Him innocent again. Pilate tells the Jews to crucify Jesus themselves, knowing full well that they did not have that authority.

This torture did not appease the Jews. They continued to appeal to Pilate for execution and offered their reasoning for wanting such a thing.

V8-16

Why is Pilate afraid upon hearing that Jesus claims to be the Son of God (verse 8)?

We don't know how John knew Pilate was afraid. Maybe John was in the crowd and saw the expression on Pilate's face. Maybe there was a conversation afterwards that a Christian slave was privy to. It's even possible that Jesus relayed this information to John after the resurrection. Regardless, the best guess of commentators to the answer comes down to Roman culture. Romans were taught from childhood about the gods and how they interacted with humans and even appeared in human form, what in modern terms is known as mythology. This was an established cultural belief system that would be engrained in every Roman citizen. Even if Pilate didn't take his own religion seriously, hearing of one of these events on his own doorstep would cause him alarm. Pilate wanted to clear this up immediately before proceeding.

Why is Jesus silent in verse 9?

Pilate asks one of the most pertinent questions in all the bible: "where are you from?" Jesus gives no response. Jesus has already said He is not of this world. But maybe by clarifying this statement to Pilate meant changing the outcome of Jesus' fate. Jesus, although He didn't want to do this, knew that it had to be done. This was the best course of action to accomplish the task at hand.

Pilate does not understand the non-answer. Pilate, as an authoritarian in the Roman government, can declare Jesus innocent. Pilate is used to having prisoners beg for mercy or enraged with hatred for condemnation. Jesus is neither. Instead, Jesus lets Pilate in on the plan.

Pilate is apparently desperate to find a way to release Jesus at this point, although John does not make it clear as to why this is the case. The best guess is found in Matthew 27:19. Pilate's wife sent him a message concerning Jesus. It is also unclear how Matthew was aware of this message, but this is the most fitting reason for Pilate being so out of character as to be concerned about a condemned prisoner. Whatever the reason, Pilate seeks an alternative to death for Jesus. It is only in response to being called a traitor to the Roman Emperor that Pilate sees no other course of action before him. His position in Rome, even one as lowly as being stationed in Jerusalem, is still a status that he is not willing to give up. Innocent or not, Jesus must die.

Verse 14 mentions that this took place in the sixth hour which is different than the account in Mark which declares it the third hour (Mark 15:25). There are numerous plausible attempts to reconcile this including that the two writers may have been using different time keeping methods or maybe the account had been transcribed wrong. This discrepancy does little to take away the account of the crucifixion, though.

The Jews shout that they have no king but Caesar (verse 15). Just a short time before, they demanded that Barabbas, a Jewish revolutionary be set free. This crowd has requested the release of a freedom-fighter against Rome, declared allegiance to Caesar, and demanded the death of God all in this short span of time.

V17-22

Verse 17 says that Jesus carried His cross. Most likely and in accordance with Roman custom, Jesus was carrying the cross-piece or the arm board which would be attached to an in-place upright stake. This would still be a considerable weight to bear, especially for one who had been beaten so badly just prior to the condemned walk. It would be even more of a burden if He did, indeed, carry the entire cross.

Romans considered crucifixion an abomination and only used it on the worst of criminals. It was socially unacceptable for Romans to discuss crucifixion in public. This extended beyond just Romans. It was a common practice to depict the form of death on a person's tomb or ossuary (a box containing the remains). Crucifixion was never used to depict a death on any burial site. Early Christians didn't use the form of a cross to identify themselves until roughly 500 AD or later. By then, most of the gruesome details of how crucifixion was performed had been lost. It wasn't until archaeology discovered the remains of a crucified Jew that the modern era knew how bad crucifixion was. In 1968, archaeologists discovered the remains of a crucifixion victim from this same era that John is writing about. This seems to show the exact method of Roman crucifixion. It would be a painful, long-suffering, tormenting way to die.

Why did Pilate write out, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews" and place it on the cross of Jesus?

It was Roman custom to write out the victim's name and then write out the crime that was committed to deserve such punishment to dissuade others from committing the same acts. Pilate could find no fault in Jesus and wrote this as a way to get back at the Jewish leadership for having an innocent man executed.

V23-24

It was customary for those being crucified to be executed naked as part of the humiliation of the sentence. Jewish execution customs dictated that a person sentenced to death be executed with at least a loin cloth on. It is unknown if the Romans permitted this to Jesus or to the Jews in general, but the Roman soldiers in charge of the crucifixion had the clothes of Jesus.

