

# **The Gospel of JOHN**

**“The Gospel of Boldness”**

**-- The Asynoptic Gospel --**

**CHAPTERS 1-21**

**With**

**INTRODUCTION**

**And**

**QUESTIONS ON EACH LESSON**

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# THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

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# THE LIFE OF CHRIST IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

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**INTRODUCTION**

The New Testament books of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are often referred to as the “Synoptic Gospels,” a name arising from the fact that those three accounts of the life of Jesus Christ seem to have given their reports from similar perspectives [“synoptic”-- “same eye”]. Striking resemblances occur among the three in content, structure, and language. Together, they provide a composite record of the earthly sojourn of God’s Son that unfolds for us the eternal purpose of God “which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Eph.3:10).

There is also a fourth Gospel that is more unlike than like the first three. John’s Gospel might be thought of as the “asynoptic” [“*not* the same eye”] Gospel. While it treats many of the same incidents and teachings dealt with by the other writers, this book largely distinguishes itself from the synoptic Gospels by the things it omits from its narrative and by the singular approach it takes to many of the incidents that are included within its pages. So different is the general tenor of John from Matthew, Mark, and Luke, that some scholars have labeled it as a “spiritual” Gospel and the other three as “historical” Gospels.

Some of the differences between the synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of John are seen in the material included in those books but omitted in John:

- (1) John makes no mention of Jesus’ birth, baptism, temptation by the devil, or ascension into heaven following the resurrection;
- (2) He says nothing about the institution of the Lord’s Supper or about the healing of many people possessed by demons;
- (3) Jesus’ agony in Gethsemane goes unnoticed, and His charge to the apostles in the Great Commission is passed by when John concludes his account of the Lord’s life on earth;
- (4) Also, the numerous parables employed by Christ to teach some of the foundation principles of His kingdom, and which occupy so much space in the *synoptic* Gospels, are totally missing from John’s *asynoptic* Gospel.

Other differences exist in the material included by John in his Gospel but omitted in the other three books, such as:

- (1) The marriage feast miracle at Cana of Galilee (John 2);
- (2) Nicodemus’ visit to Jesus and the ensuing conversation about the new birth (John 3);
- (3) Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan woman and His teaching about true worship (John 4);
- (4) The raising of Lazarus from the dead (John 11);
- (5) The washing of the disciples’ feet by the Lord (John 13);
- (6) In-depth instruction about the role of the Holy Spirit in the apostles’ future work (John 14-16).

John records a number of events that occurred during the *early* ministry of Jesus in Judea. The Synoptics deal largely with the work of Jesus in Galilee *after* John the Baptist had been imprisoned by Herod (Matthew 4:12). Eusebius, an early church historian, commented on this significant difference between John's Gospel and the Synoptics:

"Finally he proceeded to write for the following reason. The three gospels already mentioned having come into the hands of all and into his hands too, they say that he fully accepted them and bore witness to their truthfulness; *but there was lacking in them an account of the deeds done by Christ at the beginning of his ministry...*They therefore say that John, being asked to do it for this reason, gave in his gospel an account of the period which had been omitted by the earlier evangelists, and of the deeds done by the Savior during that period; that is, of the deeds done before the imprisonment of John the Baptist...John therefore records the deeds of Christ which were performed *before* the Baptist was cast into prison, but the other three evangelists mention the events which happened *after* that time...The *Gospel according to John* contains the *first* acts of Christ, while the others give an account of the *latter* part of his life" [Eusebius, *The Ecclesiastical History*, 5:24--quoted in Barkley, *The Gospel of John*, Vol. 1, p. 4].

John's record of Jesus' work appears to include a somewhat more pronounced emphasis on Jewish geography, history, and religion than is usually found in the other Gospels. He speaks of the years required to build the temple (2:20); of the ongoing animosity between Jews and Samaritans (4:9); and of the rigid sabbath traditions observed by the Jewish populace (5:10). He cites a pool in Jerusalem "by the Sheep's gate," called Bethesda, having *five* porches. Excavation has only recently discovered just such a five-porched pool, dispelling the skepticism about its existence that prevailed for many years. John everywhere displays a close familiarity with the Jews' capital city that lends a unique flavor to his Gospel.

Furthermore, the fourth Gospel provides the reader with a keener sense of the passing of time than might be gained from the first three. For example, it records the occurrence of at least *three* Passover feasts (2:13; 6:4; 11:55), whereas Matthew, Mark, and Luke note only the events of the final Passover associated with Jesus' trial and crucifixion [with the exception of Luke's account (2:41) of the annual journeys to Jerusalem by the boy Jesus in the company of his parents]. John's reference to still another feast in 5:1 might point to a *fourth* Passover, validating the three and one-half years that most students hold as the time Jesus spent in the world. John additionally makes it easier than the other writers for scholars to measure this duration of time by the numerous seasonal details he includes in his narratives.

One of the most striking differences between this Gospel and the others is the lengthy discourses by Jesus that appear throughout the book, often following His performance of some attention-getting miracle or the occurrence of some unusual event. These miracles and events seem to have been designed to provide an entree for Jesus to teach about matters of great spiritual importance. He chose to heal an infirm man on the Sabbath (5:1-15) and then spoke at length to the Jews about the singular relationship that He enjoyed with the Father (5:16-47). He dared to interact with a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well (4:5-12) and then explained to her His own significance as the "water of life" (4:13-26). He forgave the sin of an adulteress (8:3-11), whereupon He delivered a long discourse about the fact that only through belief in Him could *any* sin be forgiven by God (8:12-47). The multitudes were fed miraculously (6:2-14) and then were treated to a lengthy discussion about Jesus as the "bread of life" (6:26-58). Other extensive lessons concern the new birth (chapter 3); the shepherd and His sheep (chapter 10); the *inseparable*

relationship between the Father, Son, and apostles (chapters 14,15,16); and His prayer for the preservation of all disciples (chapter 17).

The asynoptic Gospel of John is a book of miracles. *Seven* are “written,” while “many other signs” were unrecorded (John 20:30,31). Merrill C. Tenney classifies the miracles in this way:

- (1) Changing water into wine (2:1-11)-- a miracle controlling *quality*;
- (2) Healing the nobleman’s son (4:46-54)-- a miracle controlling *distance* or *space*;
- (3) Healing an impotent man (5:1-9)-- a miracle controlling *time*;
- (4) Feeding the five thousand (6:1-14)-- a miracle controlling *quantity* ;
- (5) Walking on the water (6:16-21)-- a miracle controlling *natural law*;
- (6) Raising of Lazarus (11:1-46)-- a miracle controlling *death*.

Tenney adds, “these miracles, then, are preeminently *signs* because they point to those aspects of Jesus’ ministry in which He demonstrated His transcendent control over the factors of life with which man is unable to cope. Quality, space, time, quantity, natural law, misfortune, and death circumscribe humanity’s world. Daily existence is a struggle against their limitations. Christ’s superiority over them as revealed by these events called signs was proof of His deity and a clue to understanding what the writer desired to say about Him” (John: the Gospel of Belief, pp.30,31).

It is important to the understanding of any literary work to first understand the purpose for which the work was written. This Gospel is no exception. The structure, content, and language of the book become more meaningful as we grasp the role that each plays in satisfying the reason for which John penned the impelling words of his Gospel. And we do not need to speculate about what that purpose really was. The author himself has clearly identified his purpose for us. In a “footnote” to his record of events in Christ’s work among men, he declares:

***“And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name” (John 20:30,31).***

From John’s stated purpose, we may learn that:

- (1) Christ’s miracles were “signs” intended to prove something to those who witnessed them-- His *divinity*;
- (2) These signs were seen and could be confirmed by many witnesses;
- (3) The seven recorded miracles bear some particular significance that makes each one especially potent in accomplishing Christ’s mission among men;
- (4) John’s purpose is pointed toward producing belief in *the* Sonship of Jesus;
- (5) Christ’s purpose is pointed toward producing eternal life in true believers.

The Gospel of John is plainly a **“Gospel of Boldness.”** “Boldness” is defined with various shades of meaning. It is, “*strikingly unconventional*”; it is, “*confident, assured*”; it is also, “*standing out prominently, conspicuously clear*” [Webster]. This Gospel is all of these things at once as it portrays a Savior whose earthly life and deeds filled the definitions of “boldness” to the fullest. We will try to observe the boldness of our Redeemer as we follow His trail through this unique story of Jesus’ tabernacle among men.

The unique place occupied by the Gospel of John among the Gospels should be understood and appreciated by students of the four books. That place has been described in various ways by scholars who have attempted to impress the beauty of its message upon us:

“Nevertheless, there is a common and justifiable consciousness that in the Gospel according to John we arrive at an ultimate unveiling. Dr. Arthur T. Pierson once suggested that the four Gospels in the order in which we now have them, follow the line of the old Hebrew encampment. Matthew surveys the Theocracy in its entirety. In other words, the whole camp is seen surrounding the King. In Mark we find ourselves in the outer court, in the place of service and sacrifice. In Luke we have passed into the Holy Place, where stood the seven-branched candlestick of witness, and the table of shewbread, or communion. In John we enter within the veil, into the Holiest of all. If this warranted figure of speech be allowed, it at once becomes evident that any approach to this Gospel must be that of reverence and awe” [G. Campbell Gordon, The Gospel According to John, p. 9].

“Very often on stained glass windows and the like, the gospel writers are represented in symbol by the figures of the four animals that the writer of the Revelation saw around the throne (Revelation 4:7). The emblems are variously distributed among the gospel writers, but a common allocation is that the *man* stands for Mark, which is the plainest, the most straightforward and the most human of the gospels; the *lion* stands for Matthew, for he specially saw Jesus as the Messiah and the Lion of the tribe of Judah; the *ox* stands for Luke, because it is the animal of service and sacrifice, and Luke saw Jesus as the great servant of men and women and the universal sacrifice for all people; and the *eagle* stands for John, because it alone of all living creatures can look straight into the sun and not be dazzled, and, of all the New Testament writers, John has the most penetrating gaze into the eternal mysteries and the eternal truths and the very mind of God. Many people find themselves closer to God and to Christ in John than in any other book in the world” [William Barclay, The Gospel of John, p. 1].

*Note: All Scripture references in this study, unless otherwise specified, are taken from the New King James Version, Thomas Nelson, 1982.*

<b>Abbreviations used:</b>	[NKJV]--	<b>New King James Version</b>
	[KJV]--	<b>King James Version</b>
	[ASV]--	<b>American Standard Version</b>
	[RSV]--	<b>Revised Standard Version</b>
	[Conf.]--	<b>Confraternity Version</b>

### CHAPTER ONE: “BOLD CLAIMS”

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

#### PROLOGUE TO JOHN’S GOSPEL (1:1-18)

This introductory passage is often called the “prologue” to John’s Gospel. Actually, it is more than that. It serves as a brief “overview” of the entire mission of Jesus in the world. From these verses we learn *who* Jesus was, *what* He did for men, *how* He was received, and, in retrospect, *what* was the *significance* of His time here.

John’s Gospel is to be much more than a record of one man’s life on earth, and John wants his readers to know that right away. Jesus was much more than a man, and His life took its real meaning from that fact. John’s purpose will be to generate faith in Jesus’ divine nature, and by that faith to bring eternal salvation to lost sinners. [See John 20:30,31.] That was an imposing task, and the apostle intends to waste no time in seeing that it was accomplished. So, he gets right to his main theme in these initial words of his Gospel, where he makes **BOLD CLAIMS**.

#### Jn.1:1-5 WHO WAS THIS MAN?

1. He was “in the beginning.”
  - a. John started his account of God’s spiritual creation [a “new beginning”] where Moses had begun his record of God’s physical creation [the “first beginning”-- See Genesis 1:1]. All things originate with **God**! Every “good gift” is from Him (James 1:17), whether physical or spiritual.
  - b. This Being of whom John is to write has, in *essence*, *always been* because *He is God*! But, *in form*, He has **not** always been [the same] because, for a time, He *became a man among men*!
2. He was “the Word.”
  - a. The physical world was created by the *word* of God. “God said,” and it was made. Only God’s word was needed to create a physical environment that would meet man’s physical needs.
  - b. Likewise, the spiritual environment necessary to satisfy man’s spiritual needs had been established through the action of God’s “other Word,” the divine Personage who became Jesus in the flesh.
  - c. “Word” perhaps is chosen by John to identify the “second person in the Godhead” [See Col. 2:9.] because His work in both the first [physical] creation and in the second [spiritual] creation was associated with *speaking*. Ultimate *power* was communicated when a physical world was formed simply by His words. Ultimate

*truth* was communicated when a spiritual world was inaugurated by the words of the same Creator (John 6:63;17:7).

3. He was “with God.”
  - a. It is not clear how well the triune being of “God” was understood by the Jews. Certainly, it was not at all comprehended by the pagan Gentiles.
  - b. John’s Gospel will focus on the relationship that existed between the Father and the Son. That relationship depended on both their *separateness* and their *unity*. Jesus would claim to be *from* the Father, to speak not His own words but the Father’s, and to eventually return *to* the Father. He was not the Father, but He was as fully **God** as the Father was!
  - c. It was important that this “separate but equal” status of Father and Son be established. The Jews were jealous of their “One God” and accused Jesus of attempting to usurp God’s pre-eminence [e.g., Luke 5:21]. The Gentiles were easily confused about God’s true nature because of the complex hierarchy of their own polytheistic culture (1Cor.8:5,6).
4. He was the “Maker of all things.”
  - a. The Jews had Moses’ testimony about the origin of the world. “In the beginning *God* created the heavens and the earth...” They needed also to understand that the divine Personage who became the “Son of God” had shared in that singular action.
  - b. No greater reason could be offered to skeptical people to embrace the power of Jesus to *save* men than the fact that He had originally *created* men and knew completely men’s nature and needs (John 2:25).
  - c. Paul expanded on this grand concept in his attempt to help Gentile converts arrive at an appropriate appreciation of the being and station of the Christ: “For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him” (Col. 1:16).
5. He was the “Lifegiver” of all life.
  - a. In Him existed the very principle of life, and only from Him could that life be passed to an otherwise lifeless humanity. Originally, God had breathed the breath of life into man, and man had become a “living” being (Gen. 2:7). Now, by the same divine power, this God could breathe spiritual life into men and empower them to live eternally (John 6:51).
  - b. The Son of God [through the spoken word of Jesus] is as responsible for the gift of *spiritual* life as the Word was originally responsible for the gift of *physical* life.
6. He was the single source of light for a darkened world.
  - a. “Light” is essential to human life, physical and spiritual. The spiritual light that Jesus provides through His teaching is as dependable to sustain man’s spiritual life as the natural light from the sun is to sustain his physical well-being.
  - b. Darkness is indicative of sin and ignorance and everything else that is contrary to man’s best interests.
  - c. Numerous philosophies and religions had sought over many centuries to “enlighten” man’s consciousness of his duty and destination , but even the

Jews' Law of Moses, while providing a limited but invaluable knowledge of God and of man's responsibility to God, could not adequately "shine" in the darkness to bring salvation to blind sinners (Hebrews 10:4,11).

- d. Jesus' "light" [truth] could shine to light man's way as no other light ever could.
- e. Looking back over events now past, John could observe that evil men in their "darkness" did not welcome the "light" brought into the world by Jesus. Although their efforts were strenuous, they could not "comprehend" ["apprehend" or "overcome"] the light. This gospel, like the others, would testify of many efforts to destroy both truth and teacher, but to no avail.

**Jn.1:6-9; WHAT DID HE DO?**

**14-18**

1. He "became flesh."
  - a. John's thesis was that Jesus was the "Lamb of God" who had come to "take away the sin of the world" (1:29).
  - b. Both Jews and Gentiles were familiar with the offering of animals as sin-sacrifices. That concept, however, was a very physical one. Blood had to flow and lives had to end. It was likely beyond man's comprehension that an invisible and absent being could serve as such a sacrifice.
  - c. It was necessary that the Word [spiritual, invisible, and absent] take a body of flesh that could satisfy men's concept of "sacrifice," and one that men could witness in the very act of being slain as the sacrifice for sin.
  - d. Pagan religions offered many tales of their gods coming to the world in the form of men. None, however, told of any god who had come to offer himself in sacrifice to rescue mortals from their problems. John introduces "something new under the sun" for his readers to consider.
  - e. John the apostle presents John the Baptist as the first of many witnesses to the incarnation of the Word. John testified to his audiences that, although he was older than Jesus according to the calendar, Jesus was really "older" than he. Jesus' prior existence ["He was before me"] was related to *deity*, and deity demanded deference ["He is preferred before me"].
2. He "dwelt among us."
  - a. The Word became flesh not just to enable a bodily sacrifice on the cross. He also spent about three and one-half years as a man, living and teaching among other men. He had "many things" to teach (John 8:26) and an example of godly behavior to show his followers (1Pet.2:21,22).
  - b. The Word chose "in all things to be tempted as we are" while in the flesh (Heb. 4:15). He experienced what it meant to be a man in the fullest sense. He enabled Himself to sympathize with man's "infirmities" through personal contact with them. He lived as a carpenter's son and denied Himself many of the things that might have made His sojourn here much more pleasant (Matt.8:20).
3. He allowed us to "behold His glory...of grace and truth."
  - a. The things Jesus did were not done "in a corner" (Acts 26:26). His daily activities and His miracles alike were open to public view. Numbers of people witnessed

- nearly everything He did, and they proclaimed that He did “all things well” (Mk. 7:37).
- b. They saw the grace of God reflected in the deeds of kindness and the works of healing that Jesus performed wherever He went. Both *power* and *compassion* were exhibited in full measure as He “went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him” (Acts 10:38).
  - c. They heard the truth of God as never before. Nature had always taught much truth about the Creator of the universe (Psalm 19:1ff). The law of conscience had served to guide Gentiles into good conduct (Rom. 2:14,15). The Law of Moses introduced the Jewish nation to concepts and principles about the character of God far beyond what other people had ever known. Still, man’s grasp of truth left much to be desired before Jesus came to declare truth to the world.
  - d. They listened in awe to the marvelous teaching that fell from His lips in lessons that were unlike the dictates of the Jewish teachers (Matt. 7:28). Those who recognized the uniqueness of Jesus’ truths glorified Him as a teacher like no other in all Israel (Luke 4:15).
4. He brought light to “every man.”
    - a. Jesus’ mission in the world was to “seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). All men are lost in sin (Rom. 3:23), so *all* men become the beneficiaries of the Savior’s mission.
    - b. “Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev. 22:17). Of course, it is the truth [“light”] which Jesus brought into the world that makes us free from our sins (John 8:32), and freedom *always* follows obedience to the truth (1Peter 1:22).
    - c. It was, and is, a wonderfully uplifting message that man’s eternal prospect is not restricted by reason of race or nationality. Nor is his salvation or damnation predetermined by some unchangeable selection by an arbitrary God. The “good news” [“gospel”] of John’s book is “good news” to *every* man (John 3:16)!
  5. He allowed us to “see God” as never before.
    - a. No man can literally see God in His essence, for “God is a spirit” (John 4:24). He manifested Himself in many ways at many different times, but those expressions of His Person were very limited and incomplete at best.
    - b. The nearest man will ever come to a full understanding of the Person of God [this side of eternity] is in what he can see in the Person of Jesus, the Son of God. “Like Father, like Son” certainly applies as we observe the life of Christ in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. “He that has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9). Jesus “declared” God’s nature, God’s love, and God’s will by what He said and what He did among men.
    - c. The Son came from the “bosom” [heart] of the Father, and He knows and understands the Father as no one else can. John’s confidence in the essential value of Jesus’ revelation of God sprang from the eternal relationship that existed between Father and Son both before and after the Son’s brief appearance on earth as the God/man whose life will be the subject of John’s Gospel.
    - d. The Son is “in” the Father’s bosom. The Father completely endorses the mission

already accomplished by the Son, and He requires men's compliance with the terms of the Son's mission that is yet to be fully executed. [See Mark 16:15,16.]

**Jn.1:10-13**    **HOW WAS HE RECEIVED?**

1. When the creation of the earth was completed, God said, "It is very good" (Gen.1:31). But, by the time the Word came to the earth as the Son of God, there had been a drastic change in the state of things. Sin had entered the world and had corrupted God's creation. The Word was the *same* (Heb.13:8), but the world was *different*.
2. In its sinful state, the world could not "know" [approve] the sinlessness it saw in Jesus. The change that had taken place in the world resulted in the *creature* rejecting its own *Creator*!
3. Even more ironic was the reaction of Jesus' "own" [people]. Many centuries had been consumed in preparing them for the coming of their Messiah. [See John 1:45.] The Law was given to Israel as a "tutor to bring us unto Christ" (Gal. 3:24), but the Lord's "own" refused to "receive" the world's Savior.
4. The work of preparation was not a total failure. Some *were* ready to "receive" the Son when He came to them. And for them, readiness brought a rich opportunity. They were given the "right to *become* children of God."
5. Jews were already children of God in the flesh, but they were not children of God in the spirit. Their "blood" birth was ineffective to receive the gift of salvation from the Giver. Only submitting to the will of God could accomplish that.
6. A "new birth" would be the only access offered to all believers for entrance into salvation and the kingdom of God (John. 3:3-5).

**A BOLD WITNESS APPEARS (1:19-34)**

**"He confessed...I am not the Christ"**

**Jn.1:19-28**    **THE BAPTIST'S TESTIMONY**

1. John's work as Jesus' forerunner was very **BOLD** [See Matt.3:1-12; Luke 3:7-18.] as he preached about the kingdom's coming and as he baptized the penitent. He was no self-appointed herald of the Messiah, but one "sent from God for a witness to bear witness of the Light, that all through Him might believe" (John 1:7).
2. He had captured the attention of the Jewish leadership, and they were alarmed at what they saw and heard. Apparently, anticipation of the fulfillment of Scriptures concerning the Messiah's appearance to Israel was at a high level. Could this bold preacher and reformer be the Messiah? If so, already He did *not* fit the image that Jewish expectations had fashioned for Him. Already, He was challenging almost everything in Jewish religion and society that had been either tolerated or supported by the leadership for many years.
3. A deputation of priests and Levites from the Pharisees was sent to determine more facts about this strange iconoclast. "Who are you?" Although their question was indirect, John understood its true purpose. "I am not the Christ," he replied, for he

knew that is what they really were trying to find out.

4. Then, "Are you a holy man sent to signal the advent of the Messiah? Are you Elijah who, according to our Scriptures, is said to come to Israel before the 'great and dreadful day of the Lord'?" (Malachi 4:5,6) "I am not." "Then, are you 'the Prophet' like Moses, whom we are commanded to hear?" (Deut.18:15) "No." "If not, then who?"
5. The Baptizer did not miss this first opportunity to give his testimony about Jesus and about his own role in pointing the Lord's "own" to their Redeemer. Nor did this **BOLD WITNESS** ever miss any such opportunity to magnify the Christ.
6. From their prophet Isaiah came John's identity, his mission, and a stern warning from the God of heaven (Isaiah 40:3):
  - a. "I am [only] the voice of one crying in the wilderness;"
  - b. "My message to you is about the way [coming] of the Lord;"
  - c. "Make *straight* ["direct, right, with reference to moral transformation"--Vine] the way of the Lord."
7. Perhaps the delegation was relieved to learn that John did not have authority for his actions because he was someone the Scriptures had prompted them to expect--the Messiah, the "Prophet," or Elijah. Evidently, they did not look for an "unknown" to prepare the way for the King of the Jews.
8. Then, "Why do you baptize?" "Who authorized you to demand such radical changes in our way of life and to require us to submit to your baptism in water as the way to have our sins forgiven? Why declare our loyalty to someone about whom we know nothing, so far as this present time is concerned?" The Jewish leadership, of course, had already refused to submit to such a "demeaning" baptism (Luke 7:30).
9. John's baptism was not something performed in a vacuum of "maybe." The Christ had already come. He actually was "standing among them" [apparently in the assemblage], and they "did not know" [recognize] Him.
10. John's testimony was expanded. Not only did he assert that the Lord was present but also that His greatness was unquestioned. "I am not worthy to loose His sandal strap!" And what did that imply about these religious reprobates questioning John?

#### **Jn.1:29-34** *JESUS, THE LAMB OF GOD*

1. These events occurred some six weeks after Jesus' baptism (Matt.3:13-17). The forty days of temptation preceded these testimonies from John (Matt. 4:1-11).
2. John could not personally identify Jesus as the Chosen One of Israel before the time of His baptism. John *did*, however, know enough about Jesus to recognize that His manner of life was outside the scope of John's baptism [for flagrant sinners who had by their behavior repudiated the righteous principles of the Law] (Matt.3:14,15).
3. The Father Himself had certified Jesus' identity, so now John knew for sure that this man who approached him was indeed the "Lamb of God" who had come to take away the world's sins. What more and when God may have told John about Jesus before this present incident we cannot know, but at least he knew about the eventual sacrifice of the Son, and he knew about the miracle of Spirit baptism as a tool in

accomplishing the Lord's mission of salvation for lost humanity.

4. John's witness is **bold** and unequivocal: "And I have seen and testified that *this is the Son of God.*"

### **OTHER BOLD WITNESSES ARE ENLISTED (1:35-51)**

**"The two disciples heard Him speak, and they followed Jesus."**

#### **Jn.1:35-42    THE FIRST THREE DISCIPLES**

1. The Baptizer's next opportunity to affirm his faith in Jesus as God's Son arose on the day following his first testimony. We know that one of John's companions was Andrew (verse 40), but the identity of the other is withheld. The popular belief is that it was none other than John [the apostle-to-be] himself, but that is speculative.
2. John's characterization of Jesus as the "Lamb of God" is repeated, and it made enough impact on his two disciples that they immediately left him and followed Jesus to learn more about Him and why John was so enthusiastic about Him.
3. Jesus' question of them was, "*What* do you seek"-- not "*who*?" There had to be in them more than an attraction to a rising public star ["Rabbi"]. Only a felt need for personal and national deliverance from the oppression of Satan would suffice as a foundation on which to build faith enough to become **BOLD WITNESSES** of the Master.
4. "Where are you staying?" served as a request to be invited to spend some time with this "Lamb" and to learn more about His nature and His agenda. "Come and see" extended that invitation.
5. The "tenth hour" was either 10:00 A.M. [Roman time] or 4:00 P.M. [Jewish time]. Whichever it was, the two disciples of John remained in close conversation with Jesus for the rest of that day. What an interesting exchange between them it must have been!
6. We are not informed about what topics were addressed in this meeting with Jesus, but the outcome of the discussion is impressive. Andrew was completely convinced of the identity of this new acquaintance. So convinced was he that he sought out his brother Peter and proclaimed, "We have found the Messiah!" No "ifs," "ands," "buts," or "maybes." This man is *the One*!
7. Upon meeting Peter, Jesus pronounced him to become "Cephas"-- a *Rock*. Perhaps this surprised Peter, who probably was aware of his personal weaknesses which would show up later in so many ways. He knew in his heart that he was not a "rock" at all. But what he was not *then*, he *would* become through the nurturing of the Lord into becoming a better man than he ever thought he could be.
8. Peter was not promised, nor did he ever become, the "rock" on which the church was to be built (Matt.16:18). He never aspired to, nor was he ever offered, the role of "vicar of Christ" or "pope" over the Lord's church. Instead, he was content to serve as a *rock*--dependable and strong-- upon which Jesus could depend in the preaching of the Gospel and in the spreading of the church in the world.

**Jn.1:43-51**     **PHILIP AND NATHANAEAL**

1. Two more **BOLD WITNESSES** were enlisted the next day. Jesus “found” Philip and solicited his discipleship. We can only guess upon what particulars Jesus made His choice of Philip to become a witness. But the selection was valid. Philip served faithfully and well, as did the other apostles, excepting Judas [by design].
2. Whatever transpired between Jesus and Philip, this new enlistee was immediately “on fire” to serve the Lord. He found his sibling Nathanael and announced, “We have found a *man*-- the son of Joseph-- who is more than a man. He is the One specified in the Law and in the prophets to be the Messiah of Israel!”
3. Nathanael’s skepticism centered around a human prejudice against the smallness and unimportance of Nazareth. Surely, only a more impressive hometown could be fitting for one so important as the Redeemer of the Jews.
4. Philip was undaunted in his pursuit of his brother. “Come and see”-- the same thing that Jesus had said to the first-chosen witnesses. Happily, Nathanael went to see for himself what value there might be in following this Nazarene.
5. Jesus’ first remark about Nathanael was a compliment to his honesty. “An Israelite not affected by guile.” Nathanael had spoken his mind to his brother. Although he was wrong in his thinking, he was right in his sincerity. That is what Jesus was looking for in these **BOLD WITNESSES** upon whom so much would depend.
6. Jesus’ display of familiarity with Nathanael was surprising to him. Yet, the Lord knew even more about Nathanael than that he was “without guile.” At some point, Jesus had “seen” him under a fig tree in circumstances very unordinary. Nathanael was impressed. He immediately confessed Jesus as:
  - a. “Rabbi”-- Teacher, a term of great respect among the Jews;
  - b. “The Son of God”-- though he likely did not comprehend what that implied;
  - c. “The King of Israel”-- someone with supernatural power that might qualify him as a national leader capable of delivering the nation from its oppressors.
7. Nathanael’s impulsive profession of faith in Jesus was much too shallow and much too dependent on inadequate credentials to sustain Nathanael as a **BOLD WITNESS** through many difficult situations that lay ahead for the Lord and His disciples.
8. “Greater things than these” would serve to increase the faith of all the disciples. Things fully as wonderful as Jacob had seen when angels descended and ascended a ladder reaching into heaven would be witnessed by the followers of Christ. The Lord would teach lessons and work signs that would surely foster confidence in Him as the true Light who had come to give the “light” of forgiveness to the unforgiven.

**QUESTIONS ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN--**

**CHAPTER ONE**

[Wording of questions is taken from NKJV, which should be used by student if possible.]

**Complete These Statements:**

1. “In the \_\_\_\_\_ was the \_\_\_\_\_, and the \_\_\_\_\_ was with \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ was \_\_\_\_\_.”
2. John the Baptizer was not the \_\_\_\_\_, but was sent to bear \_\_\_\_\_ to the true \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Jesus came to His \_\_\_\_\_, but His \_\_\_\_\_ did not receive Him. As many as did \_\_\_\_\_ Him were given the \_\_\_\_\_ to become \_\_\_\_\_ of God.
4. The Word became \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ among us, and men beheld His \_\_\_\_\_ as the only \_\_\_\_\_ of God, full of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
5. John said he was before \_\_\_\_\_, but Jesus was really \_\_\_\_\_ him. Because of this, Jesus was \_\_\_\_\_ before John.
6. “For the \_\_\_\_\_ was given through \_\_\_\_\_, but \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ came through \_\_\_\_\_.”
7. John testified twice that Jesus was the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
8. John baptized with \_\_\_\_\_; Jesus would baptize with the \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Jesus told John’s disciples to “\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_” about His identity and mission.
10. The first disciples who followed Jesus were \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and an unidentified man who was possibly \_\_\_\_\_.

**True (T) or False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Darkness comprehended (overcame) the light Jesus brought into the world.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. John the Baptist was sent to start a church bearing his name.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. All who “received” Jesus became children of God without further action.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Jesus was “before” John even though John was “before” Jesus.

**True (T) or False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. A delegation asked John, “Are you the Christ?”
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. John’s mission was to make the Lord’s way straight.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Jesus was unknown to John as the Savior until His baptism at John’s hand.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Both of the first two who followed Jesus were identified by name.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. These two disciples visited with Jesus very early in the morning.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Nathanael doubted that any good thing could come from Nazareth.

**Match the Persons, Places, and Things:**

- |                           |                     |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| _____ 1. Andrew and Peter | a. John’s baptism   |
| _____ 2. Bethabara        | b. Fig tree         |
| _____ 3. Holy Spirit      | c. Brothers         |
| _____ 4. Isaiah           | d. Wilderness voice |
| _____ 5. Nathanael        | e. Dove             |

**Answer These Questions:**

1. John denied being *three* people: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
2. What *three* identities did Nathanael give Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
3. *Three* towns are called by name, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
4. John spoke of *two* baptisms, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Children of God are those who have done *three* things: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

**BONUS QUESTION: At least 15 proper names (capitalized) are given to Jesus in this chapter. Can you find them all? List the names and the verse(s) where they appear. (Do not repeat names)**

## CHAPTER TWO: “A BOLD ACTION”

“...He drove them all out of the temple...”

### Jn.2:1-11 THE FIRST MIRACLE--CHANGING WATER INTO WINE

1. John sometimes seems more conscious of the passing of time than the other three writers of the Gospels. Here, he concludes his account of Jesus' first week of public ministry. It was “on the third day” following the enlistment of Philip and his brother Nathanael or “on the third day” after Peter was brought to the Lord in chapter one that these opening events of chapter two occur.
2. We can observe the progression of this week in Jesus' life by noting the references John makes throughout his narrative. One possible sequence is this:
  - a. The first day-- John's *first* witness of Jesus as the Christ (1:19-27);
  - b. The second day-- John's *second* witness of Jesus (1:29-34);
  - c. The third day-- John's *third* witness to Andrew and [John] (1:35-40);
  - d. The fourth day-- Andrew brings Peter to Jesus (1:41,42);
  - e. The fifth day-- Jesus enlists Philip and Nathanael (1:43-51);
  - f. The sixth day-- Travel to Cana of Galilee [no specific reference given];
  - g. The seventh day-- Arrival at a wedding in Cana (2:1).
3. Jewish weddings were usually conducted on Wednesdays. If this tradition was observed for this particular celebration, we can count back and identify the days on which the previous events occurred.
4. Jesus' mother seems to have had some special connection with this wedding. Her concern over the short supply of wine, her subsequent efforts to remedy the situation, and her orders to the servants about what to do, all lend support to this possibility.
5. Mary plays only a minor role in the life of Christ after He begins His public ministry. She appears only here and at the foot of the cross. This fact does not diminish the importance of her motherhood, but it *does* call into question the inordinate emphasis and adulation given to her as the “Mother of God” in some religions.
6. When the wine failed, Mary appealed to Jesus for help. Of course, we cannot know what she might have expected Him to do. Despite what she knew about the circumstances surrounding His birth, and despite what she might have heard about what had happened at His baptism, Jesus evidently had not done any miracles prior to this occasion, and she would have had no reason to expect one now.
7. On the other hand, some scholars think that ever since Jesus' birth, she might have been under a cloud of suspicion about what had happened to her. It is conjectured that she saw this situation as an opportunity for Jesus to do something impressive

- enough to convince her detractors of her purity in matters involved in Jesus' birth.
8. At any rate, Mary obviously had enough confidence in her offspring's ability to do *something*, that she approached *Him* for a remedy rather than someone else more closely associated with the wedding.
  9. Christ's response to Mary is often misconstrued as insensitive and disrespectful. This is far from true. "Woman," as it appears here, in Jewish usage conveys tenderness rather than harshness. "What does *your* concern have to do with *me*" [NKJV], probably is His attempt to show His mother that her concern is inconsequential when compared to the mind-boggling responsibilities He will be dealing with from this time forward.
  10. The fact that He *did* respond to Mary's concern removes any possibility that He did not care about her distress. His "hour" [for betrayal and crucifixion] had not yet "come" [See John 8:20;12:23 13:1;17:1] and would not for some time. Nevertheless, it appears that He was willing, for Mary's sake, to suffer the consequences of a premature display of His divine power before those who might react in jealousy and defensiveness.
  11. Mary was certainly *not* discouraged by Jesus' response. Regardless of what she may have expected, she ordered the servants, "Whatever he says to you, do it." Her confident statement offers a good lesson about our *own* commitment to the Lord:
    - a. "Whatever" He says-- whether we understand or agree with it or not;
    - b. "He" says-- no other voice or authority in religious matters should be heard;
    - c. "Says"-- only what is actually *said* counts-- silence is *not* consent to act;
    - d. "Unto you"-- Old Testament commands don't apply-- *we* have a *New Covenant*;
    - e. "Do it"-- faith without works is dead (Jas.2:24)-- action is essential!
  12. It was not unusual that several water jugs were on hand. Water at such occasions was used for "purifying" the hands of all guests numerous times during the course of the festivities. It was also used to "purify" all utensils that might be utilized by those participating in the feast. Dusty feet would also need cleansing.
  13. Jesus' *first miracle* followed. Some scholars see no problem in the obvious *excess* of fine wine that was made by the Lord at this late hour of the feast [120-180 gallons]. Others suppose that the water was miraculously changed into wine only as it was taken from the six jars: ("...but the servants who had drawn the *water* knew..."). We cannot insist on either alternative, but *we can* believe that a miracle occurred.
  14. Just who was aware of this "beginning of signs," we are not told. The servants who dipped the wine knew. Jesus' disciples [probably the first five previously mentioned in chapter one] also realized at some point that a miracle had been performed, for they "believed in Him."
  15. This "sign" [a miraculous deed with an underlying purpose] manifested the "glory" of the Son. It was the first of many that were designed to cause belief that would lead to eternal life (John 20:30,31).

**Jn.2:12     SOJOURN IN CAPERNAUM**

1. Previously, Jesus' family had moved from Nazareth to Capernaum, perhaps after

the death of Joseph. Jesus, along with His mother, brothers, and disciples, went from the wedding feast to Capernaum. That city became the hometown to and from which Jesus was to travel for much of His remaining time on earth.

2. “They” [Jesus and His disciples] did not remain there very long. The first Passover Feast of His public ministry was approaching, and it was His intention to become part of the activities in Jerusalem. His disciples would share with Him in those activities.

#### **Jn.2:13-22 FIRST CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE**

1. Jesus “went up to Jerusalem.” Such was required of Jewish males in observance of Israel’s three major feasts: Passover, Tabernacles, and Pentecost. Although the Law originally called for “every” male to attend these feasts, Jewish tradition seems to have changed the requirement to apply to all men who lived within fifteen miles of Jerusalem.
2. Still, large numbers of Jews attended this Passover celebration. Estimates range from two to three million. In addition to Jews within Palestine, pilgrims from the many nations into which Jews had settled were also faithful to come [See Acts 2:9-11.] for the feast.
3. Passover was instituted by God for the Jews to observe annually on the fifteenth day of their month of Abib [March-April]. It commemorated the “passover” by the Lord of Israel’s firstborn children as they prepared to leave Egypt’s bondage. All firstborn among the Egyptians died, but the offspring of the Jews, human and non-human, were spared when the Israelites carefully followed God’s instructions. [See Exodus 12:31-42.]
4. The temple was the central focus of the Passover observance. There Jesus came under His obligation as a “practitioner” of Moses’ Law. What He discovered in the temple was an environment that would alarm *any* devout Jew. To the Christ, it presented an intolerable situation. God’s house had become overrun by money-changers and sellers of birds and animals.
5. The Law required that the annual Passover sacrifices of animals [sheep and oxen] be made with unblemished animals [See Exodus 12:5, etc.]. The temple tax had to be paid with the Jewish half-shekel coin (Exo. 30:13). No money bearing any man’s image could be used. Consequently, it was difficult for people coming to Jerusalem for the feast from distant places to bring animals or to have the appropriate coins for the duties they wished to perform under the Law.
6. A thriving trade had arisen in the Court of the Gentiles for the changing of money and the selling of inspected and approved animals. Probably that would have simply been a business of convenience and an advantage for worshipers, except for *three* things:
  - a. The “house of God” [the Gentiles’ Court] had selfishly been made into a “house of merchandise” by the Jewish officials and rendered unfit for Gentile proselytes to use for worship. The beauty of the temple had been marred for other Gentiles who came to the temple in large numbers to admire the impressive surroundings of this singularly magnificent structure.

- b. Money changers and merchants charged worshipers exorbitant prices for their services and goods. They used every opportunity to profit as much as possible for the conveniences they provided the defrauded pilgrims.
  - c. By the time Jesus came to the temple, it is almost certain that a large share of the profits generated by these abusive practices found their way into the pockets [if robes had pockets?] of the chief priests and other religious officials in charge of temple activities.
7. Jesus' wrath was stirred, and He demonstrated His outrage by driving out the offenders. He denounced their irreligious behavior in a ringing shout, "*Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!*"
  8. Then, or probably later, His disciples remembered David's words (Psa.69:9) about his intense zeal for God's house, and they realized that such great devotion had also been demonstrated by Jesus in His **BOLD ACTION** against the temple thieves.
  9. The non-action of the temple authorities seems out of character. They apparently offered no physical resistance to Jesus in this matter, and they made no protest about what He had done. All they did was to ask Him to state by what authority He had dared to disrupt the activities that were dear to their hearts and to their pocketbooks.
  10. Perhaps the extreme unpopularity of the temple leadership and the deep contempt with which they were regarded by the Jewish populace account for their seeming timidity. They knew that the people knew that what they were doing was wrong. They also knew that any reprisal on their part would trigger a violent reaction by the common people who had come to worship in the temple and who were convinced that they were being taken advantage of by officials and merchants alike.
  11. The only "sign" that the Lord would offer them would come later. It was the same sign He characterized as the "sign of Jonah" (Matt.12:39,40). His burial and resurrection would then be proof enough of His authority to make any changes in the religious landscape that He might choose.
  12. Those who heard Jesus make the claim that the "temple" might be destroyed, but He would "raise it up" in three days, jumped to an understandable but false conclusion. It was ridiculous that this structure, started by Herod in 64 B.C., and forty- six years under construction, could be torn down and then rebuilt in so short a time. Jesus' challenge *was* ludicrous, if it was *this* building that He spoke about. But, instead, He had in mind His own physical body, which *would be* "destroyed" and "raised up" in three days. Nobody grasped His reference at the moment. This claim was used as evidence against Him at His trial (Matt,26:61) and was used to taunt Him as He hung on the cross (Mark 14:29,30). Not even His disciples understood His real meaning until after the resurrection, but their faith was strengthened when they finally made the proper application.
  13. Some confusion among scholars exists about the *two* records of temple cleansing in the Gospels. John cites this cleansing *early* in Jesus' work. The Synoptics reveal a cleansing that took place at the beginning of His last week on earth [See Matt. 21; Mark 11; Luke 19.] Some hold that there were *two* events of purging the temple: this one early and another one later. Others contend that only *one* cleansing took place-- the one toward the end of the Gospel records. John, it is said, inserted his account

prematurely in his writing in an effort to emphasize the power and authority of the Savior as soon as possible. He was more concerned to show *what* Jesus did than *when* He did it.

14. Although much might be offered for each argument, it is more likely that there *were two cleansings*. Enough variation exists between what John recites and what is found in the Synoptic writings that the likelihood is great that the accounts describe two separate, though similar, occurrences. A close examination of the texts will disclose these differences.
15. Although the Jewish leadership made no overt effort to resist the actions of Jesus to set aright the things that had gone very wrong during their watch, there can be little doubt that His cleansing of “their” temple set in motion their determined opposition to His work that ultimately resulted in their hanging Him on a cross.

### **Jn.2:23-25 BELIEVERS IN THE CHRIST**

1. If perhaps the *first miracle* had been performed largely because of His mother, the Lord now chooses to use this Passover feast as an opportunity to demonstrate His power and glory as the Son of God. While no details are offered, we learn that He did “signs” which caused many to believe in “His *name*.”
2. The faith of these believers was, at best, shallow and undependable. Likely, many believed in His *name* [prophet-like authority] rather than in His *Person*, and Jesus knew this.
3. This would explain why He avoided placing Himself in any position of vulnerability with these “half-baked” disciples. Those not *fully* convinced may easily become unconvinced and turn on the object of their earlier devotion. This seems to be exactly what happened with the multitudes of Jesus’ early ministry. They praised Him profusely, and then later they cried out, “Crucify him!” Jesus was in search of “disciples,” not “fans.”
4. Any premature trust of untrustworthy people might well result in a disruption of the plans that had been laid in heaven for the work and teaching of the Savior to be completed to man’s greatest advantage. Jesus took it upon Himself to assure that no such crisis would arise. Indeed, He had come to “seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). That was all that mattered.

**Complete These Statements:**

1. On the \_\_\_\_\_ day a Jesus attended a \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Jesus told His \_\_\_\_\_, “My \_\_\_\_\_ is not yet come.”
3. Jesus’ \_\_\_\_\_ said, “\_\_\_\_\_ He says unto you, \_\_\_\_\_.”
4. \_\_\_\_\_ waterpots used for \_\_\_\_\_ each held \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ gallons.
5. This first miracle \_\_\_\_\_ Christ’s \_\_\_\_\_, and His \_\_\_\_\_ believed on Him.
6. At the feast of \_\_\_\_\_, Jesus discovered \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ in the temple and \_\_\_\_\_ being changed.
7. The Lord exclaimed, “Do not make \_\_\_\_\_ a \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.”
8. Both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ exhibited a great \_\_\_\_\_ for the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.
9. The temple had taken \_\_\_\_\_ years to build, and people thought \_\_\_\_\_ threatened to tear it down and rebuild it in \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Jesus really spoke about the \_\_\_\_\_ of His \_\_\_\_\_.

**True (T) or False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Jesus took His disciples with Him to the wedding at Cana.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The Lord eagerly seized the opportunity to perform His first miracle.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. It is clear that Mary expected Jesus to provide wine miraculously.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Jesus changed 120-180 gallons of water into wine at this wedding feast.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The new wine was of better quality than the wine served early in the feast.

**QUESTIONS ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN**

**CHAPTER TWO (Continued)**

**True (T) or False (F):**

□

- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Abuses were occurring in the temple during the Feast of Tabernacles.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. The moneychangers were allowed by Jesus to continue their trade.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Zechariah had foretold Jesus' great zeal for God's temple.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Jesus' sign of authority was the "sign of Jonah."
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. The Lord's disciples quickly understood about His raising the temple in three days.