Read Psalm 22:11-18. This is a startlingly accurate picture of Christ at this moment on the cross.

V25-27

Jesus' mother stood and watched as her Son died a horrible, excruciating, and very public death. Along with her was an aunt of Jesus, most likely the "mother of the sons of Zebedee" mentioned in Matthew 27:56, and Mary Magdalene. John was also present and gives a firsthand account of the death of his Teacher.

It is presumed that Mary's husband, Joseph, has since passed as there is no mention of him at this event or much mention of him at all after the birth of Jesus. The brothers of Jesus were also not present, and it is believed that none of them followed their older brother at this point. Jesus' final request was that John look after His mother. Jesus wanted a true believer to look after His mother. John would essentially become the patriarch of Mary. It should be noted that there is speculation that John may have been a cousin of Jesus, through Mary's sister Salome, so this could also be a legal transfer of patriarchy. Even on the cross, Jesus was concerned about and cared for His mother.

V28-30

What is the sour wine that was given to Jesus in verse 29?

Mark 15:23 mentions that Jesus did not take the traditional drink of wine and myrrh offered to the condemned to dull the pain of the cross. This was usually offered by Jewish women to ease the suffering of those being executed. Since Jesus refused this drink, he became thirsty and wanted a clear throat for His final proclamation. The sour wine was there for the soldiers that had to stand by and watch the crucified until they died. This could take hours, even days if allowed to go on that long, so provisions for the soldiers were made including a jar of sour wine for them to partake from when needed. John does not say who offered Jesus this final drink, but Jesus received enough to declare clearly and loudly, "It is finished," before His final breath.

The Greek word "tetelestai" used here, translated to "it is finished," is the triumphant cry of a warrior. It is declared in victory over an opponent. It was also often used to declare that a loan or debt had been paid and can be translated to "paid in full." It would be strange for those witnessing this execution to hear this from someone on a cross. No one there yet understood what Jesus meant. But this meaning would be clear upon His resurrection.

What does the phrase, "gave up His spirit" mean in verse 30?

There is no way to be certain, but the translation of this indicates that Jesus *decided* to die. He did not wait any longer for death to engulf Him but instead went into death on His terms. This is another indication that Jesus was in full control of the events taking place and could have altered them at any time.

It is interesting to note that there are at least 4 non-biblical accounts of Jesus' death.

- A letter written by Mara bar Serapion around 73 A.D.
- Josephus, the Jewish historian around 90 A.D.
- Tacitus, the Roman historian around 115 A.D.
- The Babylonian Talmud around 200 A.D.

V31-37

Why did they not break Jesus' legs to confirm death?

This is a much-debated question with many possible answers, but the most accurate answer is we don't know. The breaking of His legs would have gotten a reaction and confirmed whether He was alive or dead. This soldier had to stop what he was doing, change out his club for a spear (if it was even the same soldier) and pierce the side of Jesus. Whatever the reason, it can be certain that there was some meaning behind it and this act fulfilled the prophecies found in Psalm 34:20, Exodus 12:46, Numbers 9:12, Zechariah 12:10, and Zechariah 13:6. It is important to know that crucifixion itself does not break any bones. The nails pierce flesh and go in between bones but the bones are used to support the weight of the body on the cross. Breaking the bones defeats the purpose of crucifixion, hence why the breaking of legs would be performed to speed up the death process. Since the legs of Jesus were left intact, all His bones were whole.

What is indicated by water and blood pouring from the side of Jesus after He had been pierced?

This observation tends to point to the cause of death being a ruptured heart. The sack surrounding the heart contains a watery substance. When the heart ruptured, blood from inside the heart filled the sack. The guard used a spear to pierce the side under the rib cage and thrust the tip of the spear into the heart. The sack-water and blood cannot mix, much like oil and water, and flowed out separately through the open wound.

V38-42

It was customary for crucified bodies to remain hung on their cross for days as a deterrent to those who might consider committing the same crimes but because it was Passover, the Romans allowed the Jews to remove the bodies. Bodies not claimed by anyone would simply be put in the city dump. It is possible that Jesus would have been thrown in the dump even with His mother, Mary, present because she was a woman and could stake no claim, and, most likely, she had no money for a grave anyway. Regardless, two members of the Jewish court came forward to claim Jesus and bury Him with dignity. Jesus was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, and the oils and perfumes used to wash the body of Jesus were provided by Nicodemus. The tomb and the preparation with myrrh and aloes would have been considered a rich man's burial.