**Match the Persons, Places and Things:**

- |                         |                         |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| _____ 1. Passover Feast | a. Abuses in the temple |
| _____ 2. Wedding        | b. House of merchandise |
| _____ 3. Moneychanging  | c. Jerusalem            |
| _____ 4. Temple         | d. Forty-six years      |
| _____ 5. Father's house | e. Cana of Galilee      |

**Answer These Questions:**

1. Find at least *six* numbers that appear in this chapter: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.
2. *Three* cities or towns are mentioned: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
3. *Three* individuals or groups connected with Jesus are cited: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
4. *Seven* things were made of stone: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
5. *Two* temples are important to this chapter: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

**BONUS QUESTION: At least seven "days" are specified in chapters one and two. Can you identify them? List the days and the event(s) related to them.**

### CHAPTER THREE: “A BOLD DOCTRINE”

“...unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”

#### Jn.3:1-12 MEETING WITH NICODEMUS

1. Chapter two ended with the statement that Jesus would not to “commit” Himself even to some who “believed in His name.” He was likely wary of their underlying motivations.
2. This chapter begins with “Now...” or “But...” Either translation signifies a contrast between Nicodemus and many other men. Jesus does not hesitate to discuss with this man things about God’s purpose and plan that He was not yet ready to share with everyone else. Nicodemus obviously was unlike most other men in character and sincerity, and Jesus seemingly judged him to be more prepared to receive certain facts about Himself and His kingdom that might prove unacceptable to some other people.
3. Nicodemus is mentioned three times in the Gospels:
  - a. Here in this chapter, when He comes to Jesus for information and confirmation of Jesus’ heaven-sent mission among the Jews;
  - b. In John 7:51, where he seeks to prevent hasty action against Jesus by the chief priests and Pharisees. “Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?”
  - c. In John 19:38-40, when he brought spices and assisted Joseph of Arimathea in burying Jesus.
4. Each reference indicates a favorable attitude by Nicodemus toward the Lord. His behavior was certainly different than the conduct toward Jesus by other rulers.
5. The text and other evidence offer certain conclusions about Nicodemus:
  - a. He was a Pharisee [“separated one”]. This Jewish sect was, in some ways, the “best” of the Israelites. In other ways, it was the worst. It was composed of a brotherhood of fewer than 6,000 men who had separated themselves to keeping the Law implicitly and trying to makes others do the same. However, what began as a noble goal degenerated into a senseless legalism when they tried to specify and legislate behavior involved in *every conceivable* human action related to each minute expression of Moses’ Law. A serious effort to be right with God turned into a ludicrous stance on “conformity” that made obedience to the Law an impossibility for the ordinary Jew [See Matthew 23.];
  - b. He was a ruler of the Jews. This fact suggests that he served on the Sanhedrin, the highest court of the land that was charged with exclusive regulation of Jewish religious life and which was responsible for guarding the nation from false teachers and their teaching. This accounts for his deep interest in Jesus as a “teacher

- come from God”;
- c. He was a wealthy man. He brought about one hundred pounds of spices to be used in burying the body of Christ. Only a man of considerable means could have afforded to do that;
  - d. He was possibly a member of a prominent Jerusalem family. Some scholars link this Nicodemus to others with similar names in the history of Jewish dealings with the Roman government.
6. Each of these characteristics should have dissuaded Nicodemus from having personal contact with Jesus. Taken together, they make a strong case for the singularity of this visit by one of such rank and station among the religiously elite in Israel.
  7. We are not told why Nicodemus came to see Jesus at night. John 19:39 says that Nicodemus “*first* came to Jesus by night.” Perhaps that indicates some increase in his confidence in being associated with Jesus since this initial contact.
  8. Not every Pharisee conceded that Jesus’ signs [so recently performed during the Passover (2:23)] marked Him as enjoying divine favor. Many Pharisees charged that His signs only proved His alliance with Satan (Mark 3:22).
  9. Instead of commenting on Nicodemus’ endorsement of His miracles, Jesus responded with a truth that was the necessary *consequence* of His connection with God. If His signs were regarded as genuine, then his message should be also. He and John the Baptizer both had been preaching, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” If men would believe that fact, then they should welcome instruction about how to become a part of the kingdom. Nicodemus showed himself to be a good candidate for such teaching.
  10. The kingdom of Christ, of course, would not become a reality for a while (Mark 9:1; Matt. 16:18). When it appeared, a “new birth” would be the basic requirement for membership in it. “Seeing” [viewing with a favorable impression] and “entering” the kingdom both would depend on being “born anew.” *What a BOLD DOCTRINE!*
  11. Another *physical* birth is obviously impossible. What, then, did this worker of miracles mean by a “new birth”?
  12. Jesus explained that this second birth was one of “water and the Spirit.” We cannot know how clearly Nicodemus grasped the real meaning of these terms as Jesus used them here. He most likely knew about the connection between “*water*” and the *baptizing* Jesus and John had recently been doing. He also would understand from John’s preaching that a baptism was required of the Jews as preparation for a “new” kingdom.” It was not beyond reason, then, that a baptism in water would also precede *entrance* into the new kingdom of God.
  13. Jesus did not capitalize “Spirit” for Nicodemus, but He might have specified the *Holy Spirit* in some unrecorded comment. He added in verse six, “That which is born of the flesh [man’s first birth] is [the] flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit [man’s second birth] is [the] spirit.” That language necessitated *two* “fleshes” and *two* “spirits.” The first is *causative* flesh or Spirit; the second is *resultant* flesh or spirit.
  14. Knowledgeable Jews should not “marvel” at the concept of a new spiritual birth, or beginning, being associated with the coming kingdom. The Old Testament had frequently spoken of the prospect of “*new*” things attached to the coming of Israel’s

Messiah. Jeremiah foretold a “new” covenant between God and His people (Jer.31: 31-34). Ezekiel had insisted that God would demand a “new heart” and a “new spirit” as part of a restoration to His favor (Ezek. 18:31; 36:26,27). It should not be unexpected that Jesus would confirm what the prophets had anticipated for a long time. Although a man’s physical life cannot start all over again, his spirit *can* and *must* be renewed if he is to be saved.

15. This new birth would include *all* people, not just Nicodemus. “*You*” [‘Ye’--plural--KJV] “must be born again.” A **BOLD DOCTRINE**, indeed!
16. The new birth is not only *possible* but also *rational*. The wind is invisible to the human eye, yet we know that it really exists by its visible effects on the earth. While man’s spirit also is invisible, any Pharisee [as a believer in spirits] would concede that the spirit is real and that its transformation can be observed through changes in man’s outward behavior (Matt.12:35; Jas.2:26).
17. Jesus’ illustration does not brand the new birth as mysterious and beyond human understanding. Rather, it is intended to assist in comprehending the process of entering the kingdom. “So is everyone who is born of the spirit” simply affirms that man’s spiritual change occurs *within*, but that change is manifested to others *without*.
18. Perhaps Nicodemus was frustrated by this new perception. Why should one so dedicated and highly regarded in the Jewish nation be required to make so radical a change in his life in order to become part of the new kingdom? How could one so old and so long in his traditions and habits be expected to become a “new creature”?
19. Nicodemus was “the” teacher in Israel, well-versed in the scriptural expectations that anticipated the very change that Jesus now advocated. He should have had no trouble in grasping what the Savior was saying about a “new birth.”
20. The principles underlying the need to be born again were far easier to grasp than some of the weightier things that Jesus would teach later. “Earthly” facts [e.g., the wind illustration] could provide help with some lessons, but other truths would be totally without any physical counterparts to aid men in comprehending them.

### **Jn.3:13-21 JOHN COMMENTS ON THE NEW BIRTH**

1. Although most “red letter” editions of the New Testament classify verses 13-21 as the words of Jesus, the statement that Jesus “*is* in heaven” presents a real difficulty to this conclusion. He was *not* in heaven when He spoke with Nicodemus. “*Has* ascended” offers the same problem. However, when John wrote this Gospel, Jesus *had* ascended and He *was* in heaven at God’s right hand. It is reasonable to conclude that these verses are the apostle’s own commentary on Jesus’ conversation with Nicodemus and not a record of what Jesus actually said at the time.
2. The new birth and every other spiritual concept of the Lord’s new kingdom rests on the foundation of Christ’s resurrection. *Any* spiritual thesis is believable if one can first accept the reality of Christ’s return to heaven after death on earth. Don’t struggle with the idea of a new birth. If God can *reunite* a spirit with its physical body, He could easily *cleanse* a spirit by a “new birth” while it was still in its body.
3. Again, Christ on the cross as the basis of man’s regeneration should be no more in-

credible than the Jews' physical salvation by the raising up of a brass serpent image in the wilderness. God's power accounted for *both* outcomes.

4. The "new birth," in simpler language, is identified with "believing in Him." Those who "believe in Him" should not perish but have eternal life because they have been born again and have entered the kingdom of God.
5. The "new birth," Jesus said, is related to *water* and *Spirit*. "Eternal life" is related to "belief," which requires not only mental acceptance of Jesus as the Son but also obedience to His commands (John 3:36--ASV, RSV). The *Spirit* leads man into his faith by the evidence of His revelation, and *water* is the element employed by God by which man displays his willingness to obey whatever God demands. Thus, a birth of "water and Spirit" affords every true "believer" citizenship in the kingdom with all its attendant blessings. [See Romans 14:17.]
6. God's stipulations to Nicodemus and others about membership in the "new" Israel are not intended as a detriment to enjoying the new kingdom. Man is already condemned by his sin without Jesus playing *any* part in his destiny. God's pervasive love for man made it imperative that He offer His Son as the redeeming sacrifice for all sins.
7. Jesus' provision of a "new birth" into a new [eternal] life does not condemn anyone. Instead, being "born again" by water and Spirit-- believing to the extent of obedience-- is the way of *escape* from the certain condemnation that sin necessitates.
8. What condemned men was not that the "light" [Jesus] had come to make new demands on people who supposed they were already good enough for the new kingdom, but that they were all condemned sinners who chose to persist in their evil deeds rather than accept the forgiveness so freely provided by the Lamb of God.
9. We do not know the result of the exchange between Jesus and Nicodemus. We would like to think that this apparently good man who dared to speak with a teacher who held radical views was receptive to those views and that he was "born again" into the kingdom of God when it became a reality.
10. John's comments acknowledge that many of those offered the "new birth" had refused the offer by the time this Gospel was written. The nature of men's hearts has always determined their attitude toward God's ways. Men who really *want* to be saved will come to the light [Jesus and His teaching] to access every blessing included in the merciful plan that was framed by the Father and executed by the Son.

### **Jn.3:22-30 *JESUS AND JOHN BAPTIZING IN JUDEA AND AENON***

1. Jesus left Jerusalem and passed into the countryside of Judea with His disciples, where He taught and baptized people. Matthew (chapter 4), Mark (chapter 1) , and Luke (chapter 4) all omit any reference to this activity in Judea, choosing instead to begin their records of Jesus' ministry with His work in Galille.
2. John states that these baptisms occurred *before* John was cast into prison by Herod. Matthew says that the Savior's teaching in Galilee began *after* John's imprisonment, which happened about a year after these labors of Christ in Judea.
3. John continued to call sinners to repentance and to baptize them in preparation for

the establishment of the Lord's new kingdom. He was operating at Aenon [exact location unknown, although thought to have been somewhere in northern Samaria], which removed him by many miles from the site of Jesus' activities.

4. John baptized where there was "much water" available because Bible baptism was always a *burial* in water, and a considerable amount was needed for its performance. We can safely assume that Jesus also required "much water" to baptize in Judea.
5. While we are not told any more about these Judean baptisms, we know that they were not the same as those that took place after the Great Commission was made operational. [See Matt.28:19,20; Mark 16:15,16.] The baptisms of the Commission resulted in people entering the kingdom [church] (Acts 2:47; Col. 1:13). That was impossible with these baptisms, because the kingdom had not yet been established (Mark 9:1; Matt. 16:18).
6. Since Jesus' first recorded teaching in Galilee joined repentance with the coming kingdom (Matt. 4:17) [there is no mention of His baptizing in Galilee], it is reasonable to suppose that any teaching He may have done as He baptized in this earlier work followed the same pattern. John's baptisms also required repentance in preparation for Christ's kingdom (Matt. 3:1). These circumstances suggest that both men were engaged in doing the same kind of work in different places.
7. These parallel labors gave rise to a "dispute" between John's disciples and certain Jews who likely had come from Judea with questions about why Jesus and John were pursuing "duplicate ministries," both making disciples by baptizing the penitent. We know that John's baptism was "for the remission of sins" (Mark 1:4). Jesus' baptism is not specifically said to have been for that purpose, although it probably was. Regardless, the dispute was about "purification," suggesting that a question was raised about baptism and its relation to cleansing from sin. We can only wonder what the question was.
8. John's disciples apparently became somewhat jealous of the report brought from Judea that the Lord was making more disciples than John (John 4:1). They voiced their complaint: "All are coming to Him!"
9. The Baptist responded gently but firmly to correct the misplaced loyalty that was displayed by his followers.
  - a. Every agent of God succeeds in his mission only to the extent that God wills. So, it must be that God is working through Jesus to bring such remarkable results.
  - b. John was not jealous about Jesus' relation with the Father. He knew that he was *not* the Messiah, only the forerunner of the Messiah, and he had never given anyone any reason to place him into competition with Jesus.
  - c. John was only the "friend of the bridegroom," while Jesus was the "bridegroom." The friend's function during the wedding activities was very important to the success of the wedding, but ultimately his role was to assist the bridegroom in his acquisition of a bride. The friend's pleasure came not in marrying the bride but in the joy the bridegroom experienced when the bride became his wife.
  - d. John's part in God's plan for the kingdom was fast being fulfilled. He had been faithful in working to "make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Luke 1:17). Now it was time for Jesus to begin work with those who were ready to listen and

to learn the things that would prepare them further for the “new birth” and the “new kingdom” when a “new covenant” would be inaugurated. For that reason, John would “decrease” and Christ would “increase” [in influence and disciples].

**Jn.3:31-36** *THE APOSTLE SPEAKS ABOUT JESUS AND JOHN*

1. The NKJV continues the narrative by placing quotation marks so as to indicate that the rest of this chapter reveals more remarks made by John the Baptizer to his disciples. However, it seems more reasonable because of the substance of the remarks and the language used to convey them, that these are rather the words of the apostle John as he reflects later on the truths that the Baptist had spoken here about himself and the Savior.
2. John’s comments offer additional contrasts between the Christ and the Baptizer.
  - a. Jesus is greater than John or any other man because He is from “above,” while men are “of the earth.”
  - b. Jesus speaks what He has “seen and heard” in heaven. He is privy to God’s plans and purposes. John and the other prophets speak “of the earth.” Although they convey God’s will by inspiration, they are necessarily limited by their humanity.
  - c. Jesus possessed the Spirit without “measure” [limit] as He taught and worked miracles among men. His impressive powers added to the impact of His message. John performed no miracles (John 10:41) but depended on his startling words and his unusual personality to catch the attention of the people (Matt. 11:7-10).
  - d. The Father’s relationship with Jesus is closer than with any other individual in the world. His love for the Son prompted Him to give “all things” related to salvation into the Son’s control [“All authority has been given unto me in heaven and on earth...”]. That fact alone should settle for those who seek to please God where Jesus stands. “This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am *well pleased*.”
  - e. Man’s eternal destiny will be determined solely on the basis of Jesus’ role in the scheme of redemption. John will not be a factor in the final judgment, but everything will center around Jesus. Believers in Him will have everlasting life; disbelievers will become subject to God’s “abiding” wrath.
  - f. The apostle John thus lends retrospective validation to the Baptizer’s assessment of his own importance and that of Jesus Christ. John the Baptist had been absolutely right in every way about the Son of God. God’s purpose for Jesus’ role as the Savior of mankind had been accomplished, and the Good News of His salvation was being preached in all the world even as the apostle recorded what John the Baptist had predicted long before.
3. The ASV and the RSV both translate verse 36 differently from the NKJV. They assert that the person who “believes” will have everlasting life, but the person who does not “*obey*” will receive God’s wrath. In the light of other specific statements in the New Testament, this translation must be preferred.

## ADDENDUM ON THE NEW BIRTH

1. Most scholars admit that the “water” of John 3:5 refers to water baptism. However, many of them contend that baptism is *not* made necessary to the new birth or to salvation by this reference. The “Spirit” (they say) effects the regeneration of the soul, and then the body is baptized in water to “symbolize” the previous inner cleansing of the soul. This tactic is employed in an effort to dismiss water baptism as an integral part of Jesus’ plan for the remission of sins.
2. No one has ever successfully explained *how*, if membership in the kingdom of heaven [universal church] is necessary to salvation, and water baptism *is required for* entrance into that kingdom, any person can be saved without water baptism.
3. Jesus frequently used highly figurative language in teaching spiritual truths (John 16:25). He also taught with parables in an appeal to simple and sincere hearts (Matt.13:10-17). He promised that at some time He would no longer speak figuratively but plainly (John 16:25).
4. All students of John’s Gospel recognize that John 3:3-8 involves such figurative language. The terms Jesus used confused Nicodemus, “the” teacher in Israel, and they have confused many people since. The figures employed by Jesus have fostered much controversy through the centuries about their meaning.
5. Jesus promised that a time would come when literal, not figurative, language would characterize His teaching (John 16:25). This would occur *after* prayer could be made “in His name” [by His authority] (John 16:26). “All authority” was given to Him following His resurrection (Matt, 28:18).
6. When the apostles began to preach the Gospel on Pentecost [Acts 2], they did so “in the name of Jesus Christ”(Acts 2:38). When people asked, “What shall we do [to be saved]?” they were *not* told to be “born again,” although that *was* necessary for their salvation. Rather, the commandment came, “Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins...” (Acts 2:38). Plain and straightforward language now carried God’s message.
7. Penitent and baptized believers were “saved” and “were added” to the kingdom [church] when they responded to the easily understood words of Peter’s preaching. They were *born again*, because the new birth is what makes entrance into the kingdom possible (Acts 2:47)!
8. Never in any account of conversion in Acts did an inspired teacher instruct sinners in figurative language about how to be saved. Each occasion featured words not subject to question or dispute. Converts invariably were “born again” by belief in Jesus as the Son of God and by an unwavering obedience to His commands to repent of sins and to be baptized in water for the remission of their sins.

**Complete These Statements:**

1. A man of the \_\_\_\_\_ named \_\_\_\_\_, a \_\_\_\_\_ of the Jews, came to Jesus by \_\_\_\_\_.
2. This man acknowledged Jesus as a \_\_\_\_\_ come from \_\_\_\_\_, for otherwise He could not do the \_\_\_\_\_ He did.
3. "Unless one is \_\_\_\_\_, he cannot \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ of God."
4. "Unless one is \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_, he cannot \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.
5. The Lord stated that if a man cannot understand \_\_\_\_\_ things, he surely will not understand \_\_\_\_\_ things.
6. Just as a \_\_\_\_\_ was lifted up by \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ would also be \_\_\_\_\_ up.
7. God did not send His \_\_\_\_\_ into the world to \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_, but to \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_.
8. John was \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ near to \_\_\_\_\_ because there was \_\_\_\_\_ there.
9. John portrayed Jesus as a \_\_\_\_\_ and himself as the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_. John would \_\_\_\_\_; Jesus would \_\_\_\_\_.
10. One who \_\_\_\_\_ the Son has \_\_\_\_\_, but one who does not \_\_\_\_\_ [ASV; RSV] the Son will have God's \_\_\_\_\_ abide on him.

**True (T) or False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Nicodemus wanted Jesus to perform a miracle to prove His divinity to him.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The new birth and water baptism are not related.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. A new birth that involves *both* water and the Holy Spirit is essential to salvation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The new birth is as mysterious and unobservable as the wind.

**QUESTIONS ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN**

**CHAPTER THREE (Continued)**

**True (T) or False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Nicodemus, a teacher of the Jews, easily grasped the teaching about the new birth.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Evildoers avoid the light of truth to prevent the exposure of their evil deeds.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. John and Jesus were baptizing in the same place in Judea.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Jesus is the bridegroom because He is head over the bride [church].
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Both Jesus and John would “increase” in the size and in the results of their work.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Eternal life requires both faith *and* obedience on man’s part.

**Match the Persons, Places, or Things:**

- |                    |                            |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| _____ 1. Nicodemus | a. John                    |
| _____ 2. Jesus     | b. Serpent                 |
| _____ 3. New birth | c. “The” teacher of Israel |
| _____ 4. Aenon     | d. Water and Spirit        |
| _____ 5. Moses     | e. Rabbi                   |

**Answer These Questions:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The number of men who are called “Rabbi” in this chapter.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The number of questions Nicodemus asked Jesus in their conversation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The number of men who were acknowledged as “teacher” in this chapter.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The number of comparisons Jesus makes between earthly and heavenly things.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The number of times a form of “believe” appears in this chapter according to the \_\_\_\_\_ version [indicate the NT version you are using].

**BONUS QUESTION:** John gave his disciples four (4) reasons why he would never enter into competition with Jesus or be envious of Jesus’ success in teaching and baptizing. What were these reasons?

## CHAPTER FOUR: “A BOLD ENCOUNTER”

“For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.”

### **Jn.4:1-3** DEPARTURE FROM JUDEA

Mt.4:12

Mk.1:14

1. John had experienced remarkable success in making disciples and baptizing people in anticipation of the Messiah’s arrival on the Jewish religious scene. However, when Jesus began a similar undertaking in Judea, His success was even more remarkable.
2. The Lord deemed it necessary, despite the growing numbers of people in Judea “made ready” for the beginning of His primary mission [to “seek and *save* those who were lost”], to leave Judea for Galilee. Two possible reasons might account for a change of location at this particular time:
  - a. Primarily, the Pharisees had become aware of Jesus’ popularity and influence with the masses. He posed an obvious threat to their own personal power, having already defied their conduct of affairs in the temple (2:13-16). Now He was gathering large numbers of followers to His cause. Jesus did not want to generate unnecessary opposition so soon, lest His work should be severely hindered by the Pharisees and other opponents;
  - b. Secondly, changing the locale of His activities might avoid further resentment and jealousy on the part of John’s disciples, who had already expressed their alarm about the productivity of Jesus’ work: “Behold He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!”
3. Jesus baptized, but He *didn’t* baptize. That sounds strange, but it isn’t. Jesus’ teaching convinced hearers to *be* baptized, but He enlisted others to physically perform the baptisms that ensued. Paul followed a similar course: “For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel...” (1Cor. 1:17). Paul’s converts *were* baptized (Galatians 3:27), but hands other than his attended to their obedience.

### **Jn.4:4-15** ENCOUNTER AT JACOB’S WELL-- “THE WATER OF LIFE”

1. Jesus “needed” to go through Samaria. Most Jews felt no such need at all. Instead, they would travel longer distances through Perea on the east side of the Jordan River to avoid passing through Samaria, which lay between Judea and Galilee.
2. Such behavior sprang from the deep hatred that had existed between Jews and Samaritans for many years. The Samaritans were a people of mixed blood whose

origins were traced to the influx of foreigners brought into their country when the Assyrians transplanted the northern tribes out of Palestine. The ensuing intermarriages resulted in a race of people regarded as Gentiles and despised by “orthodox” Jews as completely unworthy of any treatment as “children of the covenant.”

3. John is silent about *why* it was imperative for Jesus to travel through Samaria, but it could be argued that He anticipated the contact at hand with a Samaritan woman and the resulting numbers of believers that would come from that contact.
4. The Samaritan town of Sychar was near some land that Joseph, ancestor of the Samaritans, had received from his father Jacob, also proudly regarded by the Jews as *their* father. Fiercely loyal Jews probably considered this location as especially offensive to their feelings of ownership in land that originally been given to the “*faithful*,” but which had now fallen under the control of the “*unfaithful*.” We know nothing about details of Jacob’s transaction or about the well he had dug here many years before.
5. Jesus was God *in the flesh*, and His flesh was subject to the same needs that *our* flesh experiences. It is not surprising that he was “weary” from His journey and in need of a drink of water. Neither is it surprising that Jesus, who had no regard for the narrow and traditional prejudices of His fellow Jews, would stop at such a place as this to get that water.
6. It was about the “sixth” hour, either noonday [Jewish time] or six o’clock in the evening [Roman time].
7. “A woman” whose nationality [essential to the story] we are given, but whose name we are never told, came to draw from the well and was engaged in conversation by a stranger she recognized as a Jew. That a Jew would be there and that he would have anything to say to a Samaritan woman was a **BOLD ENCOUNTER!** Her attention was arrested. Jesus’ *request* was unremarkable; its *circumstances* were not!
8. Perhaps with a touch of resentment in her voice, the woman challenged Jesus’ request for aid from someone who ordinarily would have been held in derision by such a Jew as she perceived Him to be. “Are you sure that Samaritan water is good enough?”
9. John explains her reaction, “For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.” Obviously, this was not completely true, for the disciples had just gone into the city to buy food from the Samaritans there. *Socially*, there was no contact; *practically*, a transaction was acceptable to narrow-minded Jews when it was to their advantage.
10. Following so closely the interchange between Jesus and Nicodemus in chapter three, we cannot fail to notice how different this Samaritan woman was from the noble ruler of the Jews. This difference impresses us anew with the comprehensiveness of Jesus’ mission to *all* people in *all* the world. Notice these facts:

Nicodemus

An “orthodox” Jew  
 A strict religious Pharisee  
 A political ruler  
 A scholar in the Law  
 High moral standards  
 A name of repute  
 Male entitlements

Samaritan Woman

An “unorthodox” Samaritan  
 No apparent religious affiliation  
 Without political influence  
 Unlearned in the Law  
 Questionable moral standards  
 Unnamed by John  
 Female disenfranchisement

Nicodemus  
Came by night  
Opened dialog with Jesus

Samaritan Woman  
Came by day  
Dialog opened by Jesus

11. Although many would have judged this woman as an unlikely or unworthy prospect for the Lord's attention, Jesus appreciated some innate quality in her that warranted the discussion of "living water" that was to follow.
12. Jesus' response to the woman's question was typical of many of His conversations intended to lead to the revelation of profound truths. He opened with a statement that was misunderstood. He repeated the statement in a more vivid way, but its meaning was still not comprehended. Then, Jesus induced the other person to confront the truth at issue as if by self-discovery. Someone has observed, "There are certain truths which a man cannot *accept*; he must *discover* them for himself."
13. Christ introduced the concept of "living water," which was completely beyond anything this woman had ever thought of. Her mindset was physical, and it was only literal "water" that she could think about. She immediately had two questions for Him: (1) "How can you draw out *any* water, since you have nothing with which to draw?" (2) "Where would I have to go for this wonderful water; this well furnishes only ordinary water?"
14. The reference to "living water" perhaps was not totally lost on the Samaritan. God's blessings had long before been described in terms of healing waters:
  - a. Psalm 42 depicted the soul's need for God as a deer's need for water;
  - b. Isaiah 12:3 foretold God's people drawing water from the "wells of salvation";
  - c. God extended His invitation to the thirsty, "Come to the waters" (Isaiah 55:1);
  - d. God's ways were a "fountain of living waters" for the O. T. Jews (Jer.2:13);
  - e. Ezekiel described a river that made everything "live"(Ezekiel 47:9);
  - f. Zechariah proclaimed that "living waters" and a "fountain" would offer cleansing from sin to spiritually-weary travelers (Zech. 13:1; 14:8).
15. Probably though, "living" water signified something less to her. This was a well or a cistern that depended for its water supply on either percolation or collection. "Living water" would come from an ever-flowing and never-failing spring.
16. A cultural defensiveness was evoked in the woman at the thought of a Jew having access to something superior to its Samaritan counterpart. "Our father Jacob" gave "us" this water. It was good enough for him; it should be good enough for his people. Of course, Jacob was *not* father to the Samaritans, physically or spiritually, as she implied. Jacob's "people" were the Jews who sought to keep the ways of Jehovah.
17. Jacob and all others who had drunk from this well had thirsted again and had finally died. Christ had water to offer that would prevent *both* eventualities. "Eternal life" would burst forth from the fountain that He could make available to thirsty souls.
18. The Samaritan suddenly had visions, not of spiritual water to satisfy the thirsty soul, but of physical water with preternatural qualities that would permanently remove any need for coming to this place or to any other place to draw water.

**Jn.4:16-26 TRUE WORSHIP IDENTIFIED**

1. The woman's misplaced attention was leading nowhere in Jesus' effort to interest her in something she *really needed*. Her greatest need was spiritual, but her focus on physical things stood in the way of recognizing that need. It was time to try a different approach with her. The remarkable differences between Jesus' teaching methods and those of other teachers are always obvious and significant.
2. "Bring your husband here." Jesus changed the subject *without* changing the subject. He still intends to make her face the facts of His divinity and of her urgent need to possess what He alone had to give.
3. Perhaps the woman thought that Jesus wanted to discuss His "living water" with her husband also. She apparently knew it would have been as fruitless for Jesus to approach her live-in boyfriend [if that is what he was] about this mysterious water as it had been for Him to discuss it with her. "I have no husband" might be the best way to end this **BOLD ENCOUNTER** with this **bold** traveler!
4. "You truly don't have a husband, but not in the way you wish for me to believe." We cannot know the circumstances surrounding her five previous husbands or the legal, moral, or religious status of her present relationship with a man. But it is clear that this was not a normal or religiously acceptable relationship.
5. It was also clear to the woman that Jesus possessed more-than-natural knowledge about the private life of a complete stranger. There must be more to Him than she had at first supposed. She knew that prophets often were endowed with knowledge such as Jesus had displayed. Maybe He was some kind of holy man.
6. We all have questions that we long to have answered by someone who knows. To her credit, her question was about religion rather than about something far less important. She was not *totally* engrossed with secular things. She wanted to satisfy her mind about true worship and about who was right in the controversy over *where* true worship could be conducted--in Judea or in Samaria. Each place had its proponents who condemned those who defended the other location.
7. Here was a long-awaited opportunity to hear the answer from a prophet's mouth! "Where *ought* people to worship-- in the temple in Jerusalem, as the Jews say, or on Mount Gerazim, where we Samaritans have been taught to serve God?"
8. The temple on Mount Gerazim was built there long after the northern kingdom had separated itself from Judah. Israel had been instructed to "seek the place" of God's choosing for His "habitation" (Deut. 12:5). However, God did not specify in the Pentatuch (the only books accepted by the Samaritans) where that place was to be. God's support for Solomon's temple in Jerusalem was significant, but that structure lost some of its popular status when it was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. The temple on Mount Gerazim was erected about 300 B.C. by Sanballat, Persian governor of Samaria. It was demolished by John Hyrcanus about 128 B.C., but its location remained sacred to the Samaritans.
9. Mount Gerazim and nearby Shechem had been the scene of many prominent events in Bible history. J. W. McGarvey cites some of them:
  - a. God appeared there to Abraham when he entered Caanan (Gen. 12:6,7);

- b. Jacob first dwelt there following his sojourn with Laban (Gen. 33:18);
  - c. Joseph sought his brothers there (Gen. 37:12,13);
  - d. Shechem was appointed as a city of refuge (Joshua 20:7);
  - e. Joshua read the blessings and cursings of God there (Joshua 8:33);
  - f. Joshua gave his last address to Israel at Shechem (Joshua 24:1);
  - g. The bones of Joseph were buried at Shechem (Joshua 24:32).
10. The Samaritans thought they had a strong case for Mt. Gerazim as a place to worship God. This was a “hot topic” during the lifetime of Jesus on earth.
  11. This controversy that raged between Jews and Samaritans was meaningless. A *place* for true worship had been important to people who respected God’s Law. For people who disregarded much of what that Law required, a *place* was pretty far down the list of what mattered. Moreover, *any place* would soon become totally irrelevant to acceptable worship for everyone-- Jews *and* Samaritans.
  12. The Jews had given lip-service to a God who demanded strict conformity to His revealed will in Moses’ Law. Samaritans had functioned religiously under the premise that God’s ways could be mingled acceptably with the ways of other religions. They practiced things forbidden in the Law while clinging to enough of the Law to try to retain their identity as the people of Jehovah. Their “God” was *not* the God of the Jews in that respect. They really did not *know* what they worshiped.
  13. A new dispensation of true worship was on the horizon, and God would soon be worshiped both in spirit and in truth. The Jews claimed to treasure *truth* in their practice of O.T. worship by conforming to prescribed rituals, but they were often short on the *spirit* [sincerity] that God wanted from them. Samaritans had ignored much of God’s *truth*, which negated any *spirit* in their activities. Either quality of worship without the other disallows any possibility of worship being *true*.
  14. Jesus’ stance on *true* worship seems not to have provided the woman with a satisfactory solution to her quandary. Rather than continue to bother herself with so perplexing a problem, she deferred a resolution to a “Messiah” to come. The Samaritans anticipated a Savior like the “prophet” foretold by Moses in Deuteronomy 18:18. McGarvey says, “This woman’s idea of the Messiah was probably also very crude, but it was an improvement on the general Jewish conception, for it regarded him as a teacher rather than a world-conquering, earthly prince.”
  15. For the first time, Jesus proclaims Himself as the “Messiah,” the “Christ.” There would be no threat to the continuation of His work in making this claim among the Samaritans, whereas the Jews soon would try to make Him their [earthly] king (John 6:15).
  16. In the days ahead, there would be other proclamations of His uniqueness:
    - a. “*I am* the bread of life...” (6:35);
    - b. “*I am* the light of the world...” (8:12; 9:5);
    - c. “*I am* the door of the sheep...” (10:7, 9);
    - d. “*I am* the good shepherd...” (10:11,14);
    - e. “*I am* the resurrection and the life...” (11:25);
    - f. “*I am* the way, the truth, and the life...” (14:6);
    - g. “*I am* the true vine...” (15:1,5).

Jn.4:27-42 **BELIEVERS IN CHIRST AT SYCHAR**

1. The Samaritans' immediate reaction to Jesus' claim to be the Jews' Messiah was pre-empted by the return of His disciples from their quest to secure food for the company. His companions were very surprised that He was in conversation with a Samaritan and, moreover, with a *woman*. Jews of any prominence did not ordinarily speak with women in public, not even their wives. In fact, their prejudices led many to believe that prolonged conversation with a woman would result only in evil and might consign the offender to eternal punishment!
2. Jesus had no regard for foolish traditions. That much the disciples already knew about Him. Although they were alarmed by His behavior, they said nothing and asked Him no question about what He was doing.
3. The Samaritan woman *was* deeply affected by Jesus' claim to Messiahship. Her confusion had turned into wonder. Could this man actually *be* what he claimed? Hadn't he already broken with tradition by displaying an uncommon interest in someone outside the narrow circle of Judaism? Hadn't he manifested a familiarity with the facts of her private life that no ordinary man could possess? Maybe his claim was deserving of consideration!
4. In her haste, she abandoned both her waterpot and her original mission to carry needed water to her home. She could not contain her excitement about this stranger who had "told me all things that I ever did!" This wonderful possibility of what *might be* had to be shared! Her exclamations of wonder about this Jewish traveler aroused the curiosity of many others in the city, and they came to see for themselves the man who had been responsible for a religious enthusiasm that had not been seen before in the life of this woman.
5. Meanwhile, the disciples insisted that Jesus eat some of the food they had brought. No doubt He would be as hungry as He had been thirsty. Imagine their bewilderment when He informed them that He had already eaten food that they knew nothing about! They wondered whether someone else had already fed their Leader?
6. The figurative language used by Jesus was again the source of confusion in those at whom His remarks were directed. It was *spiritual food* that satisfied Him, and it consisted of doing the will of God and in sharing that will with others.
7. What the disciples needed to learn was the lesson of a non-discriminatory gospel. One day He would send them into all the world to preach that gospel, but they were still a long way from being ready to do that now. These Samaritans were about to realize from His teaching that He was to be the "Savior of the world," but His closest followers would have their minds closed to that possibility for some time.
8. The "fields" of evangelism were "white unto harvest" for teachers willing to reap. Waiting for an "opportune" moment for conditions to be "just right" might deny the success that otherwise could crown their efforts. Samaritans were not thought to be good prospects for the labors of Jewish disciples, but Jesus' experience with this Samaritan woman, coupled with the response soon to come from many others of this place, was a powerful reason for timely action to reach lost souls, regardless of their culture or nationality.

9. *What a gospel teacher contributes to the evangelism of a soul is unimportant. That he contributes whatever he can is essential.*
10. The teaching Jesus did while visiting in Sychar for two days generated faith in the minds of many of its citizens. Curiosity had been at first aroused in them because of the growing confidence of a woman who had brought her excited report to the city. Now, because of what they had learned from Him personally, they knew that Jesus was “indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.” Jesus’ **BOLD ENCOUNTER** with an unsophisticated and immoral woman had resulted in marvelous eventualities that only He could have foreseen.
11. God’s concern for men other than the Jews had been amply demonstrated all over again. Just as in the O.T. stories of Rahab, Ruth, Naaman, and others, God’s grace is made available to *all* who will “take the water of life freely.”

**Jn.4:43-45**     **WELCOME IN GALILEE**

Mt.4:12-17

Mk.1:14,15

Lk.4:14,15

1. Jesus’ fame had preceded Him into Galilee. Galileans who had witnessed His miracles during the feast at Jerusalem (2:23) reported to their countrymen in a way that caused them also to want to see and hear the things He might do and say.
2. The Lord’s “own country” was either Judea or Galilee. This “honor” He mentions was not withheld in Galilee at this time as it seems to have been in Judea. He could have been speaking about honor recently given to Him in Samaria in contrast to the pressure He had felt to leave Judea.

**Jn.4:46-54**     **THE SECOND MIRACLE-- HEALING A SICK BOY**

1. Upon Jesus’ return to Cana, a nobleman from Capernaum who had learned of His abilities sought His intervention in the serious illness of his son. Just what the man had learned, and under what circumstances, we are not told, but his confidence was strong that Jesus could help.
2. Jesus ultimately wanted believers who accepted Him because of His Person and His teaching. Early in His ministry, this might not always be likely. Now, faith would probably spring from the signs He did. This was not peculiar to this nobleman; it was typical behavior-- “you people.”
3. The nobleman was not deterred. Regardless of his reasons, he had faith enough to persist in bringing Jesus to the aid of his boy. For the moment, that was good enough for the Lord. Mercifully, He bestowed the healing requested.
4. The report of his servants convinced the nobleman that it *had* been Jesus who could be credited with his son’s recovery. His fever had “left” at the very hour when Jesus had pronounced the child whole.
5. The father’s faith in the Lord was increased still more upon receipt of this remarkable report. His household also believed that a notable miracle was done.
6. John remarks that this constituted the *second sign* that Jesus performed in Galilee. The first had been done at Cana. Other signs were done at Jerusalem during the Passover (ch.2), but John is here concerned only with the miracles in Galilee.

**Complete These Statements:**

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ heard that \_\_\_\_\_ made and \_\_\_\_\_ more \_\_\_\_\_ than \_\_\_\_\_.
2. A city of \_\_\_\_\_ called \_\_\_\_\_ was near a plot of ground that \_\_\_\_\_ had in the past given to \_\_\_\_\_.
3. “For \_\_\_\_\_ have no \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_.”
4. Whoever drinks of the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ will never \_\_\_\_\_; that \_\_\_\_\_ will become a \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ springing up into \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The Jews worshiped in \_\_\_\_\_; the Samaritans on \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The Father would seek \_\_\_\_\_ to worship Him in \_\_\_\_\_ and in \_\_\_\_\_.
7. The Samaritan woman said Jesus had told her \_\_\_\_\_ that she \_\_\_\_\_ and she wondered if He might be the \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Jesus’ “food” was to do the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ and to \_\_\_\_\_ His \_\_\_\_\_.
9. The people of Sychar \_\_\_\_\_ in Jesus, not because of the \_\_\_\_\_, but because they had \_\_\_\_\_ for themselves.
10. “Unless you people [“ye”] see \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, you will by no means \_\_\_\_\_.”

**True (T) of False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Jesus personally baptized disciples just as John did.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Jesus arrived at the well about three o’clock in the afternoon.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The Samaritan woman was surprised that a Jew would speak to her.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Jacob had dug this well and had personally drunk its water.

**True (T) or False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Jesus told the woman to call her neighbors to come to Him.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Jews and Samaritans agreed about a proper place of worship.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Jesus declared that salvation is “from the Jews.”
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. “Messiah” and “Christ” are two terms with the same meaning.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Jesus met early rejection both in Judea and Galilee.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. The nobleman had to wait until he got home to learn if his son was alive.

**Match the Persons, Places, or Things:**

- |                    |                   |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| _____ 1. Jacob     | a. Second sign    |
| _____ 2. Husbands  | b. Seventh hour   |
| _____ 3. Truth     | c. Well at Sychar |
| _____ 4. Fever     | d. Spirit         |
| _____ 5. Capernaum | e. Five           |

**Answer These Questions:**

1. The *three* sections of Palestine are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
2. *Four* things are said in this chapter to have belonged to Jacob: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
3. *Three* cities are named in this chapter: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
4. *Three* literal things are spoken of in figurative terms: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
5. *Seven* numbers appear throughout this chapter. They are: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

**BONUS QUESTION:** Can you find *five* (5) names or designations given to Jesus in chapter four? List the terms and the verses where they appear. Do not repeat terms.

### CHAPTER FIVE: “A BOLD DEFENSE”

“My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.”

#### Jn.5:1-9 THE THIRD MIRACLE-- HEALING A LAME MAN

1. Some time “after this” [healing of the nobleman’s son], Jesus went to Jerusalem from Galilee to attend “a feast” of the Jews. Scholars disagree about the identity of this celebration. The more established view supports Passover, while many of the “modern” scholars lean toward Purim [See Esther 9:26-32.] or the Feast of Trumpets. [See Leviticus 23:23-25.]
2. The determination of this matter is important because of its bearing on the length of Jesus’ ministry on earth. If this is the Passover observance, Jesus’ time on earth can be verified as lasting more than three years. If this is some other feast, that time was possibly one year less. There are *three other* Passovers referenced during Jesus’ sojourn: John 2:13ff; John 6:4ff; and John 11:55ff.
3. J.W. McGarvey cites the article “the” [feast] in the Sinaitic manuscript as evidence that this likely was one of the three *main* feasts at which attendance was required of Jewish men. Jesus seems to have “gone up” to this most sacred convocation in response to *duty* rather than choice.
4. If this is the Feast of Passover, then John skips a *year* of activity between chapter 5:47 and chapter 6:4.
5. Some commentators cite the prophesy of Daniel 9:27 as limiting Christ’s life to one-half “week of years” [three and one-half years]. If true, that would support the identity of this celebration as Passover.
6. John says there “is” a certain pool in Jerusalem called “Bethesda.” Considering that this Gospel was written *after* Jerusalem’s destruction in A.D. 70, the apostle either spoke of what “was” early in the century as if it still were, or he meant that although the city had been ravaged, the pool had survived the Roman onslaught.
7. Another controversy exists about the identity of this pool. Some defend “Bethesda” as it appears in the KJV, NKJV, ASV, etc. Others prefer “Bethzatha” in the RSV and other more recent translations. The Confraternity [Catholic] version names it as “Bethsaida.”
8. Whichever name is correct, this pool was a gathering place for the ill and infirm of the area. Its five porches provided shelter for a “great multitude” of desperate men and women seeking relief from their maladies.
9. A popular conviction had attached itself to this place over time. It was thought that when the waters of the pool were “troubled” by an “angel,” healing was available to the first person getting into the water.

10. The text gives *no* verification to this idea and makes no comment about its being fact or fantasy. Many versions omit the latter part of verse three and all of verse four, which deletes altogether the reference to the phenomenon of angelic intervention. Many scholars contend that this “troubling” of the waters resulted from the recurrent flowing of an underground spring into the pool.
11. It is clear that Jesus’ mission in the world was not primarily to alleviate human suffering. If so, He would have healed all those seeking healing on this occasion. Instead, He selected *one* prominent example of human misery to use as a demonstration of His divine power and as an entree for defending His true identity.
12. Jesus asked a seemingly strange question of a man that He knew had endured his severe infirmity for thirty-eight years. “Do you want to be made well?” Surely, the invalid’s very presence at the pool made the answer obvious?
13. However, it was necessary that there should be no question in anyone’s mind about the reality of Christ’s healing power if the incident was to be used advantageously in the subsequent discussion with the Jewish leadership about His true relationship with God. A willing recipient was as important as a willing dispenser of mercy if the lesson about Jesus being the “Lord of the Sabbath” was to be as effective as possible.
14. This miracle of healing required no initial faith in the Person of Christ. The invalid had no knowledge then or even later of who the healer was. No indication is given that he was *ever* familiar with any claim of Jesus about Sonship. Clearly, the focus of this miracle was not on healing *per se*, but on the Divine Nature that made such a remarkable occurrence possible.
15. In response to Jesus’ command and the *immediate* healing that followed, the sick man was made whole. He did as he was told--he took up his bed and walked.
16. It was no coincidence that “that day was the Sabbath” on which the healing had been done. The Lord on numerous occasions deliberately challenged the religious leadership about their ridiculous interpretations and applications of the Sabbath laws. He foresaw-- and welcomed-- the consequences of what He had done.

**Jn.5:10-16**    **CONSEQUENCES OF THE MIRACLE**

1. Unappreciative [as Jesus knew they would be] of the *mercy* demonstrated in this miracle of healing, the Jewish leaders instead seized upon the *legality* of carrying a bed on the Sabbath!
2. It was true that the Law forbade work on the Sabbath day (Exo. 31:14,15), and the Jews had been forbidden to “carry any burden out of their house” (Jer. 17:22). Still, the Sabbath law never prohibited performing acts of necessity or benevolence on the seventh day. [See Matt.12:1-12.]
3. It was the twisted *interpretation* of the law, and not the law itself, that caused Sabbath problems for the people. Thirty-nine forms of work had been specified in the Talmud, one of which was the carrying of burdens. Numerous kinds of carrying, both approved and unapproved, had been added to the “law,” making any understanding extremely difficult and compliance virtually impossible.

4. “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27). The legalistic attitude of the scribes and Pharisees *opposed* acts of mercy on the Sabbath; the benevolent attitude of the “Lord of the Sabbath” *encouraged* such acts on that day.
5. “In this case, a man lying on his bed, away from home, is suddenly healed. Under such circumstances *Jewish tradition* said that he must spend the rest of the day watching his bed, or else he must go off and leave it to be stolen” [McGarvey].
6. Sabbath-breaking was a serious offence. Some authorities even assert that tradition prescribed stoning for offenders [although at this time, death sentences were restricted by the Romans]. Still, serious penalties could be imposed on one who carried his bed on the Sabbath. It is not surprising that the healed man would shift any possible blame for such an act to the one who had healed him.
7. Jesus “found” the man in the temple [why the man was there, we do not know] and warned him about continuing practices that seem to have been responsible for his previous disability. We are not told what those sinful things might have been.
8. Unrevealed motives prompted the man to report Jesus’ identity to the authorities. It is possible that Jesus Himself instructed him to identify Him to the leaders. At any rate, the report resulted in a confrontation with those leaders about Sabbath-breaking, which probably is *exactly* what Jesus wanted to happen.
9. John’s much later *retrospective* observation (vs.16) is that Christ was persecuted and eventually killed because [during the course of His ministry in the world] He had done “these *things*” [many things such as the healing of this lame man] on the Sabbath. The real issue, of course, was not only Sabbath-breaking but also the Lord’s strenuous opposition to the perverted influence and leadership of the Jewish religious authorities.

**Jn.5:17,18** **A BOLD DEFENSE**

1. Jesus’ **Bold Action** on the Sabbath called for a **BOLD DEFENSE** by the Savior. It was considered to be worse to incite another to violate the Sabbath than to personally commit an act in violation of the traditional law. An unfortunate and simple man like this might not have realized the seriousness of his bed-carrying, but *without doubt* this **Bold** offender Jesus had been in deliberate defiance of the Sabbath traditions when He told the healed man to take up his bed and carry it away. For that He must answer to the “powers that be”!
2. The Lord’s defense was **Bold** indeed: “My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.” At least *three* things stand out in this response:
  - a. “My Father” makes a **BOLD DEFENSE** that Jesus and God enjoy a special Father/Son relationship that did not exist between the leadership and “their Father” or even between the Jewish populace and “our Father.”
  - b. Christ’s **BOLD DEFENSE** furthermore claimed that God had never stopped His providential governance of the world since its creation. God had ceased from His work of *creation* (Gen. 2:2,3), but His work of *maintenance* on *every* day of the week had been constant. Else, the creation would have long since

fallen into disarray and destruction. Hence, the claim of Jewish tradition that all work on the Sabbath was sinful was obviously spurious. Surely, God did not violate His own Sabbath law in His benevolent care of the universe and everything in it!

- c. Jesus **Boldly Defended** His actions by claiming a *unity* with the Father when He did precisely what the Father had always done on the Sabbath. To charge Jesus with sin in this matter was to make the same claim against God Himself! Would they dare?
3. John observes again (verse eighteen) that the *root* of Jesus' problem with the Jewish hierarchy lay in two "transgressions."
    - a. He "broke the Sabbath." He did this frequently, and in doing so He openly discredited the authority of the Pharisees whose duty it was to enforce the specifics of the *traditional Law*.
    - b. He made Himself "equal with God." Admitting to any sort of equality between Jesus and God would require the authorities to cease immediately *all* opposition to Jesus and to comply with His every word, even when He disclaimed the validity of their leadership. There was no co-existence with this **Bold Agitator!**
    - c. Over the course of time, the Jews [rulers] sought more and more intently to kill the Christ because of His refusal to compromise with their hypocrisy and their deceptive dominance over the people of the Lord.

#### **Jn.5:19-30**    **IDENTITY WITH THE FATHER**

1. A lengthy continuation of Jesus' **BOLD DEFENSE** follows His initial response to the Jews' accusation that He had broken the Sabbath and had caused another to commit the same sin.
2. There is a strong *reassertion* of His claim to divinity rather than a retraction caused by the Jews' reaction to that claim.
3. The claim to the Divine Nature follows *four* routes in this discussion.
  - a. Jesus and God maintain a complete unity of action. "What He sees the Father do...the Son also does in like manner" (vs.19).
    - (1) This includes all the past actions of the Christ.
    - (2) This also includes "greater works" that Christ would yet perform (vs.20).
  - b. Jesus and God maintain a complete unity of love. "For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does..." (vs. 20).
    - (1) Equality springs from love, not competition. Subjection of the Son to the will of the Father is a *voluntary* execution of different but essential roles.
    - (2) Those who profess to love the Father must also love the Son. Haters of Jesus should not expect to receive the love of the Father.
  - c. Jesus and God maintain a complete unity of relationship to men. "For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will" (vs.21).
    - (1) Father and Son act as One in *raising the dead*, both physically and spiritually (vs.21).

- (2) Father and Son are totally agreed about the *judgment* of all men (vs. 22).
- d. Jesus and God maintain a complete unity of honor. "...that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father" (vs.23).
  - (1) Withholding *any* honor from Jesus also denies *all* honor to the Father.
  - (2) Jesus requires honor on a *level* equal to the honor given to the Father. He is not a second-rate God!
- 4. Jesus executes God's work by *entitlement*, not by *usurpation*. Men must embrace God's purpose ["believe God"] in sending Jesus to do God's work (vs. 24).
  - a. Strong emphasis is placed on the "sending" of Jesus into the world. *Six* times it is said He was "sent" by God (verses 23, 24, 30, 36, 37, and 38). Once, He has "come" in the Father's name (vs. 43).
  - b. The hour was "coming and now is" [i.e., preparations were then underway] for the revelation and execution of the Gospel plan of salvation. The "voice of the Son of God" [the word of truth] would soon give spiritual life to those who were dead in sin. This first took place on Pentecost (Acts 2).
    - (1) Only God possesses life-giving power, and Jesus has such power because He *is God* and He shares in the giving of life with the Father (vs. 26).
    - (2) Spiritual judgment would also be tied to Jesus' work and words: "...the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). *Present* judgment [God's recognition of those who are His children and those who are not] and *eternal* judgment [the final separation of the good and bad for eternity] both are based solely on what Jesus' voice has spoken either personally or through His chosen and inspired spokesmen.
  - c. The hour is "coming" [not "and now is"-- it was far in the future] when a physical resurrection to life will also occur when Jesus' "voice" calls all the dead from their graves. Jesus as Judge of all men will revive the righteous to *everlasting life* and the unrighteous to *everlasting condemnation* (vs.28,29).
  - d. The Father had endowed the Son with the function of judgment because of His unique relationship to men *as a man* ["a Son of man" (vs. 27-ASV)] (Heb.4:15).
    - (1) Jesus will judge *exactly* as the Father would judge-- "as I hear" [from the Father] (vs. 30).
    - (2) Jesus' judgment will be entirely righteous with no taint of self-interest, prejudice, or partiality. The Father's will is the sole influence on any judgment made by the Son.

**Jn.5:31-39, THE GREATEST WITNESS**

45-47

1. This was a **BOLD DEFENSE** of His actions that Jesus had made, and these were **Bold Claims** that constituted His defense. They could not be casually overlooked or ignored by people whose *eternity* was dependent on the truth or untruth of what He said.
2. Such a **BOLD DEFENSE** should be supported by dependable evidence that could not be disputed. The Lord proceeds to offer strong witnesses to the truthfulness of the things He has said about His unity with the Father.

3. There were SIX witnesses that could be called to testify to His veracity, including His own affirmation:
- a. Jesus discounted His own testimony about divinity because He knew that others would do the same. The Law under which they were living required “two or three witnesses” other than the accused to certify the merit of any charge (Deut. 19:15). Men would not accept His claims as true until they were persuaded that He was God. That persuasion had to depend on the testimony of other people or things that they already considered to be reliable. Such testimony was readily available.
  - b. A second source of testimony about the claims of Jesus was totally unimpeachable [“true”] (verse 32). God Himself had testified about the divinity of the Son.
    - (1) At His birth the angel of God had declared to Jewish shepherds, “...for behold,...there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11). That report was widely circulated (Luke 2:17), and the identity of the holy child could have been easily followed until His adulthood.
    - (2) At His baptism God had openly proclaimed, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt.3:17).
    - (3) The Old Testament prophets had foretold numerous details about His character, work, and mission in the world. Thoughtful observers would have little difficulty in recognizing the fulfillment of prophecy in the Person of Jesus.
    - (4) The power of God was clearly displayed in the miracles already performed by the Savior. “No one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him” (Nicodemus, John 2:2).
    - (5) The impelling evidence furnished by the Father had largely fallen on deaf ears and closed eyes. The Jews had neither “heard” God’s witnessing voice nor “seen” [accepted] His “form” [the Christ--See Phil.2:6.] (verse 37).
    - (6) God’s word of testimony did not “abide” in people who refused to believe in the Sonship of Jesus. It made no difference in their lives, and it gave them no hopeful outlook, even though those were basic reasons why the Lord had been “sent” to the world.
  - c. The third witness to Christ’s divinity was that of John the Baptizer. John had once been a “burning lamp,” a popular herald of the Christ, and multitudes had responded to his message of repentance and preparation. But even his testimony would prove inadequate to generate unbending faith in Jesus as God’s only begotten Son.
  - d. The fourth witness was the “works” that had been done and those that would be “finished” prior to His death. Everything He accomplished-- His teaching, His miracles, His connection with the common people, and His eventual sacrifice of love on a Roman cross, all pointed to a more-than-human source of wisdom and power such as the world had never seen before (John 7:46).

- These things were a “greater witness” than that of John, because their energy came directly from above and depended on no human agency.
- e. The “Scriptures” generally were revered by the Jews. They dutifully studied them and centered their conversations around them. “In them you think that you have eternal life” (verse 39) was reflective of their regard for the written word. Ironically, however, “the more they studied, the less they knew” about the Christ of the Scriptures! They were like those of whom Paul wrote, “...always learning and never coming to a knowledge of the truth” (2Tim.3:7). The Gospel of John is replete with references to Old Testament prophecies that were “fulfilled” in things that Jesus said and did. But the testimony of the word about Jesus had made no positive impact in the Jews' thinking about Him or in their reaction to His appeals to their hearts.
  - f. Finally, the Lord cited the writings of Moses in particular as a valid witness to His divinity. Moses had warned that God would “raise up a prophet...like me...Him shall you hear” (Deut. 18:15). Those who refused to hear would be cut off from God’s people (Acts 3:23). The Jews gave lip service to the wisdom of Moses, but they paid little attention to what Moses had said about Jesus.

**Jn.5:40-45**    **A PARTING SHOT**

1. Jesus’ stated conclusion to this long discourse on the unbelief of the Jewish leadership was, “But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life” (vs. 40). Every effort to bring them to reason and faith had failed and would continue to fail until the very end. Instead of drawing closer to their Savior, they would thrust themselves further away in their unbelief.
2. The success of the Lord’s mission to the world was not dependent on His popularity with the hard of heart. He never expected to “receive honor from men” because He would not try to satisfy their expectations of a Messiah. Honor would have been overwhelming if He had been the conquering leader that they wanted. A humble carpenter and teacher could never receive the accolades of people who were looking for something entirely different than what they found in Him.
3. It was their love of themselves and of worldly ideals that prevented the people from embracing a love for God that should have naturally transferred itself into a deep devotion for Jesus as He manifested an identity with the Father that none should have doubted (vs. 42).
4. It was ironic that He came with overpowering credentials as the true Christ, but He could persuade only a few of them to follow Him. Others, who were merely pretenders and deceivers, had come and would continue to come with claims of heaven’s endorsement of their leadership. They would persuade many because they purported to give the masses what they wanted in their leaders. Sadly, these bogus “campaigns to freedom” would typically end in disaster for those who chose to participate in them. Jewish history documents numerous such episodes.
5. Jesus took no pleasure in the spiritual blindness of His Jewish brothers and sisters. His role was not that of a prosecutor but that of a Savior. “For God did not send

His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved” (John 3:17). Those who turned away from His Light and Life were self-condemned.

**Complete The Statements:**

1. In \_\_\_\_\_ was a \_\_\_\_\_ called \_\_\_\_\_.
2. An infirm man had suffered \_\_\_\_\_ years and had no one to help him into the \_\_\_\_\_ when it was \_\_\_\_\_ up.
3. Jesus healed the man on the \_\_\_\_\_ day and told him to take up his \_\_\_\_\_, which was not \_\_\_\_\_ for the Jews.
4. In the \_\_\_\_\_, Jesus told the healed man to \_\_\_\_\_ no more, lest a \_\_\_\_\_ thing befall him.
5. "My Father has been \_\_\_\_\_ until now, and I have been \_\_\_\_\_."
6. The Jews sought to \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus because He \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ and made Himself \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_.
7. The Father \_\_\_\_\_ no one, but has committed all \_\_\_\_\_ to the Son.
8. All in the \_\_\_\_\_ shall hear Jesus' voice and \_\_\_\_\_, to either a \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ or of \_\_\_\_\_.
9. John was for a time the \_\_\_\_\_ and a \_\_\_\_\_, and the people \_\_\_\_\_ in his \_\_\_\_\_.
10. If the Jews believed \_\_\_\_\_, they would believe \_\_\_\_\_, because \_\_\_\_\_ wrote about \_\_\_\_\_.

**True (T) or False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The pool of Bethesda was near the Camel Gate in Jerusalem.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The people believed an angel stirred the waters of the pool.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The lame man had dipped repeatedly in the pool to no avail.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Jesus told the healed man to show himself to the priest.

**True (T) or False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The man immediately identified Jesus as His healer.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The man's infirmity was likely related to sin in his life.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. There were *two* reasons why the Jews sought to kill Jesus.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Jesus' works were a greater witness than John the Baptizer.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Many of the Jews were dutiful about studying the Scriptures.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Moses would serve as an accuser of the Jewish leadership.

**Match the Persons, Places, and Things:**

- |                                |               |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| _____ 1. Unlawful work         | a. Moses      |
| _____ 2. A light and a lamp    | b. Scriptures |
| _____ 3. Five porches          | c. Bethesda   |
| _____ 4. Testimony about Jesus | d. Sabbath    |
| _____ 5. Wrote about Christ    | e. John       |

**Give The Numbers:**

- 1. The *number* of infirmities listed for people at the pool of Bethesda. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. The *number* of times Jesus said He was "sent" by the Father. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. The *number* of times Jesus referred to "judgment" in His discourse. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. The *number* of things Jesus told the lame man to do. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. The *number* of consequences Jesus experienced for "breaking" the Sabbath. \_\_\_\_\_

**BONUS QUESTION: Six witnesses to Jesus' divinity are discussed by Him in this chapter. What/who are they? List them and give the references.**

## CHAPTER SIX: “BOLD METAPHORS”

“I am the bread of life.”

“...unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.”

**Jn.6:1-15**

### **THE FOURTH MIRACLE--FEEDING FIVE THOUSAND**

Mt.14:13-23

Mk.6:30-46

Lk.9:10-17

1. “After these things” refers to the events surrounding the sending out and return of the apostles (Matt.10; Mark 6; Luke 9) and the death of John the Baptist at the hands of Herod (Matt.14; Mark 6; Luke 9). This was a time to celebrate the completion of the apostles’ mission (Luke 9:10), but it was also a time to be apprehensive about *potential threats* to the Lord’s ministry.
  - a. The great excitement generated by Jesus’ apostles as they cast out devils and healed the sick was certain to arouse even further the jealousy and animosity of the Jewish leadership.
  - b. This excitement also raised the problem of possible attempts to sidetrack Jesus’ spiritual mission into one of physically delivering His countrymen from the fleshly ills common to human beings and from the national ills suffered by the Jews under the heavy hand of Rome. Any attempt to “make Him their king” (John 6:15) would be in direct opposition to God’s purposes.
  - c. Herod had first imprisoned John and then beheaded him, despite John’s popularity among the people as a prophet. Herod had proved to be a potent force against anyone whose influence might try to undermine his public authority or his private lifestyle.
  - d. Reports were circulating that Jesus, who by now now was working miracles as a teacher “come from God” (John 3:2), might be John, Elijah, or another old prophet risen from the dead (Luke 9:7-9). Herod was perplexed and sought to “see” Jesus, possibly with the intention of doing Him harm as he had done to John.
2. The intense activity associated with the work of Jesus and His apostles was extremely exhausting. Sometimes, they were so engaged by the throngs of seeking and curious Jews that they “had no leisure so much as to eat” (Mark 6:31).
3. The Lord determined to take His disciples to a secluded place away from Herod’s immediate control where rest and refuge would be available to all of them. They went from Jerusalem to a remote location near Bethsaida Julius on the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, renamed “Sea of Tiberius” in honor of Caesar. There they retired to a mountain to get away from the crowds that followed Jesus because of the signs He performed on those who were diseased.
4. The time for Passover was near, and, as would be expected, a great many people were passing through this region on their way to Jerusalem for the celebration

- there. McGarvey says that it has been calculated that this Passover took place on April 16, A.D. 29. A large number of the pilgrims were intent on seeing for themselves this miracle worker about whom they had heard so much recently.
5. Mark reveals that Jesus had spent the day teaching these people (Mark 6:34,35). He was concerned for their physical welfare as well as for their spiritual needs, and He proceeded to satisfy their hunger.
  6. Three obvious possibilities existed for feeding this gathering of people:
    - a. The people could be sent away to buy food for themselves;
    - b. The apostles could go into the villages to secure the needed meal;
    - c. Jesus and/or the disciples could supply the need from what they had available.
  7. Jesus rejected the first two options and selected the third as the best choice.
  8. That appeared to the disciples to be an poor decision. They had no food in their possession, and their financial resources were far less than sufficient to buy enough food to satisfy the multitude.
  9. Using the situation as an opportunity to test the faith of His apostles and as a way to teach a needed lesson about trust in His divine power, Jesus asked Philip where food might be bought for so many. Information was not the key issue in His question, for “He Himself knew what He would do.”
  10. Philip’s mental calculation quickly showed that no *ordinary* solution to the problem was possible. Two hundred denarii [more than six month’s wages for a working man] would not buy enough to feed this hungry crowd, even if each person ate only a little. Philip seemed to have *no thought* that Jesus might make possible the impossible. He *failed* the test Jesus had designed for him and the others!
  11. Andrew reported that a lad’s small lunch, consisting of five “pancake-like” loaves of barley bread and five “sardine-like” pickled fish [*opsaria*], was the sum of what had been discovered in a search among the assemblage. It was a *little* something, but *too little* to make any difference.
  12. Now it was time for the Savior’s plan to swing into action. The men were seated “on the grass” in ranks [women and children likely sat separately, in compliance with cultural dictates], assuring that everyone would be served. Also, the large number of people actually fed would be documented and would attest to the magnitude of the miracle about to be performed.
  13. In the hands of Jesus, the loaves and fishes became a feast of more-than-ample proportions. When everything had been distributed to the diners, there was food left over. Twelve basketsful of fragments were taken up, although we are not told to what purpose.
  14. It is strange and sad that some who profess to be “Bible scholars” feel impelled to explain away the miracles of the Savior. William Barkley tells us that “if we can believe” that this event was truly miraculous, then “let us continue to do so.” However, he says that there are *two* “other explanations”:
    - a. This became a “sacramental meal,” and the “reality of God” turned the “sacramental crumb” of each recipient into a rich spiritual experience similar to the blessing of *every* communion service even to this day. He ignores the plain fact that the writers clearly state that all ate and “were filled”;

- b. The willingness of the lad to share his meager meal shamed others in the crowd who also had brought food with them. His generosity sparked a similar reaction in them, and there resulted a “miracle” of sharing and outpouring of love.
15. The impression made on the people was strong. *They* thought that something unusual had happened! The claim was raised among them that Jesus must be the “Prophet” of whom Moses had spoken (Deut.18:15). This long-awaited Prophet was expected by the Jews to become their great national leader who would not only deliver them from political oppression but also would provide for their physical needs [including bread] just as Moses [as they supposed] had given manna to their ancestors in the wilderness.
  16. Concluding that this was a man who could instantly relieve them of both their national and personal difficulties, the highly excited multitude determined not to allow such an opportunity to escape them. They proposed to take Jesus “by force” and make Him their king.
  17. It was time to terminate this volatile situation, so the crowd was sent away [under unrevealed instructions or conditions] and the disciples were “constrained” to get into a boat and sail for the other side of the Sea. Jesus would remain behind for the present, and He went alone onto a mountain to pray.

**Jn.6:16-21**    **THE FIFTH MIRACLE-- WALKING ON THE WATER**

Mt.14:24-36

Mk.6:47-56

1. The disciples complied with the Lord’s wishes and rowed toward Capernaum, their ultimate destination. Their proposed route is variously estimated to have been between three and one-half and six miles.
2. The funnel-like topography of this location often produced sudden and violent storms over the waters of the lake. Such a tempest assailed their boat, and the disciples rowed hard to reach landfall, which was not far away.
3. A frightening sight appeared. An “apparition” was walking on the water and was rapidly overtaking their struggling vessel! It was, of course, Jesus, whom they had left behind and whom they never expected to meet under *these* circumstances!
4. Having identified Himself to the apostles and having calmed their fears, Jesus came aboard, and the boat was “immediately” at the land.
5. Some modern “scholars” attempt to diminish the miraculous nature of this incident by asserting that instead of walking “*on* the sea,” the Lord was walking “*by* the sea” [on the shore]. They cite John 21:1 and the phrase “*epi tes thalassan*” in both passages as having identical meanings. However, Matthew and Mark both specify that the boat was “in the *midst* of the sea” and not near the shore. Moreover, there was no reason for the apostles to be so surprised or afraid if they merely sighted Jesus on the seashore where they would have *expected* Him to be.
6. Luke does not record this episode on the sea at all, and John makes no mention of Peter’s attempt to walk on the water in response to Jesus’ invitation for him to do so [nor does Mark].
7. Instead of landing at Capernaum, their original destination, they came to the re-

gion of Genessaret, situated several miles south of Capernaum. Many people, hearing of His presence there and of His movement through their villages, brought their sick and infirm to Jesus, and He graciously healed them.

**Jn.6:22-26**    **SEEKING THE LOAVES AND FISHES**

1. Some who had witnessed the feeding of the multitude the previous day returned to the scene of the miracle in search for Jesus, who was not to be found. They knew that the only available boat had left without Him aboard, but they concluded that He had somehow gone to Capernaum. They forthwith set out on some newly-arrived vessels to look for this potential “meal-ticket.” Perhaps other gifts might come to them from His hands.
2. The bread-seekers found Jesus in the synagogue in Capernaum (verse 59) and questioned Him about *when* [not *how*] He had come there. Despite the miracle on the day before, they seemingly failed to attach any supernatural element to whatever the answer to their question (vs. 25) might be.
3. Jesus always “knew all men” (John 2:24), and these who now pursued Him were no exception. Jesus perceived that they followed not because they understood the import of the signs that they and others had seen but because they hoped for more physical favors. Their interest was in the *gift*, not in the *Giver*.

**Jn.6:27-34**    **THE FOOD THAT DOES NOT PERISH**

1. As common to all men, the most pressing need of these seekers was not to be fed physically but to be strengthened spiritually. This encounter afforded Jesus an opportunity to discuss that need with them at a time when their minds might be open to thinking about the inadequacy of yesterday’s literal bread.
2. “Seek *lasting*, not *temporary*, satisfaction in the food you work for.” This was timely advice for people whose stomachs had been well-filled the day before but were already in need of refilling. Regardless of the impact made on them by the remarkable events of yesterday, they should have been easily convinced that *nothing* physical, no matter its source, can ever supply man’s needs permanently. The “Son of man,” however, has food that will do just that.
3. Jesus had spoken of “working” to please God as the means of receiving His spiritual blessings. It was natural for the people to ask, “What work must we do to please God?” Perhaps they supposed some new commandment had been added to their duty or that by some way unknown to them, they might acquire a uniquely-different food that would diminish their need to be striving always to provide the necessities of life for themselves and their families.
4. The answer fell on deaf ears and dull minds: “Believe in Him whom He sent.”
5. Amazingly, those who had witnessed Jesus’ power in the feeding of the multitude now demanded another proof of that same power before they could give Him their trust! They cited Moses, their first “great prophet,” who had proved his relationship to God by providing bread [manna] from heaven for his followers.

- Their implication was that Jesus, if He truly was their second Great Prophet, must do better than Moses had done, and even better than He had done just yesterday in producing a material bounty for them. “What work will you do?” What audacity!
6. Christ was quick to correct their misapprehension about the manna. Man had not been favored with “angel’s food” to bolster their faith in Moses. It had been the gift of God, not Moses, to increase the confidence of their fathers in His ability to secure the promised land for those who would accept His terms of commitment.
  7. But even *that* bread, as marvelous as it was, was *not the best that God could do!* It sufficed for a time, but the travelers got hungry again and more had to be gathered every day. Eventually, the manna ceased altogether when the travelers reached the promised land.
  8. Contrariwise, the Father has true bread in the Person of the One who has come down from heaven to give life to the world.
  9. Paul observed, “The *natural* man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God because they are spiritually discerned” (1Cor.2:14). These worldly-minded people instantly were caught up in the possibility of some permanent solution to their constant struggle for physical survival in a hard society. Much like the woman in Samaria [“give me this water of life”], they cried out, “Give us this bread always.”

**Jn.6:35-59**    **THE BREAD OF LIFE**

1. Jesus countered with His first **BOLD METAPHOR--** “I am the bread of life.” His followers will *never hunger* and will *never thirst!*
2. It was not a lack of *opportunity* that kept them from this satisfying food from heaven but a lack of *willingness* to “see” Him with the eye of faith and “come” to Him in humble obedience. Every prejudice and every preconceived thought about Him must be cast aside with the assurance that, in return, true believers in the Son will never be cast aside by the Father.
3. The “heavenly bread” will sustain believers both here and hereafter. Not one who eats of it will be lost to heaven; *all* will surely die physically, but they will just as surely be raised by Jesus to enjoy the *everlasting* life that only spiritual food can offer.
4. The Jews failed to grasp the significance of the **BOLD METAPHOR** Jesus had used in contending for His own divine Nature and for His power to enable men to “partake of the divine nature” (2Peter 1:4). They had personal knowledge of His parents [although Joseph was probably dead by this time], and they were both mystified and offended at His suggestion that He had “come down from heaven.”
5. It was useless for the Jews to “murmur” among themselves in trying to understand spiritual realities within the context of their physical experiences. Faith would never come to them in that way.
6. God will “draw” willing subjects to a saving faith that will “raise them up at the last day.” This He will do through His word. Hearers who are “taught of God” (Isa. 54:13; Jer. 31:31-34) through the gospel will either be drawn [attracted] to Him or driven away. Those who “learn” [believe] will “come” in their belief to

the Christ who has been sent by the Father to save them from their sins.

7. No man had ever been taught personally by God [“seen God”] about this living bread. However, the Son, who had come to earth *from* God, had firsthand knowledge of these truths. He had indeed “seen” the Father, and His assurance to them was, “He who believes in Me has everlasting life,” for, “I am the bread of life.”
8. The Jews would have rejoiced to have another opportunity to eat food such as the manna their ancestors had been given. Yet, that food was far from perfect for their real needs. Not only did the people suffer hunger again after eating it, but they also suffered a much more unwelcome eventuality despite the manna-- death!
9. This synagogue audience had been startled by Jesus’ **BOLD METAPHOR** comparing Himself to bread which they must eat if they were to have life. Now, He adds another and perhaps even more shocking **BOLD METAPHOR** to consider: “My flesh is the bread that will give eternal life to the world.”
10. The Law of Moses strictly forbade the drinking of blood or the eating of meat containing blood. It was unthinkable that this man who claimed to be from God would suggest that they should “eat His flesh and drink His blood” with the promise of being blessed by heaven. That would be the surest way to *condemnation*, not *salvation!*
11. Jesus is profuse in the promises attached to partaking of His flesh and blood:
  - a. It will lead to eternal life for the partaker (verse 54);
  - b. It will cause the partaker to be raised up in the last day (verse 54);
  - c. It will allow the partaker to enjoy the benefits of “true” food (verse 55);
  - d. It will assure that the partaker “abides” in the Lord (verse 56);
  - e. It will assure that the Lord “abides” in the partaker (verse 56);
  - f. It will make it possible for the partaker to live forever and never die (verse 58).

#### **Jn.6:60-71 CONSEQUENCES OF BOLD METAPHORS**

1. It is not surprising that the Jewish leadership was offended at the **Boldness of the Savior’s Metaphors**. It is less to be expected that those who had shown admiration for Him and had given some measure of devotion to Him would be offended also. That this *did* occur indicates how unready both the populace and the apostles were for the “hard sayings” that Jesus was now ready to share with them.
2. The unrest of the apostles could not be hidden from One who knew the thoughts of others. “If the prospect of my *death* is disquieting to your aspirations about My kingdom, what effect will my *ascension* to heaven have on your expectations?” For some time yet to come, the apostles would struggle with the idea that the kingdom would be spiritual rather than physical and political. Jesus’ continued presence on earth was essential to their concept of His kingly reign. Still, it was the Spirit who, through the teaching [word] of the Son of God, could provide real life to the kingdom’s subjects. The flesh [worldly things] could offer nothing of value to their quest for heaven.
3. Not only was Jesus aware of the instability of the faith of the multitudes but also

He knew that the faith of His apostles was none too strong. *All* of them needed a lot of work on their understanding and trust, and *one* of them [Judas] had no real faith in Him or His mission at all. John's assertion of Jesus' foreknowledge [many years after the fact] is his way of saying that the Lord knew exactly what He was doing in His relationships with His chosen twelve. He understood perfectly what each apostle needed from Him if he was to be of value in the kingdom. Jesus was not to become Judas' *victim* in the betrayal but rather would remain completely in charge of *every* detail of His own life and death.

4. These **BOLD METAPHORS** and their implications perhaps mark the beginning of the decline of Jesus' popularity among the masses. "From that time *many* of His disciples [not apostles] went back and walked with Him no more."
5. The defection of the *many* offered an opportunity to test and strengthen the dedication of the *few*. Were *they* also offended in Him to the point of surrender? No, surely He knew *that* was not so, but it would do them good to affirm again their commitment. "Do you also want to go away?"
6. Peter spoke for himself and for the others [as he often did]. "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." What a wonderful response!
7. Subsequent events show that Peter's determination was not as unwavering as he thought it to be at this time. In the months ahead, there would be many challenges to the loyalty of these disciples. There would be many occasions when their faith, professed so beautifully and so adamantly here, would vacillate and fall into danger of destruction. Ultimately, though, they proved to themselves, to the world, and to God that they really *did* believe that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God." And that was the same faith that they labored to instill in the hearts of lost men and women as they "went out and preached everywhere" (John 20:31; Mark 16:20).

**Complete These Statements:**

1. "Now the \_\_\_\_\_, a \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_, was near."
2. \_\_\_\_\_ said that \_\_\_\_\_ worth of bread was needed to feed the multitude if everyone was to receive a \_\_\_\_\_.
3. A \_\_\_\_\_ had \_\_\_\_\_ loaves and \_\_\_\_\_ small \_\_\_\_\_, from which Jesus fed \_\_\_\_\_ men.
4. When people saw this \_\_\_\_\_, they said Jesus was the \_\_\_\_\_ who had come into the \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The apostles' boat was bound for \_\_\_\_\_ but came instead to the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_. (See Matthew 14:34.)
6. The discourse about the \_\_\_\_\_ of life was delivered by \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_.
7. "This is the \_\_\_\_\_ of God, that you \_\_\_\_\_ in Him whom He \_\_\_\_\_."
8. He who \_\_\_\_\_ to Jesus will never \_\_\_\_\_, and he who \_\_\_\_\_ in Jesus will never \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Men come to Jesus only when they are \_\_\_\_\_, when they have been \_\_\_\_\_, and when they have \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
10. The \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

**True (T) or False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Andrew calculated the cost of food needed to feed the hungry multitude.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The crowd numbered about 5,000, including women and children (Matt. 14:21)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The Jews referred to the manna their fathers had received in the desert.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Jesus acknowledged Moses' greatness as the giver of the manna.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The multitude was told to stand in orderly groups to be fed. (Mark 6:40.)

**QUESTIONS ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN**

**CHAPTER SIX (Continued)**

**True (T) or False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Jesus reproved “the people” for seeking His loaves and fishes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Only the Christ has seen the Father.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Jesus abides in those who eat His flesh and drink His blood.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Jesus knew from the beginning which apostle would betray Him.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. The Jews quickly understood Jesus’ metaphors about flesh and blood.

**Match These Persons, Places, and Things:**

- |                         |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| _____ 1. Fragments      | a. Andrew              |
| _____ 2. Food supply    | b. Capernaum           |
| _____ 3. A lad          | c. Sea of Tiberius     |
| _____ 4. Synagogue      | d. Twelve basketsful   |
| _____ 5. Sea of Galilee | e. Two hundred denarii |

**Answer These Questions:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The *number* of men named “Simon” in this chapter. Name them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The *number* of apostles mentioned in this chapter by name. Name them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The *number* of boats used to carry the apostles across the Sea of Tiberius.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The *number* of men each barley loaf had to feed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The *numbers* into which the hungry crowd was divided. (Mark 6:40)

- BONUS QUESTIONS:**
1. This is a “chapter of numbers.” How many numbers does John use? List them and the verses in which they appear.
  2. Compare John 6:16-21 with Matthew 14:24-36 and Mark 6:47-56:
    - a. What familiar part of the story does John omit?
    - b. How is Luke’s treatment of the “water-walking” account different from the others?
    - c. What do Matthew and Mark add to the “follow-up” of the story that John says nothing about?

### CHAPTER SEVEN: “BOLD CHALLENGES”

“If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine...”  
“Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.”

#### Jn.7:1-10 DELAYING TACTICS

1. “After these things” obviously refers to the things recorded in chapter six: Jesus feeding the five thousand, walking on the water, teaching about spiritual bread and drink, and desertion by many of Jesus’ followers.
2. It is interesting to note John’s concern with the chronology of events. “After these things” is also used in 3:22, 6:1, and 21:1. Specific time references are found in 1:29,35,43; 2:1; 4:43; 5:1; 6:22, and in many other places.
3. Jesus had left Judea following His confrontation in chapter five with the Jewish authorities about “making Himself equal with God.” Perhaps as much as eighteen months were occupied with activities outside of Judea while He “walked in Galilee.” The Jewish leaders had already sought to kill him before He left Judea (5:16), and He had no reason to suppose that their hatred of Him had abated over time. His safety was still in great jeopardy in Judea.
4. The Feast of Tabernacles was one of the three major feasts commanding the attendance of Jewish males. It came on the fifteenth day of Tisri [September-October], halfway between Passovers. It was originally observed for seven days, but over time it had been expanded to occupy eight days. The feast celebrated the blessings of permanent homes [as opposed to makeshift dwellings in the wilderness] and the fruitful harvests of the Promised Land. It was also called the “Feast of Ingathering” (Exodus 34:22).
5. It does not seem plausible that Jesus’ fleshly brothers doubted whether He would attend the feast in Jerusalem. He was known to be a conscientious keeper of the Law, and as such would not have deliberately missed the celebration. Jesus probably had already announced His intention to go secretly to the feast because of the opposition in Jerusalem. Such a plan would have confused His brothers because anyone with so great a mission as professed by Jesus should be anxious to receive as much publicity as possible. John clearly says that they were not yet “believers,” but they appear to admit a uniqueness in the “works that He was doing.” Perhaps they anticipated additional works being performed in Judea that might be helpful in resolving their own uncertainties about their brother. These brothers later became believers (Acts 1:14).
6. Jesus’ plan for secrecy was driven by the fact that “his time” [*kairos*] had not come. This word often means an “opportune or seasonal time” (Thayer). The time for

*aggressive* action would come soon [e.g., in the triumphal entrance], but God's wisdom discouraged such openness at the present. Unimportant pursuits, such as those of the Lord's brothers, may be unaffected by a divine schedule, but Jesus' activities had to be governed strictly by God's own timetable. One time might be as good as any other for them, but the world's hatred for the Lord had to be factored into whatever He did during this period of His life on earth.

7. Jesus remained in Galilee until the opportunity arose for Him to travel in secret to Judea. He did not break His promise or change His plan. He acted in keeping with circumstances that would best serve God's purposes as He followed the path laid out for Him by the Father. Luke (9:52) reveals that His route took Him through Samaria and away from the crowds of travelers moving along the indirect but more orthodox road through Perea.
8. The Lord's visit in Jerusalem would last for several days and would occupy John's Gospel through chapter ten, verse 39.

### **Jn.7:11-24 JUDGING RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT**

1. Jesus' presence at the feast was expected, and Jewish leaders sought to find Him. They anticipated opportunities to confront and ensnare Him in situations that might enhance their evil purpose to destroy Him.
2. In fact, the Savior was the object of many expectations. The crowds were anxious to see Him, but they were very divided in their opinions about what they would see when He was found. Some considered Him to be a "good man," while others held Him to be a deceiver of the people. Those with opinions were careful to protect those opinions from the public view for fear of reprisal from the Jewish authorities who would have wished for Jesus to be completely ignored as a significant figure among the populace. The debate about Christ's character was lively but subdued. "There was much *murmuring* among the people concerning Him."
3. During the feast, Jesus made an unexpectedly **Bold Move**. In the midst of secrecy, He went into the temple to teach. John does not explain how this action fit into His plan for avoiding unnecessary antagonism from the Jewish leaders. However, the situation evidently offered the *right* opportunity for teaching important lessons about the faulty basis upon which opposition to Jesus rested.
4. The Jews [leaders] who heard Him teach were not impressed by *what* He taught but by *how* He presented Himself as a teacher. They knew He had not attended one of the prestigious training schools from which all recognized rabbis came. We do not know, of course, just what evidence of "knowing letters" Jesus displayed, but it is a mistake to think that His instruction could only appeal to the lowly and uneducated.
5. The basic problem of the Jewish leadership in their role as guides and governors of Jewish religion was their pervading scorn of any "truth" that did not emanate from their own preferences and prejudices. Their most pressing need was to face the fact that God's mind was superior to their minds in all things and that their responsibility to the people was not to filter His mind through theirs so that the masses would become subject to *their* will and not *God's*.

6. This conflict over what constituted “truth” underpinned every confrontation that the Master Teacher had with the orthodox teachers of the Law. It was important to seize every opportunity to stress that His doctrine and theirs came from two very *different* sources. The crowd of worshipers might profit from a good lesson on divine authority as they stood by and listened to this exchange between the Lord and His Jewish detractors.
7. Jesus never made any claim for any human origin of His teaching. He had come to do and teach the Father’s will in everything (Hebrews 10:9). The wide-ranging traditions taught by the rabbis denied any similar claim that they might make.
8. Another flaw in the Jews’ approach to teaching the Law was in their *attitude* toward “truth.” Their deepest desire was *not* to insist on what was *right* about their message but what was *advantageous* to their position as leaders of the people. No one could ever arrive at real truth with that motivation.
9. On the other hand, *anyone* [teacher or taught; leader or led] can successfully measure the divine validity of any doctrine if his quest genuinely is only about what is *true*. Intellectual honesty and good common sense will go far in leading the seeker to find God’s will. We have been provided with ample proofs and evidences from every area of human existence by which to test and measure God’s word *externally*. The *internal* evidences will also remove any doubts about the heavenly inspiration of “every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.” Additionally, the *practical demonstrations* of the divine wisdom embedded in every God-breathed doctrine speak volumes to the conscientious student of the word about what is “truth.”
10. “If you truly wish to know the origin of My teaching, a good and honest heart will lead you to the right decision!” What a **BOLD CHALLENGE** to the consciences of people in every age!
11. Unlike the rabbis and other Jewish teachers, Jesus made no claim for self-glory. It was the glory of God that He promoted by what He taught. Being free from any human agenda was perhaps the best advertisement for the truths Jesus advocated.
12. The *practice* of Jewish teachers with regard to the Law was condemning to what they *taught* about it. The Law plainly declared, “Thou shalt *not* kill.” Yet, those who bound that Law on others were themselves eager to kill Jesus if the opportunity should present itself (John 5:6). Jesus called attention to their evil intent because the worshipers who were listening to this exchange needed to know about this serious inconsistency between *teaching* and *practice*.
13. This charge made by Jesus against the teachers involved behavior that some of “the people” knew nothing about. It impressed them as a bizarre accusation that only a demon-possessed man would make.
14. It was likely that others in the crowd knew about Jesus’ earlier encounter with these leaders about the cripple He had healed on the Sabbath at Bethesda’s pool (John 5:1-15) and how these men had “marvelled” [were astonished, surprised] that He had deliberately violated the “sanctity” of the Sabbath. Their persecution of the Healer apparently had been made public knowledge in Jerusalem.
15. The Bethesda confrontation had been a prime example of how the Jewish teachers consistently mishandled Moses’ Law while insisting on strict obedience by

the people to everything they taught. They had vigorously objected to any healing on the Sabbath, and they had appealed to the Law to sustain their objection.

16. The Law forbade any work on the Sabbath (Exodus 20:10). However, the authorities saw no problem with circumcising a child when his eighth day of life fell on a Sabbath day. Even though “the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27), these men were willing to make an exception to the “work law” to accommodate circumcision but were totally unwilling to except the removal of a thirty-eight year affliction from a suffering man.. That surely said something about their hearts and their lack of interest in other people.
17. Jesus ended this exchange with another **BOLD CHALLENGE**, both to the teachers and those who were taught: “Do not judge according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment.” The rabbis made unfair treatment under the Law *appear* to be fair by the application of their traditional interpretations that had no connection with God’s intent in the Law. Jesus’ citation of their handling of circumcision and healing on the Sabbath was a good example of how far they had strayed from “righteous judgment.” Any judgment made about Jesus’ character, claims, and behavior should be based on what *was right*, not on what someone *said was right!*

#### **John 7:25-31 MISTAKEN IDENTITY**

1. Onlookers who lived in Jerusalem were aware of the pernicious plot of the authorities to kill Jesus. Yet, in spite of the leaders’ avowed intention to destroy their adversary, they were standing by and allowing Him to “**speak boldly**” without any concerted effort on their part to stop Him. This was perplexing to the observers.
2. Could it be that some new information about Jesus had been discovered that lent some credence to His claims of being the Christ and that made the rulers reluctant to take any overt action against Him?
3. Such a possibility was as quickly dismissed as it had been raised. Everyone “*knew*” that this man was a Galilean from Nazareth and that it was an established “*fact*” that the origin of the Messiah’s appearance would be a complete mystery when it occurred. This strange position held sway among the people, despite the proclamation of the Scriptures that Bethlehem, the “city of David,” would be the birthplace of the Christ [e.g., Micah 5:2].
4. These people who thought they knew so much about Jesus were mistaken about *who He was* and *where He came from*. They supposed that He was merely a carpenter’s son, the son of Mary whom they knew, and the brother of several men and women also known to them (Mark 6:3). They assumed that He was just a man from the humble village of Nazareth. He was, of course, all of these things, but what they did not know was that He was *so much more!*
5. The Christ had not “come of Himself,” [i.e., He did not have only human origins], but He had been sent into the world by One they professed to “know” well but did not know at all. The “true story” about Jesus began with *God*, not with Mary and Joseph. It focused on *heaven*, not on Bethlehem or Nazareth. These were facts they could not accept, because they really didn’t “know” [approve, accept] God on His

own terms. Truth for them had to be channeled through their own traditions and personal preferences.

6. This exposure of their ignorance of the Scriptures and of obvious facts did nothing to cause the leaders to feel more kindly disposed toward Jesus. They wanted to take Him and stop His “rantings” before the people, but they did nothing. John says that their inability to act was due to the fact that the Lord’s “*hour* had not yet come.” This is a different word [*hora*] from the one used in verses 6 and 8. It means, “the time when one must undergo the destiny appointed him by God-- ‘one’s hour’ ” (Thayer, p. 679). Christ’s destiny was the cross. Nothing must be allowed to interfere with the Father’s plans for sacrificing the Lamb. We are not told what influences God may have used to frustrate the evil designs of the Lord’s enemies, but whatever He did was effective.
7. Not only were Christ’s opponents unable to do Him bodily harm but also they could not prevent “many of the people” from believing on Him [at least superficially]. It seems that these “believers” were not so much impressed by Jesus’ claims to divinity and by His personal credentials as they were by the “signs” that He had done. Even the signs were inconclusive for them. *If He was not the Christ*, He obviously enjoyed some kind of special relationship to God. Perhaps they should move slowly in taking any public position against Him.

#### **John 7:32-36 A PUZZLING DECLARATION**

1. The Pharisees were alarmed to discover that Jesus might be gaining favor with some of the people. They could remain still no longer, lest a small ripple of approval should grow into a huge wave of support for Him. They sent officers [temple guards] to take Him. Of course, *they* did not know what *we* know: *His hour was not yet come*, and nothing they could do would thwart the activities of this man.
2. The officers *found* Jesus (verse 45), but they chose not to apprehend Him. It appears that the declaration in verse 34 about finding Him was a message sent from Jesus by these officers to the Pharisees and chief priests. He could be found *now*, but the time was at hand when that opportunity would be gone. Where He would go they could not come. This promise probably carried a dual meaning. They would indeed seek Him physically in vain after His death and burial. But, more than that, He soon would return to heaven, where no unbeliever could ever come.
3. Being unable to explain what this enigmatic declaration meant, the Jews made light of what Jesus had said. “Where could He hide that we could not find His hiding place?” “Would He dare to go where He might ‘teach the Greeks’ [*we* certainly would not go there!] and thereby automatically disqualify Himself as the Jewish Messiah?” “What an absurd statement He has made!”

#### **John 7:37-44 DIVIDED OPINIONS**

1. On the eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus repeated the metaphor He first

introduced in chapter four. He is the *water of life*. In still another **BOLD CHALLENGE**, He promised that *living water* will flow from the hearts of believers. As He gives eternal life to believers, they in turn will become faith-bearers by whom other believers will also receive the hope of everlasting life [See John 4:14.].

2. John offers an explanation of these remarks that might have been difficult for some to understand. The Lord was looking ahead, John says, to the time [Pentecost] when the Holy Spirit's message of salvation would become available to lost people. This would not occur until Jesus had been "glorified" in the resurrection.
3. Perhaps the traditional ceremonies with which Israel celebrated this feast prompted Jesus to revisit His metaphor about living water. It is said that for the first seven days, water was brought from the pool of Siloam to be poured out before the altar. This ritual reminded participants of the water divinely provided to Israel in the wilderness wanderings. The "rock" that graciously gave the life-sustaining water was the Christ (1Cor.10:4) [McGarvey]. No water was carried on the last day of the feast, signifying that the means of physical life eventually will cease. The Lord's reference to His *living* [enduring] *water* was very timely.
4. A marked division of opinion about Jesus' identity prevailed among the crowd that heard Him promise living water to sin-thirsty souls. Some identified Him with a "Prophet" [probably the one promised in Deut.18:15]; others went further in raising the possibility that He might be "the Christ."
5. This discussion about identity might have been a repetition by John of the debate already reported in this chapter [vs.11-13 and vs. 26-31], or it may be an entirely new statement of the varying opinions of Jesus that people entertained as they saw Him from different perspectives. If it is new, some of those taking part in the controversy had a better knowledge of the Scriptures than some in the prior dispute. Christ, they said, must come out of Bethlehem, not Galilee, as everyone seemed to suppose that Jesus had done.
6. "So there was a division among the people because of Him." Christ always has and always will divide people in their thinking and in their allegiance. It is crucial that we carefully examine all available evidence in determining *Who* and *What* He is to be in our lives!

#### **Jn.7:45-52 UNRIGHTEOUS JUDGMENTS**

1. The officers who had been dispatched to seize Jesus [verse 32] returned empty-handed to the Pharisees and chief priests. Their only explanation for their failure to accomplish their mission was, "No man ever spoke like this Man" [They likely would not have capitalized "man."]. Whatever they may have decided about the object of their manhunt, they were sure that they wanted no part in the plans of their leaders for this teacher who taught so differently from any other they had ever listened to.
2. The authorities were highly indignant at this response by the officers. Were they no more stable in their religious convictions than the less sophisticated masses who didn't enjoy their advantage of being closely associated with the temple and its

celebrations of traditional Law?

3. Another group of people had at another time discovered that this man's teaching stood in stark contrast to that of the scribes and Pharisees (Matt.7:28,29). He taught the people with authority. William Barclay comments:

"Jesus had been to no Rabbinic school. It was the practice that only the disciple of an accredited teacher was entitled to expound Scripture and to talk about the law. No Rabbi ever made a statement on his own authority. He always began: 'There is a teaching that...' He then went on to cite quotations and authorities for every statement he made. And here was this Galilean carpenter, a man with no training whatever, daring to quote and expound Moses to them."

4. The Pharisees and scribes entertained the notion that they alone were not susceptible to religious deception. An aura of intellectual elitism surrounded their every judgment and every pronouncement. Other men might be deceived by such "imposters" like this Jesus, but not them! They were too smart for that! Therefore, they were *sure* that no ruler or Pharisee would ever consider this man to be anything other than a religious renegade.
5. Already, however, the solidarity of their opposition to Jesus was being eroded. Nicodemus, a respected ruler who was called "the teacher of the Jews," had displayed a high regard for Him (John 3:1,2). Others would soon follow his lead. Just a short while later, John will report that "even among the rulers *many* believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue" (John 12:42). One prominent Pharisee (Acts 26:5) would even become an apostle of Jesus, entrusted with the responsibility of taking His gospel to the despised Gentiles.
6. The Pharisees wrongly supposed that their "knowledge" of the Law would serve as a protective shield to make them impervious to such preposterous things as Jesus was claiming. But the vulnerability of the common people was another matter. Their lack of knowledge of the [traditional] Law would condemn them to certain deception and ultimate condemnation. Their advice to the returning officers was, "Don't join in with those ignorant people!" F.F. Bruce observes:

"The disparaging judgment pronounced on the crowd expresses a characteristic attitude of many Pharisees towards the common people. The common people-- 'the people of the land' as they called them-- simply could not be expected to master the details of the oral law, 'the tradition of the elders,' and therefore they were always liable to infringe it. Even the liberal Rabbi Hillel, of the generation before Christ, summed up this attitude when he said, 'No member of the common people is pious.' From the Pharisees' point of view, the common people could easily be misled by any plausible teacher, because of their ignorance of the true interpretation of the law."
7. Nicodemus, remembered from his "new-birth conference" with the Savior in chapter three, puts in another appearance to speak favorably in behalf of Jesus. His appeal now is not so much a personal endorsement as a **BOLD CHALLENGE** to his colleagues for *fairness* in their treatment of the Lord. The Law of Moses demanded a fair hearing of evidence and an unbiased disposition of disputed cases ( Exodus 23:1-3; Deut. 1:16, etc.), but these men were acting in direct violation of its demands in their behavior toward Jesus. Rabbinic law said, "Flesh and blood may pass judgment on a man if it hears his words; if it does not hear them, it can-

- not establish its judgment.” Roman law agreed in this requirement (Acts 25:16).
8. The Pharisees were incapable of receiving criticism about their conduct from any quarter. They would as quickly turn on one of their own number who might question the rectitude of their actions as on anyone else. Nicodemus’ appeal for fairness was greeted with scornful rejection. “Are you of no better quality than this offensive Galilean? You profess to know and teach the Law; yet you are defending this man as a prophet, when everyone knows that the Scriptures clearly specify that *no* prophet can come from Galilee.”
  9. Of course, the Pharisees, who loved to parade their knowledge before any admiring audience, were wrong again about their Scriptural facts. The prophet Jonah had come from Galilee (2Kings 14:25). It is also possible that Elijah (1Kings 17:1) and Nahum (Nahum 1:1) had their origins in Galilee. As with so many other people, they seemed concerned more with how the Scriptures might be used to sustain their religious positions than with handling those Scriptures with appropriate reverence and accuracy.

**Complete These Statements:**

1. Jesus remained in \_\_\_\_\_ because the \_\_\_\_\_ sought to \_\_\_\_\_ Him.
2. The \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus urged Him to go to \_\_\_\_\_ to attend the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The people \_\_\_\_\_ about Jesus, some saying He was \_\_\_\_\_, but others claiming that He was \_\_\_\_\_ the people.
4. Christ promised that all who \_\_\_\_\_ to obey God will \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_, whether or not it is from \_\_\_\_\_.
5. “Do not \_\_\_\_\_ according to appearance, but \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_.”
6. Some \_\_\_\_\_ in Jesus because even the \_\_\_\_\_ would do no more \_\_\_\_\_ than He had done.
7. The Lord asserted that men would \_\_\_\_\_ Him and not \_\_\_\_\_ Him because they could not \_\_\_\_\_ where He was.
8. Some asked whether Jesus intended to go to the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_.
9. “Living water” was related to \_\_\_\_\_ receiving the \_\_\_\_\_. This would happen only after \_\_\_\_\_ had been \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Many said Jesus was “the \_\_\_\_\_” but not “the \_\_\_\_\_” because He came from \_\_\_\_\_ instead of \_\_\_\_\_, the town of \_\_\_\_\_.