Read Isaiah 53:9. These two Rabbis would have known the scriptures. The Romans fulfilled the prophecies of crucifixion unknowingly. These Rabbis knew exactly what they were doing. These well-to-do, respectable leaders of the Jewish faith took the time and effort to prepare a body for burial in traditional Jewish fashion, normally a task reserved for slaves, students, or family members. This would mean cleansing the body, a complete washing from head to toe and removal of any foreign objects including the crown of thorns, and splinters, of which there would be many. The open wounds would have to be tended to which meant Jesus' hands, feet, and most of His back and sides would need to be cleaned from the scourging. Then the body would be bathed in the ointments and perfumes. The strips of cloth for wrapping the body would be smeared in the ointment, as well. Finally, the body would be

fully wrapped in the cloth strips and carefully laid in the tomb next to His ossuary (if one for Joseph of Arimathea had already been present) where His bones would be placed one year after death when the flesh had decayed. The ossuary reserved for Jesus would go unused.

Chapter 20

The Resurrection is covered in all four gospels. All of them do so from various perspectives. Luke and Mark are both giving second-hand accounts as they are writing down what they have been told by the apostles. Matthew and John are both giving first-hand accounts. These perspectives sometimes offer differences in detail that skeptics use to try and discredit the bible. These discrepancies do not invalidate the accounts of the authors, however. These authors wrote the gospels knowing full well that their very existence could invite a harsh penalty from the world they live in. The survival of the gospel records throughout the ages is a miracle in and of itself. The fact that the gospels are still around 2000 years later and knowing the fate of the authors who wrote them are enough to validate their authenticity.

V1-10

John jumps immediately from death to an unsealed tomb, much like the other gospel accounts. The gospel authors had no need to dwell on the dark days. This story was now decades old when John wrote his account, so it was a well-known story. He has had plenty of time to contemplate what Jesus said and what happened on that day to accurately recall what took place. Resurrection day would be something permanently etched in John's mind.

John also only mentions Mary Magdalene and leaves out others that were with her. Only Mary went to retrieve the disciples, so John focuses on her. Notice in verse 2 Mary says, "...we do not know where..." indicating that Mary was not alone.

John and Peter both run to the tomb. At this point, Peter is in his forties or even older while John is supposedly in his twenties. It is no wonder, then, that John outran Peter. This gospel is the only one to record that John went to the tomb with Peter.

What is meant by, "He saw the linen cloths lying there" in verse 6?

The original Greek word means to contemplate, observe, or scrutinize. Peter meticulously examined the tomb and the cloths within. John was careful to record what he and Peter found. The oils and spices used to prepare the cloths would harden within a few hours making the wrapping look like a mummy. John does not record what state the wrappings were in, but the remains of Jesus were not among them.

There are countless observations concerning this passage and others like it in the corresponding gospels. The Shroud of Turin brings even more speculation to this already heavily studied section of the bible. But it is also easy to understand why there is so much interest. Even if you are not a believer in Christ or God, wouldn't someone having been raised from the dead pique your curiosity? The resurrection of Lazarus can be attributed to Jesus, but no one can take credit for the resurrection of Jesus but Jesus Himself.

What does John mean here when he says, "...he saw and believed" in verse 8?

Most people did not believe Jesus was alive because of an empty tomb. It was only after seeing a risen Christ that people then believed. John had a jump-start on believing once he realized what had

happened. Even though John believed Jesus had risen from the dead, he makes it a point to say that none of them knew *why* Jesus had risen. This would be what Jesus would tell them in the coming weeks.

V11-18

Unlike John, Mary did not believe that Jesus was alive. She simply assumed that His body had been stolen. Peter and John had already left, satisfied with their examination of the empty tomb. Yet when Mary peers in, she sees something that Peter and John did not.

John does not go into detail of what Mary saw or how she reacted because he was no longer present. He had to rely on her account afterwards and there was probably much confusion as to what happened. Her confusion might account for her lack of shock at seeing two angels in the tomb that Peter and John had just left. This also accounts for John not saying why Mary did not recognize Jesus at first. Whether she was so distraught as to not recognize Him, had tears in her eyes which blurred her vision, or some other explanation, she did not realize who it was she was talking to.

It is only when Mary hears her name uttered in a familiar voice that she recognizes whom it is she is talking to. Whatever made her eyes fail her, her ears recognized her Lord calling out to her.

Why does Jesus respond in this way in verse 17? What do different translations say?

The original Greek tense of this phrase indicates that Jesus was telling Mary to stop because there were things that needed to be done. Some biblical translations make it out that Jesus was telling Mary *not* to do this instead of to stop doing this. Jesus wasn't admonishing Mary. He was simply telling her that there is work to do.