**True (T) or False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Many of the events in this chapter occurred during the Passover Feast.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Jesus’ brothers were at this time among His most ardent disciples.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Judea offered a safer environment for Jesus than Galilee.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Jesus went to the temple to teach on the last day of the Feast.

**True (T) or False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The Jews had no problem with circumcising on the Sabbath day.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. A popular concept was that Christ's background would be a complete mystery.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. No one could harm Jesus because "His hour" had not come.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Jesus assured His foes that they could always find Him when they wanted to.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Many did not expect "the Prophet" and "the Christ" to be the same individual.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Nicodemus' appeal was well received by the other leaders of the Jews.

**Match the Persons, Places, and Things:**

- |                       |                  |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| _____ 1. Galilee      | a. David         |
| _____ 2. Pharisees    | b. No prophets   |
| _____ 3. Greeks       | c. Chief priests |
| _____ 4. Bethlehem    | d. Dispersion    |
| _____ 5. Living water | e. Holy Spirit   |

**Answer These Questions:**

- 1. Moses "gave" the Jews *two* things: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2. *Two* principal sections of Palestine are mentioned: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3. *Four* specific or general identities or characteristics are assigned to Jesus: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4. The *three* groups of people involved in trying to arrest Jesus were: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5. *Two* things done on the Sabbath are discussed: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

**BONUS QUESTION:** At least 18 proper names (capitalized) of persons, places, or things appear in this chapter. Can you locate them? List them with verses where they are found. (Do not repeat names or include words like "Him," "Man," etc.)

## CHAPTER EIGHT: “BOLD ACCUSATIONS”

“...whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.”

“You are of *your* father the devil...”

“And if I say, ‘I do not know Him,’ I shall be a liar like you...”

### Jn.8:2-11 CONFRONTATION ABOUT A SINNER

1. Considerable disagreement has existed among scholars over the years about the *authenticity* and *chronology* of this passage. There remains some uncertainty as to whether it is from the pen of John the apostle or from some other writer. Also, some have questioned the placement of the passage and suggest that it might better be located elsewhere in this gospel or even in another N.T. book. An addendum will be included at the end of the notes on this chapter to consider a few of the pertinent facts surrounding the controversy.
2. The passage will be treated here as it appears in most popular versions.
3. Much of the teaching that Jesus did in chapter seven appears to have been done in the temple (7:14). Here, He returns to the temple to resume His work.
4. John does not reveal what subject(s) Christ might have been discussing with “all the people,” but whatever they were, He was interrupted by some scribes and Pharisees bringing to Him a sinful woman and an urgent demand that He make a decision on what punishment should be given to her.
5. The Law of Moses was clear that adultery was a serious sin that was worthy of harsh punishment:
  - a. *Death* was the punishment prescribed for *both* men and women who might become involved in the sin (Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22);
  - b. *Stoning* was the method of punishment prescribed for parties guilty of this behavior (Deut.22:24);
  - c. *Witnesses* to sins worthy of stoning were charged with the duty of throwing the first stones at the guilty parties. The stones of others would follow (Deut.17:7).
6. So, these scribes and Pharisees were *legally* correct in their assessment of the woman’s situation. Under the Law, she should be stoned to death. However, this law had fallen into disuse, and the death penalty had been removed by the Romans from the hands of the Jewish authorities. In this situation the leaders thought they had found an opportunity to lay a trap for Jesus.
7. “What do you say?” was not a request for guidance in a difficult situation but an attempt to pressure the Lord either to take a position that would raise legal problems with the Romans or make a statement that would expose Him to the people as someone who was *not* really as devoted to God’s Law as He professed to be.

8. This was not the only time that Jesus' foes resorted to such tactics. At another time, He was urged to side either with the Romans or with the people in regard to a Jew's duty to pay taxes to the government in power (Matt.22:17-22). His enemies were no more successful in ensnaring Him then than they are now.
9. The Lord was immune to entrapment. Heavenly wisdom always responded in a way that mere human cleverness never could. His answer to a difficult question, though indirect, was clear and overpowering in its meaning to His questioners.
10. Jesus *wrote* instead of *speaking*. John doesn't tell us *what* He wrote. One Armenian manuscript gives this translation: "He himself, bowing his head, was writing with his finger on the earth to declare their sins; and they were seeing their several sins on the stones." Barclay suggests that one meaning of *katagraphein* might be to "write down a record against someone." The Law imposed the death penalty on both guilty parties. The woman's accusers had ignored the guilt of her partner. None were "without sin" in this regard. "Throwing the first stone" was out of the question!
11. The import of the Law was that no one was eligible to participate in punishing another for a sin that was identical to something of which he was guilty himself. It is also suggested that *anamartetos* not only can mean "without sin" but also "without sinful desires." That would certainly exclude *any* of the witnesses from carrying out the prescribed punishment, even if they dared. And since Jesus was not a witness to the sin, He was under no obligation to press for the execution of the sinner.
12. Self-convicted in their consciences, the woman's accusers left the scene, oldest to youngest [reflecting an increasing awareness of sin's cumulative nature?], leaving the woman alone with Jesus.
13. There had been no denial of guilt by the woman--the evidence against her was *undeniable*. But there would be no condemnation [to death] by either Jesus or the frustrated accusers. Nor was there any approval of her sin by the Lord-- "go and *sin no more*." But there *was* an abundance of forgiveness and encouragement for remaking her shattered life into something better.
14. This episode reveals much about the true moral character of many of the Jewish religious leaders. Merrill Tenney observes that "the utter heartlessness of her captors was as immoral as the promiscuity of the woman." He contrasts the conduct of Jesus toward this sinner with the behavior of the leaders:

<u>Scribes and Pharisees</u>	<u>Jesus</u>
Brought her as a captive	Questioned her as a free woman
Used her as bait for their trap	Respected her as a human being
Saw the blackness of her past	Saw the brightness of a better future
Eager to destroy her	Ready to save her

**Jn.8:12    THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD**

1. If the first section of this chapter appears out of chronological order in John's account, then this verse possibly follows immediately after verse forty-four of chapter seven while Jesus was still teaching in the temple. This declaration about "light" would then become a continuation of the Lord's defense of His true identity.

2. "I am the light of the world" is the *second* of the great "I Am's" of John's gospel. The first occurred in 6:35: "I am the bread of life." Just as that first claim caused confusion and disagreement among the Jews in the synagogue, so now this latest proclamation will provoke a firestorm of criticism and opposition among Jesus' detractors in the temple. The remainder of chapter eight records the **BOLD ACCUSATIONS** made by Jesus about the Jewish leadership and the equally **BOLD ACCUSATIONS** directed by the scribes and Pharisees at the Savior.
3. This chapter is also largely composed of the reiteration and re-emphasis of many truths already introduced to us in this book:

<u>Lesson</u>	<u>Reference in chapter 8</u>	<u>Previous reference</u>
(a) Light of the world	verse 12	1:4,5,9; 3:19-21
(b) Self-witnessing	verse 14	5:31
(c) Judging	verse 15	7:24
(d) Knowing God	verse 19	7:28
(e) Seeking Jesus	verse 21	7:34
(f) Jesus sent from God	verses 26,42	7:16,29
(g) Teaching God's doctrine	verse 26	7:16
(h) Lifting up Christ	verse 28	3:14
(i) Glorifying God	verse 29	7:18
(j) Knowing God's doctrine	verse 47	7:17

4. Jesus' proclamation about being the "light of the world" was made during the Feast of Tabernacles (7:2). William Barclay offers this interesting comment:

"On the evening of the first day, there was a ceremony called the Illumination of the Temple. It took place in the Court of the Women. The court was surrounded with deep galleries, erected to hold the spectators. In the centre, four great candelabra were prepared. When the dark came, the four great candelabra were lit and, it was said, they sent such a blaze of light throughout Jerusalem that every courtyard was lit up with their brilliance. Then all night long, until cock-crow the next morning, the greatest and the wisest and the holiest men in Israel danced before the Lord and sang psalms of joy and praise while the people watched."

Under such circumstances, Jesus' analogy would surely take on added significance. Man-made light might impress onlookers, but it would soon fade. *His light* would provide permanent guidance to *all* the world, not just to Jerusalem. It would last not just until the morning but would shine forever.

5. Light has always been associated with divinity in Jewish history. Moses witnessed the light of a burning bush; he acquired a brightness of face when he spoke with God in the mount and had to wear a veil when he approached the people. The Lord led Israel by night in the wilderness in a pillar of fire, and ample provisions for light were made in both tabernacle and temple with the golden candlesticks. Light signified a special relationship between God and His holy nation.
6. On a physical level, light is also a precious thing. It is an essential element for the physical life of plants and animals, including man. It provides an environment in which the gift of sight in both humans and animals can function properly. On the spiritual plane, Jesus guides man's soul with the light of truth, assuring him successful navigation as he moves through this world toward the world to come.

7. Of course, Christ's light shines on a darkened world through the message of the gospel: "...our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2Timothy 1:10).

#### **Jn.8:13-18 ACCUSING JESUS OF FALSE WITNESS**

1. The first accusation made against the Lord by His critics was: "You are not allowed to bear witness of yourself as the light of the world."
2. In chapter five, Jesus had acknowledged, "If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true" (5:31). He expected no one to accept His claims without proof outside of Himself. He offered *several* other sources by which His claims can be validated. Now, He makes a greater demand on the faith of others than He did before. "*Even if My word stands alone, it is still true. Humanity cannot judge divinity because it can only judge by the flesh and there are realities that exist beyond the physical world. I only am in a position to judge My own identity and to declare that identity to the world because I alone have all the facts to assure a 'righteous judgment.'*"
3. Christ's word does *not* stand alone. The Father has borne Him witness repeatedly so that all may be certain of Jesus' identity. By the voices of the prophets, including John the Baptizer, by His own voice at Jesus' baptism [and later at His transformation], by Jesus' singular teaching and His mighty works, and by the other-worldliness of His conduct among men, God had testified with power, "This *is* My Son!"
4. If the Law accepted the words of two *fallible men* to establish a truth, then surely the words of two *divine Beings* should be adequate to settle the controversy about Jesus' identity.

#### **Jn.8:19,20 JESUS' PARENTAGE IN QUESTION**

1. Jesus' claim to the witness of the Father was clearly a claim to divinity, and this the religious leaders could not tolerate. If they could not challenge Him on the level of His *spiritual* parentage, they certainly could deal with Him by citing the *physical* realities of His public identity.
2. Jesus was well known to be the son of the humble carpenter Joseph (Matt.13:55). It is fairly certain that Joseph had died by this time and was no longer available to testify about the circumstances surrounding Jesus' birth. It was absurd for Jesus to appeal to Joseph as a witness in His behalf as they thought He was doing.
3. Even if Joseph were available to reveal the true details of Jesus' origins, these evil men insinuated that he might not be able to verify an honorable birth for his "son." It is possible that rumors had long circulated among some people that Jesus had been born under the shadow of sin to an unwed mother and an unknown father. It was not only, "Where is your father?" but "Who [really] *is* your father?" This **BOLD ACCUSATION** of illegitimacy was the best weapon they had, and they did not hesitate to use it to answer this man's claim for respectability, to say nothing of His bid for divinity.
4. Since the Father and the Son bore witness *together*, and since each one testifies of His relationship to the other, both must be accepted ["known"] or rejected as

- one. Men cannot “know” the Father without “knowing” the Son because the Father endorsed the divine connection between Himself and His Son, Jesus Christ.
5. This exchange between the Lord and His adversaries took place in the “treasury,” that busy part of the temple where monies were collected for various ceremonial activities of the Jewish religion. Thirteen large trumpet-shaped receptacles received the donations of the givers in the Court of Women.
  6. “The hour” established by God for Jesus’ arrest was still in the future, so “no one laid hands on Him,” nor could they until the time was fulfilled as planned by God.

**Jn.8:21-24 *JESUS WARNS ABOUT DYING IN SIN***

1. Prejudice is hard to overcome. It was very unlikely that these hardened enemies of the Lord would ever repent and accept His Messiahship. The Savior’s concern for their souls was deep. A clear and sober warning to them was in order.
2. Jesus’ time among men was limited. Their opportunities for personal contact and personal acceptance of the numerous proofs of His divine Nature were also limited. A time would come when they *would* “seek” Him. That would soon come to pass when Christ’s enemies looked for Him in the Garden of Gethsemane to take Him by force to the cross. Their part in the crucifixion would display in them a consuming and unrelenting disbelief of His divine Nature. Most of them would no doubt die while still responsible for their “sin” [singular--verse 21-- firm disbelief] and “sins” [plural-- verse 24--particular transgressions, the fruit of unbelief]. This warning was given in love, not in vindictiveness.
3. Jesus would soon return to His Father in heaven. Unbelief would prevent all unbelievers from going there to be with Him.
4. The scribes and Pharisees characteristically reacted to the idea that someone other than they could control a given situation. It offended them that Jesus thought He could hide from them in a place where they could not go. They concluded that only *one place* existed like that-- Gehenna, where, they contended, all suicides went, and where no Pharisee possibly could go.
5. These unbelieving men could never understand Jesus’ message about His role as “The Way, the Truth, and the Life.” They supposed that they already possessed all necessary things within the practice of their self-determined religion. Their mind-set was centered below; His was focused on things above. So long as this difference existed, “Where I go you cannot come.”

**Jn.8:25-30 *THE GREATEST PROOF OF ALL***

1. The easiest approach to dealing with Jesus’ strange claims about Himself was not to deal with them at all. In their minds, the reason for not grasping His meaning was in Him and not in themselves. “Tell us plainly what you mean about these things you say and about just who you really are.”
2. Jesus’ reply was unsatisfying. He was still the same One He had always been. His claims for divinity were unchanged. At the present, He had nothing more to offer

them than God's testimony, and that was just what He had been presenting since the onset of His ministry among them.

3. Knowing that their hearts were unprepared to change their attitude about the Father's *testimony*, His hope would have to rest on God's great *demonstration* of the Father/Son relationship that would take place on the cross and in the resurrection to follow. That was when God would declare Jesus to be His Son "*with power*" (Romans 1:4).
4. Some of those now committed to Jesus' destruction would one day be moved by this ultimate confirmation of His heavenly origin and would accept Him in faith and obedience. This began to occur on Pentecost under the influence of gospel preaching about Christ (Acts 2:23, 24, 32-38, 41). That would be the great blessing that would come from His being "lifted up." [See John 3:14-17; 12:32,33.]
5. Some things that Jesus' detractors would not *now* admit, they would later accept:
  - a. "I am He"-- the divine Son of God, as I claim to be;
  - b. I do everything in unison with the Father; what *I* do, *He* does;
  - c. All My teaching originates with God; reject it, and you reject God's word;
  - d. The Father supports Me in all I do on the earth; I am never alone;
  - e. What I do is completely pleasing to the Father.
6. The hardest of hearts require the strongest evidence. Thankfully, God was not disinclined to furnish whatever proof was necessary to soften these hard hearts.
7. Jesus' words on this occasion were not altogether without effect. "Many" who heard them believed. These believers were likely from among those who listened to this exchange between Jesus and the scribes and Pharisees. His most ardent religious foes probably remained unmoved by His latest pronouncements of truth.

**Jn.8:31-36 SLAVES TO SIN**

1. Whether these "believers" made some open confession to Christ of their new-found faith, or whether His divine knowledge of men's hearts (John 2:24) revealed their belief to Him, Jesus knew that their weak faith must be strengthened by "abiding" in His word. To become disciples "indeed," they must ultimately make a commitment that they were unaware of at this moment.
2. Only Christ's truth can break the bonds of sin and set our spirits free from sin's burdens, dangers, and disappointments.
3. In this statement, Jesus made a **BOLD ACCUSATION** that those in His audience who continued to disbelieve were *not* free. Of course, He spoke of *spiritual* freedom, but His foes thought only of *physical* liberty, and they were offended again by His accusation.
4. The statement about the truth making people free had been directed to those who had just believed in Him. However, it was "they" from among the disbelieving scribes and Pharisees [those who sought to kill Him--verse 40] who raised a strong objection to what He had said about freedom. Their pride simply could not "hold still" at what Jesus had spoken for somebody else's benefit!
5. They denied any possibility of bondage for Israel because they were "children of

- Abraham.” Physical lineage, they *thought*, was protection enough against any national enemy. Jesus’ promise about freedom was totally without merit. It was blasphemous to suggest that any faithful Jew could ever be enslaved to anyone!
6. Of course, Jewish history was replete with records of captivity and control by other nations. Beginning in Egypt, Jews had been subjected to a bondage that was repeated in their contacts with Assyria, Babylon, and, most recently, Rome. Partial subjection had been imposed on them by the Philistines, the Syrians, and other peoples during the days of their judges and afterward.
  7. It must be admitted that captivity had not broken the spirit of the Jewish nation. Physical bondage had not caused them to recant the freedom they believed was absolutely connected to their physical descent from Father Abraham. Perhaps this freedom of the spirit is what these leaders were defending.
  8. It was slavery to sin that should be their concern. All are under that bondage because all are sinners. The recent confrontation about the sinful woman had made that very clear (verses 1-11)!
  9. As slaves to sin, men are subject to ejection from God’s “house” [people] at any time of His choosing. They hold no real claim on His beneficence. A “son” [one made free from slavery by the “Son”] has the assurance of permanent residence with the Father. That is freedom [from the winds of change] “indeed.”

**Jn.8:37-47 A SPURIOUS CLAIM**

1. The scribes and Pharisees in this crowd of people had not hesitated to disparage the parentage of Jesus. They had denied His claim of Sonship to the Father, and they had even insinuated that His physical parentage was suspect. Now it was time for Jesus to return the favor by exposing their spiritual parentage.
2. Already His own **BOLD ACCUSATIONS** and His firm responses to their **BOLD ACCUSATIONS** against Him had resulted in the making of believers. Perhaps an even **bolder** exposure of the vile character and purposes of these unbelievers would pay further dividends.
3. Fleshly attachment to Abraham meant nothing to God. It never had. Faith and faithfulness had *always* been the criteria by which God measures men. People of unquestioned lineage from Abraham had many times perished because of their sins. Why would it be any different now?
4. One of Jesus’ prime claims of His heavenly parentage was that His works were in unison with those of His Father. The best proof that these unbelievers were *not* Abraham’s children was that what *they* did bore no resemblance to what Abraham had done in his walk with God. They had nothing but contempt for Jesus as He did God’s work on earth. Abraham had *honored* God’s servants, as in the case of Melchizadek. [See Hebrews 7:1-9.] Abraham had been positively affected by God’s word borne by messengers [See Genesis 18:16-33.], but these men not only rejected His message but also they sought to kill His messenger!
5. Frustrated by Jesus’ **BOLD ACCUSATIONS** about their lack of connection to Abraham, the leaders adopted another approach to this discussion. If Jesus would

not grant their sonship to Abraham, they had an even *greater* claim to spiritual freedom-- they were the children of *God!* Their spiritual parentage could not be disputed. They could trace a direct relationship to God as far back as Abraham. Their insidious reference to “fornication” likely sprang from rumors surrounding the virgin birth of the Lord, which they were implying had some basis in fact. If they were challenged about this insult to Jesus, they could always claim that their meaning lay in their freedom from idolatry [spiritual fornication]. They scorned the Samaritans because of idolatrous practices they had participated in *since* the removal of the ten tribes into Assyria. However, their hypocrisy stood out in the fact that their own history had plenty of episodes of dalliance with idolatry *before* their own fathers had been taken away by the Babylonians.

6. Jesus immediately countered their claim of being sons of God and their innuendo about rumors of fornication attached to His own birth with His **BOLDEST ACCUSATIONS** of all in this heated exchange.
7. “You are not God’s children because you do not respect His own Son. Family affection would transfer love for the Father to love for the Son. You exhibit *no love* for Me, only intense *hatred*.”
8. Jesus’ opponents were the devil’s children because they displayed an affinity with him that they didn’t show toward God. They did things that pleased Satan and displeased God. They “looked like” the devil in their character and conduct. There was a very strong family resemblance:
  - a. The devil is a *murderer*. He introduced sin into the world, and that resulted in the death of every soul thereafter. The Son of God came to bring *life*, not *death*, to the world. Satan generates hatred among men, and hatred is at the root of all murder and mistreatment of others (1John 3:15);
  - b. The devil is a *liar*. He lied to Eve in the Garden of Eden. He lied to Jesus in the wilderness temptations. He has been the motivator for lies in every age and among all peoples. The Messiah came to bring *truth* and spiritual freedom to those who are caught in the clutches of the evil one.
9. No respectful child would deliberately ignore or dispute his father’s instructions. Yet, Christ’s opponents consistently did just that when God’s message was delivered to them. Either they were wilfully disobedient children or they were children who were obligated to listen to a different father. Either way, they stood condemned for their treatment of Jesus’ proclamations of truth.

**Jn.8:48-51** **DESPERATE ACCUSATIONS**

1. The scribes and Pharisees must have been very disturbed by Jesus’ vigorous attack on their spirituality and worthiness for leadership. An old adage says, “When you can’t answer the message, attack the messenger.” At a loss for a satisfactory response to the Lord’s charges about their spiritual ancestry, the leaders resorted to *two* of the wildest accusations at their disposal:
  - a. You are a Samaritan. Jesus’ detractors had earlier cited His *supposed* birthplace in Nazareth of Galilee (John 7:41). They knew his kindred (Mark 6:3). This

**BOLD ACCUSATION** probably was directed at His behavior rather than His bloodline. The Samaritans were little better than idolaters to the Judeans. Their claims to be God's people were bogus, and they were a disgrace to the history of the sacred nation of Israel. This **Bold Accuser** who dared to question their standing with God behaved very much as a Samaritan would.

- b. You have a demon. Even a Samaritan was incapable of such despicable conduct as Jesus exhibited, claiming to be God's own Son and denying the sonship of Judeans whose loyalty to the Law was unquestioned. Moreover, He had the audacity to openly accuse keepers of the Law of a murderous intent toward Him, when everyone knew that the Law plainly declared, "Thou shalt not kill." Only subhuman influences could drive a man to such extreme conduct. Obviously, this misguided person was under the control of demonic powers!
2. Perhaps the people who had heard Jesus' **BOLD ACCUSATIONS** against the leaders might dismiss the merit of His charges if His own character and behavior could be brought into question. Maybe *reason* could be hidden by *emotion*!
3. The Lord responded to these vile accusations with two obvious and telling facts:
  - a. He had never sought any honor or advantage for Himself in anything He had ever said or done. Men with base origins always do base things. Honor to God had been His sole pursuit in the world;
  - b. He had never sought to do harm to any Jew in any way. Instead, His actions had been directed toward making it possible for them to live forever. What could constitute a more convincing denial of their charges than that?

**Jn.8:52-55 GREATER THAN ABRAHAM?**

1. The leaders were unmoved by Jesus' responses to their charges. They were determined to discredit Him before the people at any cost. His promise of eternal life to those who keep His word seemed to provide another opportunity to make Him appear in an unfavorable light.
2. "Are you greater than Abraham?" Such a claim would be a short route to unpopularity. No one could be greater except God Himself. But Abraham had died even though he heard and obeyed God's word. So did many other holy men such as the great prophets. If *God's* word didn't shield them from death, how can we be shielded just by hearing *Jesus'* word?
3. Only a man under the control of demonic influences or audacious personal egotism would make such ridiculous claims as Jesus had made to the masses. They considered Him to be either a braggart or a madman, and for either reason He was unworthy of their attention.
4. The harsh opposition manifested by the scribes and Pharisees was insufficient to cause Jesus to retract any claim that He had made for Sonhood. Any denial of that claim or any failure on His part to make that claim would be a lie, and He was devoted to telling the *truth*.

**Jn.8:56-59** *A FINAL ACCUSATION*

1. There was one more thing that disqualified these religious authorities from claiming a spiritual relationship to Abraham. Not only did they not behave toward servants of God as Abraham had behaved but also they did not cherish the spiritual values that were so important to Abraham.
2. Abraham “saw” the “day” of Christ with the eye of faith. He believed that in his seed [Christ] the whole of mankind would be blessed (Gen. 3:15). The prospect of Jesus coming into the world to redeem man made Abraham glad. How different had been the reaction to Christ’s appearance by these scribes and Pharisees. They had *not* rejoiced. They were in despair about how to eliminate His influence among the people. Their spiritual outlook was not the same as Abraham’s!
3. His critics never failed to seize every chance to embarrass the Lord. His last **BOLD ACCUSATION** had to be met with one of their own. Now they accuse Him of claiming to have been alive [as a man] during the lifetime of Abraham, who was now dead for many years. This was undeniably the raving of a maniac!
4. Jesus was not nearly fifty years old at this time. Perhaps “fifty” was used as the age of full maturity among the Jews. It was the age at which priests retired from active service in the temple. Jesus was not even old enough to be recognized as an elder among His people, so how could He claim to have lived in Abraham’s time?
5. Of course, the Lord made *no* claim of seeing Abraham. It was Abraham who had seen *Christ’s* “day.” These critics never minded wresting His words to their own purpose just as they wrested the Scriptures to teach what they wanted them to teach. [See 2Peter 3:16.]
6. Jesus’ declaration that, “before Abraham was, I AM,” was not that He had “seen” Abraham [though He had], but that He existed even in Abraham’s time. “I AM” is the expression used by God in speaking to Moses: “I AM WHO I AM.” Moses was to tell the Israelites, “The I AM has sent me” (Exodus 3:14).
7. The Father and the Son are both the “I AM,” for both are eternal in *existence*. Eternal existence is identified only in terms of the *present*, never past or future. Time relates only to humanity, not divinity. One day is the same to God as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day (2Peter 3:8) because time doesn’t measure God’s existence in the same way as it does man’s.
8. Like everything else He had said to them, these “experts” in the Scriptures had no idea what Jesus was talking about. All they knew was that He was a serious threat to the “status quo” of their religious environment and a challenge to their control over the people.
9. They saw, no doubt, that their **BOLD ACCUSATIONS** against Him would not be enough to turn the populace away from Him. More conclusive action would have to be taken to terminate His widening influence. So, they resorted to an act of violence strictly prohibited by Roman law. Stoning was the appropriate punishment for blasphemy such as they were convinced He had committed (Lev.24:16), but any execution of religious criminals had been taken out of their hands by Rome. There could be serious repercussions for any violation of this prohibition.

10. “Desperate times require desperate measures.” Frustrated and angry, the leaders forgot all the reasons why they had hesitated many times before to kill this trouble-maker. They could not now recall the various tactics they had planned by which to destroy His influence with the common people. All that drove them now was the overwhelming instinct of self-preservation-- it’s him or us! Without any thought about the consequences, they “took up stones to throw at Him.”
11. It was still not Jesus’ “hour” to die, nor was this the manner in which death would come. Whether by miraculous intervention or not, Jesus was able to hide and “pass through the midst” of His attackers without harm.
12. Merrill Tenney traces the progression of the Jews’ hostility in this chapter:
  - a. Contradiction-- “Your witness is not true” (verse 13);
  - b. Insinuation-- “Where is your father?” (verse 19);
  - c. Flat denial-- “We have never been in bondage to anyone” (verse 33);
  - d. Deliberate insult-- “You are a Samaritan and have a demon” (verse 48);
  - e. Sarcasm-- “Are you greater than our father Abraham?” (verse 53);
  - f. Violence-- “They took up stones to throw at Him” (verse 59).

### **ADDENDUM ON THE INTEGRITY OF JOHN 7:53-8:11**

Uncertainty prevails among many Biblical scholars about this familiar story that is usually included in John’s Gospel. The doubts entertained by these writers focus on the integrity of the passage and involve *three* questions:

1. Does the story recount an actual event in Jesus’ ministry?
2. Was the passage written by the apostle John as part of his Gospel or by another author?
3. Is its placement as the opening verses of John chapter eight chronologically accurate?

Although no definitive conclusions to these problems are available, there are facts and circumstances that may be helpful to the student of John’s Gospel in arriving at conclusions that are most satisfactory to himself.

#### The Recent Popular Versions

1. The passage appears, without notation, as original in the KJV and Confraternity (Catholic) versions.
2. It is bracketed in the ASV with an explanatory footnote.
3. It is italicized in the RSV with accompanying footnote.
4. The NKJV presents it in regular textual form but with an explanatory footnote: “They [the words of the passage] are present in over 900 manuscripts.”
5. The NEB (New English Bible) gives it on a separate page following the Gospel.
6. Other versions treat the passage in various ways.

#### The Ancient [Greek] Manuscripts

1. The earliest uncials [all capital letters--57 contain substantial parts of N.T.], from the fourth

and fifth centuries, generally omit the passage altogether.

- a. One includes the passage in question.
  - b. Two leave blank spaces where the passage traditionally would appear.
  - c. The MSS omitting the passage: Codex Vaticanus [4th century]; Codex Sinaiticus [4th century]; Codex Alexandrius [5th century]; Codex Ephraemi [5th century]; Codex Claromontanus [6th century]. The MS including the passage: Codex Bezae [fifth or sixth c.].
2. Later Greek and medieval manuscripts included the passage but usually marked it in some way as of doubtful origin. Several placed it at the end of the Gospel.
  3. It appears in nearly all later manuscripts, uncial and cursive.

#### The Versions [translations from Greek into other languages]

1. Is not found in the Syriac, Old Syriac, Armenian, Gregorian, Coptic [Egyptian], or Gothic versions. These are the most ancient of the translations.
2. It was included in the Vulgate, translated by Jerome in the 5th century.
3. It was contained in some earlier Latin versions but excluded from others.

#### The Writings of the “Church Fathers”

1. The earliest writers, Latin or Greek, did not mention it or comment on it at all. This was in spite of the fact that they made thousands of references to N.T. verses in their writings.
2. The first to comment on it was Euthymius Zigabenus, who said it was *not* found in the best manuscripts.
3. Jerome [346-420 A.D.] included it in the Vulgate and said it *was* in “many Greek and Latin manuscripts.”
4. Augustine and Ambrose [5th century] were familiar with the passage and commented on it in their writings.

#### Placement of the passage

1. Most manuscripts [where it is included] place it between John 7:52 and 8:12.
2. Others locate it after John 7:36, 7:44, or 11:25.
3. One group of manuscripts [family 13] place it after Luke 21:38. Some reason that this is a better location for the passage because:
  - a. Jesus taught “early” in the day in the temple during His last week on earth and lodged on the Mount of Olives at night;
  - b. “And everyone went to his own house,” implies that the contested passage occurred following some kind of assembly;
  - c. “Again” in verse two suggests that this teaching was part of a *series* of discourses.

#### The origins of the problem of integrity

1. A third century book, The Apostolic Constitutions by Eusebius, the church historian, attributed the story to Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis. Papias lived soon after 100 A.D.
2. Augustine says the story was removed from the original manuscripts of the Gospel because it was feared that there would arise from it a softening attitude toward the sin of adultery. That would be dangerous to the faith in a time of pagan immoralities. As time went on, that fear subsided, and the passage, which had always been transmitted orally, was eventually

inserted again into the later documents.

3. Some scholars believe that the passage was placed in its present usual location [after verse 53 of chapter seven] in an effort to amplify Jesus' statement in John 8:15: "I judge no one."

Remarks by Biblical scholars

1. F.H.A. Scrivener [a conservative textual scholar]: "On all intelligent principles of mere criticism the passage must needs be abandoned: and such is the conclusion arrived at by all the critical editors." [1894]
2. A.T. Robertson: "It is clear that it not a genuine part of the Gospel of John." [1916]
3. But-- C. E. Hammond says, "The style and contents, indeed, in both of which it is utterly different from any of the narratives of the apocryphal gospels, convey an irresistible impression of genuineness; and it is probable that we have a piece of apostolic narrative upon which the consent of the universal Church has set the seal of canonicity." [1890]

**Complete These Statements:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_, in the law, commanded that \_\_\_\_\_ be \_\_\_\_\_ to death.
2. The accusers were \_\_\_\_\_ by their \_\_\_\_\_ and left \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_, from the \_\_\_\_\_ to the \_\_\_\_\_.
3. "I am the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_. He who \_\_\_\_\_ Me shall not \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_."
4. Unbelievers would \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus, but because of their \_\_\_\_\_ they could not \_\_\_\_\_ where He \_\_\_\_\_.
5. When His enemies \_\_\_\_\_ Him up, some would see that He had done \_\_\_\_\_ of Himself and had spoken only the words of \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Those who commit \_\_\_\_\_ are its \_\_\_\_\_ and will not \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_ forever.
7. Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ what He had \_\_\_\_\_ with His \_\_\_\_\_; the Jews \_\_\_\_\_ what they had \_\_\_\_\_ with their \_\_\_\_\_.
8. The Jews' father was the \_\_\_\_\_, and they were imitating his examples of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Anyone who \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus' \_\_\_\_\_ will never see \_\_\_\_\_.
10. "Most \_\_\_\_\_ I say to you, before \_\_\_\_\_ was, \_\_\_\_\_."

**True (T) or False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The main reason no one harmed Jesus was their fear of the common people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The Jews claimed security because they were related to David, the great king.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. A desire to kill Jesus destroyed the Jews' spiritual relationship to Abraham.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Jesus came to the temple early in the morning to teach the people.

**True (T) or False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The Jews could not follow Jesus into Samaria.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The crucifixion would convince some of Jesus' true identity.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. The truth will free slaves of sin from their master.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. If the Jews were really Abraham's children, they would act as he had acted.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Forty years was considered as the age of maturity among the Jews.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. The Jews sought to beat Jesus as the right punishment for His sin of blasphemy.

**Match the Persons, Places and Things:**

- |                             |                          |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| _____ 1. Oldest to youngest | a. Samaritan             |
| _____ 2. Jesus              | b. Scribes and Pharisees |
| _____ 3. Truth              | c. Freedom               |
| _____ 4. Demon              | d. Abraham               |
| _____ 5. Prophets           | e. His "hour"            |

**Answer These Questions:**

1. *Two* witnesses in this chapter who testified of Jesus' Nature were: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Jesus was accused of being *two* things: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
3. *Two* things are said to free men from sin: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
4. *Four* things are called "true" in this chapter: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
5. *Two* similar sins are named in this chapter, one early and one later. They are: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

**BONUS QUESTION:**

**Abraham's name appears in this chapter *eleven* times. Find the references and list the verses in which they appear.**

## CHAPTER NINE: “BOLD CONFESSIONS”

“If this man were not from God, He could do nothing.”

“Lord, I believe!”

### Jn.9:1-7 THE SIXTH MIRACLE-- HEALING A MAN BORN BLIND

1. Some scholars associate the events of this chapter with those of chapter eight and within the timeframe of the Feast of Tabernacles [October]. Others suppose that they are better connected with the Feast of Dedication [December], as cited in John 10:22.
2. The “passed by” of John 8:59 is not the same “passed by” of John 9:1. Some time, whether hours or weeks, had transpired between the two “passings.”
3. The blind man whom Jesus “saw” was probably a familiar figure to those who frequented this location. We do not know whether or not it was general knowledge that his blindness was from birth, but the disciples knew that when they asked their question of the Lord. This is the only miracle that Jesus performed, as far as the record goes, to heal an infirmity that someone had endured from birth.
4. Blindness can result from many different circumstances. Some cases would be more responsive to non-miraculous healing than others, but no one would ever expect sight to be enjoyed by someone who had *never* seen before. Jesus’ miracle would be all the more impressive because of that fact.
5. There was a strong conviction among the Jews, as with many other people, that there was an invariable relationship between sin and suffering. Catastrophes, illnesses, and all other human difficulties were thought to be visited on people in retribution for their misconduct. This philosophy was widely defended in many cultures. Job’s friends immediately attributed his ordeal to personal sinfulness, and the people on Malta (Acts 28) concluded that Paul’s encounter with a poisonous serpent was the direct result of criminality in his life. The disciples apparently held to this same idea, or else they were taking the opportunity to have Christ settle any doubts in their minds about this popular belief.
6. In their thinking, two possibilities could have caused this man’s affliction: (1) He might have been personally responsible for some sin that resulted in his blindness, or, (2) his parents could have been guilty of some heinous act that brought blindness upon their offspring.
7. The first explanation would have been absurd, since the blindness had been from birth, except that there were other strange concepts about sin and suffering among the Jews at that time. Some believed that it was possible for unborn children to sin in the womb before birth. Others had adopted the thinking of the Greeks that souls migrate

from one body to another in a sequence of lives on earth and that some spirits might be placed into newborns accompanied by physical impairments that were appropriate punishments for the sins of their previous “owners.”

8. Jesus did not choose to correct any misapprehensions that the disciples might have entertained about these matters. He simply disallowed *both* explanations offered by His apostles. Instead, He focused on the use God could make of a bad situation rather than on the cause of the problem. The power and mercy of the Father would be proclaimed in what He was about to do to an extent that might not be possible otherwise. His own relationship to the Father would also be revealed with great emphasis to onlookers who observed God’s “works” with honest hearts.
9. The blind man’s disability had not been given to him at birth so Jesus could, many years later, remove it to God’s glory. It is unthinkable that God would do that to an innocent child. Rather than being a circumstance *created* by God for Jesus to do His marvelous works, the blindness was the result of natural causes, and it provided an *already-created* circumstance that the Savior could use to show God’s power.
10. G. Campbell Morgan suggests that the passage be repunctuated for better meaning. Of course, the present punctuation is simply the best judgment of the translators:  
“Neither did this man sin, nor his parents. But that the works of God should be made manifest in him, we must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day.”
11. Jesus’ remaining time on earth was drawing to a close. The “day” of opportunity would not be available forever. The “night” of accountability would come soon enough. It was important for Him, as it is for us, to accomplish God’s will within the time God has appointed. Jesus *knew* how short His time was. We *don’t*, and that makes it easy to forget the urgency of *our* tasks!
12. So long as Christ dwelt among men, He would shine the light of truth by whatever He said and did. Giving “light” [sight] to this beggar would serve to reinforce confidence in His power to impart spiritual enlightenment as well. “I am the light of the world.”
13. Saliva was employed in two other miracles of healing: a deaf stutterer (?) (Mark 7:33) and a blind man (Mark 8:23). Saliva was thought to possess healing properties and was often used to treat various afflictions. This time, Jesus made clay with His saliva and “anointed” the man’s eyes with it. We are not told why this procedure was followed.
14. What we *can* understand is that the Lord gave the blind man some responsibility for his healing, too. “Go...wash in the pool of Siloam.” Three details were necessary to the cleansing: (1) Go; (2) wash; (3) [only] in the pool of Siloam. Exact obedience resulted in his healing: “So he went and washed, and came back seeing.”
15. The man was “sent” to a pool bearing a name that also meant “sent.” Siloam received water “sent” through a channel from the Virgin’s Fountain [Gihon] in the Kidron Valley. It is possibly the “old pool” or “lower pool” mentioned in Isaiah 22:9,11. The tunnel through which the water passed had been built by King Hezekiah after the defeat of Sennacherib. It served a need created when the pools outside Jerusalem were stopped to prevent access to them by the Assyrians (2Chron. 32:1-8,30). Some see a connection between the water that had been “sent” to the blind beggar for his *physical* healing and the Christ who was “sent” to the world for *spiritual* healing.

### **Jn.9:8-12 AMAZING GRACE**

1. Those who were acquainted with the previously-blind beggar were amazed when they discovered his new condition. At first, some questioned his identity, not being able to reconcile what he *had been* with what he *is*. There was *no way* he could be the *same man* and yet be *so different!* Their *own* eyes were surely deceiving them-- he just "looked like" the beggar.
2. That issue was quickly settled. "I am he." Their amazement grew stronger. "Then *how* is it possible for something *so* impossible to have happened to you?"
3. The beggar recited the simple facts of his experience, which told *everything* but explained *nothing*. What he had done should not have caused any improvement even in *mild* afflictions, to say nothing of something so incurable as blindness from birth!
4. What made these ordinary actions so extraordinary was-- "a Man called Jesus." *He* was the source of their amazement. Had it not been for Him, nothing that the man had done for himself would have made any difference at all in his condition.
5. God's grace always amazes people whose lack of faith in Him represses their expectations of His intervention in their problems. "The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" (James 5:16).

### **Jn.9:13-16 BAD TIMING**

1. It is unclear just who "they" were who took the healed man to the Pharisees and why they did so. Jesus had taught many things that had caught the attention of the people (Matt.7:28,29). He had engaged in open debate with the scribes and Pharisees about their relationship to God (John 7:28), and He had made numerous claims about His own unique connection with His Father (John 8:42). Immediately before He spoke to the blind beggar, He had said, "I am the light of the world." There was an obvious and open disharmony between "a Man called Jesus" and the Pharisees who usually enjoyed control of the Jewish religious community. Perhaps "they" recognized that this was still another incident in a series of actions by Jesus that challenged *traditional* authority, and they wanted some resolution to this troubling situation.
2. Without doubt, the main thing behind the healed man's being taken to the Pharisees was that the miracle had been performed on the Sabbath day. The "sanctity" of that holy day had been so indoctrinated into the masses by their teachers that the kneading of clay, the anointing of the eyes with that clay, and giving instructions for the subsequent washing in the pool were all quickly recognized by the onlookers as being in violation of the strict prohibitions imposed by the Jewish religious leadership.
3. Upon being questioned by the Pharisees as to how he was able to see, the man restated the same simple facts as before without making any outright claim for anything miraculous in the proceedings. We cannot know just what he might have been thinking at that moment about what had happened to him.
4. Prejudice would not allow the Pharisees to view the behavior of Jesus, whatever He might have done for the blind man, as anything but sinful. God would never approve of any action, no matter how wonderful it might seem, that was contrary to the

regulations they had placed on all Sabbath activity.

5. Others [Pharisees?] were not so sure. Sinners had never been known to do miracles, only men whom God *did* approve. Israel's history testified to that fact.
6. F.F. Bruce makes this comment about the division of opinion about the Lord's character that resulted among the Pharisees:

“Adolph Schlatter, who was no mean authority in rabbinical scholarship, thought that the division followed the tendencies attributed respectively to the schools of Shammai and Hillel. The school of Shammai tended to argue from first principles (so here: anyone who breaks the law is a sinner); the school of Hillel tended to have regard to the established facts of a case (so here: Jesus performed a good work). In a case like this, their conclusions were bound to conflict with each other.”
7. The reaction of the Pharisees to Jesus' behavior likely would not have been so harsh if He had healed this beggar on some day other than the Sabbath. It was bad timing as far as they were concerned. However, as far as *Jesus* was concerned, there is little doubt that He deliberately sought occasions on Sabbath days through which He could raise these issues about what was *wrong* with the Pharisees' traditions.

#### **Jn.9:17-23 PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AT WORK**

1. Maybe more questions would help to clear up this confusion about Jesus. The healed man was in the best position of anyone to have a valid opinion about this controversial person. But now it is not what did He *do* for you, but what made Him *able* to do it? It was commonly supposed that demons could perform miracles (John 10:20, 21). Some of Jesus' detractors at another time dared to accuse Him of casting out demons by the power of the prince of demons (Luke 11:15).
2. His answer came back without hesitation. “I don't know all I would like to know about this Jesus, but I know that He must be a *prophet* if He can do what He did for me!” A more sophisticated Nicodemus had reached the same conclusion some time earlier and had declared, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with Him.”
3. The disbelievers continued to disbelieve in spite of credible testimony. They brushed aside the evidence offered and once again challenged the facts on which the evidence was based. They must seek other testimony that might possibly cast doubt on Jesus being a good man in the service of God.
4. If testimony favorable to their predetermined conclusions could not be obtained from the man himself, perhaps his parents might tell something that would bolster their case. After all, the blind man could be mistaken about *how long* he had been blind. A child could be afflicted with some *reversible* event or condition and later in life not be certain just *when* it occurred. But parents would know for sure whether the blindness was actually birth-related.
5. The mother and father were quite willing to give their statement to the authorities about the *origin* of their son's disability. They were *not* willing to make a commitment about *how* the removal of that disability came about. Of course, they were not present to know personally about the event in question, so they could presume to report only what had been reported to them. Also, they were intimidated by the

threats of the Jews [religious leaders] that any testimony favorable to Jesus would result in their expulsion from the synagogue.

6. Few things more serious could happen to a conscientious Israelite than to be “cast out” of the synagogue. It meant not only that he would be put out of the synagogue itself, but he would be considered a heathen, and he would no longer have a country or a religious fellowship. There were penalties of both short-term and permanent excommunication for offenders, but the context of this passage seems to point to permanent expulsion. Johnson observes:

“The effect of even the mildest grade was to render the offender a heathen, to cut him off from religious privileges, from association with his Jewish friends and neighbors, and even from his own family. If, at the end of thirty days, the offence was not repented of, a severer punishment was administered. This resolution to expel all confessors of Christ from the synagogue became a fixed rule after the crucifixion, when the gospel began to be preached with such success. Christ predicts it in Matt. 10:17.”

7. The parents opted out of any further participation in this “witch hunt.” They likely had some stronger opinion about the righteous character of Jesus than they were willing to admit to the authorities, but they saw no reason to become further involved in something that could have severe consequences for themselves. Anything they said would not change circumstances for their son, who already had taken his stance. “Let him speak for himself, and leave us alone.”
8. It is said, “If at first you don’t succeed, try, try again.” So, the Jews went back to the son. Now, however, the Pharisees approached him differently. He became the *accused* along with Jesus. He was charged with conspiring in some way with his “healer” to deceive the people. “Give God the glory!--tell the truth this time with God as witness to what really happened!” [See Achan’s case in Joshua 7:19.]

#### **Jn.9:24-29 A BOLD CONFESSION**

1. As further intimidation of their witness, the Pharisees let it be known that they had *already* reached *their* conclusion about Jesus, no matter *what* the man might say about Him. “We *know* that this Man is a sinner.”
2. The witness was unmoved by their their virulent attitude. “Whatever you may *think you know*, one thing I know-- I was blind and now I can see.” This was a **BOLD CONFESSION**, considering that it would certainly cause the confessor to suffer awful consequences for having made it before such hostile men.
3. Once more, hoping to catch him in some inconsistency in his story, they asked the same question all over again-- “how did this happen?”
4. Losing all patience with the tactics of these “religious” men, the “man who was blind” grew tired of being on the defensive with them. It was time for *him* to take the offensive in this exchange. In irony, he suggested that perhaps the purpose of their incessant questioning might be to get enough information about Jesus that they, too, could become His disciples. How that remark must have shaken his accusers!
5. The debate was over. This man could only do harm to their crusade against the integrity of the Lord. They wrote him off entirely with another accusation: “You have separated yourself from our nation by proclaiming loyalty to this Sabbath breaker!”

We remain loyal to Moses, who demanded respect for the holiness of the Sabbath day. We *know* that Moses' Sabbath command came from God; we have no good evidence that God approves the way Jesus treats our holy day."

**Jn.9:29-34 A BOLDER CONFESSION**

1. Here begins one of the most unusual conversations in this whole Gospel. It is an exchange between, on the one hand, the most prestigious religious leaders in Jerusalem, men who have been schooled in Moses' Law and practiced in the application of that Law for most of their lives, and, on the other, a poor beggar who until recently has been blind and completely disadvantaged in every way. This was David versus Goliath locked in religious debate.
2. There were some things that the beggar understood about the Law far better than these Pharisees did.
  - a. He *knew* that God does not hear the prayers of flagrant sinners [See Isa. 59:1,2].
  - b. He *knew* that God's support of any man depends on his faithfulness.
  - c. He *knew* that without God's support, no one could do a mighty work.
  - d. He *knew* that healing blindness from birth had never been done before.
  - e. He *knew* that only a *Man from God* could have done what Jesus did.
  - f. He *knew* that something was greatly lacking in "scholars" of the Law who didn't *know* these fundamental things that he had no trouble understanding! That was "a *marvelous thing!*"
3. These learned leaders of Israel had no answer for their adversary's knowledge of the Law and the logic with which he applied its teachings to the present controversy over Jesus. "How dare *you* try to teach *us!* Your blindness obviously was proof of your complete depravity and worthlessness. We'll have nothing more to do with you!"
4. "And they cast him out." What a commentary on their own worthiness as shepherds whose duty it was to guide the wandering sheep of Israel into righteous behavior!
5. Some doubt that this was a permanent excommunication. It is contended that a meeting of the Sanhedrin was necessary before this action could be imposed. However, such a meeting might have taken place before the "casting out" was done. Also, the extremely caustic attitude of the Pharisees indicates that a very serious penalty would be pronounced on the object of their wrath.

**Jn.9:35-41 THOSE WHO WILL NOT SEE**

1. It is not enough that a man may believe that Jesus was a good man or even believe that He was sent from God with a vital message of salvation. "Except you believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins."
2. Jesus had "captured" this man's *body*, giving him a physical blessing that only He could give. Now he wanted the man's *soul*. He actively sought him and posed the most crucial question any man was ever asked: "Do you believe in the Son of God?"
3. The beggar's attitude toward the Savior had been positive in every previous test. But this was his "final exam." Nothing else in this entire episode mattered-- not getting

his sight; not realizing that Jesus was at least a “prophet” sent by God; not even his courageous resistance to the intimidation of the religious heavyweights who had confronted him about the character and power of Jesus. If he could not accept Christ for who He really was, everything else was in vain!

4. Receiving the information he needed, the man who had been healed physically now positioned himself to be healed spiritually also. “Lord, I believe! And he worshiped Him.” Now, the healing was complete. The purpose of the Lord’s miraculous grace that was displayed in the healing had been fully realized.
5. Faith had come to this man as it does to *all* men. “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom.10:17). Christ had spoken the word about Himself, and the unbeliever became a believer upon accepting the message as true.
6. Jesus used the opportunity to make one final statement-- both to summarize and to emphasize the significance of the things that had happened in the performance of this great miracle and in the circumstances surrounding its performance.
7. He had come into the world to *save* the world, not to judge it (John 3:17). Nevertheless, His every lesson and His every action caused a distinct *judgment* among those who heard and saw. Some accepted Him as God’s only-begotten Son; others did not. Some were spiritually blessed; others were condemned.
8. Framing this truth in terms of the miracle just accomplished, the Christ proclaimed: “My mission among men is to allow the spiritually blind, but who *want* to see, to do so. I also intend that those who are blind and who refuse to see will continue to wander in the darkness of ignorance and sin.”
9. Pharisees who heard this declaration felt the sting of its indictment. They had just been embarrassed by an unlearned nobody. If they could, they needed to have some measure of redemption with the onlookers who had witnessed their debacle.
10. They seemed to expect that Jesus, who had already made His point before the people, would not “push His luck” and specifically classify *them*, the leaders in Israel, with those He had just condemned as being willfully blind. They asked, “Are we blind also?”
11. If that was their expectation, they had badly underestimated the **Boldness** of Jesus Christ. Without hesitation, He testified that they had spurned opportunities to be enlightened with the truth and that they had rejected every chance to learn. “Therefore, your sin remains.”

**Additional Note on This Miracle:**

“The narrative of this miracle has a special value in apologetics. How often do we hear the wish expressed that Christ’s miracles had been put on documentary record; and had been subjected to thorough judicial examination! Here we have the very thing desired; judicial personages, and these too, the avowed enemies of Christ, investigate a miracle of Christ in repeated hearings and they can find no flaw. If the reader will observe he will find that the people refer the case to a great religious order composed of enemies of Christ; that members of this order first examine the facts; then the case is referred to a higher tribunal, the official representatives of the nation, who cross-examine the parents, as well as the subject of the miracle. This judicial investigation shows by the testimony of both that the young man was born blind, that he now saw, and his own testimony was given that he was healed by Jesus. The attempt to disprove the miracle was an utter failure and the court sought to discredit it by excommunicating the chief witness” (Tholuck).

**Complete These Statements:**

1. Jesus' disciples questioned whether the \_\_\_\_\_ or his \_\_\_\_\_ had \_\_\_\_\_ to cause his \_\_\_\_\_.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ was placed on the man's \_\_\_\_\_, and he was told to go and \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The \_\_\_\_\_ denied that Jesus was from \_\_\_\_\_ because He did not \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The man's parents confirmed that this was their \_\_\_\_\_ and that he had been \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The \_\_\_\_\_ agreed to put people out of the \_\_\_\_\_ if they \_\_\_\_\_ that Jesus was \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The accusers said, "Give \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_. We know that this \_\_\_\_\_ is a \_\_\_\_\_."
7. They accused the healed man of being a \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus, but they were \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
8. God does not \_\_\_\_\_ sinners, but He hears those who \_\_\_\_\_ Him and \_\_\_\_\_ His \_\_\_\_\_.
9. The healed man finally confessed, "\_\_\_\_\_, " and \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus.
10. Jesus came for \_\_\_\_\_ that those who don't \_\_\_\_\_ may \_\_\_\_\_, and those who \_\_\_\_\_ may become \_\_\_\_\_.

**True (T) or False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Jesus said God's work must be done day and night.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. All agreed about the identity of the man who had been blind.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The healed man first thought Jesus was a prophet from God.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The parents of the man avoided getting involved in the dispute about Jesus.

**QUESTIONS ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN**

**CHAPTER NINE (Continued)**

**True (T) or False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The Pharisees questioned the healed man more than once.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The Pharisees gloried in being Moses' disciples.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. It was a "marvelous thing" that the leaders did not know more about Jesus.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. God requires obedience as a prerequisite to prayers being answered.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. The Pharisees did not execute their threat against the healed man.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Jesus' enemies were as blind spiritually as the healed man had been blind physically.

**Match the Persons, Places, and Things:**

- |                     |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| _____ 1. Fearful    | a. Siloam          |
| _____ 2. First time | b. Sabbath         |
| _____ 3. Miracle    | c. Parents         |
| _____ 4. Cast out   | d. Birth blindness |
| _____ 5. "Sent"     | e. Synagogue       |

**Answer These Questions:**

1. *Two* requirements for answered prayer are: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The blind man (before and after healing) had done *two* things to be healed that would allow his prayers to be heard: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Jesus was thought to be either of *two* very different personalities: \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.
4. *Five* proper names given to Jesus in this chapter are: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The disciples of *two* men are mentioned in this chapter: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

**BONUS QUESTION:**

**The word "blind" appears 15 times in this chapter. List each verse. Place a (P) beside each reference to physical blindness and a (S) beside each reference to spiritual blindness.**

## CHAPTER TEN: “A BOLD ALLEGORY”

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep.”

### Jn.10:1-6 THE SHEPHERD AND HIS SHEEP

1. The religious leaders of God’s people have often been compared in the Scriptures to shepherds responsible for the well-being of sheep.
  - a. God is the Shepherd over His people: “For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand” (Psalm 95:7).
  - b. Israel’s national leaders [both good and bad] were considered as shepherds over the Jews: “Therefore thus says the Lord God of Israel against the shepherds who feed my people...” (Jeremiah 23:2).
  - c. Jesus is the Great Shepherd over His disciples: “...who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep...” (Hebrews 13:20).
  - d. The apostles were given general oversight of Christ’s flock: “Feed my lambs...Tend my sheep...Feed my sheep” (John 21:17-19).
  - e. Elders are to be appointed in every local church to rule, oversee, feed, and guide the flock of Christians “among them” (1Peter 5:1-4).
2. The Pharisees, self-appointed shepherds of Israel during the time of Christ, had assumed the duties of “caring for” the spiritual welfare of the nation. They directed both the doctrine and the practice of the Law and insisted on a pervasive control of every aspect of the lives of the common people.
3. These “shepherds” should have been the source of encouragement and support for the man healed of blindness in chapter nine. They should have rejoiced in the fact that Messiah had finally come to the nation and that Jews could now begin to reap the glorious benefits of His appearance.
4. Instead, the Pharisees had vigorously resisted any possible influence that Christ might have on the people. They defamed the Messiah in every way they could manage, and they even sought on several occasions to kill Him. They had, moreover, *not taken in* the healed man to receive their comfort and guidance; they had *cast out* of the flock a lamb who refused to agree with them that his healer was a sinner!
5. In contrast, while they were bad shepherds, Jesus intends to be seen as the Good Shepherd who would never disappoint the needs or expectations of His sheep.
6. John says He used a “*paroimiav*” [Gr.] to make His point. This word is translated “parable” in the KJV, ASV, and Confraternity [Catholic] Scriptures. The RSV calls it a “figure.” None of these terms is entirely satisfactory. Jesus’ comparison is not, strictly speaking, a parable [*parabole*] like those found in the Synoptic Gospels.

It is too long and too involved to be seen as a “figure.” Perhaps the more modern “illustration” of the NKJV will serve. Or, better still, “allegory,” which is defined as a “prolonged metaphor, in which typically a series of actions is symbolic of other actions” [Webster]. “Proverb” [cryptic saying] is also apt.

7. Jesus often employed this method of teaching. “Parables.” “figures,” “illustrations,” “proverbs,” and “allegories” are effective in:
  - a. Getting the attention of listeners;
  - b. Featuring familiar elements that will enhance the comprehension of listeners;
  - c. Tactfully approaching subjects that might otherwise be offensive to listeners;
  - d. Concealing true meaning from listeners whose mindset prohibits honest consideration of the lesson being taught.
8. Parables and allegories are intended to emphasize a *main theme or lesson*. We must not try to read too much into the lesson by attempting to identify every detail and forcing it to represent something else. Some elements may simply “round out” the illustration without requiring any specific application.
9. The Lord likens Himself to *two* things [two of the seven “I am” statements in John] familiar to the Jews who understood a great deal about shepherds and their sheep. He is the door into the sheepfold, and He is at the same time the good shepherd of the sheep. In a strict likeness, that would be an impossibility. But, in this allegory, it is not just *possible*; it is *reasonable*.
10. The “sheepfold” is that place or relationship planned and provided by God for the spiritual prosperity and security of His children. Now, it is the church of Christ. Then, it was the nation of Israel as God *intended* it to be, faithful to Him and eager for the advent of its Messiah.
11. Jesus was soon to declare Himself to be “*The Way*” into this relationship with the Father (John 14:6). There is no other door that will lead to “*The Truth*,” and “*The Life*.”
12. The Good Shepherd is authorized to lead God’s sheep because of who He is. He enters “through Himself.” God had sent Him and no one else to fill the role of shepherd. That selection was made because the Son is “*Good*.” He alone is “good” because He is God (Luke 18:19)! Anyone else who presumes to fill the role of Christ is a “thief and a robber,” and he has no authority from God in that role.
13. Jesus, who came in the full authority of His Father, *is* recognized by the Father to be the only real Shepherd.
14. The “doorkeeper,” if the allegory intends any special identity for Him, would have to be the Father, who “opened the door” for Jesus to lead His sheep.
15. Jesus’ hearers on this occasion would recognize several truths about His work as God’s Shepherd from what they knew about other shepherds and their sheep. They would also gain an insight into the dangers that lay in following false shepherds:
  - a. God’s real sheep would hear the voice [teaching] of the real Shepherd;
  - b. The Good Shepherd would identify closely with the sheep, even calling them by their individual names and by displaying a deep concern for them;
  - c. He would “go before” the sheep and lead them to protect them from harm and to guide them to green pastures;

- d. God's real sheep will follow the Shepherd without hesitation because they know that His voice [teaching] is the voice of God;
  - e. God's sheep will refuse to follow "strangers" [false teachers] and their voices because they perceive that there is great danger in doing so.
16. Considering the deep prejudice and obstinacy of the Pharisees, it is not surprising that they failed to understand just what Jesus was talking about. It was hard for them to grasp the fact that they were *not* doing an admirable job of serving as God's shepherds for Israel.

**Jn.10:7-13 THE "GOOD SHEPHERD" AND THE "DOOR"**

1. Perceiving their failure to understand His **BOLD ALLEGORY** about His God-sent mission in the world, Jesus "again" laid claim to being the "*door*" by which the sheep can access the benefits of the sheepfold. "Again" also identifies four other things in this chapter that had happened before (vs.19,31,39,40).
2. There are *two* possibilities in Jesus' meaning about the "thieves and robbers" who had come "before Him":
  - a. Others in the past had come attempting to usurp the role of leadership and redemption that God had assigned from eternity to the Son. Some had promised military deliverance to the Jews, some religious freedom, some both;
  - b. These usurpers, past and present [Pharisees and scribes], had put themselves "before" [above] Jesus as the one to lead the nation to freedom. Yet, He was not just the *best* to lead God's sheep; He was the *only* one who could do that.
3. *Two* vital advantages are gained by the sheep who enter the sheepfold by Jesus:
  - a. They will be *saved*. Wild beasts were no threat to sheep under the protection of a dedicated shepherd. He would guard them with his own life. The Lord's people enjoy spiritual safety from Satan's condemnation (1Peter 5:8);
  - b. They will have *abundant pasture*. They could be free ["go in and out"] to follow the shepherd to the green grass and clear water that would assure their health and growth. Those whom God has *justified* [saved] are given the opportunity to be *glorified* [by emulating Christ--Col. 1:27]. What outside influence can defeat our personal quest for eternal glory? *Nothing!* [See Romans 8:30-39.]
4. The "*Good Shepherd*" is a better shepherd than the "pseudo" shepherds because:
  - a. He has a better *motive*. His ambition is only for the welfare of the sheep. His goal is to give them abundant life. The usurpers seek their own benefit, even if they must "steal, kill and destroy" to satisfy their wicked purposes;
  - b. He has a better *commitment*. He will do whatever is necessary to advance the well-being of His flock, even to sacrificing His own life in exchange for theirs. The pretenders are committed only to their own interests and will do nothing for the good of the sheep, except as it advances their own cause;
  - c. Some who pretend to the role of shepherding the flock are "thieves and robbers" who will resort to vicious means, if necessary, to attain their ambitions of power and control over the sheep. Others are "hirelings" who entertain no intent to *harm* the sheep, but whose commitment is limited to whatever personal

advantage they can gain from their relationship to the flock. They provide no protection in times of danger or distress, and they really do not care very much about providing the things that will enhance the health of the flock. The hireling will not work if he is not paid.

**Jn.10:14-21 THE “GOOD SHEPHERD” AND ONE FLOCK**

1. Another characteristic of the “*Good Shepherd*” that distinguishes Him from others who propose to lead God’s flock is His *knowledge*.
  - a. He knows His sheep. He not only knows their names [vs.3] but also their needs. He knows what will make them stable and secure, and He knows what will cause them to grow and be strong. He possesses this knowledge of the flock as a whole and of each member of the flock individually.
  - b. He knows His Father. He has received from the Father His unique abilities to shepherd the flock without error. His omniscience in making decisions for the sheep is a comfort to them because they are assured that His decisions for them are always *right*.
  - c. Even His impending death on the cross, when He would “lay down His life for the sheep,” was part of the Father’s eternal plan for the Son (Revelation 13:8; Ephesians 3:11).
2. Jesus now introduces still another difference between His leadership of God’s flock and that of the Pharisees and others who might seek that role. They were *parochial* in their vision, while He is *universal* in His view of the spiritual landscape. They shut people *out* [e.g., the man formerly blind]; Jesus takes them *in*. “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt.11:28).
3. Although the Old Testament contains numerous references to God’s plan to extend His salvation beyond the borders of Israel, the Jews had never in any way grasped that concept. Nor would they likely have approved of it, even if they had understood it. The “*Good Shepherd’s*” flock was to include more than Jewish sheep. “Other sheep I have which are not of this [Jewish] fold.” These sheep must be brought to spiritual safety if God’s plan was to be fulfilled. [See Mk. 16:15,16.]
4. Just as God “had many people” at Corinth before the gospel was widely accepted there (Acts 18:10), so Jesus *had* many sheep, Jews and Gentiles, before the “door” was opened for their admittance. These were Christians *in prospect*, who, in keeping with their good and honest hearts, *would* obey Christ when given the opportunity. That opportunity was first extended on Pentecost following the resurrection of the Savior (Acts 2) when Jewish sheep were added to the flock (Acts 2:47). The “other sheep” [Gentiles] got their first opportunity in Acts 10 when Cornelius and his house obeyed the gospel (Acts 10). From that time, the Lord’s flock [church] has included men of all nations.
5. The “middle wall of partition” (Col.2:14) that had excluded Gentiles from the Jewish “fold” would be removed by the cross, and all sheep would live together in one flock. The Savior’s death was required before that could happen. He would willingly lay down His life as a sacrifice to secure the forgiveness of sins, and He

would take it up again in the resurrection.

6. Jesus had the power in Himself both to give and to take up His life. While it is said that the Christ was delivered up by the “determined counsel” of God and that He was raised up by God (Acts 2:23,24), Jesus’ statement here confirms that these actions were accomplished only by the *unified* planning and execution of both Father and Son. Jesus’ death was to be completely without any coercion, even from One so mighty as the Father.
7. “Again,” there was a division of opinion about Jesus because of what He had said about Himself. Again, some were totally at a loss to see anything rational in His **BOLD ALLEGORY** and in its unacceptable claims. They resorted to an easy “explanation”-- “You have a demon--You are mad!” His detractors had done this *twice* before (John 7:20; 8:52).
8. Not everyone in the crowd made that mistake. Some were unwilling to ignore what was obvious-- these were not the words of a madman. Nor were His deeds, such as the healing of a blind man, the kinds of things that would be done by a man with a demon. These dissenters probably weren’t quite sure about who or what He really **was**, but they *were* sure about who or what He **wasn’t!**

#### **Jn.10:22-30** **“TELL US PLAINLY”**

1. Some two or three months had passed since the events of the Feast of Tabernacles [chapter seven through half of chapter ten]. F.F. Bruce comments on the Feast of Dedication, during which the next confrontation between Jesus and His critics took place:

“The festival of Dedication was of relatively recent institution. After the temple had been defiled for three years (167-164 BC) by the installation of a pagan cult under Antiochus Epiphanes, and the idolatrous altar, the ‘abomination of desolation’ (a mocking pun on the pagan divinity’s name), had been erected on top of the altar of Israel’s God, the sacred site was recaptured by Judas Maccabaeus and his followers and the temple was reconsecrated to its proper use on 25 Kislev (= 14 December), 164 B.C. The festival of Dedication (*Hanukkah*) commemorating this event, may have had a prehistory as a festival of the winter solstice, but from then on it was given a place in Israel’s religious calendar, and to this day it is celebrated as the Feast of Lights (so called from the lighting of lamps or candles in Jewish homes to honor the occasion).”
2. Perhaps because it was winter, Jesus was walking in the covered Porch of Solomon within the temple complex. This was the place where Peter and John soon would preach the gospel after encountering and healing a lame man at the hour of prayer (Acts 3). This was also the location chosen by the early church in Jerusalem for its gatherings (Acts 5:12). It was a large place some four hundred feet long.
3. Jesus was surrounded by “the Jews,” at least some of whom He had been in conversation with before. They apparently “hemmed Him in” so He would have to stay until He had satisfactorily answered their questions. Once before, He had evaded them in the temple before they were ready for Him to leave (John 8:59).
4. Their first demand was, “Tell us plainly whether or not you are the Christ!” We cannot know how many of the questioners were sincerely seeking information and

how many were hoping that Jesus would say something by which they could accuse Him further. His answer may suggest that the latter were in the majority.

5. It may be that this encounter was occasioned by the festival activities. The feast was a celebration of the rescue of the nation some years before from an oppressive enemy by a heroic deliverer, a “messiah.” It would be an appropriate time for a new “Messiah” to declare himself to the people.
6. The Lord *had* explicitly revealed His role as Messiah to the Samaritan woman (John 4:25,26) and to the blind man He healed (John 9:35--although there He claimed Sonship and did not use “Messiah”). At Caesarea Philippi He had accepted Peter’s confession that He was the “Christ” [Greek equivalent of “Messiah”] (Matt. 16:18). However, such plain expressions as those had not been spoken publicly in Jerusalem before this time.
7. “Messiah” carried with it political and military connotations among the Jews. He was expected to serve the people in those ways as well as in a religious capacity. Jesus earlier had experienced an effort to make Him a king different from what was planned. It would be a detriment to accomplishing His real purpose if the masses pinned their nationalistic ambitions to His “star” at this time.
8. Of course, Jesus had continually made statements and had done things that were plain-enough declarations of Messiahship for any who were sincerely looking for His appearance. His claims to be “one with the Father,” “sent by the Father,” “the door,” and “the *Good Shepherd*” were easily connected with His role as Messiah. But proud and prejudiced minds could hardly make the connection.
9. If they were still unreceptive to His *spoken* testimony about His rightful place as the “Christ,” His works were an evident witness that would make the claim of Christhood *for* Him. However, even the weight of *that* testimony was not heavy enough to offset their preconceived ideas about the nature of the Messiah they were looking for. They were simply “not of His sheep” and could not be as long as they refused to let truth overcome the bias in their hearts.
10. It was to their shame that many had been given the opportunity to *hear* what Jesus said and to *see* what He did and yet had refused to accept the evidence of their own eyes and ears. Jesus wanted them to understand what they were really refusing in their rejection of His role as “Christ”:
  - a. His sheep will be given eternal life; this is eternal blessedness and not just eternal existence;
  - b. His sheep will never perish;
  - c. His sheep will be safe from any attempt to snatch them out of His hand;
  - d. His sheep enjoy a security that rests upon the power of “both the Father and the Son” (2John 9) because the Father and the Son are “*One*.”
11. Jesus was *not* promising, as some suppose, that His sheep could not, under any circumstance, turn away from His shepherding guidance and suffer spiritual destruction at the hand of the devil. God’s power will prevent any *forcible* removal from the safety of the sheepfold, but He will *not* take away a sheep’s power to *choose* to stop following the Good Shepherd. If that choice is made, the sheep begins traveling a path that leads to *sure* destruction (Gal.5:4,9; 1Cor.10:12).

Jn.10:31-39 DOING THE WORKS OF GOD

1. Some of the Jews [leaders] had determined to kill the Lord from the time He healed the lame man at Bethesda. They accused Him then of Law-breaking and blasphemy (John 5:18).
2. After He had made the claim of existing before Abraham's time, which was the claim of divinity, the Jews attempted to stone Him for what they perceived were more blasphemous assertions (John 8:39).
3. Jesus understood that the anger of these Jews sprang out of their jealous defense of the "Messiah" they had been taught to expect. Their animosity toward Him could only deepen as He continued to proclaim truths that supported His heavenly identity. Until reason could overcome emotion, He could anticipate more violent attempts by His enemies to stop the things He did that offended them.
4. And so, He resorted to reason in an effort to salvage some of them, if possible. He had just appealed to His *works* as the most convincing testimony to His divinity (verse 25). The healing of the blind man was fresh in their memories. They had witnessed personally or heard from others about a multitude of "good" deeds He had performed for others. If His "good" words couldn't allay their anger, perhaps His "good" deeds could.
5. These accusers judged *deeds* in the same way they judged *words*. Both could be "good" only if they met their own personal criteria for "good." Otherwise, what might *seem* to be "good" was really "bad." Healing on the Sabbath was no better to them than claiming to be on an equality with God. Both were worthy of severe treatment by people who "followed" the letter of the Law.
6. Psalm 82:6 designated as "gods" certain judges who were charged with the fair administration of God's Law. This characterization as "gods" simply recognized the seriousness and the authority of the positions these individuals held as they served God by honorably serving their fellow men.
7. Jesus' argument was one that the legalistic Pharisees should grasp. If it was not blasphemous to give the name of "gods" to judges because of their human task of representing God to their fellows [and the Scripture that called them that cannot be broken (challenged)], why was it blasphemous if Jesus, who was at least a special messenger [prophet] of God, called Himself the "Son of God"?
8. All Jesus asked was a fair examination of His life among men. If His enemies were unable to believe in His divine Nature because of what He *said*, then let them look at His *deeds* for their decision. "Talking the talk," as we say, may not convince some people, but "walking the walk" should make a difference in their thinking. Surely, honest men would agree that what Jesus did was in complete harmony with what He said, and both were the very things that God would say and do if He were on the earth instead of His "representative." "The Father is in Me, and I [am] in Him."
9. Emotion is usually stronger than reason. The Lord's effort to placate those who were aroused against Him only made their anger more violent. They sought to take Him and do Him harm, but His "hour" was still "not come," and He escaped

out of their hand.” We are not told how.

**Jn.10:40-42** **BEYOND THE JORDAN**

1. After His latest encounter with the Jewish leadership and with their subsequent violent disposition displayed toward Him, the Lord left Jerusalem and went into Perea, just across the Jordan River. John identifies the new location as “the place where John [the Baptizer] was baptizing at first.” That was probably at Bethabara [many versions-- “Bethany”] (John 1:28).
2. The apostle John does not tell us *why* Jesus sought another place to stay. Unquestionably, it was safer at this time than Jerusalem where His enemies were seeking His life. It may be that He sought a brief period of retirement in a rural environment that would bring some relief from His busy schedule and ease the tensions that always accompanied life in the “big city.”
3. If He expected to get away from the crowds of people who followed Him everywhere He went, that prospect was not to be. “Many” came to Him in this quiet place in Perea, evidently hoping to witness miracles at His hand. It is likely that He accommodated their expectations.
4. Those who came to Perea were duly impressed with what they found in Jesus, in what He said, and in what He did. John, whom they had held to be a prophet from God, had done no miracles, but He had testified of this Man who would perform many signs to witness the fact that He was, indeed, the “Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). Satisfied that John had spoken the truth about Jesus, many believed in Jesus there.

**Complete These Statements:**

1. Anyone who does not enter the \_\_\_\_\_ by the appointed \_\_\_\_\_ is a \_\_\_\_\_ and a \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The sheep hear the \_\_\_\_\_ of the shepherd who calls them by \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ them out.
3. "I am the \_\_\_\_\_. If anyone \_\_\_\_\_ by Me, he will be \_\_\_\_\_ and will go \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and find \_\_\_\_\_."
4. "I am the \_\_\_\_\_. The \_\_\_\_\_ gives His \_\_\_\_\_ for the sheep."
5. A \_\_\_\_\_ sees the \_\_\_\_\_ coming and \_\_\_\_\_ the sheep and \_\_\_\_\_. The \_\_\_\_\_ catches and \_\_\_\_\_ the sheep.
6. Jesus had the power to \_\_\_\_\_ His \_\_\_\_\_ down and to \_\_\_\_\_ it up again.
7. The Jews wanted Jesus to tell them \_\_\_\_\_ if He was the \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Jesus promised that no one could \_\_\_\_\_ His disciples out of His \_\_\_\_\_'s hand.
9. The Jews did not want to stone Jesus for a good \_\_\_\_\_ but for \_\_\_\_\_ in making Himself \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Jesus said if men cannot believe His word, they should believe His \_\_\_\_\_, which manifested that the \_\_\_\_\_ was in Him.

**True (T) of False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. There are several doors into the Lord's sheepfold.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Jesus' sheep will have difficulty in distinguishing His voice from the voices of others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Jesus is both the shepherd and the door of the sheep.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. All who "came before" Jesus are thieves and robbers.

**QUESTIONS ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN**

**CHAPTER TEN (Continued)**

**True (T) or False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Jesus warned that a hireling leaves the sheep at the mercy of bears and lions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Jesus planned to become the Shepherd of several flocks of sheep.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. The Jews accused Jesus of being mad and having a demon.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. The Feast of Dedication occurred during the summer months.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Jesus disputed the right of any man to be called a “god.”
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. John had at first baptized in Perea beyond the Jordan.

**Match the Person, Places, and Things:**

- |                          |                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| _____ 1. John’s baptisms | a. Solomon’s porch     |
| _____ 2. Stoning         | b. Blasphemy           |
| _____ 3. Temple          | c. Shepherd and door   |
| _____ 4. Jesus Christ    | d. Feast of Dedication |
| _____ 5. Winter          | e. Beyond the Jordan   |

**Answer These Questions:**

1. *Three* kinds of people pose a danger to Jesus’ sheep: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Thieves and robbers do *three* bad things: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
3. *Two* things are given as reasons why Jesus is the “Good Shepherd”: \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Some acknowledged *two* things about Jesus that proved He had no demon: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Jesus’ sheep respond to His voice in *three* ways: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

**BONUS QUESTION:**

**This chapter mentions *five* things that happened “again.” Locate these things and list them and the verses in which they appear.**

### CHAPTER ELEVEN: “A BOLD SIGN”

“...He cried with a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come forth!’ ”

#### Jn.11:1-6 BAD NEWS

1. In this chapter, Jesus performs His last of the *seven* miracles recorded in the Gospel of John. In some respects, this one could be considered His greatest miracle of all. No other natural law so impacts the human experience as the law of physical death. No more awe-inspiring action could arrest men’s attention than doing something to overcome death. The raising of Lazarus can be viewed as the *climactic* evidence of God’s power working through Jesus. All of the miracles “written in this book” were designed to generate belief in the unbelieving, but this last **BOLD SIGN** should surely have moved all but the hardest of hearts.
2. Jesus had raised the dead twice before, according to the record of Scripture. He returned a dead son to a widow at Nain (Luke 7:11-17), and He raised a certain ruler’s daughter in response to an urgent plea from her father (Matt. 9:18-26; Mk. 5: 21-43; Luke 8:40-56). However, this is the first instance of raising someone who had been buried and who had been dead long enough that no one could possibly question the reality of the death.
3. John is the only Gospel writer who records the raising of Lazarus, as significant as it was. In an effort to explain why the Synoptic writers omitted the story from their books, some scholars suppose that publicizing the miracle might have placed Lazarus’ life in jeopardy, considering the concerted efforts by Jesus’ enemies to suppress any testimony that might lend credence to His claims of divinity. This Gospel, of course, was written [late first century] years after such a danger would have subsided, even if Lazarus were still alive.
4. Although Martha appears to have been the older sister, John’s focus is on Mary as he leads his readers toward the miracle involving her brother Lazarus. Mary apparently gained some notoriety among the disciples from a remarkable incident that John will report in chapter twelve (vs.1-8), when she poured oil on Jesus’ feet and wiped them with her hair. Many years later, John uses this widely-circulated story to identify the particular “Mary” he had in mind. There were other “Marys” of note: Mary, the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of Mark, and Mary the wife of Cleophas.
5. The sisters sent word to Jesus, who had retired to Perea for a while to avoid any additional confrontation with His accusers, that Lazarus was [very] sick. They made no request of Him but evidently knew that a request was unnecessary. His devotion to

- their family would assure His coming to Lazarus' bedside without delay.
6. Strangely, the Lord *didn't* rush immediately to Bethany as they expected He would. Instead, He stayed where He was for *two days* after receiving their message. His only explanation for this unusual behavior was:
    - a. Lazarus' sickness would not be "unto death";
    - b. The outcome of the sickness would "glorify" God;
    - c. Jesus would also be "glorified" as a result of Lazarus' illness.
  7. Of course, Lazarus *did* die. He may have been dead even when Jesus received notification of his sickness. Did Jesus misspeak? Was He wrong about the outcome of Lazarus' illness? No-- Christ knew *exactly* what would happen-- Lazarus *would die*, but his sickness would not end in death *only!* An unexpected outcome [restoration] would lead to glory for both Father and Son.

### **Jn.11:7-16 BACK TO JUDEA**

1. Then, Jesus did something else unexpected, so far as His disciples were concerned. He proposed that they all return to Judea. This was a very **Bold Proposal!** The apostles would doubtless have readily agreed to this proposal under normal circumstances. But the circumstances were *not* normal. Jesus had just recently *left* Judea because of threats against His life, and nothing had changed to lessen the danger He would face as soon as He arrived in Bethany. The danger, they feared, was too great to risk, even if He must ignore the distress of those He loved most!
2. Characteristically, Jesus responded to their outcry against His plan with an enigmatic statement. "There are twelve hours in a day. One must walk in the light of day or risk stumbling in the dark." Earlier (John 9:4), He had declared the need to do God's work "while it is day" because when the night comes, work will be over. Both there and here He meant that His time on earth was limited to a "day" and it was drawing to a close. There were things to be done and dangers to be faced if God's plans were to be fully executed.
3. Jesus already knew what He would do when He came to the house of Lazarus. He had already declared, as John states, that Lazarus was only "asleep," and His mission in returning to Judea would be to awaken him. That seemed foolish indeed to the disciples. Sleeping possibly indicated a change for the better in his illness. An improvement in the situation meant that their Lord had even less reason for taking the risk of going to Bethany.
4. Once again, the apostles failed to understand the meaning of Jesus' imagery. It was necessary for Him to tell them plainly, "Lazarus is [already] dead." It must have puzzled them greatly that He had at first assured them [so they thought] that Lazarus would *not* die (verse 4), and now He says plainly, "Lazarus *is* dead."
5. Their confusion was increased when Jesus added, "I delayed going to my sick friend for your sakes. I wanted *you* to believe." How could this have anything to do with *them*? It was Lazarus who had needed His help.
6. Even more mystifying: "Now that Lazarus is dead, let us go to Bethany." They must have wondered: "You didn't go when you *could* have healed a *sick* man. Why go

- now when it is *too late* to make any difference to a *dead* man?"
7. Thomas, who later would distinguish himself as one who needed more evidence than most to change his mind about the Lord, now spoke up in support of His avowed purpose, regardless of its senselessness. Little did he understand at this moment how needful this impending miracle would be “for his sake” that he might believe.

**Jn.11:17-27 THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE**

1. Evidently, Lazarus had been buried on the same day he died, which was often the practice in that culture. He was four days in the grave when Jesus arrived.
2. The large gathering of sympathizers was to be expected. Comforting the bereaved was an important duty under the traditional Law. The Law commanded, “You shall walk after the Lord your God...” (Deut.13:4), and that was interpreted as requiring all of God’s actions to be emulated by the Jews. Since Jehovah is depicted in Scripture as being concerned for the physical situations of humanity, His people are obligated to show the same concern in their conduct toward others.
3. Mourning for the dead followed strict and precise formulas among the Jews. These mourners were still present after four days because tradition “required seven days’ public and thirty days’ private mourning for distinguished or important personages” [McGarvey].
4. Mary and Martha behaved differently upon the arrival of Jesus. Martha went out to meet Him outside the village of Bethany. Some scholars say that this violated the custom which dictated that mourners should remain in their houses early in the period of mourning. Mary remained in the house and did not see Jesus until she was sent for.
5. Martha’s first remark to Jesus manifested faith in Him and at the same time betrayed a lack of faith in His power. She was convinced that Christ could have *prevented* death, but she was not fully convinced that He could now *overcome* death.
6. With a generic statement of trust, Martha expressed confidence that “whatever” Jesus decided to do in matters relating to her brother, God would support Him. She seemed at a loss to know just what to ask for in this situation.
7. In an effort to give her immediate comfort, the Lord promised her that Lazarus would rise from the dead, but she associated that promise with her conviction that there will be a resurrection of *all* the dead at the end of time.
8. “I am the resurrection and the life.” This is another of the “I AM” statements of great truths in this Gospel. Jesus had the power of resurrection and life in Himself *at that time!* His intervention was not limited by time. Since “in Him we live...and have our being” (Acts 17:28), that divine control of life can be exercised at one time as well as another. If Jesus chose to act *right then*, Lazarus would not have to *wait* for relief.
9. The Lord called for a faith in Martha that went even *beyond* immediate relief from physical death. His power was such that believers in Him would need *never* die! This promise, of course, was related to *spiritual* death, from which believers would be forever protected.
10. Martha’s profession of faith in this truth was not as directly responsive to the Lord’s question as it might have been. Later at the tomb, she exhibited a lapse of confidence

that possibly casts a shadow here on the depth of her confession of the Son of God.

**Jn.11:28-37 “LORD, IF YOU HAD BEEN HERE...”**

1. Perhaps it was because Martha had seemed not to grasp fully the import of His promise about His power over death both now and hereafter that Jesus sent her to bring Mary to Him. Mary’s perspective on things was usually more spiritual than her sister’s (Luke 10:38-42).
2. It was customary for women to visit a loved one’s tomb as often as possible following burial. The mourners concluded that this was Mary’s purpose in leaving the house. They went with her, thinking to further discharge their *duty* as comforters. This meant that Jesus would not be able to have a private conversation with Mary after all, as He had with Martha.
3. Mary’s first remark was identical [in English] to her sister’s. However, Merrill Tenney detects a difference between the two statements:

“The difference appears in the word order of the Greek text, in which the last word is the most emphatic. Matha’s words end with the possessive pronoun *me*, (21) Mary’s words, with the noun *brother* (32).”
4. Jesus was moved by the grief that swept over Mary’s heart. He groaned and was troubled. The footnote for “groaned” in the ASV is interesting. “He was *moved with indignation and was troubled*.” He knew that those Jews [leaders] who now were professing to mourn Lazarus’ death would soon be plotting to kill him to suppress his role as a testimony to His own power and divinity (John 12:10,11). Their grief was *pretended*. Mary’s was *real*. Their hypocrisy troubled [disgusted] Him.
5. “Jesus wept.” This shortest verse in the Bible is one of the most profound in demonstrating the humanity of the Lord. He was touched by the same infirmities that touch every mortal. He did not weep because of Lazarus; He would very soon raise him. He wept because of the deep distress felt by people He had grown to love a great deal. His sadness pictures the sorrow which we are allowed as Christians to display under similar circumstances (1Thes.4:13-18). His weeping was for the living rather than for the dead.
6. Some in the crowd of mourners were familiar with Jesus’ miracle that had given sight to the sightless. It was natural that they were struck with the possibility that He could also have prevented Lazarus from dying. They apparently entertained no thought of Jesus raising His friend from the dead, indicating that everyone would have readily agreed that it would have been harder to raise the dead than to heal the sick.
7. Tenney draws a striking contrast between the behavior of the two sisters in the company of Jesus in this chapter:

Martha

*Active* in going out to meet Jesus;  
“My” brother reflects her possessive nature;  
*Vocal*;  
*Stood* [apparently] as she spoke to Jesus;  
*Spoke* of her expectation of resurrection.

Mary

*Passive* in contemplation in the house;  
My “brother” shows grief for Lazarus;  
*Tearful*;  
*Knelt* at Jesus’ feet;  
*Silent* about any expectation at all.

8. Both sisters were devoted to Jesus and willing for Him to take whatever action He judged best. They both loved their brother but expressed their grief in different ways.

**Jn.11:38-44** **“LAZARUS, COME FORTH!”**

1. Burial in caves was a common practice. Large millstone-like rocks were placed across the entrance of the tomb to secure it from animals. The stone frequently was situated in a groove that allowed it to be moved back and forth in the opening.
2. “Take away the stone.” The time for action had come. The stone could have been moved by supernatural power, but that was unnecessary to the miracle about to take place. God always expects us to do for ourselves what we *can* before we expect Him to do for us what we *can’t*.
3. Martha’s faith wavered at the Lord’s command. The laws of the *natural* world suddenly pushed aside her confidence in the workings of the *unnatural* world. Martha exposed the fact that she had failed to grasp the full meaning of the conversation held with Jesus just minutes before.
4. Jesus reminded Martha that His promise of a faith-building experience was still good. The glory of God was about to be declared to a degree that she or the others there had never seen before.
5. When adequate faith had been displayed, at least enough to make things ready for the miracle, Jesus spoke openly to the Father [apparently those present could hear]. He intended that the onlookers would be completely aware that the miracle would result from the Father’s power and not from some mysterious ability of His own. The relationship between the Father and Son was the sole reason why Lazarus could arise.
6. With a voice *loud* enough to impress onlookers with His total mastery over death, the physical world’s most uncontrollable weapon against men, the Lord called Lazarus from the tomb. He came forth immediately, still wrapped in the graveclothes in which he had been buried. The Christ had delivered *physical* man from the control of physical death, just as He hoped to deliver *spiritual* men from the eternal control of spiritual death.
7. “Loose him, and let him go”-- back to his normal activities as a living man. This was not a resurrection like His own would be. Lazarus would have to die again; Jesus would be raised from the tomb to never-ending life. Lazarus would have that glorious prospect, too, if he maintained unshakable faith in the Christ. And, it’s unthinkable that his devotion could *ever* diminish, in view of this unique experience.

**Jn.11:45-57** **“WHAT SHALL WE DO?”**

1. The Jews who had witnessed the notable miracle of Lazarus’ raising were divided in their reaction to what they had seen. Some laid aside their prejudices against Jesus and accepted Him as someone much more significant than they had supposed before. Others, however, were still unconvinced by convincing evidence and reported the incident to the Pharisees.
2. Something had to be done by the rulers to stop any further demonstrations that

would bolster the claims of Jesus and expand the limits of His influence over the nation. Delay was no longer an option. A “council” [meeting of the Sanhedrin] was called to deal with their problem once and for all.

3. F.F. Bruce comments on the Jewish Sanhedrin:

“The Sanhedrin, the supreme court of the Jewish nation, comprised seventy-one members, including the high priest, who presided over it by virtue of his office. The chief priests (the high priest, the captain of the temple and the members of the leading priestly families), together with the party of the Sadducees, to which most of them belonged, formed a majority of the court; the Pharisees constituted an influential minority.

“It is plain that the members of the court were desperate that Jesus’ presence and activity in and around Jerusalem would attract a large following and, whether with or without his approval, spark off a popular rising. This would inevitably bring down the heavy hand of Rome and might lead to the abolition of the internal autonomy and temple-constitution of Judea. ‘Our place,’ which they feared would be taken away, was the temple (this ‘holy place’ of Acts 6:13f; 21:28). By the time this Gospel was written, the catastrophe which they dreaded had taken place, but not because of the presence and activity of Jesus.”

4. This meeting likely was beset by much confusion. Nobody had a ready solution to the dilemma they faced.
- a. They could not deny the *reality* of Jesus’ signs. Their consciences spoke to them from a background rich in evidence that God had *never* endorsed such things as Jesus was doing unless He had *sent* the miracle worker to do His work among men. Some of them must have grappled within themselves for a reason why Jesus’ credentials as a man of God were any less acceptable than those of other miracle workers who had come before Him.
  - b. At the same time, they feared that the impact of Jesus’ miracles would eventually draw the majority of the populace after Him. That would forever destroy their control over the Jewish religious system that had required hundreds of years to cultivate. Any serious internal conflict for dominance among the people would cause Rome to assume total control over the nation in every aspect of political and religious life, and their “place” of prestige and power would be lost.
  - c. It was a struggle between conscience and expediency. Expediency usually wins with those whose focus is on *this* world.
5. Caiphias, who had been installed by the Romans as high priest in place of his father-in-law Annas, was moved by an irrepressible hatred for Jesus and an overwhelming jealousy for his own official position to voice a plot that probably had lurked within the recesses of his mind for a long time. The simplest thing to do to achieve the goal they desired was: “Kill Jesus!”
6. His reasoning for the validity of his plan was: it would be better that one man die than for an entire nation to “perish.” Of course, he could not have been nearly as concerned for the welfare of the “nation” as he was for his *own* place in that nation.
7. The apostle John observes through the eye of inspiration that Caiphias’ devious plot had far deeper meanings than even he realized. His wicked proposal actually carried a *prophecy* originated by God. Indeed, Jesus might die “for the nation” and postpone intervention by Rome in the status-quo of Jewish life. But on a grander scale, the Lord’s crucifixion would result in both death “for the nation” and “death

“to the nation.”

8. Jesus would die for the *spiritual life* of the Jewish people as well as for the salvation of the Gentiles. At the same time, His death would forever remove the “middle wall of partition” that maintained the favored status of Israel over other nations (Col.2:14). When that distinction was removed, “the [special] nation” of the Old Testament would be no more. God’s “other children” could then be gathered through the preaching of the gospel to “*all* the nations” (Matt. 28:18).
9. From that moment, Jesus’ enemies formalized their previous desires to defeat His threatening activities into plans that would lead to His final and complete destruction. His *death* was now their ultimate goal. It was the only thing that would satisfy their selfish frustrations about the personal magnetism of this man who had challenged everything they stood for among the people.
10. We can trace the unorganized and often spontaneous efforts of these enemies to stop further actions by Jesus that were harmful to their cause: John 5:16-18; 7:32,45; 8:59; 9:22; 10:39; 11:47.
11. Once again, being aware of the plotting against Him by the Jews, Jesus retired to the “wilderness” to escape the wrath of the plotters. We cannot identify precisely where He chose to reside [a village called “Ephraim”], but there He remained with His disciples until it was time to return to Jerusalem to live out the rest of His life on earth and to die on a cross for the *redemption* of the entire human race.
12. The Passover Feast was approaching, and many people were making their way to Jerusalem for the celebration. Although there was no specific mandate in the Law for preparatory purifying ceremonies, it seems that a popular practice among the pilgrims was to go early to the Feast and engage in self-imposed rituals of cleansing.
13. Jesus remained the subject of popular conversation in Jerusalem. His latest **BOLD SIGN** [raising Lazarus] had stirred the imagination of the people, and everyone wanted to see this miracle worker. They were hoping that He would come to the Passover celebration.
14. There was great danger in this popularity. The authorities had given orders that anyone who saw Jesus must report His whereabouts to them so they might carry out their evil scheme to end His life and snuff out His influence with the people.

**Complete These Statements:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_, the brother of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, was very sick in the town of \_\_\_\_\_.
2. This sickness was not unto \_\_\_\_\_, but to the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The disciples were alarmed that Jesus would return to \_\_\_\_\_, where the \_\_\_\_\_ had tried to \_\_\_\_\_ Him.
4. \_\_\_\_\_, called \_\_\_\_\_, told the other \_\_\_\_\_ that they should go with \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ with Him.
5. Both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ said, “ \_\_\_\_\_, if You had been \_\_\_\_\_, my \_\_\_\_\_ would not have \_\_\_\_\_.”
6. “I am the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_. He who \_\_\_\_\_ in Me, though he \_\_\_\_\_, he shall \_\_\_\_\_.”
7. The Bible’s shortest verse says, “ \_\_\_\_\_.”
8. The \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ wondered what they could \_\_\_\_\_, because this \_\_\_\_\_ worked many \_\_\_\_\_.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ proposed that it was \_\_\_\_\_ that Jesus should die for the \_\_\_\_\_ rather than that the \_\_\_\_\_ perish.
10. Caiphas’ “prophecy” foretold that Jesus would \_\_\_\_\_ for both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

**True (T) or False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. John recalled that Martha had wiped Jesus’ feet with her hair.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Jesus went immediately to Bethany when He heard of Lazarus’ sickness.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The apostles were glad when Jesus proposed returning to Judea.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Jesus stated that there were twelve hours in the day.

**True (T) or False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Jesus' plan was to go to Bethany to wake Lazarus from sleep.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Mary and Martha rushed out to see Jesus when He drew near to Bethany.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Both sisters had a long conversation with Jesus before they went to the tomb.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Martha displayed weak faith at Lazarus' grave.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. All who witnessed the raising of Lazarus became believers in Jesus.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Many Jews at this time were preparing for the Feast of Passover.

**Match the Persons, Places, and Things:**

- |                              |            |
|------------------------------|------------|
| _____ 1. Cave                | a. Ephraim |
| _____ 2. Town of two sisters | b. Judea   |
| _____ 3. Stoning             | c. Thomas  |
| _____ 4. Wilderness          | d. Stone   |
| _____ 5. Didymus             | e. Bethany |

**Answer These Questions:**

1. *Two* times it is said that Jesus "stayed/remained." In what locations? \_\_\_\_\_  
and \_\_\_\_\_.
2. *Two* things were to be "taken away/loosed." What? \_\_\_\_\_ and  
\_\_\_\_\_.
3. *Three* individuals or groups were said to "weep." Who? \_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
4. *One* Jewish authority is called by name. Who? \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The Savior is called by *six* proper names: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

**BONUS QUESTIONS:**

- 1. Four (different) numbers are used in this chapter. List each one with the verse(s) where it is found.**
- 2. Jesus is called "Lord" eight times. List each verse.**

## CHAPTER TWELVE: “A BOLD PROMISE”

“And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.”