It is also interesting to see how Jesus phrases what that work is. Jesus is supposed to ascend, but He uses an equal term for both He and Mary. The Father is not just the Father of Jesus, but the Father is the same for both Jesus and Mary. The promise of the New Covenant is fulfilled upon the resurrection of Jesus and all now have direct access to God!

V19-23

All four gospels record appearances of Jesus on the day of resurrection. John is the only one to record that Jesus appears to ten of the disciples later that same day. It is not known why Thomas was not present for this appearance, but he surely missed out.

As seen with previous instances of the accounts of John, details are omitted if he's not there and included if he is witnessing an event firsthand. John was no doubt present for this manifestation of Christ.

What does it mean by "the doors were shut" in verse 19?

John saying that the doors were shut has been a never-ending source of debate among scholars and commentators. This could mean that the doors were locked, and Jesus miraculously appeared inside. It could also mean that the disciples were in hiding and Jesus found them. However, for someone who has just defeated death, a closed door would seem to be of little difficulty to overcome. All four gospels tell of Jesus appearing and disappearing at random, yet He still appeared in physical form as if He was human. With the defeat of death, Jesus no longer had to refrain from using the miraculous power of God. Regardless of how Jesus enters their midst, He greets them with the famous phrase, "Peace be with you."

What is the significance of the phrase, "Peace be with you" in verse 19?

This phrase carries with it an assurance that there no need for fear or for alarm. The disciples would have plenty of reason for both as their fallen Master now stood before them alive and well causing them plenty of shock. They may have even been worried that Jesus would be disappointed in them since they all went into hiding after the crucifixion. Jesus repeats the phrase to reassure them that all is well.

With the defeat of death, Jesus is passing on the mantle (verse 21) to the disciples. They are now responsible (or soon will be) for carrying on the work of Jesus on Earth.

Why would Jesus "breathe" on them to deliver the Holy Spirit (verse 22)?

The Greek word is the same used in the Septuagint for Genesis 2:7 to bring Adam to life and in Ezekiel 37:9 when the vision of Ezekiel sees dried bones restored to life. This is an act of passing on life from God to Creation. Life as they knew it is over. The Holy Spirit now resides in each of them full time.

What does verse 23 mean and what is significant about its relation to verse 22?

The wording here is that Jesus is giving those present the authority to announce or even declare forgiveness to those that ask for it. It needs to be noted that this authority comes with the Holy Spirit and not before. We can forgive those who do us harm, but only God can forgive sin. With the Holy Spirit taking residence in our souls as Christians, we can pass on the message of forgiveness.

V24-29

It took eight days before Jesus appeared to Thomas. Thomas had missed out on the initial blessing of the Holy Spirit that the other ten had received.

What is the significance of Jesus repeating back to Thomas the demands of proof in verse 27?

It is not known how Jesus knew what the demands of Thomas were, but John indicates that Jesus reiterated those demands verbally and met those demands physically. This would be a humbling experience for Thomas and dissuade him to doubt so haughtily ever again.

Jesus lovingly refutes Thomas' doubt even further by giving another famous line, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." The disciples have been blessed with so much by merely being in the presence of Jesus. Yet, this is a blessing that is not for them. It is for those who willingly come after.

V30-31

Why does John close the chapter in this manner?

John is giving a brief purpose as to why this gospel exists. It is important to note that John is writing this account later in his life and after he has watched all his fellow disciples, and many more believers, be executed for their faith. John doesn't have to write this gospel. He does so knowing what the consequences could be, although many point out that this may be the very reason why he doesn't mention himself by name. Yet he still feels compelled to write down his experiences and define the life of Christ as a Holy, Godly life. John also states that it is not a complete gospel. He has focused on specific aspects of Jesus but has by no means given a complete recap of the life and ministry of Jesus. Even a study of all four gospels would leave a very lacking account of the ministry of Jesus both before and after the resurrection (see John's closing statement at the end of chapter 21). John clearly states that

the purpose of his gospel is to strengthen the faith of those that seek Him so that they who believe in Jesus will live forever.

Chapter 21

John is closing out his testimony about the ministry of Jesus. This chapter appears to be vague on the events that John describes and leaves much to the imagination. It's the final statement of this chapter which indicates that this vagueness may have been intentional.

V1-3

The disciples find themselves once again in Galilee because Jesus had told them to do so (Matthew 28:7 and 28:10). Peter and six others decide to go fishing while they wait.

How are the disciples able to fish at this point? Where did they get the boat and nets?