### **Jn.12:1-8** ANOINTING AT BETHANY

Mt.26:6-13

Mk.14:3-9

1. The Passover Feast was to mark the time when Jesus’ “hour” would come and His life would be offered on the cross as the sacrifice for mankind’s sins. John began to focus on that time in chapter eleven, verse fifty-five, when He observed that the Feast was “near” and that many were preparing themselves to observe it.
2. Jesus had withdrawn into seclusion at Ephraim (11:54), and people were wondering if He would dare attend the Feast, since the Pharisees and chief priests were plotting to apprehend and destroy Him. It was Jesus’ intention to go to the celebration in Jerusalem, and there was to be no secrecy surrounding His attendance. B.W. Johnson remarks about this unexpected turn of events:

“As we learn from the other Gospels, he crossed the Jordan from Ephraim and joined in Perea the immense crowds who were hastening to Jerusalem, moved through Jericho in a kind of triumphal procession, with vast multitudes thronging his steps, and moving with them to Bethany, parted from them, not to seek seclusion, but to attend a public feast. The time for all concealment was now past, and in the scenes at Jericho, the feast at Bethany, the kingly march into Jerusalem, the second cleansing of the temple and the final appeal to Jerusalem recorded in Matthew XXIII, he not only seemed to seek publicity, but to invite the malice of his enemies to do its worst.”
3. John’s narrative resumes *six* days before the Passover when Jesus returned to Bethany, the home of Lazarus. An earlier visit to this city centered around Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42), who enjoyed a close friendship with Jesus. Now, however, their *brother* is the center of attention. Lazarus now is important to Jesus as a living testimony to His power over death and as a tool in God’s hands to bring many to a saving faith in the Christ.
4. Soon after Jesus arrived in Bethany, a supper was prepared in His honor at the home of Simon, a [former] leper. It is possible that Jesus had healed this man at some earlier time. It is also possible that there was some kinship between him and the family of Lazarus. That might account for Martha serving the meal and Lazarus sitting at the [family] table with Jesus.
5. There is another record of Jesus attending a supper in the home of a man also named Simon, a Pharisee (Luke 7:36-50). Some of the events at that supper are similar to those in this account, but that supper is *not* the same as this one. A careful examination of the details of both records will make that clear.

6. During the course of the evening, Mary did a very remarkable thing. As Jesus reclined at the table, she poured a copious amount of costly oil on His feet and wiped them with her hair. Matthew and Mark both say that the oil was [also] poured on His head. The *head* of a special guest was the object of a good host's hospitality (Luke 7:46), but the anointing and wiping of the *feet* was a service that would be performed only by a totally dedicated admirer.
7. Mary's behavior not only emerged from the humility of absolute devotion to the Lord but also displayed an outpouring of thankful generosity of remarkable dimensions. The spikenard was valued at "three hundred denarii," which represented about a year's wages for a common laborer in Palestine at that time. Such an action as Mary took was only possible for the affluent, and it indicates that this family had been blessed with substantial prosperity.
8. As generous as this sacrifice was, it was nothing to compare with the sacrifice that would be made in just a few days by the One who was now the object of *this* act of love and devotion.
9. Several of the disciples, prompted by the initial outburst of Judas Iscariot, were critical of Mary's behavior. Judas was motivated in his criticism by a personal greed that the other apostles probably had not perceived. He was "treasurer" for the group and was accustomed to making personal "withdrawals" from their money box [bag]. He had no real concern for helping the poor; the others most likely had concern, and they probably were won over to his position by his pretended appeal for the poor.
10. Jesus came to Mary's defense with another reference to His own death and burial. Her tribute was an impelling forecast of other respectful gifts that would soon be brought for his burial (John 19:39; Luke 24:1). We cannot be sure that the disciples understood at that moment the significance of what Mary had done for the Lord.

**Jn.12:9-11 ANOTHER EVIL PLOT**

1. The presence of Jesus in Bethany generated a great excitement among the Jews. A "great many" came there for a "double" benefit: they wanted to see Jesus, the teacher who had raised a dead man from his tomb, and they also anticipated the opportunity to see the "dead" man who had been brought back from the shadowy realm of hades. This, surely, was the chance of a lifetime!
2. The interest of the religious authorities, however, lay in a different direction. They had already plotted together about how to destroy Jesus and His influence over the people. Now, another threat to their leadership roles had appeared. Lazarus, who before his sickness and death had been just an ordinary citizen of Bethany, now had become a powerful weapon in Jesus' arsenal of evidences. Many of those who came and saw for themselves that Lazarus really was alive again went away believing in one way or another in the uniqueness of this man called Jesus.
3. Every believer in the worthiness of Jesus constituted a threat to the scribes and Pharisees both *politically* and *religiously*.
  - a. The close political ties between the leaders and the Roman government, which had charged them with responsibility for maintaining order and efficiency in the

governance of the Jewish nation, would be severed by any serious challenge to their authority and leadership. Every believer in Jesus was a ripe candidate for participating in such a challenge.

- b. The religious position occupied by the scribes and Pharisees depended on the willingness of the people to give unquestioning submission to their every dictate and desire. Every believer was one more person whose loyalty was being transferred from the traditional authority of *imposed* leadership to the radically different authority of *demonstrated* leadership by Jesus Christ.
4. Such a serious threat in the person of Lazarus could no more be ignored than the danger to their role in the Person of Jesus. Lazarus, like Jesus, would have to be disposed of as quickly as possible. The plotting began.
5. The Gospel writers make no further mention of Lazarus, and so we cannot know what the outcome of this plot might have been. Likely, it never succeeded.

### **Jn.12:12-19** **THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY**

Mt.21:1-11

Mk.11:1-11

Lk.19:29-44

1. All four Gospels report the remarkable entry of the Messiah into Jerusalem prior to His activities in the city during the final days of His life on earth. Two large groups of people participated in the demonstration of adulation and praise. One consisted of pilgrims who had come to celebrate the Passover and who were familiar with the reputation of Jesus as a great worker of miracles. The other included many of those who had been present at Bethany when Jesus raised Lazarus. The latter group fed the enthusiasm of the former by giving them first-hand testimony of just how impressive the power of that miracle had been.
2. Together, these two groups joined in a triumphal march with their “king” into the city which, they supposed, would become the governmental seat of the great *kingdom* their people had expected for many centuries.
3. Palm branches and garments were strewn in the road (Matthew 21:8), perhaps as a gesture of adoration that would prevent the animal Jesus rode on from becoming “defiled” by contact with the dust of the ground. The significance of the palm branches is interesting:

“Palm branches played no prescribed part at Passover; it was at Tabernacles that the people were commanded to rejoice before the Lord seven days with ‘branches of palm trees’ (Lev.23:40)...From the time of the Maccabees palms or palm-branches had been used as a national symbol. Palm branches figured in the procession which celebrated the rededication of the temple in 164 BC (2Macc.10:7) and again when the winning of full political independence was celebrated under Simon in 141 BC (1Macc.13:51)...

On this occasion, then, the palm branches may have signified the people’s expectation of national liberation, and this is supported by the words with which they greeted our Lord.” (F.F. Bruce)

4. The multitude of admirers also raised a chorus of praise and thanksgiving in celebration of what they *thought* was about to take place. Words from Psalm 118:26 were adapted to reflect the expectation of the throng that Jesus was ready to assume the role of king and military leader, a role into which their Messiah had been cast for many years. “Hosanna!” means “Save now!” We cannot know exactly to whom the original plea referred, but we *do* know how this independence-hungry

crowd applied it, and we can understand the implications of its application to their “King of Israel.”

5. It is easy to understand why the common people were so quick to give their allegiance to this “savior.” He had for some time been performing remarkable signs in various places throughout the country, and just recently His demonstrations of power had culminated in bringing back a dead man from the grave! Surely, a man who could overpower death would have no problem in delivering His nation from the controlling grip of the Roman government.
6. Jesus had instructed His disciples to locate a donkey on which He could ride, and on that animal He entered the city amid the acclamations of the “great multitude.” John is careful to note that this choice of transportation was a clear fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy and cites the [adapted] words of Zechariah 9:9. Jewish leaders had often ridden on donkeys, but the symbolism of this animal on this particular occasion probably didn’t exactly fit what the crowds would have anticipated. In Jewish culture, the donkey was representative of *peace*. The horse was used by military leaders in the conduct of *warfare*. The crowd would have placed Jesus on a *horse* in keeping with their wishes for Him to fill the role of liberator of the nation. However, He made a definitive statement to the people in His use of a donkey. His work as the King of Israel was to be characterized by *peace* and not by *war*. How many of the onlookers were able to grasp the “message of the donkey,” we don’t know.
7. Some time earlier, John had observed that the apostles failed to understand Jesus’ statement about the destruction and the renewing of His physical body in resurrection (John 2:19-22). Now, he says that they could not recognize the fulfillment of prophecy on this occasion until after the Savior was “glorified.”
8. The overwhelming acceptance of Jesus by the people and the emotional demonstration of their embrace of their “new” leader brought no joy to the Pharisees. Instead of being closer to accomplishing their conspiracy to destroy this man and to terminate His troublesome influence over the masses, it now appeared that the opportunity to reach their evil goal would be lost forever.
9. As the religious authorities talked among themselves about these latest developments in their struggle with Jesus, recriminations flowed freely. All their scheming seemed to them to have been for nothing. “Look, the world has gone after Him!”

#### **Jn.12:20-26 A MESSAGE TO THE GENTILES**

1. Certain “Greeks” came to Jerusalem during this time of celebration. It is unclear whether they were themselves prospective worshipers at the Feast or just visitors who had come in the company of those who were eligible to engage in the activities prescribed for Jews by the Law.
2. It is clear that these were not Hellenist Jews [*Hellenistae*] who had migrated into Gentile places and had adopted Gentile language and lifestyles. The word here is *Hellenes*, which is always applied to people who were Gentiles by birth.

3. In the light of this fact, these “Greeks” [*Hellenes*] were either:
  - a. Gentile proselytes who had been converted to the Jewish religion and who had made the journey to Jerusalem to observe the ceremonies of Passover alongside their Jewish “brethren.” The practice of the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:27) is an example of the worship offered at Jerusalem by such proselytes;
  - b. Or, they were unconverted Gentiles who had been attracted to the values they perceived in the Jewish religion and were known to come to the temple in expression of their attraction. Gentiles of this sort often were kindly disposed toward the Jews and sometimes acted in ways that were beneficial to the Jewish nation. Cornelius is cited as having given alms “generously to the people” (Acts 10:2), and another centurion in the Roman army “loved” the nation and built them a synagogue (Luke 7:5).
4. These “Greeks” were interested in “seeing” Jesus. We are not told what prompted this interest.
  - a. They may have simply been curious about this man who had generated such excitement in the city. The uproar of adulation and the reports they had heard from people about marvelous works He had performed would probably have sparked a desire in them to see this remarkable individual for themselves.
  - b. It is possible that some of them had been in the temple [outer court of the Gentiles] when Jesus had driven out the moneychangers and the sellers of animals in the “second cleansing” (Matt. 21:12,13). Perhaps they understood that His actions were supportive of Gentiles who visited the temple and who were no doubt distracted by the activities of the greedy merchants there. It would not have been strange for them to want to learn more about this man of action.
5. The request for an interview with Jesus was made through the apostle Philip, possibly because he had a Grecian name and might have had some ability in the Greek language. Philip routed the request through Andrew, a fellow citizen of Bethsaida.
6. John doesn’t tell us about the outcome of this matter. However, it seems unlikely that the Lord would have completely ignored the wishes of these Greeks.
7. We are told that Jesus answered “them” at some point after receiving the petition brought to Him by Philip and Andrew. The subsequent brief discourse by Jesus about the necessity of His approaching death could have been addressed to:
  - a. The two apostles who had brought the request to Him;
  - b. The Greeks who had made the request for an interview;
  - c. The apostles, who later repeated His remarks to the Greeks.
8. The discussion about His death served to teach both Jews *and* Gentiles about the importance of embracing His death and resurrection as the means of salvation in the world to come. The Lord promises that “anyone” [Greeks included] who follows and serves Him will be “honored” by the Father. This pronouncement was a solid prediction of the equal opportunities soon to become available to *all* nations under the preaching of the Gospel (Acts 10:34,35).
9. The “hour” had come when God’s plan for equality was to be executed. The time for Jesus’ “glorification” was at hand. His death should be a source of *encourage-*

ment, not discouragement, to all believers. Those familiar with the laws of agriculture knew that “death” and “burial” were essential to the increase of grain in the field. Similarly, He could not fulfill the purpose for which He had come into the world without going through the ordeal of the cross. Death would *not* mark the *defeat* of His mission but the *victory*. Only by His rising from the grave as victor over Satan could heaven’s plan for a *multitude* of saved disciples be realized.

10. It was imperative that both Jews and Gentiles realize that the Lord’s approaching ordeal on the cross would open doors of opportunity never before opened. “Any-one” who is willing to “hate” his life in this world can “keep” it for eternity.
11. Regardless of *how* these “Greeks” received Jesus’ message, they must have been excited by the prospect that God’s redeeming plan for the human race included *them* [assuming that they comprehended what He meant].

### **Jn.12:27-36** “IF I AM LIFTED UP”

1. The lesson taught by Jesus for the benefit of the “Greeks” once again called His own attention to the grim reality of the suffering that the cross would bring. The humanity of His Being was “troubled.” Later, in the Garden of Gethsemane, He would cry out, “...if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me” (Matt.26:39). Perhaps this, too, is a momentary expression of the weakness of the flesh as He says, “Father, save Me from this hour.” Several versions treat this statement as a petition and punctuate it with a period at its end. However, other versions [e.g., NKJV, RSV] use a question mark instead. The *doubt* implied by the statement becomes a rhetorical question of *certainty*. The Savior could not ask for exemption from the cross, since the cross was at the very center of His purpose for coming into the world.
2. Rather than excusing His Son from the pain of crucifixion, it was better that the Father should use the pain to glorify His name. For a third time, the Father spoke openly to assure the Son that this was His purpose. Previously, at Jesus’ baptism (Luke 3:22) and on the transfiguration mount (Matt.17:5), His voice had been audible to the ears of men.
3. Now, those who heard God’s voice had differing impressions of what they had heard. Some supposed that they had only heard thunder; others believed that it had been an angel speaking. Perhaps the difference lay in the *mindset* of the hearers. Those who were more spiritual in heart accepted a more spiritual explanation for the sounds they heard. Just how intelligible the sounds of God’s voice were to *any* of the hearers is unrevealed. It may be that, like Saul’s companions, they heard the *sounds* but not the *words* of the Father’s declaration. [See Acts 9:7; 22:9.]
4. God had spoken on this occasion not [only] for the Son’s benefit but [also] for the benefit of the people who were present. All but the spiritually insensitive, who only could hear “thunder,” were certainly impressed that the sounds of an “angel’s voice” lent credibility to the claims of Jesus that heaven approved of His activities on earth.
5. In the wake of “angelic” support, the time was opportune for Jesus to speak further about the universal significance of His “**lifting up**.” His death on Calvary

was a **BOLD PROMISE** that the power of Satan over men had been broken and that *all people* could have the deliberate choice of which spiritual leader would receive their loyalty-- the Christ or the devil.

6. The choice made by [people of] the world would determine their eternal judgment. No longer was Satan's domination over the human spirit inevitable. The "lifting up" of the Christ would be both an elevation and an exaltation [the words carry both meanings]. The **BOLD PROMISE** of the crucifixion held out an awesome prospect for all who chose to be "drawn" to the Savior in response to being "taught of God" in His Gospel (John 6:44,45).
7. There were statements in the Old Testament that led some to believe that when the Messiah came, His reign and service among the Jews would never be interrupted. Psalm 72:17 declared, "His name shall endure forever; His name shall continue as long as the sun." Isaiah 9:7 prophesied that "of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end...from that time forward, even forever." To many, this made the death of the Messiah impossible. Furthermore, Daniel had declared that the "Son of Man" would "come with the clouds of heaven" and that His reign would be an "everlasting dominion which shall not pass away." His kingdom was to be one that "shall not be destroyed" (Daniel 7:13,14).
8. Jesus as the "Son of Man" [His own description of Himself] did not fit the "Son of Man" that they had come to expect. They reasoned, "How can we believe in someone who fails in every way to measure up to the person described in our Scriptures?"
9. When people have preconceived notions that they refuse to surrender, there is little profit in trying to reason with them. Jesus offered an admonition rather than an argument to these doubters. He resorted to an analogy frequently used in His teaching. The "light" [Christ] would be in the world for only a short time. When the light was removed, men would be overtaken by "darkness" and wouldn't know "where they were going." While opportunity knocked, they should "believe in the light" and try to become "sons of light" [men led by the truth].
10. With these final words, Jesus departed and was hidden in some undisclosed location. The reason for this behavior is "hidden" from us.

#### **Jn.12:37-41 DISBELIEVING THE EVIDENCE**

1. Sadly, John, who knew what really happened between the Lord and the Jews with whom He tried so many times to reason about spiritual things, admits, "But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him." It was John's purpose in writing this Gospel to record "signs" that would prompt faith in the hearts of his readers (John 20:21).
2. Seven impressive signs had now been reported by John, and many others had been done that received no more than a passing notice (e.g., John 2:23). Yet, the number of believers was limited. John had immense confidence in the power of signs to convince unbelievers, and he didn't want his readers to conclude that Jesus' signs had failed to fulfill their purpose. He cites Old Testament prophecy to show that

the rejection of Jesus' words and signs was something to expect in the first century, just as the signs and words of the prophets had been rejected by unbelievers during the centuries before.

3. Isaiah had been very aware that his prophetic warnings would not be popular with the Jews, but he was constrained to deliver his warnings anyhow (Isaiah 53:1). Even the Christ could not expect to be well received by those who were the objects of His admonitions.
4. John's quotation of another warning, initially stated by Isaiah (Isa.6:10) and later made more familiar in a restatement by Jesus (Matt.13:15), was accompanied by John's own commentary on its implications: "Therefore they *could not* believe."
5. Some have understood these verses to mean that people did not believe because they were barred from doing so by God's irrevocable decree and thus they were not morally responsible for their unbelief. Johnson comments on this idea:

"It is a physical as well as a moral law that he who turns from the light and seeks to abide in darkness will become blinded until he will 'believe a lie and be damned.' The men who are the champions of unbelief...are unbelievers because they did not wish to believe. Their moral condition was such that they could justify their course of life only by refusing to believe on Christ. They sought the darkness, and as a result, they became so blinded that they could not believe...God blinded their eyes, because their blindness resulted from the action of his universal law. The Savior's words settle how God blinded their eyes. It was by the application of his invariable law to their own acts. Trench says, 'The Lord, having constituted as the righteous law of moral government, that sin should produce darkness of heart and moral insensibility, declared that he would allow the law to take its course.'"

J. W. McGarvey adds this remark as a more specific application of Isaiah's words to the unbelief referenced by John:

"He hardened their hearts and blinded their eyes by the manner in which he approached them through the person of his Son, Christ Jesus. Jesus so came, so lived, and so taught that those who hunger for godliness are drawn to him and enlightened by him, while those who despise the grace and love of God are repelled and blinded. John here recognizes that the type [Isaiah] should be fulfilled in the antitype [Christ]. If Isaiah was to so preach that the wicked would be blinded, then Christ in his ministry should likewise so teach and preach as to produce similar results."

6. Although there was a more immediate application of Isaiah's prophecy, John declares that the prophet also had in mind the Messiah's work and its reception [or lack of it] by the people of His day.

#### **Jn.12:42-50 NOT TO JUDGE BUT TO SAVE**

1. Another flaw in the character of the Jewish religious leaders surfaced in consequence of the display of power manifested by Jesus in His miracles. Most totally rejected the strong evidence of those signs and sought to punish the man who had performed the wondrous works. "Many," however, were moved by the evidence of the signs and were compelled to believe in the uniqueness of Jesus. They were nevertheless unwilling to make any open confession of their belief. While there may have been several reasons for their reluctance, John points out that foremost

was the threat of their fellow rulers to cast them out of the synagogue. John indicts the character of these rulers with his judgment that they were more concerned with maintaining their places of honor among other men than with cultivating a level of spirituality that would assure the approval of God. What a pitiful choice!

2. For three and one-half years, Jesus had been a public figure who had spent most of His time in teaching and serving the *multitudes* of His nation. On many occasions He had been in the company of thousands of people and often had no opportunity for privacy or solitude. That period was now past. After these final words to the Passover crowds, as reported in this chapter, His attention will be largely directed to much more private situations and to much smaller audiences. His lessons henceforth will be taught principally to *believers* rather than to *unbelievers*.
3. Jesus' final public discourse serves as a summary of all that He had tried to teach to lost people over the course of His ministry on earth. The fundamental doctrines of His previous teaching are emphasized once again.
  - a. He had been sent by God to lost men who were under obligation to the Father to believe that Jesus is the Savior intended to rescue them from their sin.
  - b. Both Jesus' teaching and example of life were an absolute representation of God's Nature-- to see One was to see the Other.
  - c. Jesus' teaching was designed to give the "light" of truth to the lost.
  - d. Christ's purpose was not to condemn souls. Men are condemned by their own sin apart from any contact with Jesus (John 3:18). His mission was to save men from their condition of hopelessness.
  - e. Reaction to Jesus' words will determine how men will finally be judged.
  - f. Every precept and command of Jesus had been committed to Him by the Father for preaching to the world.
  - g. Man's only possibility for everlasting life lies in the commands of God that Jesus has revealed in His teaching.

**QUESTIONS ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN**

**CHAPTER TWELVE**

**Complete These Statements:**

1. Jesus came to \_\_\_\_\_, where a \_\_\_\_\_ was prepared for Him. \_\_\_\_\_ served, and \_\_\_\_\_ sat with Jesus.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ poured a \_\_\_\_\_ of costly oil on Jesus' \_\_\_\_\_ and wiped them with her \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The \_\_\_\_\_ could have been sold for \_\_\_\_\_ and given to the \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Many people came to Bethany to see \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Jesus entered \_\_\_\_\_ riding on a \_\_\_\_\_. People threw \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ (Mt.21:8) on the road before Him.
6. The \_\_\_\_\_ said, "You are accomplishing \_\_\_\_\_. The \_\_\_\_\_ has gone after Him."
7. Certain \_\_\_\_\_ wanted to see \_\_\_\_\_. Their request was carried to Him by \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
8. "And I, if I am \_\_\_\_\_ from the \_\_\_\_\_ will draw all \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_."
9. \_\_\_\_\_ had prophesied that God had \_\_\_\_\_ the eyes and \_\_\_\_\_ the hearts of unbelievers.
10. Jesus said He had not come to \_\_\_\_\_ the world. The \_\_\_\_\_ would \_\_\_\_\_ unbelievers in the \_\_\_\_\_.

**True (T) or False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Judas Iscariot was very concerned about the poor.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Kindness could be shown to the poor long after Jesus was gone.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The chief priests considered Lazarus a threat to their priestly status.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on an animal symbolic of war

**QUESTIONS ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN**

**CHAPTER TWELVE (Continued)**

**True (T) or False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. John records the interview of Jesus by the Greeks.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Philip was a citizen of Bethsaida.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Jesus used a grain of wheat to illustrate His need to die on the cross.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. God’s speaking was for the encouragement of Jesus in His time of trial.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Jeremiah prophesied about the dangers of unbelief to the “eyes” and “heart.”
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. God’s word will judge all men in the last day.

**Match the Persons, Places and Things:**

- |                               |                   |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| _____ 1. Praise of men        | a. Donkey         |
| _____ 2. 300 Denarii          | b. Spikenard      |
| _____ 3. Death plot           | c. Rulers         |
| _____ 4. Entry into Jerusalem | d. Judas Iscariot |
| _____ 5. Simon’s son          | e. didLazarus     |

**Answer These Questions:**

1. *Two* facts describe Judas: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. He was doing *three* things: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
2. *Two* groups accompanied Jesus into Jerusalem: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Prophecies are cited from *three* O.T.books: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
4. *Two* groups of people “believed” in Jesus: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
5. *Three* body parts are mentioned by Isaiah in his prophecies: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

**BONUS QUESTION:**

**There are at least nine (9) verses in this chapter that refer to crucifixion, death, burial, or resurrection. Locate them and list the verses and the terms used in each verse.**

### CHAPTER THIRTEEN: “A BOLD DEMONSTRATION”

“If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.”

This chapter marks the beginning of the *second* major section of this Gospel. In the first division, the Lord concentrated on His ministry to the nation of Israel, which was composed, of course, mostly of unbelievers in desperate need to develop faith in Jesus as their Messiah before it was too late. Christ performed *seven* significant miracles among the people, in addition to many others that the Holy Spirit chose not to describe, in an effort to generate such faith in His fellow Jews (John 20:21).

Now, John’s focus will shift from Jesus’ efforts to *save unbelievers* to His final attempts to *strengthen the faith* of His believing disciples upon whose shoulders the *faith* of all others would rest (Matt.28:18-20; Mark 16:15,16). Chapters thirteen through sixteen will be devoted to activities and teaching intended to prepare the apostles for the awesome task that lay before them. Chapter seventeen is the record of Jesus’ personal prayer for their welfare and for the ultimate success of their mission in the world.

#### **Jn.13:1-11 WASHING THE DISCIPLES’ FEET**

1. John had often written of Jesus’ “hour.” That would be the time when both the Son and the Father would be glorified through Christ’s death on the cross, His resurrection from the grave, and His ascension into heaven to be seated in honor at the right hand of the Father. On several occasions, the course of earthly events was altered because that “hour” had not come. Now, it has arrived. The rest of John’s narrative will be devoted to matters relating to the execution of God’s grand plan for the redemption of a lost world.
2. The Feast of Passover was the “hour” toward which Jesus had been teaching and working for the past three and one-half years. Multitudes of Jews would witness the momentous events of that “hour.” They would offer their own lambs in the temple in a futile exercise to remove the guilt of their accumulated sins, but at the same time they would become guilty of the greatest sin they could ever commit when they chose to slaughter God’s Lamb on Calvary’s cross.
3. Luke identifies the celebration as the “Feast of Unleavened Bread” (Luke 22:1). The difference in the terms used by John and the Synoptic writers to describe this festive period has given rise to some *perceived* problems about the chronology of certain events during this final week of Jesus’ life on earth. J.W. McGarvey offers these remarks on Luke 22:1 that may help to resolve some of the difficulties:

“The feast of unleavened bread began properly on the fifteenth of Nisan, and lasted seven days, but this was the fourteenth Nisan, the day on which the paschal lamb was slain. However, it was common to blend the slaying of the passover, the passover feast and the feast of unleavened bread, and to look upon all three as one great festival, and to use the names passover and unleavened bread interchangeably to describe the entire eight days. This appears from the writings of Josephus, who sometimes reckons the feast as beginning on the fifteenth (Ant. iii. 10.5), and again as beginning on the fourteenth (Wars v. 3.1). He also sometimes reckons the feast as lasting seven days (Ant. iii.10.5), and again he reckons it as lasting eight days (Ant. ii.15.1). The Rabbinites say that all the leaven was carefully removed from the houses on the evening before the fourteenth Nisan. To the present day leaven is removed from the houses of the Jews on the night between the thirteenth and fourteenth. Hence the day could be very fittingly called ‘the first day of unleavened bread.’ ”

4. John introduces the events of this chapter as occurring “before the feast of the Passover.” Since the second century, there has been a controversy about whether or not Jesus ate the Passover a day earlier than was authorized by the Law. This question springs from statements made by John which some interpret to answer the question affirmatively. Although the Synoptic writers clearly support the long-accepted time for the Lord’s observance of the Passover supper, John’s terminology, which *seems* to suggest an earlier celebration and an arrest of Jesus before the Passover [See John 13:19; 18:28; 19:14,31.], should not be regarded as offering contradictory information. McGarvey’s further comments may prove helpful:

“The simplest solution of the difficulty is to attribute the apparent discrepancy to that loose way of speaking of the feast...When the synoptists speak of the passover they refer to the *actual paschal supper*; when John speaks of the feast of the passover, or the passover, he refers to the *seven days’ feast of unleavened bread* which followed the actual paschal supper. Jesus was put to death on the first day of this latter feast, and therefore John here uses the festival to designate the time of the Lord’s suffering and death.”

5. Even in the face of a painful death, Jesus’ concern was not for Himself but for His disciples. He would not be distracted by personal prospects from providing for those things that would be needful for their spiritual well-being. His love for His apostles would remain unwavering “to the end.”
6. “The supper being *ended*” obviously is better translated “*during* supper,” as the footnote [NKJV] suggests. Verses 26-30 definitely show that the supper had *not* ended at the time indicated by verse two.
7. The devil earlier had “entered” Judas and had influenced him to bargain with the religious leaders for the life of the Lord (Luke 22:3-6). John’s implication is that Jesus was aware of Judas’ vile deed but that He also knew that God still controlled His destiny and that He would turn any plot among men to ensure the successful conclusion of heaven’s plan for the cross and for His return to the Father.
8. Several circumstances likely contributed to the **BOLD DEMONSTRATION** that Jesus was about to initiate during the Paschal Supper:
  - (a) The apostles were still expecting an earthly kingdom that would afford them differing offices of honor and influence;
  - (b) They still had personal ambitions that had prompted them to argue among themselves just shortly before this occasion about who should be “greatest” in the

- Lord's kingdom;
- (c) The owner of the house apparently had provided the objects necessary for the washing of guests' feet [basin, towels, water, etc.], but no servant was present to do the washing;
  - (d) None of the apostles had made a move to offer this service to his fellow apostles. Each would have been happy for someone in the company [except Jesus] to wash the feet of the rest, but each considered himself above rendering a courtesy that was often performed by slaves or menials;
  - (e) The problem of selfish attitudes in these disciples cried out for a solution that would go beyond a verbal discussion. Their self-seeking disposition had been targeted in several previous lessons by Jesus, but without causing any apparent change in their behavior. Perhaps the greatest threat to the success of the vital task of preaching the gospel to "every creature" was the "I'm-number-one" mentality that pervaded the thinking of the apostles. A **BOLD DEMON-STRATION** might be able to accomplish what words had failed to achieve.
9. Perhaps some incident or some bit of conversation triggered Jesus' startling action. Interrupting the conduct of the meal, Jesus arose to perform the service for His disciples that they were unwilling to perform for one another. They were shocked at this turn of events!
  10. We aren't told which apostle was first approached by His Servant-Master. It was possibly Peter, who was immediately repelled by the idea that one so honorable as Jesus would dishonor Himself by doing something that no disciple would demean himself by doing. "Lord, are you washing *my* feet? No way!"
  11. Jesus' response was as unexpected as His action. Peter's "part" [connection] with His Lord depended on being washed by the Savior. Jesus' meaning may have been on *two* levels:
    - a. If Peter could not share in the humility exemplified in this washing of feet, he would never be able to be a productive worker in the kingdom of Christ;
    - b. If Peter chose to be "unwashed" spiritually, he would be disqualified as a messenger of the Lord to proclaim cleansing to a lost world. No spiritually unclean person would have *any* "part" with the Savior, who soon would offer through the gospel the "washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5) as the only hope of the world.
  12. Since that was the case, Peter was anxious to *change* his position on foot-washing. Wash him *all over*, if that would enhance his standing with his Lord!
  13. *Two* kinds of "clean" enter into Jesus' next remark: Those who are "bathed" (spiritually) needed only a physical washing of their feet. All were in this category except Judas, whose feet were dirty like the others, but whose heart was blackened by the ravages of sin.

**Jn.13:12-17 "I HAVE GIVEN YOU AN EXAMPLE"**

1. The apostles obviously did *not* understand the significance of what Jesus had done for them. They perceived His behavior but not His meaning. He proceeded to

explain Himself. A servant [apostle] was never greater [more honorable] than his master [Christ]. What He had done for them, they should be willing to do for one another. There was no place in His service for pettiness and jealousy.

2. In this **BOLD DEMONSTRATION** Jesus had given them an example, not a church ordinance as some suppose. B.W. Johnson observes:

“We wish every student to note the fact that not once elsewhere is it referred to in the New Testament as a church ordinance, and only once mentioned at all. In 1Tim.5:19, it is named as a mark of a godly widow. Nor is there any mention of it as a church ordinance until the fourth century when the tide of corruption was sweeping in. The Pope now washes the feet of twelve beggars once a year, the German Baptists (Dunkards), Mennonites, and a few other minor sects practice it, but with rare exceptions Christendom, from the days of the apostles to our time, has looked upon the Savior’s example as a sublime act of humility whose spirit must always be followed, but has rejected the idea of him establishing a church ordinance. There is a wide difference between an example and a church ordinance...The Savior, the night before he was crucified, established a church ordinance, the Lord’s Supper. We discover it just as soon as the church is organized on the day of Pentecost. The converts ‘continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine, and in the fellowship, and in the *breaking of bread*, and in prayers.’ ”

Jesus did *not* say, “Do what I have done,” but “Do as I have done to you,” which “requires us to do something *similar* to that which Christ has done, but not necessarily the *very same thing*” [McGarvey].

3. Perhaps the disciples might begin to see what personal improvement in character they all needed to make. To understand His lesson about humility was *good*; to practice it was *far better*!
4. We can’t know exactly *when* the apostles threw off their self-serving ambitions, but it is certain that they did. Peter is a good example of just how effective this **BOLD DEMONSTRATION** actually was. By the time he wrote 1Peter, “submission,” “obey,” and “suffer” played a large role in his writing to saints. There are some twenty-six verses in that epistle that include one of those terms.

### **Jn.13:18-30** *EXPOSING THE GUILTY*

Mt.26:21-25

Mk.14:18-21

Lk.22:21-23

1. There was another item of serious business that needed attention at this supper. The disciples were completely unaware of the vile character of Judas and of the despicable bargain that he had made with Jesus’ enemies. They *would* know about those things soon, and it might prove hurtful to their faith in Christ to think that He had been as ignorant all along as they were. On the other hand, their confidence in Jesus would be strengthened if they could see that He had dealt with Judas with full knowledge of the conspiracy against Him and that He had given the traitor every opportunity to change his mind and alter his plan. It was necessary now that Jesus, without any further delay, should expose the treacherous plot that Judas had framed, even though the other disciples at the moment might not recognize the exposure for what it really was.
2. Jesus laid the groundwork for His exposure of Judas as a traitor by quoting from Psalm 41:9, where David bemoaned his own betrayal by a trusted friend. The

Lord knew the character of each disciple, including Judas, and He *expected* the disloyalty of one of them. Judas would not act in order to fulfill a Scripture, but what he chose to do would constitute a secondary fulfillment of what the Psalmist had declared hundreds of years before. When the other apostles realized at some later time that Jesus had been aware of Judas' plans and that those plans had been forecast in the Old Testament, they would have even more reason to believe that Jesus truly was the all-knowing "I Am" that He claimed to be.

3. It troubled Christ to reveal the insidious nature of one of their number, but it *must* be done. So, He announced to them plainly, "One of you will betray Me." This understandably troubled the minds of the disciples. *All* of them, according to the writers of the Synoptic accounts, began to ask, "Lord, is it I?" Each one knew [with one exception] that no such notion had ever entered his thoughts. Each innocent man must have suddenly become very disturbed to think that he might become involved, albeit unwillingly, in an act that was totally repulsive to his own fundamental nature.
4. John suggests that Peter might have initiated these fearful questions by asking him [John] to ask Jesus for the culprit's identity. John was positioned for the supper in a manner that placed his head close to Jesus' head. This situated him so that he could converse with Jesus quietly and unheard by the others present. The Lord gave a simple clue to John that would identify the offender, but even His plain indicator was not enough, for no one at the table made the right connection.
5. One thing that may have confused John in spite of Jesus' clue was the fact that "dipping the *sop*" [KJV, ASV] and giving it to a guest was a gesture of high honor. Why should anyone conclude that a disciple so recognized by Jesus would be the one incriminated by Him as a traitor? James Macknight explains the "sop" ["piece of bread"--NKJV] that Judas was given:

"...the Jews in eating the passover used a thick kind of sauce called *Haroseth*, made of palm tree branches or raisins and such like berries, which they bruised and mixed with vinegar and other seasoning, to represent the clay whereof their fathers in Egypt made brick, called in the Hebrew language, *Haras testa*. Into this sauce it is thought Jesus dipped a morsel of the meat he was eating, and gave it to Judas...Grotius on John, Lamy, Clarke, and others, think that this implies that Judas had placed himself so near his Master as to eat off the same platter with him. But their way of lying on couches at meat, must have made it inconvenient for two or more persons to eat in that manner. It is more probable that the disciples being in the deepest distress, had left off eating, only Judas, to conceal his guilt, continued the meal, and was dipping his meat in the *Haroseth*, or thick sauce mentioned above, when Jesus happened to be putting his into it; which sauce, according to custom, was served up in a separate dish."

6. Judas, of course, was faced with the fact that his vile plot was known to Jesus. Apparently, the clue about the "sop" was heard by him as well as John. *He* knew what it meant, although John didn't. When the Lord added, "What you do, do quickly," he also knew what he was supposed to do next. He went out from the supper immediately. Satan had "entered" him, and he had now made a *final* and *deliberate* choice to give in to the temptation that for some time had plagued him.
7. Some of the apostles, who heard this last statement made to Judas, misunderstood

it to mean that Judas, who was in charge of their treasury money, should go out and purchase supplies for use in the additional activities they would engage in during the remaining days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Others supposed that he was told to buy things that would assist the poor in their celebration of this season of devotion.

8. Luke 22:19-23 indicates that Judas remained with the others until *after* the Lord's Supper had been instituted. John doesn't record the Supper at all, so Luke's proposal to "make an orderly account" of such things perhaps should rule in making a determination about Judas' presence or absence.
9. It is perplexing to some students that Jesus would have chosen such a character as Judas to share in the apostleship to this point. It is clear that He recognized the serious flaws in this traitor-to-be. We may never fully understand the reasons for Judas' selection, but Johnson offers these thoughts:
  - a. There was a need within the group for someone with special business and management talents as Judas is supposed to have possessed;
  - b. Even though Judas, like the rest, followed Christ at first from mixed motives, he had the potential of becoming a "good and useful man";
  - c. Judas would become a powerful testimony for the honesty and genuineness of Christ's ministry. His failure to defend himself by making accusations against Jesus and His work was ample proof that no such charges could be made, even by someone intimately associated with the Lord;
  - d. Modern churches will be encouraged to know that God will bless them and their work, in spite of the fact that evil men sometimes infiltrate their ranks.

**Jn.13:31-35**

**A NEW COMMANDMENT**

1. It is possible that Jesus had ordered the departure of Judas from the supper so that He could more freely discuss with the other apostles some matters of great concern to their future work of preaching the Gospel. Once Judas had "gone out," the Lord commenced His remarks to them.
2. First, He assured them once again that His approaching suffering and death would become the source of great glory to Himself and to His Father. However, if glory was to emerge from the events of Calvary, then that glory could only come from the Savior's accomplishing everything that the Father had planned for Him to do. Those activities must be carried out "immediately." The crucifixion was now only a few hours away.
3. The disciples would be like "little children" in their complete dependence on their Master for guidance and support through the trying times just ahead. He would be physically present with them for only a short while. After that, they must continue to trust His guidance that would be provided for them "at a distance" by the Holy Spirit. John uses this tender and caring term ["little children"] several times in First John to address saints of the late first century who were even then still in need of divine guidance in the face of difficult circumstances.
4. The "little children" would be unable to follow Jesus for continued personal en-

couragement. The Jews, who had earlier been told that they could not follow Him (John 7:33,34), would *never* be able to “go where He was going” because of their sinful lives. His disciples, however, though temporarily barred from His presence, could so serve Him that “where He is, there they could be also” (John 14:3).

5. One thing would be of greater help to them than anything else as they labored in the world without His personal presence. LOVE for one another would afford them mutual strength that could be attained in no other way. Jealousy and selfishness would destroy their effectiveness; love and devotion to one another would assure that their all-important mission to the lost would reap a rich harvest of souls.
6. Although brethren had always been encouraged in the Scriptures to love others [e.g., Lev.19:18; Deut.10:19; Matt.5:44,45], never before had disciples been urged to love to the same extent that Jesus had loved them. No sacrifice is too great to make for a brother if we love in the way that Jesus did. No hurtful act can ever be committed against a brother when we imitate Jesus’ behavior toward us.
7. Such unmitigated love among brethren would become the clearest identifying mark of discipleship in the church. Tertullian would say about members of the early church, “How these Christians love one another.”

**Jn.13:36-38**    **GOING WHERE OTHERS CANNOT GO**

Mt.26:31-35

Mk.14:27-31

Lk.22:31-34

1. Peter was unwilling for Jesus’ announcement about “going” somewhere to pass unquestioned. He had no idea that Jesus was speaking of going into the hadean world. He supposed that the Lord had decided to travel somewhere He considered too difficult or too dangerous to permit others to accompany Him.
2. The prospect of difficulty and danger was never a deterrent to action, so far as Peter was concerned. Characteristically, he was willing to throw caution aside and follow the Lord *now*, if that would help Him to accomplish whatever He proposed to do. Even death, Peter thought, was not too great a price to pay for the privilege of supporting his Master in a time of crisis.
3. Jesus knew Peter far better than Peter knew himself. The apostle was *not* ready to lay down his life, or even to face persecution and ridicule for the Christ, as subsequent events would prove.
4. Instead of courage, Peter would display cowardice when the time of reckoning came. Instead of giving his support to Jesus after many others had deserted Him, Peter would deny that he was even acquainted with the Lord.
5. Peter’s defection from the ranks of the faithful would not be long in coming. In just a few hours his loyalty to Jesus would be tested, and Peter would *fail* the test--not once, but *three* times.

**Complete These Statements:**

1. As the Feast of \_\_\_\_\_ approached, Jesus knew that His \_\_\_\_\_ had come for Him to \_\_\_\_\_ this world and go to \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Jesus began to \_\_\_\_\_ the disciples' feet and \_\_\_\_\_ them with a \_\_\_\_\_.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ objected at first to having his \_\_\_\_\_ washed. Later, he asked Jesus to wash his \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Those who were \_\_\_\_\_ only needed their \_\_\_\_\_ washed. All the apostles were \_\_\_\_\_ except \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Christ had given them an \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ "as" He had \_\_\_\_\_.
6. A \_\_\_\_\_ is not \_\_\_\_\_ than his \_\_\_\_\_.
7. The Scripture had foretold, "He that eats \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_ has lifted up his \_\_\_\_\_ against \_\_\_\_\_."
8. After Satan had entered \_\_\_\_\_, Jesus told him, "What you \_\_\_\_\_, do \_\_\_\_\_."
9. Some thought that \_\_\_\_\_, who had the \_\_\_\_\_ box, was told to buy things for the \_\_\_\_\_ or for the \_\_\_\_\_.
10. All would be able to identify the Lord's \_\_\_\_\_ by the way they \_\_\_\_\_ one another.

**True (T) or False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Judas first thought of betraying Christ during the Passover supper.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Jesus washed the disciples' feet after the supper was finished.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Peter was eager for Jesus to wash his feet.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The apostles quickly understood Jesus' purpose in washing their feet.

**True (T) or False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Exposing a traitor would eventually strengthen the faith of the others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. One apostle leaned on Jesus' bosom during the Passover supper.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Jesus gave the "sop" to Judas Iscariot.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. It was night when Judas left the room where the supper was held.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. The disciples would be best known by their mutual love.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Peter would deny Jesus twice before the rooster would crow.

**Match the Persons, Places, or Things:**

- |                   |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| _____ 1. Humility | a. Beloved apostle |
| _____ 2. Judas    | b. A new command   |
| _____ 3. Love     | c. Rooster         |
| _____ 4. Peter    | d. Foot washing    |
| _____ 5. John     | e. Money box       |

**Answer These Questions:**

1. *Two* apostles are named in this chapter: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
2. *Two* names are given to Jesus' arch enemy: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
3. God's Son is called by *four* names: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
4. *Five* "things" were used by Jesus during supper: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ [Exo. 12:8].
5. *Three* things distinguished Judas Iscariot from the other apostles: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

**BONUS QUESTION:**

**There are *five* parts of the physical body and *two* of the non-physical man mentioned in this chapter. List them with the verse(s) in which they are found.**

### CHAPTER FOURTEEN: “ANOTHER BOLD PROMISE”

“...he who believes in Me...greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.”

#### Jn.14:1-6 “LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED”

1. In the closing verses of chapter thirteen, the apostle Peter had been troubled by Jesus’ statement that He would soon be going where “you cannot follow Me now.” There were several other things that were troubling to all the apostles. Their Lord had just announced that one of them would betray Him; one of them would deny Him three times; all would be offended in Him; and He would leave them for a destination they could not yet identify. Moreover, there was the frightening prospect that they might become homeless wanderers without the Christ and might be subject to much persecution. Such troubled minds were in need of comfort and reassurance.
2. The pronoun “you” changes from singular to plural forms between chapters thirteen and fourteen, indicating that Jesus’ efforts to comfort Peter also were intended to address the anxieties of the other apostles as well.
3. Jesus had a simple but perfect solution to all their problems. Anxiety would have no place in hearts that believed deeply in the Father and the Son. Implicit trust in the wisdom, mercy, and power of the Divine Duo would sweep away all their concerns.
4. Some versions state, “You believe in God” [an indicative statement of fact]. Others, “Believe in God” [an imperative command]. In both translations, the meaning is the same. Certainly, the apostles had faith in the Old Testament God, and certainly they needed to increase that faith. In the same way, faith in the Son was weaker than it should be. Troubled hearts could be calmed by an unquestioning faith that would place every disturbing situation in the hands of both Father and Son for a resolution.
5. Probably the one thing that was most unsettling to the disciples at the moment was Jesus’ declared purpose to go away and leave them. They needed to understand that His going would be for their benefit. His destination was His “Father’s house,” which had many “mansions” [“abiding places,” “rooms,” “dwellings”] and where there was room for all of them. He would go ahead to that wonderful house and make preparations for them to follow later.
6. Jesus’ greatest desire was for them [and for all disciples] to be forever “where I am.” His motivation to secure for them an eternal dwelling with Him was their assurance that He would return for them just as surely as He would leave them.
7. The disciples *should* have known where He was going and how He was planning to get there. He had spoken to them often enough about being “glorified.” He had

indicated that they would see Him “ascend where He was before” (Jn.6:62). Their attention had frequently been directed to His death, burial, and resurrection as the “way” He would leave the world and return to heaven.

8. Perhaps Jesus was attempting to prompt questions from the apostles when He asserted that they “knew” things they didn’t understand at all. Thomas, with stark honesty, responded, “Lord, You assume too much. We don’t know either one of these things!”
9. The Lord’s response to their ignorance was framed in some of the most profound words in all of Scripture. “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” With this pronouncement, Jesus unequivocally joins His own Nature to that of the Father so as to make the two of them inseparable. He had declared often before that He and the Father are “One.” He had not disputed the charge made against Him that He “made Himself equal with God.” Now, He proclaims that no man has access to God without going through the Son! If these eleven apostles had their sights set on going to heaven someday to be with God, then they must understand once and for all that theirs was an impossible hope unless they were willing to please the Father by going through Jesus [by obedience].
10. In the light of all they had been taught by the Savior, they should not have been surprised by His **Bold Statement**. As Jews, they had long understood the importance of “the way,” “the truth,” and “the life.”
  - a. The Law had much to say about people walking in the way that God demanded. It declared, “You shall not turn to the right or to the left. You must follow exactly the path that the Lord your God has commanded you” (Deut. 5:32,33). The prophet Isaiah warned, “This is the *way*; walk in it” (Isa.30:21).
  - b. The Psalmist said, “Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your *truth*” (Psalm 26:3).
  - c. Proverbs had taught the Jews, “Whoever heeds instruction is on the path to *life*” (Proverbs 10:17).
11. Jesus now insists on being accepted by heaven-seekers as *The Way* [not a way], *The Truth* [not just truth], and *The Life* [the only giver of eternal life]. Someone has said that “He is the true way to life.”

#### Jn.14:7-11 ***“SHOW US THE FATHER”***

1. The disciples had been with Jesus for some three and one-half years and had been closely associated with Him during that time. In spite of their opportunities, they still did not “know Him.” They knew a lot *about* Him on a *physical* level, but there was much that they had missed *spiritually*. Happily, they would be given another opportunity to comprehend better just *who* this remarkable man really was, this man in whose company they had experienced so many memorable events. After they had seen Him within the context of His crucifixion, burial, resurrection, and ascension, they would finally be able to appreciate Him in an entirely new way.
2. If the apostles had more accurately perceived the divine characteristics residing in the physical body of Jesus, they would have suffered much less anxiety about being

- “orphaned” (verse 18). The Father was one with the Son and would never have caused grief to the Son by abandoning the Son’s closest friends.
3. From now on they [will] know to trust the Father for their needs and for their protection from adversaries who would stop at nothing to stop their preaching about the Son and His salvation.
  4. Philip, like Thomas, realized that his understanding of what was taking place, and of what Jesus was promising about their future security, was grossly inadequate. The Lord again seemed to be assuming more about his mental state than was really true. If they could only see some *overt* manifestation of God, such as Moses had seen in the mount and which was so profound that it left his face shining (Exo. 33:18), then they could be completely at ease about depending on Him in times of difficulty. Short of seeing His absolute reality with their own eyes, they could not be quite so sure as they would like to be about depending on His power to sustain them.
  5. The Lord responded to this errant request by reminding the disciples that, “No one has [physically] seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, has declared *Him*” (John 1:18). Had His *demonstration* of the Father not been adequate to dispel their doubts about His own true Nature?
  6. Philip and the others wanted *physical proof* of God’s presence and power before they could commit fully to the Son’s **Bold Claims**. Although it was impossible for them to see the Father with their physical eyes, they had been offered multiple opportunities to experience His presence and power in the miraculous works performed by the Son. If it was physical proof they needed, those works should have been enough!
  7. The Savior’s message had always been, “I and the Father are one.” Both the teachings the apostles had heard from the lips of the Son and the miracles they had seen performed by His hands had all been made possible by the wisdom and power of the Father. It was this same wisdom and power they must now trust for comfort and care in the perilous days ahead. In this way they would realize the riches of His promise, “Let not your heart be troubled...I will come again to receive you to Myself....”

**Jn.14:12-14 ASKING FOR HELP**

1. The apostles had witnessed many mighty works done by Jesus. In their presence, He had even raised a man from the grave who had been dead four days! After He had returned to His “Father’s house,” the power to do wondrous things would be given to *them* through the agency of the Holy Spirit. That was something they could scarcely have expected to happen.
2. Their “works,” both miraculous and non-miraculous, would be even “greater” than those done by their Master. Not that theirs would embody greater power or wisdom, but that theirs would be greater in scope and consequence than His.
  - a. Jesus taught *thousands*; the apostles would teach *hundreds of thousands*, and the ongoing instruction of their converts would involve *millions* (2Tim. 2:2).
  - b. Jesus converted relatively few of those He taught; the apostles would see many converted by the Gospel (e.g., 3,000 on Pentecost--Acts 2), and their converts would in turn be responsible for the conversion of countless others (Col. 1:23).

- c. Jesus' works were limited to the short period of time He lived among men; the works of the apostles were to continue "until the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). What a **BOLD PROMISE** the Savior was making to them!
3. Nothing that was necessary to the success of their work among the lost would be withheld from them. Their needs would be supplied by heaven as they asked for them from a loving Father and from a devoted Leader who would still be *with* them although away *from* them. The Father would thus be glorified to all who became aware of His diligent watchfulness over them.
  4. Of course, this promise ["ask anything, and I will do it"] was directed to the apostles and not to uninspired disciples. Nor was it intended to satisfy any capricious requests that would be irrelevant to the mission with which the apostles had been entrusted.

**Jn.14:15-18 GETTING ANOTHER HELPER**

1. If the apostles were attracted to the Son by the comfort and protection He and His Father offered, they should be aware of the one restriction placed on that promise: "If you *love Me* [embrace Me as your Comforter and Sustainer], *keep My commandments.*" An alternate reading is, "If you love Me, you *will* keep My commandments."
2. The Son's watchcare would soon be in the charge of "another Helper." Their first Helper [Jesus] would go away, but the second would abide with them "forever."
3. The Greek word translated "Helper" in the NKJV is *Parakletos*, which many scholars consider to be "untranslatable." The KJV and the ASV both use "Comforter." The RSV offers "Counselor," and the Confraternity [Catholic] Bible says "Advocate." Its *two* parts, *para* ["alongside"] and *kaleo* ["to call"] suggest someone "called alongside." In fact, Barclay says that *Parakletos* always is "*someone called in to help in time of trouble or need.*"
4. Johnson offers some pertinent remarks about this "*Parakletos*":
 

"The word rendered Comforter is not exactly translated by any word in our language. It comes from two Greek words that mean "to call to one's side." It occurs four times in John's Gospel and is rendered each time as here ["Comforter" in the KJV--RG]. It is used by no New Testament writer but John, who employs it also in 1John 2:1 where it is translated Advocate, a term preferred by many scholars. Wickcliffe first rendered it Comforter and has been followed by Tyndale, and all the authorized British versions down to the Revision. Some translators have preferred to transfer the Greek word *Paraklete*, rather than to adopt any English term that does not fully express its meaning. The Spirit promised is more than a Comforter. He is our Strength, our Peace-giver, a present help in time of need, a source of knowledge to the church, a witness, God and Christ with us. Probably no single term would more nearly express the meaning than the word Helper, which is probably nearly the meaning of Comforter in Wickcliffe's time. That word is derived from *con* and *fortis* and means, etymologically, 'to encourage or strengthen.'"
5. This *Parakletos* is also described as "the Spirit of truth," because He would be responsible for bringing the saving truth of the Gospel to the apostles and to the whole world through them. "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," Jesus had previously declared (John 8:32), so that made the work to be done by this Helper vital to the spiritual welfare of all humanity (Matt.28:18,19).

6. The Spirit would be sent only to those best prepared to work in company with Jesus in redeeming mankind from Satan. The Spirit of God had impacted the lives of the apostles for several years as they observed His work hand in hand with the Son of God. They “knew” Him and they knew what He could do. In just a few days, the Spirit would be given to work with *them* as He had worked with Jesus. The Spirit would be “in” them to give them wisdom and power as they took the Gospel into “all the world” (Matt.28:19,20). **ANOTHER BOLD PROMISE** of help in time of need!
7. With such a Helper to give them support and encouragement in their mission, the disciples would have no reason to fear that they were being left “orphaned” [NKJV] or “desolate” [ASV, RSV]. There would be no more reason for their hearts to be troubled and fearful!

**Jn.14:19-24** **KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS**

1. Still **ANOTHER BOLD PROMISE** was added to those already given by Jesus to His apostles as an encouragement to their “troubled hearts.” He had previously spoken to His adversaries about His death in terms of going where He could not be found and where He could not be followed (John 7:33-36; 8:21,22). Now, the Lord repeats the same truth to His own disciples.
2. There was a big difference between Christ’s declarations to these two groups about going away. For the Pharisees and other Jewish authorities, the assertion fostered only confusion and resentment. For the apostles, it carried great hope of better things to come for them.. The Savior’s burial would take Him from their physical sight for a time, but the resurrection would restore Him to a new life and give them balm for their troubled spirits. Moreover, the power over death that He soon would demonstrate in His own body was the same power that one day would raise each one of them to receive a heavenly reward for faithful service.
3. When the events surrounding their Master’s crucifixion and resurrection were past, the disciples would finally be much better able to comprehend just how close was the bond between Jesus on earth and God in heaven. It would also begin to dawn on them what glorious things the Lord had in mind for *them*, and how much closer the bond between them and the Christ would become in the future. Things that previously had been puzzling to them would become much more understandable, and all the confusing pieces would begin to fit together into a sensible whole.
4. Along with renewing His promise of divine assistance, Jesus emphasizes once more the prerequisite for that help. Keeping the commandments of the Lord will be the litmus test of their love for the Son and will be a prime reason for the Father to bestow His love and His favor on them as they go into the world with the Gospel.
5. Judas [not Iscariot] was still confused by Jesus’ remarks. If the Lord had something so wonderful in store for the apostles when He would “manifest” Himself to them, why not share it with everyone? If the purpose of their work was to reach out to the world, why not get a “head start” with this “manifestation”?
6. “Judas” was the apostle also known as “Thaddeus” and “Lebbaeus.” He is also thought to be the author of the Epistle of Jude.

7. Jesus' answer to Judas was indirect and perhaps didn't tell him what he thought he wanted to know. He could not at this time have grasped the importance that the preaching of God's *word* would have in bringing the lost to the Savior. He likely still entertained fanciful ideas of great physical power and dominating politics as the "weapons of choice" to overcome the opposition of the Lord's enemies when the time came to set up His great kingdom on earth. Judas could not imagine that "mere" words could accomplish what only military might had been able to do throughout the recorded history of the rise and fall of human governments.
8. The most profound "manifestation" of Jesus to His apostles was to come later through the revelation of the "mystery" of the Gospel on Pentecost and thereafter. Any meaningful manifestation of the risen Lord would also come to others through that same spoken [and later, written] message.
9. If any man was without love and respect for God's *word*, any other overture than teaching that might be made to win him to the [spiritual] kingdom of Christ would be useless. God can only embrace those who *love* Him, and those who don't appreciate His word also don't appreciate the Author of that word. Since the message taught by Jesus is in fact the *Father's* message, the people of the world who had deliberately rejected Christ's word were guilty of insulting God Himself.

**Joun 14:25-31    "PEACE I LEAVE WITH YOU"**

1. Jesus' instructions to His apostles had necessarily been limited by time and opportunity. The help that "the Helper" [Holy Spirit] would offer them would not be so restricted. He would be "in" them (verse 17) and become an integral part of their lives. Mysteries of unexplained precepts would no longer confuse them; "hard" questions would never again be difficult for them to answer.
2. The Holy Spirit would be sent by the Father "in the name of" the Son. He would serve as the authoritative and able representative of Christ on the earth. He would perform *two* basic services to the apostles:
  - a. He would teach them "all things" that Jesus had not taught them prior to His return to heaven but that were needful for the world to know;
  - b. He would remind them of the things that Jesus *had* taught them while they accompanied Him during His ministry on earth.
3. It is not surprising that this guidance provided to the apostles filled them with the confidence that the Gospel they preached was "not after man" (Gal. 1:11,12). They insisted that the truths they taught were "not in words that man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing [combining] spiritual things with spiritual [words]" (1Cor. 2:13--NKJV).
4. David Lipscomb makes these observations regarding the attitude of the apostles toward the things they preached to both saved and unsaved men:

"The ground for their reliance on the certainty of the word of God is that the Spirit of God guided into the truths stated. All departures from the word of God concerning entrance into the church and into Christ come from the idea that the Spirit teaches outside of the word of God. All additions to the church in its order, organization, and work come from the idea that the Spirit dwells in, guides, and directs the church apart from

his teaching in and through the word of God. To give up the word of God as the only direction and guidance of the Spirit is to give loose reign to the dreams and imaginations, the reasonings, and philosophies of men as the directions of the Holy Spirit. It is to substitute these for the revelations of God when 'men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit (2Pet. 1:21).' ”

5. Lipscomb adds to those remarks this final thought about the importance of the word that would be revealed by the Spirit, “...no uninspired soul ever learned a spiritual truth save through the words of the Bible.”
6. Jesus’ rich provisions for security and success in their mission among men should be adequate to impart a pervading *peace* in their hearts. He had begun His discourse by urging the disciples not to be “troubled” about the uncertainties and the dangers of the events that lay ahead. Throughout this discussion with them, He had enumerated several reasons why there was no real reason for their unease. Now, he is ready to emphasize the whole purpose of His promised blessings: “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you.”
7. J.W. McGarvey comments on this special peace promised by Jesus:

“This legacy of peace is by no means to be confined to the period of doubt and fear which accompanied the crucifixion; in fact, it seems to overstep that period, and to begin after it, and continue through all the troubled ministry of the apostles. The breadth of the legacy also to be noted: 1. The quality of it; it was not the absolute unshaken peace of God, but the peace which Jesus himself possessed while upon the earth--peace with all things save the devil and his powers. 2. The nature of it; it was not peace from without, but from within. It was not such as promised to pacify and quell the persecutors, but a promise of inner calm amidst the storm. 3. The manner of it; it was no stinted, measured store such as the world bestows, but a full, free gift from the overflowing bounty of God.”
8. Additional arresting remarks about the “peace of Jesus” come from the pen of B.W. Johnson:

“Not such peace as the world gives; not an idle and empty form as were the wishes of peace in the salutations of the world, but his own peace, the peace he enjoyed; the peace that caused him to sleep sweetly while tossed on the billows of Galilee, to be calm and unruffled before the Sanhedrin and Pilate; the peace that is a deep and placid sea that the storm cannot disturb, such peace he will bestow. Such peace had Stephen when the stones crushed him down, Peter when in Herod’s dungeon, and Paul and Silas when they sang in the night at Philippi. Such peace may all have who love, obey, and receive into their hearts the manifested Lord.”
9. It would be “for the reward set before Him” that the Savior would soon suffer the agonies of Gethsemane and the cross (Heb. 12:2). Surely, no one would want to deprive Him of that joy. The apostles’ joy at His accomplishing the goal for which He had come to the world would be in proportion to their love for Him.
10. One thing that afforded joy to Jesus was the prospect of going back to a Father who was “greater” than Himself. This evaluation by Jesus of the respective positions occupied by the Divine Two is difficult for us to understand. One of the main reasons for the Jews’ opposition to Jesus was that He “made Himself equal to God” (John 5:18). Why does He now say something different?

“It is not a statement that the Father is of a different nature, or that Christ is a dependent creature, but is in entire harmony with all the teaching of the Son during his earthly

ministry. He teaches that he does the will of the Father, not his own will; that he speaks the Father's words and does his works, not his own; that the Father sent him into the world, not that he came of his own will except in the sense that he always does the Father's will; the Son proceeds from the Father, not the Father from the Son; there is a subordination of the Son to the Father, not of the Father to the Son. All his words on his relation to the Father declare the superior greatness of the Father; not that the Father is of different essence or nature in any respect, but possessing the natural precedence of Father over Son. Yet, as I write these words, I feel that the subject of this relation is too high for the human understanding, and that it is almost trenching 'where angels would not dare to tread' to discuss it. It is one of the mysteries whose solution men have vainly sought for eighteen centuries and which eternity alone will fully reveal." (B.W. Johnson)

11. Jesus' prophecy of His resurrection should serve to strengthen the disciples' faith in the reliability of His pronouncements. After He had been killed and buried, and after He had burst forth from the bonds of death, the fact that He had accurately foretold these events should lead the apostles to commit themselves to trust whatever He had said or would later say to them.
12. The "ruler of this world" [Satan] was "coming to" Jesus, i.e., the devil, through his angels [agents], would soon do his worst to destroy the work of the Lord. God would not *block* the crucifixion, for that was necessary to the salvation of the lost world, but He *would* direct its outcome to His own glory and not to the glory of the devil. Satan had nothing for which Jesus could justly be excused, and the Lord would "lay down His life of Himself." He alone had the power to lay it down and He alone had the power to take it up again (John 10:18). The events just ahead would spring from Satan's wicked influence, but those events were not under his control. They would be entirely controlled by God.
13. The ultimate outcome of the Son's death would be the glorification of the Father. It would be the most profound demonstration of the love that exists between Him and the Son. Even skeptical witnesses of the crucifixion would be forced to admit, "Truly, this was the Son of God" (Mt.27:54--NKJV).
14. "Arise, let us go from here" may indicate that Jesus and the apostles left the upper room at this point in His discourse, which He would continue as they made their way to Gethsemane. Or, this statement may simply signal their preparations to leave the room, and the discussion may have continued until the end of chapter seventeen. John 18:1 may be the place where the group departs from the supper room to cross over the Brook Kidron to the Garden.

**Complete These Statements:**

1. "Let not your \_\_\_\_\_ be \_\_\_\_\_; you believe in \_\_\_\_\_, believe also in \_\_\_\_\_."
2. Jesus claimed to be the \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_.
3. He that has seen \_\_\_\_\_ has also seen \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Jesus was in the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ was in \_\_\_\_\_.  
Skeptical persons should believe \_\_\_\_\_ for the sake of \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Jesus promised another \_\_\_\_\_ to the \_\_\_\_\_. This was the \_\_\_\_\_, who would stay with them \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The world could not receive the \_\_\_\_\_ because it neither \_\_\_\_\_ nor \_\_\_\_\_ Him.
7. Those who love \_\_\_\_\_ will be loved by \_\_\_\_\_. Also, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ will make their \_\_\_\_\_ with him.
8. The Spirit would \_\_\_\_\_ the apostles \_\_\_\_\_ and would \_\_\_\_\_ them of everything \_\_\_\_\_ had taught them.
9. Jesus promised a \_\_\_\_\_ unlike that of the \_\_\_\_\_. It would keep the \_\_\_\_\_ free from \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
10. The \_\_\_\_\_ of the world had \_\_\_\_\_ in Jesus.

**True (T) or False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Jesus said that in God's house are many fine and costly mansions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Judas asked Jesus about where He was going.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The Father dwelt in Jesus and did the miraculous works performed by the Son.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The apostles would do works even greater than those of Jesus.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Any disciple who asks anything of God will receive it.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The Spirit will dwell personally within the physical body of each saint.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Jesus' "manifestation" depended on people's love for God and His word.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. The Spirit was sent only to enable the apostles to perform miracles.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Jesus declared that the Father is greater than the Son.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Foretelling His resurrection would ultimately strengthen the disciples' faith in Jesus.

**Match The Persons, Places, and Things:**

- |                       |                  |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| _____ 1. Thomas       | a. Helper        |
| _____ 2. Trouble      | b. Love          |
| _____ 3. Commandments | c. The way       |
| _____ 4. Judas        | d. Peace         |
| _____ 5. Comforter    | e. Manifestation |

**Answer These Questions:**

- 1. *Three* apostles are named in this chapter: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2. Jesus claimed to be ["I am"] *four* things: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3. "Father" is found in \_\_\_\_\_ [how many?] verses in this chapter.
- 4. The Spirit would impart *three* blessings to the apostles: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5. The world could not do *five* things: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

**BONUS QUESTION:**

**There are at least *seven* things in this chapter that the Father had done, was doing, or would do. List them and the verse(s) where they are found.**

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN: “A BOLD ANALOGY”

“I am the vine, you are the branches.”

### Jn.15:1-8 *THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES*

1. This chapter introduces the last of the “I Am” statements of Jesus in the Gospel of John. Using a **BOLD ANALOGY**, the Lord taught a vital lesson that applied primarily to the apostles, to whom He was speaking, and secondarily to all other disciples who wished to offer faithful service to Him.
2. Chapter fourteen closed with Jesus’ decision to “go from” the upper room where the Passover supper had been observed. Since it is unclear whether He and the eleven left immediately or delayed long enough for Him to add other long discourses to the one in the fourteenth chapter, the thinking is divided on what might have occasioned the sudden change of subject matter:
  - a. If the party left quickly and proceeded to the Garden of Gethsemane, they would no doubt have encountered many grapevines and olive trees along the route. That would have suggested an opportune time for teaching a lesson about relationships that the apostles would need in the years ahead as they preached the Gospel. Many of the principles involved in grape farming could easily be transferred by the apostles to their relationships and responsibilities to the Father and Son. Such things as cultivation, pruning, fruitfulness, and connection between a vine and its branches were well known to most people who lived in Palestine.
  - b. If still in the upper room, the fruit of the vine used by Jesus in the institution of the Lord’s Supper [not reported by John in this Gospel] might have prompted this **BOLD ANALOGY** about the vine and the branches. There could be no juice from the vine apart from the relationships emphasized here by the Lord.
  - c. The pervading presence of the grapevine in Jewish life was no doubt reason enough for the Lord to use grape-growing principles to impress spiritual truths upon minds familiar with those principles. William Barclay comments:

“The vine had actually become the symbol of the nation of Israel. It was the emblem on the coins of the Maccabees. One of the glories of the Temple was the great golden vine upon the front of the Holy Place. Many a great man had counted it an honour to give gold to mould a new bunch of grapes or even a new grape on to that vine. The vine was part and parcel of Jewish imagery, and the very symbol of Israel.”
3. There are three principal elements in this **BOLD ANALOGY**: the Father, who is the *Vinedresser*; the Son, who is the *Vine*; and the *branches*, who are [primarily] the apostles and [secondarily] all other saints. The branches can bear fruit only because of

their connection to the life-giving vine. The productivity of the branches is the direct result of the vinedresser's expert care for both the vine and its branches.

4. Jesus declares Himself to be not just *another* vine from which some benefit might spring, but the true vine that has been both "planted" and "cultivated" by the heavenly vinedresser. There had been many "vines," both material and spiritual, from which Israel benefitted over the years, but none so essential to their well-being as Jesus. He is Israel's true benefactor, while the others have been helpful or detrimental to the nation in varying degrees.
5. Israel as a people had been considered as God's "vine" in the Old Testament. "For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are His pleasant plant" (Isa. 5:7). "Yet I had planted you a noble vine, a seed of highest quality" (Jer. 2:21a). Sadly, though, this vine had been a great disappointment to God. The nation became a degenerate vine, subject to the vinedresser's wrath rather than to His pleasure. "How then have you turned before me into the degenerate plant of an alien vine?" (Jer. 2:21b).
6. Every branch [apostle/disciple] is required to produce fruit in God's service. The one who is fruitful will be "pruned" by his experiences of "abasing" and "abounding" (Phil. 4:12). He will become more and more useful and effective in Christ's work as his character becomes more like that of his Master (Rom. 8:29; Col. 3:10), and his faith grows to the point that he believes he can "do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13).
7. Any branch [apostle/disciple] who fails to be fruitful will be "taken away." This warning had already been exemplified in Judas Iscariot, who bore bad fruit rather than good, and who was sent away to pursue his wicked purpose to betray the Savior. The awful reward of unfruitfulness would soon be realized when a disgraced disciple would hang himself in consequence of abusing his apostolic privileges.
8. The apostles, except Judas, were "already clean," as Jesus had proclaimed in 13:10. They had made much progress in their preparations to serve the Lord. His word had wrought a positive change in them and had made them into much better men than they had been when first called to Jesus' company. Scripture assures *any* young man that he can "cleanse his way" by taking heed to the word of God (Psa. 119:9).
9. Judas Iscariot had become an object lesson to the others about the perils of giving up on the Lord. He once had "a part in this ministry" but abandoned his commitment. His defection constituted a strong warning about not "abiding" in Christ.
10. Jesus wanted there to be no misunderstanding by his apostles about His analogy. He specified: "I am the vine, you are the branches." This proclamation promised abundant blessings and at the same time imposed upon them serious obligations. Privilege has *always* been accompanied by consequent responsibility (Matt. 10:8b).
11. It can be dangerous not to observe the distinctions made by Jesus when He gave instructions or made promises to others. We can easily expect advantages that were never intended for us, and we can assume accountability for things for which we were never liable. It is important to remember that in this passage Jesus is speaking to His apostles, not to uninspired saints. Most of what is said was directed to men upon whose shoulders would rest the spiritual destiny of the entire world. Their fruitfulness

or unfruitfulness would determine the salvation or damnation of future generations of men (Matt.28:19,20; Mark 16:15,16, etc.). It was to *them*, not to disciples in general, that both the promises of receiving the Holy Spirit for personal guidance and the responsibility of bearing witness under the influence of supernatural power were directed. We should be careful to make the same distinctions made by the Lord ["I am the vine, you (the apostles) are the branches"].

12. We should also be aware that most of the truths and duties meant for the apostles in this and the following chapters are also clearly applicable in other passages to *all* Christians. For example, Romans 11:16-24 clearly identifies Christians as "branches" springing from the "root" [Christ], even though these are branches of the olive tree rather than the grapevine. The principle is the same. Undeniably, *every* Christian [not church] is a branch of the true Vine. Furthermore, observe:

John 15

Other Passages

vs. 2 Apostles must bear fruit	Col.1:10-- All Christians must bear fruit
vs. 4-- Apostles must abide	1Jn.2:28-- All Christians must abide
vs. 7-- Apostles abide through word	1Jn.3:24-- All Christians abide through word
vs. 10-- Apostles must keep commands	1Jn.5:3-- All Christians must keep commands
vs. 12,13-- Apostles must lay down lives	1Jn.3:16-- All Christians must lay down lives
vs. 16-- Apostles chosen to bear fruit	Rom.7:4-- All Christians chosen to bear fruit
vs.17-- Apostles to love one another	1Jn.4:21-- All Christians to love one another
vs. 19-- Apostles hated by the world	1Jn.3:13-- All Christians hated by the world
vs. 20-- Apostles to be persecuted	2Tim.3:12-- All Christians to be persecuted
<b>vs. 26-- Apostles to receive Spirit</b>	<b>No passage promises Spirit to all Christians</b>

13. The two different prospects described for abiders and non-abiders should have arrested the attention of every apostle. They must not escape *our* notice, either! Unreliable branches wither and are cast into the fire [by angels? (Matt.13:39,40)]. They are good for nothing other than fuel. Good branches, on the other hand, will: (1) bear much fruit; (2) receive their prayer requests; (3) glorify God; and (4) be regarded as Jesus' true disciples.

**Jn.15:9-17 "I HAVE CALLED YOU FRIENDS"**

1. This section of chapter fifteen unfolds principles necessary for a proper relationship among the "branches," as the previous section [verses 1-8] dealt with the relationship that the "vinedresser" wants to exist between the "vine" and each "branch."
2. The defining characteristic of this relationship is *love*-- love between Father and Son; love of the Father for the apostles; love of the Son for the apostles; and love of each apostle for God, for Jesus, and for all other apostles.
3. The Father had a special love for the Son because Jesus *always* kept God's commands and did only those things that pleased Him (John 8:29). That same spirit of obedience would keep the disciples in the loving care of both Father and Son.
4. There is a joy to be realized in doing what pleases someone we love. The thirteen [including Matthias and Paul] would continue to experience an unmatched happiness as they went everywhere preaching the Gospel. They knew that nothing pleases

- the Godhead as much as witnessing the redemption of Satan's children (Luke 15:7).
5. Love was so important to the spiritual health of the apostles as individuals and to their work collectively as the ambassadors of Christ to the world that the decision to love one another was not left to their choice. "This is my *commandment* that you love one another as I have loved you."
  6. The extent of Jesus' love for them [and for all men--John 3:16] was soon to be demonstrated on the cross. There would be no question in their minds about how much He loved them. His sacrifice would express His *friendship* toward them. Similarly, they should be willing to make the same sacrifice of themselves, whether in death or in total devotion to His cause, because they sought to be *His* friends also. Friendship could be expressed through their obedience as well as by giving up their physical lives.
  7. The apostles had been called to be Jesus' servants, as we all are. Now, they were *more* than servants. He had shared with them, just as any man might do with his closest friends, His innermost motivations and His most profound plans for Himself and for them in the days just ahead and beyond. He had made it possible for them to know *why* as well as *what*. They had been told everything that they were capable of absorbing about what lay ahead. There would be more perfect knowledge available in the future, and His friendship would assure that they received that knowledge.
  8. They had been chosen to have not only unimaginable joy in serving the Lord but also to experience the deep satisfaction of heart that comes to those who participate in the salvation of the lost. Their fruit [of taking the truth to sinners] would be harvested in the innumerable souls who would serve God faithfully in the church on earth and who would eventually praise Him forever in heaven.
  9. B.W. Johnson makes some remarks about the "choosing" of God:
 

"The Lord selected every apostle, and called them to become his representatives in the church when he had ascended his heavenly throne. Peter, Andrew, James and John were taken from their boats and nets at the Sea of Galilee; Matthew from his place at the receipt of custom, the rest of the eleven from their various callings, and, last of all, Saul of Tarsus was arrested by the Lord himself on the way to Damascus and told that he was to become 'a minister and a witness' to the Gentiles. As God chose Noah to build the ark, Abraham to found the Jewish nation, Moses to be its law-giver, David to leave his flocks and be its king, the Baptist to prepare the way for Christ, so the Lord chose out the apostles and ordained (appointed) them to their special work."

**Jn.15:18-25    "A SERVANT IS NOT GREATER THAN HIS MASTER"**

1. We cannot know just how much opposition the apostles had encountered from the enemies of Jesus up to this time. Their activity until now had been performed largely in the shadow of Jesus. It was the Master rather than the servants who had drawn the fire. However, that was soon to change.
2. As the discipleship of these eleven men became more public and more aggressive, so the hatred of worldly men would be expressed toward them in more overt hostility and stronger opposition. Such opposition would often assume totally irrational positions

- against the Lord's people. For example, Tacitus, an early Roman historian, in the earliest known reference in pagan literature to Christianity, wrote that Christians possessed a "hatred for the human race."
3. People tend to dislike others who are unlike themselves and look with suspicion on them. The more differences that are perceived, the greater the dislike. The world of Christ's day followed the same pattern of behavior as people of our time. Jesus was despised by sinners because He didn't practice sin. They felt that His goodness indicted their badness and sought to condemn them for the things they did.
  4. The Lord had selected the apostles out of the sinful world to live better than the world lived. His intention for them was that they should duplicate His righteous behavior in their own lives. If this happened, then the same level of opposition would be met by them as had been experienced by their Leader.
  5. This was not the first time that He had alerted them to this prospect. In John 13:16 and in similar warnings in Matt.10:22 and Mark 13:13, Jesus had previously spoken of this natural phenomenon of human conduct.
  6. Whether men would respect the Gospel to be preached by the apostles "in the name of Christ" or violently reject it along with the messengers who would bring it to them, would be determined by whether or not these recipients of the truth "knew" [respected] God and "knew" what He expected of them.
  7. Jesus had earlier said that a refusal to believe in Him is not the only reason men will be lost. In fact, unbelievers are "condemned already" before they ever hear of the Savior (John 3:18). Sin of *any* kind separates a man from God (Isaiah 59:2), and souls that sin will perish because of whatever sins they have committed (Rom. 3:23; Ezek.18:4).
  8. Jesus indicates that the "greatest sin" of all is the sin of rejecting His claim to Sonship. Of course, men guilty of other sins would not also be guilty of this "greatest" sin if He had not given them the opportunity to witness the evidence [His mighty works] of His claim. That evidence certainly had been presented in abundance by Jesus' testimony about Himself and by the signs He had done. Men's hardness of heart would not excuse them from the consequences of their unbelief.
  9. Even unbelief on the part of Jesus' enemies was evidence in itself that His activities on earth, as well as the hateful efforts of unbelievers, were all under the control of heavenly oversight. Prophecy had foreseen the unjust persecution by Christ's opponents hundreds of years before He was even born. "They hated me without a cause" (Psa.69:4).

**Jn.15:26,27 BEARING WITNESS OF JESUS**

1. The promise of the Spirit's help had already been given to the apostles in John 14:26. There, He promised that the Helper would teach them previously unrevealed things and remind them of truths already encountered. Now, He adds the pledge that the Spirit would also "testify" of Him. Like His own testimony of Himself, the *Paraklete* would enable these messengers of Jesus to present evidence of His Sonship through both words and miracles. The Gospel message was to be preached because "faith comes by hearing the word of God" (Rom.10:17). The preaching was to be confirmed [proved] with signs and wonders, various miracles, and gifts of the Holy

- Spirit, according to His [God's] own will (Hebrews 2:4).
2. The apostles would be able to bear *dual* witness of Jesus' divinity. To the testimony furnished to them by the Holy Spirit they could add their own personal testimony of Christ's unique Nature. They had been with Him from the very beginning of His ministry. They had heard the wonderful spiritual lessons He had taught, and they had seen the wonderful miracles He had done. They would be able to say, "We know what we're talking about. We were there!"

**Complete These Statements:**

1. "I am the \_\_\_\_\_ and My \_\_\_\_\_ is the \_\_\_\_\_.
2. As a \_\_\_\_\_ cannot bear \_\_\_\_\_ apart from the \_\_\_\_\_, a Christian cannot bear \_\_\_\_\_ apart from \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Unfruitful branches are \_\_\_\_\_; then they are \_\_\_\_\_ and thrown into the \_\_\_\_\_ and are \_\_\_\_\_.
4. We must keep the \_\_\_\_\_ to abide in the love of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The \_\_\_\_\_ were called \_\_\_\_\_ by Jesus because they were told what \_\_\_\_\_ was doing.
6. The apostles were chosen to bear \_\_\_\_\_ that would \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Christ's disciples are \_\_\_\_\_ by the \_\_\_\_\_ because they are not like the \_\_\_\_\_.
8. The apostles could expect \_\_\_\_\_ from those who persecuted Jesus; their \_\_\_\_\_ would be kept by those who kept Jesus' \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Some "had sin" because of exposure to Jesus' \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Both the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ would testify and bear witness of Jesus. The disciples had been with \_\_\_\_\_ from the \_\_\_\_\_.

**True (T) or False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The disciples were "clean" because the Spirit had fallen on them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Fruitfulness is totally dependent on abiding in Christ.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Fruitless branches are punished in the fire for a time and then released.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Joy was a strong motivation for the apostles' labors for the Lord.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The apostles ceased being "servants" when they became Jesus' "friends."

**True (T) or False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Jesus had chosen the apostles to bear much fruit.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. The world's reaction to Jesus' disciples may differ from its reaction to Jesus.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. People who saw and heard Christ had no excuse for their sin.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Jesus, like David, was hated by the world for good cause.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. The apostles' witness was partially based on their personal contact with Jesus.

**Match the Persons, Places, and Things:**

- |                   |                |
|-------------------|----------------|
| _____ 1. Friends  | a. Vinedresser |
| _____ 2. Love     | b. Branches    |
| _____ 3. Spirit   | c. Command     |
| _____ 4. Apostles | d. Informed    |
| _____ 5. God      | e. Helper      |

**Answer These Questions:**

1. *Two* things made some people guilty of a "special" sin: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
2. *Two* testimonies about Jesus would be given by \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The apostles had *two* relationships with Jesus: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The Vinedresser does *two* things to the branches: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
5. *Two* reactions to Jesus and His apostles were: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

**BONUS QUESTIONS:**

- 1. The term "abide" appears numerous times in this chapter. List the verses where it is found.**
- 2. The term "remain" is also used. Identify the verses where it appears.**

### CHAPTER SIXTEEN: “BOLD ASSURANCES”

“These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble.”

“...I will tell you plainly about the Father.”

#### Jn.16:1-4 OFFERING “SERVICE” TO GOD

1. “These things” probably are the warnings Jesus gave to His apostles (15:18-25) about the hatred they would receive from the world if they remained faithful to their mission. Opposition from unbelievers would become so severe that the stability of the faith and trust of the disciples might be in jeopardy. “To be forewarned is to be forearmed,” and the Lord wished to do everything possible to prepare these men to withstand whatever assault Satan’s agents might cast against them.
2. A *general* warning was not adequate, so Jesus *specifically* cited two of the most serious dangers the thirteen apostles [including Matthias and Paul] would face:
  - a. They would be “put out” of the synagogues. This, of course, would be of little consequence as *religious* retribution. The followers of Christ would not be dependent on any connection with a synagogue to be spiritually acceptable to God. The Law would soon be taken away, and synagogue worship would no longer be a part of service to the Godhead. [See Col. 2:13-17.] But being “cut off” from the Jewish synagogue involved far more than exclusion from religious exercises. Excluded Jews were also subject to removal from social, civil, and family privileges. Offenders usually were disciplined for an initial period of time [perhaps thirty days] and then more harshly “cut off” if there was no evidence of repentance for their offenses.
  - b. A much more serious threat to these disciples was death at the hands of unbelievers who would suppose that they were actually pleasing God if they could kill Jesus’ spokesmen. The Old Law was replete with instances of transgressors being put to death at the command of a jealous God [e.g., Lev. 20:27; Exo. 21:14-17, etc.]. It was not unexpected that those who continued to live by the Law would persist in their desire to destroy any Jew who, in their judgment, violated that Law. An obvious example of this Jewish religious fervor is seen in Saul of Tarsus who would be completely dedicated to the elimination of Christians just a few years hence [See Acts 8:1-3; 9:1-2; 23:1; 26:9-11; 1Tim.1:13.]
3. It was not that the apostles’ adversaries would all be immoral and depraved at heart. In fact, many of them would be sincere men acting out of ignorance about the Gospel and about those who would promote it in the world. Such zealots would not “know” [accept on the basis of truth] either the Father or the Son. This prophetic forecast has

- been fulfilled innumerable times over the years, demonstrating man's inhumanity to man.
4. Jesus knew that prior knowledge of impending dangers would help to protect the apostles from those dangers. As with other things He had predicted to them (John 14:29), He also knew that their faith in Him would be strengthened when they later realized that He had been able to look into their future and announce things that would happen to them.
  5. While Jesus was with His disciples, He was able to shield them to a large extent from perils that they would later have to face alone. Even when He was taken by His enemies in Gethsemane, the apostles escaped the wrath of the crucifiers after Jesus requested their safety (John 18:8,9). This seems a remarkable development in the light of Peter's rash action against the high priest's servant (John 18:10,11). Another reason for delaying the warnings regarding dangers inherent in their apostleship might have been to avoid their becoming discouraged while their commitment was still young and weak.

**Jn.16:5-15** **THE MISSION OF THE SPIRIT**

1. This was not the first time that the Lord Jesus told his disciples that He would leave them. He had on several occasions revealed to the apostles that the divine plan called for Him to depart the world and return to heaven (John 13:33; 14:2-4,18,19; 15:26). However, He had also connected His *going away* from them with a *return* to them (John 14:3,18,28). This seems to have confused them about what He really was planning to do.
2. As He continued His effort [from chapter 15] to give them **BOLD ASSURANCES** about what the future held for them in their mission to the lost, Jesus revisited this matter of whether He would leave the apostles to work alone. Previously, they had asked about His intention to go away (John 13:36; 14:5), but apparently they had become so concerned with how His departure would affect *them* that they missed the impact of His promise to send the Holy Spirit to "take His place" with them as their Helper and Comforter. The **BOLD ASSURANCES** that follow in this passage are **specific to the apostles** and were never intended for other disciples or for other times. They were confined to the age when these spiritual ambassadors were engaged in taking the Gospel into all the world and needed special help to be successful.
3. Many of the hurtful *untruths* that impact the religion of many people spring from a false concept of **who** were intended to receive communications from heaven by the Spirit. It is often thought that direct revelations and confirmations from heaven are received by those who seek a better understanding of divine truth even in our time. Merrill Tenney has expressed that *false* expectation:

"Through the Holy Spirit every Christian can be provided with individual authoritative instruction. Spiritual knowledge is not identical with dogma, though the body of Christian truth which has been transmitted through the historical church undoubtedly has for its core the final revelation of God. The creation, revelation, transmission, preservation and application of that truth is made possible by the living personal Spirit who comes to each one of the disciples. The recurrence of the Spirit's impact upon individual lives keeps the truth from

becoming dead tradition; the persistence and cumulative effect of His work historically recorded guards men from extravagances and mistakes.”

4. Now, as the time for His leaving drew near, it was important that they consider that event in its true context. It was not God’s plan that both the Christ and the Spirit should function in the world simultaneously, and since the role of *immediate* Helper to the apostles was assigned to the Holy Spirit, the Son would leave in order to make the Spirit’s arrival possible. It would actually be an advantage to the apostles for the two “Helpers” to exchange places. The Spirit would perform several functions vital to the successful execution of the Father’s scheme of redemption. He would: (a) *convict* the world of sin; (b) *convict* the world of righteousness; (c) *convict* the world of judgment.
  - a. The Spirit’s work would be to “convict” [*elencho*-- “...putting the convicted person to shame” (*Vine*)] and not necessarily to “convince.” [Compare Titus 1:9.] His work would be that of a *prosecutor* of those guilty of “crime” [sin]. The same things that had alienated the world from Jesus were the things that the apostles knew would also bring wrath upon them, and that greatly troubled them. The Spirit, however, would prove beyond a doubt that the Christ had been *right* in His claims about sin, righteousness, and judgment, and that unbelievers were *wrong* in their reaction to His assertions.
  - b. J.W. McGarvey offers these thoughts about the mission of the Holy Spirit [McGarvey uses “convince” (RSV ) rather than the more accurate “convict”]:

“ It would be the work of the Holy Spirit to take the truths respecting Christ, and, using the apostles as mouthpieces (Acts ii. 1-37), to convince the world as to these truths. This convincing work was entirely in relation to Christ, the sin of disbelieving him, the righteousness revealed in him, and the power of judgment conferred upon him...Sin, righteousness, and a day of judgment with its reward upon one and its punishment upon the other, are three cardinal doctrines of the gospel. The Spirit convinces the world that disbelief in Christ is its fatal sin, for belief in Christ leads to forgiveness, and to the unbelieving there is no forgiveness. The least sin is a sin unto death, and is a sin eternal unless forgiven. The greatest sin, if forgiven, becomes harmless and is as if it had never been. Until the world is convinced of this great truth it feels no need of a gospel. Again, Christianity teaches that righteousness is prerequisite to the attainment of the presence of God. Without righteousness we can never behold him, nor can we ever hope to stand before him. But this required righteousness was found in Jesus, for he returned to the Father, and abides with the Father, being seen by us no more. The Holy Spirit convinces the world that those who are found in Christ, having his righteousness, shall attain unto the presence of the Father (Phil iii.3-14). Lastly, the Spirit convinces the world that Jesus is commissioned as its judge. Our Lord’s resurrection is the assurance of this fact (Acts xvii.31)...The cross of Christ as the source of life asserted his superiority over all other powers (Col.ii.14,15), which implies an ability to judge them.”
5. Jesus had to this time revealed truths to the apostles gradually as He thought they were able to understand and to assimilate those truths into the context of the comprehensive mission He had come to accomplish. It is a commentary on man’s “carnal [‘natural’] mind” that after three and one-half years of close association with the Master Teacher, these disciples were still not ready to be exposed to many of the principles that would govern the lives of citizens in God’s new kingdom (1Cor. 2:14).

6. This inability to comprehend “many things” crucial to their work would be corrected by the “Helper” when He came. They would be “guided” into *all truth* about matters pertinent to the Lord’s church. Perhaps this was a promise of enhancing their normal powers of thought to enable them to reach conclusions that otherwise would have been obscure to them. We cannot know just *how* the Spirit was to “guide” the apostles into truth, but we *do* know that the result of this “guiding” was that they were well prepared to deal with the “things to come” after the kingdom had been established on Pentecost. They would possess all the right answers to questions about the Lord’s church: how to *worship*; how to *serve*; how to *live*.
7. The apostles could be confident that the truths they would receive through the work of the Spirit would come from the mind of the Father. Like Jesus, their new “Helper” would not speak from His own authority [only] but from that of the Father [also].
8. The Son would be glorified when the Spirit’s full revelation of His Person and work was preached to the world. Moreover, the heavenly message would be composed altogether of truths He endorsed without reservation. In fact, God is One, and the authority of the Gospel is the unified and comprehensive authority of the Holy Three. The knowledge that the Father, Son, and Spirit were all present in their work should forever banish any feeling in these disciples that they had been left alone to execute their awesome task. This knowledge was surely a **BOLD ASSURANCE** to their troubled minds!
9. Tenney, who advocated a popular but erroneous view of who were to receive revelations from the Holy Spirit, surprisingly provides a good discussion of the relationship between the Spirit and the other members of the Godhead:

“ Jesus’ exposition of the work of the Holy Spirit affords a practical understanding of the meaning of the Trinity. Each of the persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is separate in personality and is distinguishable from the others. In function the Father plans, the Son perfects, the Spirit executes and reveals. The Father sent the Son; the Son sent the Spirit; the Spirit represents the Son as the Son represented the Father. The three interact and also act separately; they are three individuals, but yet one God. All that the Father has belongs to the Son; and all things that the Son has to teach are administered through the Spirit (15,12,14). Jesus offered no philosophical statement of the Trinity. His language was extremely simple, though the profundities of His words are still unplumbed.”

**Jn.16:16-24** ***TURNING SORROW INTO JOY***

1. Jesus had previously indicated that He would remain on earth for just a short while (John 13:33; 14:19). Now, the time was drawing near for Him to leave this earth and return to His rightful place in heaven. He understood far better than the apostles that His departure would bring drastic changes in relationships and functions to all of them--Father, Son, Holy Spirit, and the apostles.
2. It was important that the disciples not allow His crucifixion to destroy their faith in Him as the Christ. Although He would be [physically] absent while in the tomb, that absence would last only a “little while” [Friday evening-Sunday evening], after which they [the entire group] would see Him again. This proclamation was, of

course, a promise to them of His physical restoration to them in the resurrection, but spiritual promises may also have been intended. F.F. Bruce makes this suggestion:

“We should not imagine too quickly that we understand what was so unintelligible to the disciples. It is easy to suppose that Jesus meant, ‘In a little while you will not see me, because I am about to die; but in a little while after that you will see me again, because I am going to rise on the third day and appear to you once more.’ Certainly he was going to be taken from them in a ‘little while’-in a few hours’ time- but ‘you see me no more’ (cf. verse 10) seems to indicate a longer interval than between Jesus’ arrest and the resurrection appearances. Perhaps, then it is that ‘coming again’ promised in John 14:3 that is in view in the words: ‘again a little while and you will see me.’ But in saying this we must recall...the ‘vanishing distinction’ in the upper room discourses between Jesus’ coming in the resurrection appearances, in the Spirit’s abiding presence, and at his final advent.”

3. Jesus’ ultimate destination in “going away” into the grave was not to an abiding place in Hades (Acts 2:31). His agony and ensuing burial were only steppingstones to His Father’s home (John 14:1-3). His approaching death should produce hope, not despair, because death would proclaim *victory*, not *defeat*, for the Son of God.
4. Although the apostles had frequently been made aware of the events that now lay ahead in just a few hours, they still didn’t grasp the meaning of what Jesus had said in this latest allusion to His death and resurrection. They questioned among themselves the meaning of His promises that they would not see Him, that they *would* see Him again, that He would go to the Father, and why everything was to be measured by “a little while.” They wanted answers, but they were reluctant for some reason to question the Lord.
5. Jesus could know what was in the hearts of others (John 2:24,25). The disciples must have been impressed to learn that He already knew what they wanted to ask before they had spoken a word. He didn’t offer a direct answer to their unspoken questions but instead offered them the **BOLD ASSURANCE** that things would certainly get worse, but after that they would become *much better*. Jesus’ approaching suffering and death would bring gladness to His enemies when they supposed they would no longer have to contend with His influence over the people (Luke 22:5), but those events would also cause profound grief among His close friends. Ironically, the *crucifixion* would produce happiness in one group and sadness in the other, but the *resurrection* would create an exactly opposite reaction in both groups.
6. The Lord employed the illustration of childbirth to emphasize the *joy* that would soon replace the *sorrow* that would be endured by the apostles during coming events. This common human experience had often been used to depict sudden sorrow and travail [e.g., Isa.21:3; Hosea 13:13; Micah 4:9], but the emphasis here is different. It is the joy of the consequence rather than the anguish of the event that becomes important.
7. The renewed hope that would follow the deep sorrow of the next few days would make such an impact on the apostles’ hearts that they would then be well prepared to face whatever difficulties might attend their work of evangelizing all nations. No tool of Satan would again be able to discourage them from their task.
8. “That day” would be the time when the disciples would undertake their work with the help of the Holy Spirit. They would ask nothing [about their work in the kingdom] from Christ, for He would no longer be on earth to field their questions. That

didn't mean, however, that no help would be available to them. They could ask the Father for whatever information or assistance they might need, and it would be provided through the agency of the Holy Spirit, their "Helper." Questions like those previously asked out of ignorance and misunderstanding would be unnecessary to ask. The Spirit would "teach them all things" and "guide them into all the truth" about spiritual matters.

9. Asking "in the name of Christ" means that the petitioner has full confidence in the divine ability and compassion of Jesus as God's Son to produce a desired result. Until now, the apostles had not exhibited strong enough evidence of faith to make asking "in His name" appropriate. They had earlier been taught by Jesus to pray, "Our Father in heaven..." (Matt.6:9). Jewish prayers had always been directed only to "God," and the disciples just now were beginning to regard Jesus as "God" in the fullest sense, making any earlier prayer to Him unseemly. After the resurrection and the remarkable occurrences of Pentecost, the apostles had no problem with the concept of Jesus as God.
10. How great their joy would be when they could include their Master in every religious exercise. His "name" would be in their hearts and on their lips with every prayer they would breathe. Those prayers would be nothing less than strong affirmations of the intimate relationship they still would enjoy with the Christ, even though He would be in heaven and they would be on earth. Their first "Helper" [Jesus] would continue to work hand-in-hand with them. Indeed, His promise, "I will not leave you orphans," would be fulfilled with every prayer they would lift above.