This is not so much a biblical conclusion as much as it is a logical one. While the disciples were with Jesus, they were provided for by supporters of Jesus ministry or Jesus Himself. Even though Jesus is resurrected His method of ministry has changed and the disciples must now fend for themselves. It is likely that they would have returned to the occupations which they were familiar with.

Part of being a fisherman is working odd hours (fish swim closer to the surface more often in less sunlight) and being used to disappointment (even if you work all night, you may still not catch a fish).

V4-8

Jesus appears to them from the shore in the early morning light. Their sleepiness from their work, the light of the rising sun, and the distance from ship to shore would have made it difficult for them to realize who it was that called to them.

Not knowing that it was Jesus that was speaking to them from shore, they must have found these suggestions ludicrous. Changing which side of the boat the net is cast from would make no difference and with the sun rising the chances of catching fish decreased. It does not say why the disciples decided to listen to this stranger. It's even possible that they chose to act on this bad advice simply to show this person how ridiculous this idea was. Imagine their surprise when this suggestion works.

John is the first to realize what is happening. His attention is immediately turned to the stranger realizing that it is Jesus who speaks to them. Peter is so excited he doesn't even wait for the boat to return to shore.

V9-11

The resurrected Jesus is still a servant. There is a warm fire with fish already cooking. The disciples still had to drag the net full of fish in, but they knew that it was Jesus that made the haul. Peter drags in the heavy load. The experienced fishermen immediately recognize the size of the fish and even the exact number of the fish in the catch.

Notice that this is another example of a complete miracle. Jesus didn't just provide a large number of grand fish. He also provided a net that did not break under the strain. Jesus doesn't just tell a lame man to walk. He provides a man who has been lame for decades the muscles needed to walk and the skill to walk instinctively.

V12-14

Why would the disciples want to ask Jesus, "Who are you?" in verse 12?

There is a lot of speculation about this verse, but most believe the true answer lies in the original language. The Greek verb used here is more accurately translated "to question" or "to prove". They saw Jesus in front of them, yet they were still shocked that He was alive.

What does John mean by stating that this is the third appearance of Jesus?

Much like the signs or miracles that John lists numerically towards the beginning of his account, this is the third instance that John records an appearance of Jesus, not the third time that Jesus has appeared overall. John is making notations for his readers, not notations of Christ.

V15-17

Why does Jesus ask Peter the same question three times?

John is a witness to this conversation and can hear what is being said and even see the expressions on Peter's face. But John does not go into full detail of the meaning of the conversation because that is between Peter and Jesus. The most common speculation is that this is a way for Jesus to get Peter to re-examine himself for the task ahead. It is also noted that Peter denied Jesus three times, so this could be a way for Jesus to nullify those denials for the sake of Peter, for John who was listening, and for the readers of this gospel.

This conversation is Jesus preparing Peter to become the "rock" that the Christian church will be built on. Peter, or Petra in its original language, means rock which is what Jesus changed Simon's name to when he became a disciple of Christ. It is often noted that Peter is the foundation of the Christian church, Paul is the missionary of the Christian church, and John is the witness of the Christian church.

V18-19

What is Jesus implying with this statement to Peter?

Jesus is telling Peter a small portion of his future. Peter is destined to be crucified in the name of Jesus, just as Jesus was crucified. This would not be a comfortable feeling for Peter, but he still followed Jesus and "fed His lambs" as requested.

John is recounting this conversation after Peter has already been martyred, probably under the reign of Nero and the mass persecution of Christians. It is church tradition that Peter refused to be crucified in the same manner as Jesus and was hung upside down on his cross as he didn't consider himself worthy enough to be executed in the same manner as Christ, but this is not a confirmed belief.

V20-23

Why does Peter point out John at this point, wondering what his fate would be?

No one wants to die by crucifixion. Not even Jesus. But Peter naturally wondered if it was just him or if all Christians would suffer the same fate. Jesus reminds Peter that it is not his place to know the fate of others. It is his place to be the shepherd.

John also directly addresses a myth that was being spread even before the writing of his gospel account. Either John and Peter were not the only two listening in on this conversation or the conversation was

relayed to others and it was twisted into something it wasn't meant to be. John, in his old age as he is writing this, wants to remind his readers that he is not immune to death in this life.

V24-25

John concludes his gospel by stating that it is indeed an incomplete account. John has a focus and purpose for this book but recording everything that Jesus did is not it. John even states that it would be foolish to try to record everything, as it would be impossible. The works of Jesus far exceed what was written about Him.

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