**Jn.16:25-33** **SPEAKING PLAINLY**

1. The "figurative language" [*paroimia*] is "proverbs" [KJV]; "dark sayings" [ASV]; "figures" [RSV]; "parables" [Conf.]. Thayer defines the term: "A saying...deviating from the usual manner of speaking." It is unclear just how much of Jesus' previous discussions with the disciples is included in this reference. If it is confined to words in the upper room [chapters 13-16], we know that He had used the analogy of the vine and the branches. He had talked about "clean" and "unclean" disciples; "going" to an inaccessible place of "many mansions"; sending "another Helper" to perform unique tasks for the apostles; leaving and returning in a "little while"; and changing the way disciples would pray. Also, He would utter an extended prayer [chapter 17] that would contain concepts foreign to any previous experience of these disciples.
2. Questions had already been raised by Peter, Thomas, Philip, Judas, and all the apostles as a group about His statements. How could these men be enthusiastic about things that they could not understand? This promise to clarify and simplify future instructions must have come as a **BOLD ASSURANCE** to these simple men whose minds were filled with confusion about the meaning of many things that they had been taught. "I will tell you plainly about the Father" was *good news!*
3. Plainness of teaching would come to them "in that day." That would also be the "day" in which they could *begin* to pray "in the name of" Christ. The events of Pentecost demonstrated with incontrovertible evidence that Jesus had been made

both “Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36). From that time forward, His service as man’s Mediator (1Tim.2:5) was to be tied to prayers in His name.

4. The “plain” speech about the Father to be enjoyed by the apostles apparently was to be associated with the revelation of truth by the Holy Spirit. It would be essential for teaching to be unmistakably clear when the eternal salvation of souls was involved. Faith would be the foundation of man’s relationship to God, and “faith comes by hearing the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). There would be no place for “dark sayings” then.
5. This promise of “plainness” of speech has serious implications for people today as well as for those of the first century. While there are some things in the New Testament Scriptures more difficult to understand than others (2Pet.3:16), man’s duty *can be understood!* Men are without excuse for not believing what they are taught by Spirit-inspired writings. “Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is” (Eph.5:17). The clarity of the Gospel demands compliance--those who don’t “understand” their duty are victims of “will not” rather than “cannot!”
6. Jesus didn’t withdraw his interest in the apostles’ welfare when He returned to heaven. Although their requests could no longer be presented to Him directly, there would be no need for any “third party” involvement. The Father’s concern for them would be equal to that of the Son, and He would be open to their prayers. Additionally, both the Son and the Spirit would “intercede” [recommend, support] in the granting of those things requested by the apostles in pursuit of their mission (Rom.8:26,34).
7. When Jesus declared that He had come from the Father and was returning to the Father, the disciples immediately responded, “*Now*, you are speaking plainly.” Sometimes we feel that we *must* say *something*, even when we don’t know what to say (Mark 9:6). It is obvious from subsequent events that the apostles no more understood the real meaning of the Lord’s remarks now than they had before. They were still “in the dark” about the implications of His departure from the earth.
8. The Lord questioned their latest profession of faith. “Do you *now* believe?” He was fully aware of their imperfect conviction, and He added another warning about the dangers of weak faith to what He had already said: “You will be scattered and will leave Me alone.” [See Zechariah 13:7.] This desertion by His weak-willed followers would occur very soon [“the hour now is”]. Augustine wrote, “They so little understood that they did not even understand that they did not understand. For they were babes.”
9. It was important that the apostles know that their Lord would not be vindictive toward them when they chose to desert Him in His hour of trial. He would not really be “left alone.” His Father would still be with Him to comfort Him and give Him *peace*. That was the same *peace* that He wanted them to have when they would face their own faith-testing crises. He had forecast for them turmoil, suffering, and even death in His behalf. Yet, they could enjoy an encompassing *peace* amid all this trouble, just as He would when He went to His own appointment with Calvary. They could overcome their obstacles just as He had overcome everything that Satan had cast in His way in an effort to defeat the success of His mission.

**Complete These Statements:**

1. The apostles would be put out of \_\_\_\_\_, and some would seek to \_\_\_\_\_ them as a service to \_\_\_\_\_.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ would send another \_\_\_\_\_ to the \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The Holy Spirit would convict the *world* of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The Spirit would \_\_\_\_\_ the *apostles* into all \_\_\_\_\_ and tell them \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Jesus said that in a “little while” the disciples would not \_\_\_\_\_, and in a “little while” they would \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The apostles’ sorrow would turn into \_\_\_\_\_ when they witnessed the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus, just as a \_\_\_\_\_ forgets her \_\_\_\_\_ when she has given \_\_\_\_\_.
7. When time came for the disciples to ask in Jesus’ name, they would \_\_\_\_\_ and their \_\_\_\_\_ would be full.
8. Jesus promised to speak \_\_\_\_\_ without using \_\_\_\_\_.
9. The disciples would be \_\_\_\_\_ and leave \_\_\_\_\_ alone.
10. The apostles could have \_\_\_\_\_ in spite of \_\_\_\_\_ in the world.

**True (T) or False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. It is possible to be sincere but wrong about our religious service.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Jesus sometimes withheld information from the disciples for their good.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The Lord was overwhelmed with questions about where He was going.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. It was to the apostles’ advantage that Jesus should leave them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Jesus explained why the world would be “convicted” by the Holy Spirit.

**True (T) or False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Jesus sometimes answered the apostles' questions before they asked.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. A time would come when the disciples would ask Jesus everything.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. It would always be necessary for truth to be discussed in figurative language.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. The disciples complained because Jesus had taught them in figures of speech.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. The apostles' faith would remain strong even in the face of tribulation.

**Match the Persons, Places, and Things:**

- |                            |                        |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| _____ 1. Judgment          | a. Sincere people      |
| _____ 2. Convict the world | b. Helper              |
| _____ 3. Spiritual truths  | c. Ruler of this world |
| _____ 4. Kill the apostles | d. Figures of speech   |
| _____ 5. Peace             | e. Tribulation         |

**Answer These Questions:**

1. The Spirit would convict the world of *three* things: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The Spirit would do *three* things for/through the apostles: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The Lord and His apostles refer to "a little while" \_\_\_\_\_ times [how many] in chapter 16.
4. *Two* things that might *seem* contradictory would happen "in that day": \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Reference is made \_\_\_\_\_ times about Jesus coming from the Father (God) and \_\_\_\_\_ times about His going to the Father (God).

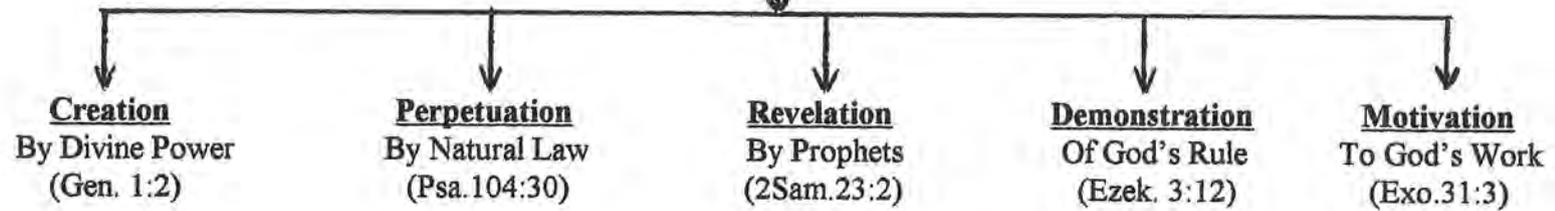
**BONUS QUESTION:**

**Chapter sixteen is a chapter of "explaining." It contains eleven (11) reasons ["because"] for different things. List each thing explained ["because"] and its verse.**

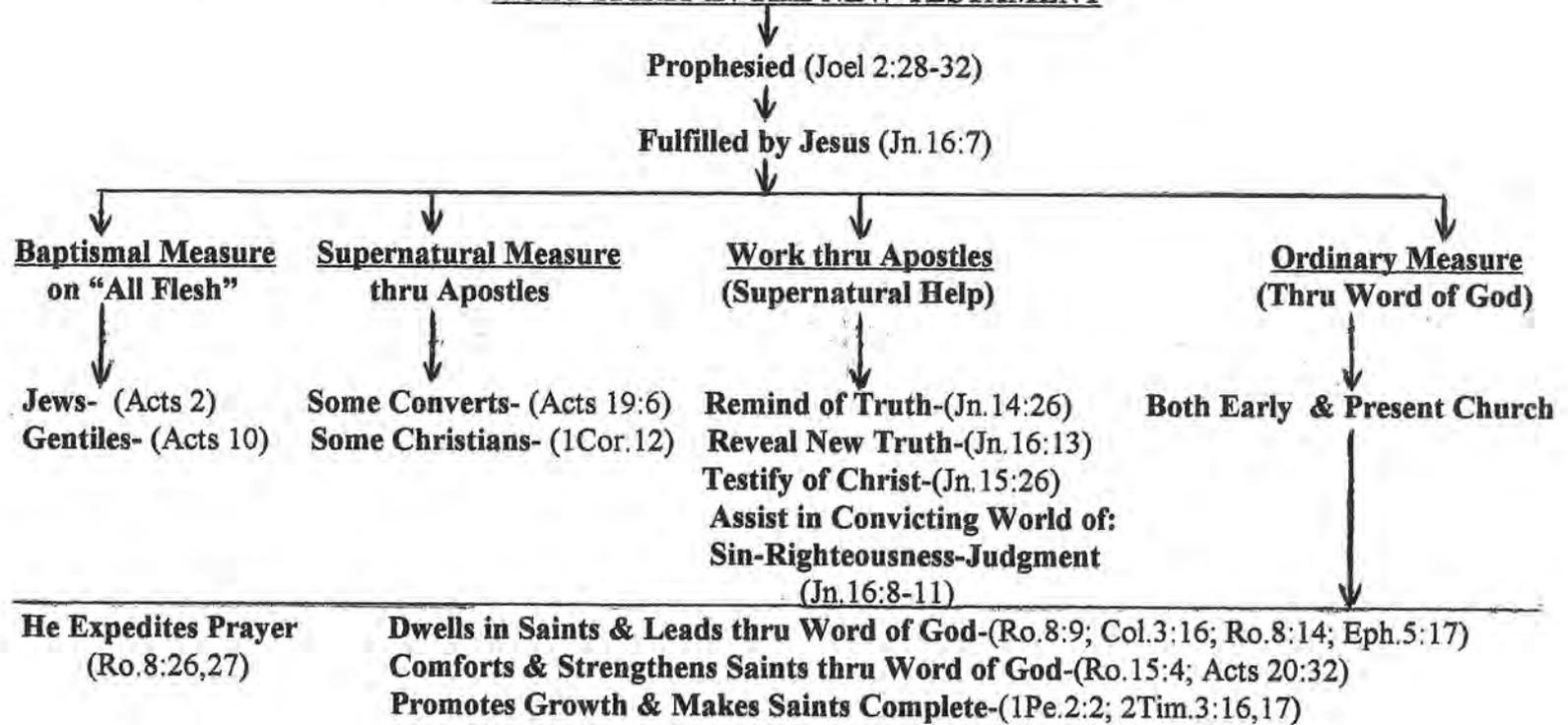
**THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**ADDENDUM**

**HOLY SPIRIT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**



**HOLY SPIRIT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**



## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN: “A BOLD PETITION”

“Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You.”

### Jn.17:1-5 A PRAYER FOR GLORY

1. In this chapter we encounter the longest prayer recorded in the New Testament. It is also the most soul-searching and far-reaching prayer found anywhere in the Bible. Most people think of the “model prayer” that Jesus gave his disciples to pray as the “Lord’s Prayer.” It has received extensive attention as such by the world. However, that entreaty was not for the Lord to pray but for others. This **BOLD PETITION**, on the other hand, is a record of the outpouring of our Savior’s innermost yearnings for the spiritual well-being of Himself, His apostles, and all men in the future who would place their trust in His Person and Plan. It is, indeed, “The Lord’s Prayer!”
2. The profound nature of this prayer is acknowledged by all students of the Bible:

“Here is holy ground; here is the gate of heaven. No such prayer was ever heard before or since. It could only be uttered by the Lord and Savior of men, the mighty Intercessor and Mediator, standing between heaven and earth before wondering disciples. Even he could pray it only once, in the most momentous crisis of history, in full view of the approaching sacrifice for the sins of the world, which occurred only once, though its effect vibrates through the ages. It is not so much the petition of an inferior suppliant, as the dialog of an equal, and a solemn declaration of his will and mission. He intercedes with the eternal Jehovah as the partner of his counsel, as the executor of his will of saving mercy. He looks back on his pre-mundane glory with God, and forward to the resumption of that glory, and comprehends all his present and future disciples in unbroken succession as a holy and blessed brotherhood in vital union with himself and his Father.” (Philip Schaff)
3. While some scholars believe that this prayer occurred *after* Jesus and His apostles had left the upper room and were on their way to the Mount of Olives, it is more commonly accepted that this petition was made by the Lord as a conclusion to the activities and spiritual teachings *in* the upper room. Surely, this prayer served Him well as both an outpouring of His heart to His Father and as an emphatic lesson to His disciples about the extensive consequences of His approaching crucifixion and of the awesome responsibilities that they, His closest followers, would bear as they went forth to proclaim the message of those consequences.
4. The essence of the “Lord’s Prayer” appears in Jesus’ very first request: “Glorify Your Son, that Your Son may also glorify You.” He was about to suffer the most degrading and humiliating death that Satan could inflict: crucifixion as a common criminal. Ordinarily, those circumstances would doom any cause to failure. Only God could salvage glory from ignominy. Only Jesus’ personal behavior in facing his

final passion and the unprecedented resurrection that would follow His burial could turn *defeat* into *victory* and result in glory to both Father and Son!

5. The ultimate glorification of Jesus and His Father lay not just in the unlimited authority entrusted to the Lord (Matt. 28:18) but also in the ultimate benefit resulting from the exercise of that authority. Eternal life was available to a lost world in no other way (John 3:17,18). No greater glory was possible than the glory that comes from rescuing helpless victims of sin from certain spiritual death and giving them life.
6. Jesus' work on earth had been intended to reveal the love and mercy of the Father to an extent that had never been revealed before (Jn.1:17,18). Now, men could "know" [understand and appreciate] the Godhead in a way that would promote saving faith in their hearts.
7. Looking beyond the agony of the cross, Jesus desired more than anything else to have the "joy that was set before Him" (Heb.12:2). His greatest glory could only be realized in the re-establishment of the relationship that He had enjoyed with the Father from eternity. [Philippians 2:5-11 provides an incisive commentary on the circumstance in which He divested Himself of that relationship.]

#### **Jn.17:6-19 A PRAYER FOR THE APOSTLES**

1. Having first offered a **BOLD PETITION** for the ultimate completion of the Father's divine plan to save the lost, Jesus next addresses the needs that were sure to be experienced by disciples who would soon be commissioned to execute that plan.
2. These men who would carry the Gospel into all the world enjoyed the confidence of their Lord. Their choosing for this task was in consequence of the Father's own knowledge of the potential excellence of their character. They had been His "own" [choice], and they were "given" to the Son as the agents through whom God's eternal scheme of redemption would be carried to fruition.
3. Not only had there been a careful selection of the men who would serve as Christ's apostles but also there had been comprehensive preparation for their success in a mission that would have eternal eventualities. They had been given:
  - a. Extensive instruction in the Father's truth. Significant evidence had been made available to convince them that "all things" taught by Jesus were truths emanating from the Father (John 15:27);
  - b. Ample opportunity and time to develop their initial enchantment with the Christ [e.g., Nathanael (John 1:46-51)] into a deep faith and commitment to the only King of [spiritual] Israel and Savior of the world [e.g., Thomas and John (John 20:24-31)].
4. The unique work of the apostles called for unique heavenly support for their efforts. So, Jesus "prayed not" for the world but for these eleven [soon to be thirteen]. His entire earthly experience had been centered on the [lost] "world," and His interest in its salvation would never wane. However, the world's salvation would be accomplished only if these apostles were faithful to their charge to preach the saving Gospel, so *their* welfare was now uppermost in Jesus' mind.
5. Both Father and Son felt the same sense of responsibility for the apostles' access to

whatever was necessary to the success of their work. “Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine.” Both would be glorified when the apostles’ message had its intended effect among millions of lost men. Multitudes would be saved because these disciples had been chosen to be the messengers of hope to a hopeless world.

6. Merrill Tenney suggests that Jesus displayed in this prayer a commitment to several things that would be conducive to the apostles’ success [comments mine--RG].
  - a. Enlightenment (verses 7 and 8). “Acceptance of His testimony, experimental realization of its truth, and personal commitment to Him were the gateway to life” (Tenney). Others would never be convinced of the truth by men who were yet to be convinced themselves.
  - b. Preservation (verses 11, 12, and 15). It was essential that the watchcare provided by the Son be continued by the Father. “Keep them in Your name.”
  - c. Joy (verse 13). Disappointment and discouragement could become real dangers when the disciples would face numerous severe trials. Only a joy spawned by the anticipation of eternal benefits from their labors could buttress their confidence amid threatening circumstances.
  - d. Sanctification (verses 17 and 19). Only a sense of special responsibility could impel men to “set themselves apart” to do a special work among thankless people. That was Christ’s motivation in the world, and it must also be theirs.
  - e. Unity (verse 11). Personal differences and a competitive spirit among the twelve had frequently been disturbing to Jesus. The world’s behavior would never be changed by men whose own lives cried out for the same transformation they asked others to make.
  - f. Fellowship (verse 10). It was important that the apostles maintain an awareness that they were members of a “team” led by the divine Godhead. Defeat to this team was *impossible*, as long as the human members kept faith with their divine leadership.
7. The apostles had leaned heavily on the personal presence of Jesus until now. He had shielded them from things that might have destroyed their potential as preachers of righteousness. His protection had been so effective that only the “son of perdition” [Judas Iscariot] had been lost to the attacks of the devil. Implementation of God’s purpose for Jesus’ death necessitated a betrayal by some intimate associate. Judas would fulfill Scripture [Psalm 109:8(?); Psalm 41:9(?)] in his despicable act but would still bear the guilt of a personal and voluntary decision to commit such a great sin against his Master.
8. The apostles would enjoy no improvement in their standing with the evil world. The seeds of bitter hatred and vengeance were already being sown within the foes of truth because of the disciples’ professed loyalty to one who was a figure of contempt among the Jewish leadership. The world’s scorn was based on the disciples’ commitment to Christ’s truth, and the disciples could never accomplish their task unless they maintained their commitment and preached the truth in every place. The solution to their uncomfortable situation was *not* to take them away from work that would incite the wrath of unbelievers, but to provide them with heaven’s protection from any harm that might terminate their work.

9. It has always been God's will that faithful people live among unfaithful people and "let their lights shine" (Matt. 5:14-16). The misguided efforts of religious people to segregate themselves from circumstances unfavorable to religion run counter to the Lord's intent that a "little leaven can leaven the whole lump" positively as well as negatively. Monasteries, nunneries, and other such provisions against the ungodly influences of the world have proved to be not only self-defeating but also to proclaim the inability of good to overcome evil. "Christianity was never meant to withdraw people from life, but to equip them better for it. It does not offer us release from problems, but a better way to solve them." [Selected]
10. It is through adhering to the Lord's *truth* and not through artificial segregation from irreligious people that Christians are "sanctified." Truth always distinguishes the believing from the unbelieving. "Sanctification" is not a "second blessing" or a "miraculous experience of grace" to be enjoyed by a select few. It is rather the spiritual condition one attains when he dedicates his life to be totally submissive to God and to His word. This is the "formula" pursued by Jesus in His *own* sanctification, and achieving a state of holiness [sanctification] is no different for His worshipers.

**Jn.17:20-26 A PRAYER FOR ALL DISCIPLES**

1. Jesus' existence was eternal and not limited by the confines of human time. Nor was His concern circumscribed by the needs of those who would serve Him only in the immediate future. There would be many others to follow throughout the history of the world who would similarly be beholden to heaven for help to survive the onslaughts of Satan's devices (2Cor.2:11).
2. **Unity** was a prime consideration for enhancing the effectiveness of Christ's cause in the world in *every age*. Superficial unity or "union in division" would be inadequate to carry the day for the Lord among critical and questioning people who would seek every opportunity to undermine the validity of His mission to the earth. Jesus wanted the *same* [perfect] *unity* for the disciples that He and the Father shared in all things. That fact makes it clear that two common religious practices are necessarily displeasing to heaven:
  - a. God's own people sometimes fall into disunity. They seemingly ignore the command to "all speak the same things, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1Cor.1:10).
  - b. Denominational churches maintain numerous and significant differences among themselves and yet all claim to follow the *same* Lord. Their divisive ways have doubtlessly contributed innumerable obstacles to faith in the world. Nothing turns away seekers more quickly than caustic bickering among churches or the lame claims of loyalty to a Savior whose commandments and precepts are openly derided by those making the claim. Jesus said, "...that they all may be *one*...that the world may believe that You sent Me."
3. There is great *glory* in **unity**. It is a glorification of the Godhead when people

manifest by their unity the conviction that Divine Beings possess a greater wisdom than human beings. How wonderful it is when God's *creatures* proclaim their dependency on their *Creator* and admit that His mind [will] must be *revealed* to lesser minds that otherwise could never follow the course that must be taken to reach heaven (1Cor.2:6-16).

4. Disciples of Christ are also glorified by their unity. Their unity reflects qualities in them that are also inherent in the Holy Three. They display a devotion to truth that is seen in a God who "cannot lie" (Heb,6:18). They show humility and submissiveness that are to be observed in the conduct of the Son while He lived on the earth (Heb. 5:8,9). And, too, they demonstrate a respect for things important to the Spirit of God--unity and peace (Eph.4:3). Who can refuse to admire people who are making a concerted effort to imitate Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?
5. We often wonder how otherwise sensible religious people can endorse Bible passages that clearly insist on unity or that condemn division, while they continue to support denominational systems that sustain division and discourage unity. It's always interesting to observe how such individuals deal with this irregularity in logical reasoning. Notice these two differing viewpoints from writers who were very much caught up in the entanglements of denominationalism:

"Unless I have greatly misunderstood one of our Savior's most solemn utterances, I suspect that our divisions are worse than negatively unchristian; in their effects they are decidedly *anti-christian*. What else can our Lord have meant when he prayed to the Father, 'that they may all be one, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me'? If these affecting words mean anything, is it not that, in some way or other, the unity of Christ's followers is a divine condition of the conversion of the world? If that is his meaning, then is not every needless division treason to the kingdom of Christ? And, to speak very practically, what can it be but treason to permit the helplessness caused by our divisions to hand over to perdition, so far as we are concerned, perhaps more souls than our divided ministry is saving? With what consistency are we spending millions of money in foreign missions, while the wasteful wantonness of our denominational divisions, together with the crippled inefficiency which is caused by them, is virtually and needlessly consigning more thousands of our own countrymen to heathenism in one year than all our missionaries put together have ever converted in five? God forbid that I should disparage any effort to spread his Gospel at home or abroad; but while we are rejoicing over the heathen whom we save, let us not forget the account we have to give of the heathen whom our divisions are making by the thousands in every great city of this land" (Dr. John Fulton, Episcopal minister).

"What was that unity for which Jesus prayed? It was not a unity of administration or organization; it was not in any sense a religious unity. *It was a unity of personal relationship*. We have already seen that the unity between Jesus and God was one of love and obedience. It was a unity of love for which Jesus prayed, a unity in which people loved each other because they loved him, a unity based entirely on the relationship between heart and heart.

"Christians will never organize their churches all in the same way. They will never worship God all in the same way. They will never even all believe precisely the same things. But Christian unity transcends all these differences and joins people

together in love. The cause of Christian unity at the present time, and indeed all through history, has been injured and hindered, because people loved their own religious organizations, their own creeds, their own rituals, more than they loved each other. If we really loved each other and really loved Christ, no church would exclude anyone who was Christ's disciple. Only love implanted in our hearts by God can tear down the barriers which we have erected between one another and between our churches" (William Barclay--religious author and commentator).

6. The Lord's most precious goal was that those God had "given" Him would be in heaven with Him in eternity. He had been "given" the twelve through whom to evangelize the whole world. Numerous other believers would be "given" to Him through the efforts of those chosen few. His desire was that *all* of them could live in the "mansions" He would soon go to prepare for the faithful (Jn.14:1-3).
7. It was not for the sake of His own personal glory that Jesus expressed this desire for all His followers to be glorified. Rather, it would be an inestimable blessing to them to witness the glory that is only possible for those whose most basic goal is to please the Father. That had been His purpose, and glory would be His reward [and theirs] when all physical things had disappeared and only spiritual values remained.
8. The education of the apostles about the Nature and beneficence of God was not yet complete. The Father had been "declared" to them, and they had accepted what they had been taught. Nevertheless, when the Spirit came to them on Pentecost and beyond, their knowledge and appreciation of God would be greatly expanded, and their love for both Father and Son would be multiplied correspondingly.
9. As stated earlier in this study, "**Boldness**" can be defined as "strikingly unconventional" [Webster's Dictionary]. If any prayer *ever* qualified to be described as a "**BOLD PETITION,**" this "Lord's Prayer" surely does!

**Complete These Statements:**

1. "Father, the \_\_\_\_\_ has come. \_\_\_\_\_ Your \_\_\_\_\_, that Your \_\_\_\_\_ may \_\_\_\_\_ You."
2. Jesus had \_\_\_\_\_ over all \_\_\_\_\_ that He might give \_\_\_\_\_ to those \_\_\_\_\_ had given Him.
3. The Lord \_\_\_\_\_ the Father by His \_\_\_\_\_ and knew that He would be \_\_\_\_\_ by the Father.
4. The \_\_\_\_\_ were given the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_. They \_\_\_\_\_ them and believed that God had \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus to the world.
5. Jesus prayed for the \_\_\_\_\_ but not for the \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Only the \_\_\_\_\_ had been lost of all those given to \_\_\_\_\_ by His \_\_\_\_\_.
7. The \_\_\_\_\_ hated the apostles because they were not of the \_\_\_\_\_ as \_\_\_\_\_ was not of the \_\_\_\_\_.
8. The \_\_\_\_\_ should not be taken out of the \_\_\_\_\_ but kept from the \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Unity among the \_\_\_\_\_ would convince the \_\_\_\_\_ that \_\_\_\_\_ had sent \_\_\_\_\_ to the earth.
10. Jesus desired that His followers be \_\_\_\_\_ as He and the \_\_\_\_\_ were \_\_\_\_\_ that the \_\_\_\_\_ might believe in Him.

**True (T) or FALSE (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Jesus had finished the work He had been sent to do in the world.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The Savior prayed in this chapter for both believers and unbelievers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Jesus encouraged diversity of belief and practice among His disciples.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The loss of an apostle was completely unexpected.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The apostles could have the same joy that Jesus experienced.

**True (T) or False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The Lord and His apostles were hated for different reasons.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. People are sanctified in answer to prayer.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Christ prayed for His disciples, both those present and those to come.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Sanctification was desirable for Jesus as well as for all His disciples.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. The Lord sometimes spoke of future things as if they were already present.

**Match the Persons, Places, and Things:**

- |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| _____ 1. Eternal life | a. Hatred             |
| _____ 2. Faith        | b. Christ's authority |
| _____ 3. Scripture    | c. Sanctification     |
| _____ 4. Truth        | d. Judas Iscariot     |
| _____ 5. Unworldly    | e. Unity              |

**Answer These Questions:**

- 1. *Three* individuals or groups were recipients of glory: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2. Faith in Christ would result from *three* things: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3. Jesus prayed for *three* persons or groups: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4. *Two* things had been "kept": \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5. *Six* things are spoken of as being "known": \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

**BONUS QUESTION:**

**There are in this chapter at least seven (7) things that are said to be "given." List them and the verse(s) in which they are mentioned (Some things may appear in more than one verse).**

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN: “A BOLD REPRISAL”

“Then Annas sent Him bound to Caiphas the high priest.”

One of the easy-to-understand but hard-to-apply lessons taught repeatedly by Jesus to His disciples was about resisting the urge to strike back at those who injure us. In the Sermon on the Mount He had said, “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also” (Matt. 5:38,39). Throughout His ministry on earth, that was a moral principal He unerringly exhibited in His treatment of those who “despitefully used” Him. Of course, the same could not be said for His enemies. They invariably reacted to His kindness with harshness; they responded to His expressions of love with overt hatred. Jealousy and fear festered in their hearts until their ill will became too strong to be contained. Their bitterness finally erupted into a violent reprisal against the Lord that was as **Bold** in its own way as Jesus’ ministry had been throughout His association with others, whether they were friends or foes.

### **Jn.18:1-11** “WHOM DO YOU SEEK?”

Mt.26:47-56

Mk.14:43-52

Lk.22:47-53

1. Beginning in the thirteenth chapter and following the Passover Supper, John has recorded several discourses by Jesus to His apostles and a lengthy prayer to His Father, all of which ended at the last verse of chapter seventeen. Now he resumes the narrative of events that displayed the shameful behavior of several groups and individuals, behavior that eventually led to the slaughter of the Lamb of God.
2. Numerous private gardens were situated on the slopes of Mount Olivet, just outside the confines of Jerusalem. Separating the city from the mountain was the Kidron valley, a deep ravine through which flowed the Brook Kidron. Jesus and His disciples had in the past often met in a garden called “Gethsemane” [Gr., “oil press”]. It was now to that garden that the Savior and the others proceeded.
3. John cites Judas’ familiarity with the garden, which accounts for the apparent ease with which he located the Christ. Previous experience evidently suggested to Judas that this would be the Lord’s destination when He left the upper room in the city.
4. Upon arriving in Gethsemane, Jesus offered another prayer to His Father [See Mt. 26:36-46; Mk.14:32-42; Lk.22:39-46.] John doesn’t mention this prayer at all, even though he was deeply involved in the circumstances that surrounded it (Mk. 14:33). This petition was so intense and emotional that it was necessary for an angel to appear from heaven and strengthen Jesus in His agony (Lk.22:43).
5. Immediately after the conclusion of this final prayer, the stage was finally set for

His "hour" of trial to begin. Judas Iscariot, having received from the chief priests, scribes, and elders a large detachment of troops ["the band"] armed with "lanterns, torches, and weapons," was also accompanied by a force of officers from the chief priests and Pharisees [temple police]. Obviously, the Jewish leadership expected strong resistance to His arrest from the Lord and His followers.

6. Jesus' behavior in this extremely dangerous situation was as **Bold** ["exhibiting or requiring daring"] as His presence among men had always been. Instead of seeking to hide or to flee from those who sought His arrest, Jesus **boldly** "went forward" to confront them and to take charge of the moment. "Whom are you seeking?" Twice Jesus identified Himself, "I am He." There *must not* be any mistake made that might change the course of events leading to Calvary and the cross. Judas had schemed with the Jews that he would kiss the Lord to prevent any misidentification of Jesus [John omits this incident]. Whatever might assure that God's plan would go forward to fruition should be done.
7. Christ's pursuers did a strange thing. John says that when Jesus identified Himself to them, they "drew back and fell to the ground." Most of the conjecture attempting to account for this reaction seems unsatisfactory. Some think that the Lord's remarkable demeanor was enough to cause the armed group to behave as it did; others suppose that the aggressive and unexpected stance taken by Jesus confused His enemies and disrupted their focus on what they had come to do. Perhaps the tactic adopted by Jesus caused them to fear an ambush or other action that would place them in a defensive mode. Whatever the cause, this unusual turn of events serves as a strong testimony of heaven's uninterrupted authority over the pitiful power of the world.
8. Ever careful for the well-being of His disciples, Jesus again called attention to the fact that He alone was the object of the armed force's search. It was imperative that none of the apostles be "lost." Both Scripture (Psa.41:9) and the numerical demands of their awesome mission in the world dictated that their lives be protected just now. "Let these go their way."
9. Peter, always the master of inappropriate behavior, sought to defend his Master who, in reality, needed no defense by others. Whether prompted by an unthinking impulse or by a sudden loss of confidence in Jesus' divine powers, Peter resorted to a sword as the solution to this critical situation. His blow to the head of his intended victim went astray, and he separated Malchus from his right ear. The apostles had been "told" by Jesus to buy weapons to prepare for the events that lay ahead (Lk.22:36-38), perhaps as an occasion for teaching the lesson that He was now ready to teach. *Only if* the Lord's kingdom were of the *world* would His servants be allowed to fight (verse 36). But it was *not* a worldly kingdom, and physical force was *not* the way to preserve the integrity of Christ's promise that the kingdom would be established on the earth (Matt.16:18). Trust must not be placed in the strength of men but in the might of God.
10. What the apostles must realize was that *any* resistance to approaching events would be totally inappropriate. The Father had by now confirmed the necessity of His Son's suffering. Jesus had prayed about that just a short while before

(Matt. 26:39). Cooperation by both the Leader and His followers was essential to the successful execution of God's plan.

11. It is interesting that John alone of the four Gospel writers names the man whose ear Peter cut off. Most students believe that John is the unnamed "disciple" of this chapter who was "known to the high priest" (verse 15). It would not be unexpected for this disciple also to know the servant's name and to use it in reporting the details of this event.

**Jn.18:12-14, LED AWAY...**

**19-24**

1. Jesus was arrested, bound, and taken away to the house of Annas, the older of two "high priests" who held influence over the Jewish nation. Annas had been high priest from A.D. 6 to 15. This position was intended by the Law of Moses to continue until death, but the Roman government had interfered in God's appointments and had assigned the high priesthood to their political favorites. Annas fell from favor and was deposed after nine years in the office. Members of his family, including at least five sons, one grandson, and a son-in-law, Caiaphas, were prominent in the high priesthood in the years that followed. Caiaphas was high priest "that year," as John states, and served in that capacity for eighteen years-- longer than any other high priest in the New Testament era.
2. It was to Annas, rather than to Caiaphas, that Jesus was first carried by His captors. There may have been several reasons for this.
  - a. Annas, although not recognized by Rome, was still widely regarded by many of the people as their high priest. He evidently exercised great influence in the affairs of Jewish government and likely spoke with a strong voice to his son-in-law.
  - b. Some scholars refer to the "bazaars of Annas" where was conducted a very lucrative business in exchanging money and selling animals for use in the ceremonial exercises of the temple. These enterprises are said to have been owned and operated by Annas' family and to have brought enormous wealth and power to them. It was this opportunistic and greedy traffic in the worship of Israel's God that Jesus had challenged and interrupted on *two* different occasions (John 2:13-17; Matt.21:12,13). Such circumstances would have fostered great personal animosity toward Jesus on Annas' part, and he would have had "an axe to grind" with the Lord over His actions. Perhaps he had let it be known that he wanted the first "licks" at the Christ when the opportunity arose. Now he could enjoy a **BOLD REPRISAL** against Jesus!
3. The Synoptic writers make no mention of this "trial" [hearing] by Annas. They dwell only on the incidents within the more official proceedings with Caiaphas.
4. John recalls Caiaphas' earlier pronouncement (John 11:50) that it would be "expedient" for Jesus to be made a scapegoat for the whole nation of Israel. It may be John's purpose here for his readers to anticipate the grossly unjust treatment that Jesus could expect to receive at the hands of such a perverted individual.

5. John's record of the events subsequent to Jesus' arrest can be a bit confusing unless a careful study is given to the sequences reported in the Synoptic Gospels. It seems clear that John, in giving attention to Peter's role as his own close companion in those events, chooses to skip ahead to relate to us how such a firm conviction as Peter had [he had **boldly** asserted his unwavering loyalty to the Christ, even in the face of death-- John 13:37] could so quickly diminish.
6. Verses 15 through 18 relate to Jesus' trial before Caiaphas. Verses 19 through 24 revert to the Lord's interview by Annas. Then, John resumes his narrative of Peter's three denials of Jesus in verses 25 through 27.
7. Farrar comments about the trials of Jesus:
 

“Reading the Gospels side by side, we will, with care and study, see how all they tell us falls accurately into its proper position in the general narrative, and shows us a six-fold trial, a quadruple decision, a triple acquittal, a twice repeated condemnation of Christ our Lord. We soon perceive that of the three successive trials which our Lord underwent at the hands of the Jews, the first only--that before Annas--is related to us by John; the second--that before Caiaphas--by Matthew and Mark; the third--that before the Sanhedrim--by Luke alone. Nor is there anything strange in this, since the first was the practical, the second the potential, and the third the actual and formal decision, that sentence of death should be passed upon him. Each of the three trials might, from a different point of view, have been regarded as the most fatal and important of the three. That of Annas was the authoritative *pre-judgment*, that of Caiaphas the real determination, that of the Sanhedrim, at daybreak, the final ratification.”
8. John's account of the judicial proceedings surrounding Jesus gives no notice of what transpired *inside* Caiaphas' courtroom. It looks instead at the disturbing things that happened to his friend and fellow disciple *outside* of Caiaphas' palace.
9. Annas [whom John calls the “high priest”] questioned the Lord about His “disciples and His doctrine.” This apparently was designed to gather information to be used later in more formal hearings before Caiaphas, the Sanhedrin, and Pilate.
10. Some students of Jewish law contend that it forbade the interrogation of any person on trial in an effort to incriminate him. It was, therefore, illegal for Annas to ask Jesus about His “disciples and His doctrine.” It is argued that under these circumstances Jesus “called Annas' hand” on the law and demanded that any evidence against Him should come from *witnesses* to His behavior and teaching, not from Him personally.
11. If this is so, it is not surprising that an officer should slap Jesus for His “impertinence” in challenging such a high official about the processes of Jewish law. The Lord's response to this treatment further emphasizes how unjust these proceedings really were. Not only had the law of evidence been violated but also the unlawful violence upon an uncondemned Jew had compounded the lawlessness of the whole situation.
12. Having determined that he would likely not discover anything more about this prisoner, Annas sent Him on to Caiaphas [with whatever information he *had* been able to gather] for further action. Their **BOLD REPRISAL** was underway!

**Jn.18:15-18, 25-27**     **WARMING AT THE DEVIL'S FIRE**

Mt.26:69-75  
Mk.14:66-72  
Lk.22:55-62

1. *After* Jesus had been sent from Annas to the court of Caiaphas, Peter fell into temptations that he failed to resist as he had fancied he would. He and John followed Jesus and His captors to the palace of the reigning high priest. John, by his own report, was for some reason acquainted with the high priest and his household. Some believe that he was from a family engaged in furnishing dried fish to the priest's residence and that he would have been known to its occupants from their business transactions.
2. John was able to follow Jesus into the courtyard of the building[s]. Peter, being a stranger, could only wait until John came and asked permission for him to follow the others. Peter's first temptation came quickly. The girl who had allowed him in asked if he were *also* [like John] a disciple of the Lord. While it seems that John's presence there should have made a positive response easier for Peter, the girl's question was phrased so as to encourage a negative answer. "You're *not* a disciple, are you?" Peter fell into Satan's trap-- "I am not."
3. Soon thereafter, as this **bold apostle** "warmed himself" at a fire in the company of servants and officers [obviously aligned with the "devil's side"], another trial was faced by Peter that proved too much for his less-than-boasted faith in his Savior. One [or some] of that group asked the same question of him about his discipleship. This time he *denied* it [seemingly with more than a "no"] and also said plainly, perhaps with more force than before, "I am not!"
4. Finally, a relative of Malchus who evidently had been with the group sent to take Jesus in Gethsemane, made a **BOLD ACCUSATION** that thoroughly rattled the composure of this **bold apostle**. "Didn't I see you with Him in the garden?" Peter recognized the strength of this eyewitness charge about his companionship with the Lord, and he seems to have "lost it." He denied again [Matthew and Mark assert that he "began to curse and to swear"-- Matt.26:74; Mk.14:71] and denied knowing Jesus at all. Immediately then, a rooster crowed [for a second time-- Mark 14:68], and the Lord's prophecy about the three denials was fulfilled exactly as spoken (Mark 14:72).  
Note-- There is a [weak] theory that these "rooster crowings" were actually Roman trumpet calls that signaled particular times each morning. It is said that the term translated "rooster crow" is *gallicinium* [Latin] and *alektorophonia* [Greek], both of which mean "cock-crow." It is claimed that the regularity of the morning alarm allowed Jesus to be certain about the fact that a rooster *would* crow in conjunction with Peter's denials.
5. Luke adds to John's story that somehow Peter saw Jesus "looking at" him soon after his recantations. All three Synoptic writers reveal that shame overwhelmed this errant apostle, and, realizing the grave error of what he had done so rashly, he "went out and wept bitterly." [Happily for the cause of Christ, Peter didn't "go out and hang himself" as Judas Iscariot did! Godly sorrow and repentance lead to (a better) life, while the sorrow of the world leads to death-- 2Cor.7:10.]

**Jn.18:28-38**

Mt.27:11-14

Mk.15:1-5

Lk.23:1-17

**FINDING NO FAULT IN JESUS**

1. For reasons known only to himself and God, John passes over Jesus' trial held by the Jewish Sanhedrin. Matthew (26:59-68), Mark (14:53-65), and Luke (22:66-71) all devote varying degrees of attention to those proceedings. This hearing was conducted pursuant to the Lord's arraignment before Caiaphus.
2. The Jewish leadership had only one goal in mind throughout these many layers of (il)legalities. They intended to make sure that Jesus would die and be forever removed as a challenge to their own selfish interests. They knew that whatever disposition they might make of Jesus' case, their decisions would be subject to Roman approval. Since the penalty of death could not be inflicted without the concurrence of the Roman governor [procurator], their next move was to appear with Jesus before Pilate for a final verdict. John reports much more about the Lord's experience with Pilate than the other writers except Luke, who includes an episode in which Pilate sought to transfer responsibility for this offender to Herod, who reigned over the district of Galilee from which Jesus had lately come.
3. Pilate's ploy was unsuccessful, and Jesus went back to Pilate. John's account of the interchange between Jesus and Pilate begins in verse 33.
4. The stark hypocrisy of the scribes, Pharisees, and elders is openly displayed in their reluctance to enter the Praetorium [courtroom]. They had not yet eaten the Passover meal, which would occur later that day. Talmudic law prohibited Jews from entering the dwellings of Gentiles during this period because leaven would likely be present somewhere. Ironically, these same "sticklers for the law" who were willing to risk offending the Roman judge rather than offend a *detail* of their own law, were unwilling to be governed by the very *foundations* of that same law which called for "justice, mercy, and faith" (Matt.23:23). Truly, as the old proverb observes, "The legs of the lame are not equal" (Prov.26:7- KJV).
5. Since the complainants would not come in to him, Pilate went out to them to inquire about the charges against their prisoner. The leaders apparently took offense at the veiled suggestion in Pilate's question that Jesus might possibly be innocent of *whatever* charges they held against him. Scornfully, they lashed out at Pilate's "audacity." "We're well able to judge a man's guilt or innocence. We know this man is guilty of capital crimes. If not, we would know better than to come here for your approval! Just go ahead, and do what we want!" They were looking for a *sentence*, not an investigation.
6. Pilate's displeasure at the condescending attitude of these men toward him and at their seeming disdain for the regulations of Rome under which he functioned as a judge spilled out in his response to them. "Tend to it yourselves, if you think you are so expert in legalities! *Your* law means nothing to *me*; if you're so sure about what should be done under *your* law, do it and don't bother me, because *my* decisions are made by *my* law, not *yours*!"
7. The tone of the Jews suddenly changed. They must *not* alienate Pilate and endanger his cooperation in their wicked scheme! So, submissively they acknowledged the "rightful" authority of Rome's oversight of their own legal system

- [even though inwardly they *despised* any interference from the empire].
8. What they would not have acknowledged was that their “willingness” to conform to Roman law automatically endorsed Jesus’ claim to be divine, the very claim for which He was being brought to trial. The Mosaic Law under which they would have preferred to try Jesus specified death by stoning (Lev.20). The Romans practiced crucifixion. Jesus had prophesied repeatedly that He would be “lifted up” for the salvation of mankind (John 3:14; 8:28; 12:32). John attests that those prophesies “signified by what death He should die.” How great would have been the chagrin of these Jews had they learned that they were actually promoting the very thing they were fighting against!
  9. The Jews knew that the surest charge against Jesus that would bring the death penalty that they wanted was the crime of sedition against the Roman government. Pilate had *no* concern about the religious charges that were of real importance to *them*, but as governor he would be obligated to give serious consideration to any attempt to undermine Rome's control over Palestine. "Another king's" challenge to his established authority could be a real problem that would have to be resolved. The charge against Jesus that the Jews brought was-- "He wants to be king of the Jews!"
  10. Pilate's' first question of Jesus went to the heart of the matter- "Are you the king of the Jews?" Is there anything to this accusation? Or, "Are you the king of the Jews? It's strange that a beaten and bedraggled, ordinary-looking common man would make any such claim! What's the catch?"
  11. Jesus responded with a question of His own about the source of Pilate's interest in His kingship. Had he heard enough about Jesus' work among the Jewish nation to prompt a genuine curiosity? Or, was Pilate merely repeating what he had just heard from His adversaries, embellished with all the ugly details that the opportunity had allowed them to present against the Lord? The answer to Jesus' question might determine where the ensuing conversation needed to go.
  12. Pilate disclaimed knowledge of the day-to-day affairs of the people over whom he presided as governor ["Am I a Jew?"]. Jesus' accusers had given him whatever information he had about this claimant to the Jewish "throne." "And," he added, "why are they so agitated about you? What have you done to inspire such anger in them?" [We can only *imagine* the things that these Jews likely had said about the Lord!]
  13. A clarification was needed: "*They* say I am conspiring for an earthly kingdom to compete with yours. *They* say that I will resort to military force to reach my goal. But *I* say that is not so. *My* kingdom is spiritual in nature, and as such it doesn't depend on physical might for its conquests." Jesus' proof of that was the fact that He was a prisoner only because He had discouraged His disciples from any show of force that might have frustrated the Jews in their assault on Him. Peter's use of a sword to defend Him had been stopped and rebuked.
  14. Pilate was thoroughly confused. What *kind* of king do you claim to be, if your kingdom is so different from all the others? Are you really a king at all?

15. Jesus is “the truth” (John 14:6). He was capable only of a truthful response to Pilate’s bewildered query. “Yes, I *am* a real king, but not one to cause worldly rulers any problem. I am the king of *truth*, and the only subjects I am interested in gathering into my kingdom are those who are committed to the *truth* for which I came into this world and to which *I* am *still* committed, even if that commitment brings Me only harm.”
16. We cannot know just what Pilate meant by his response to Jesus’ proclamation about His kingdom of truth that would be populated only by truthful persons. “What is truth?” is capable of several meanings, but at least we can be sure that Pilate understood enough about Jesus’ connection to truth that he refused to consider Him to be an enemy of the empire. He ended his interview with the Christ by going back to His enemies and plainly announcing to them: “I find *no fault* in Him *at all*.” Complete exoneration!!

**Jn.18:39,40**  
 Mt.27:15-26  
 Mk.15:6-15  
 Lk.23:16-25

**“GIVE US BARABBAS!”**

1. Little more is known about the “custom” that came into play at this point in the Gospel story than what is reported in the inspired record. Secular voices seem to be silent about how long this “necessary” (Luke 23:17) practice had been in place or how long it may have lasted after the time of Christ.
2. Several prisoners were available to Pilate for release to the crowd. Some of them had participated in an insurrection in which murder had been committed (Mark 15:7). Their leader seems to have been Barabbas, who is also labeled by John as a robber.
3. Pilate had in several ways tried to avoid passing the sentence of death on a man he knew should be executed only because the Jews were envious of Him (Mt. 27:18). He was convinced that Jesus was *not* guilty of the charges that had been brought against Him.
4. Now, he had one last opportunity to avoid the ultimate abuse of an innocent man. Offering the crowd what seemed to be a “no brain” choice between the man *most* deserving of freedom and the one *most* deserving of death, he supposed that the people would make a decision about Jesus that he dared not make himself. This was a “sure thing!” His sense of justice would be satisfied because he had not been made to condemn a guiltless prisoner, and his ego would be stroked by knowing that he had accomplished his goal in a way even more to *his own* benefit than to the benefit of the people. What *they* would want, *he* would want even more!
5. What a surprise! The Jewish leaders stirred the crowd to demand, “Give us Barabbas!” Pilate’s dilemma remained-- “What shall I do then with your king?” Perhaps he thought that this would be a sympathetic appeal to a crowd that probably wanted their own king and who could be given a “king” that Pilate now understood was no real threat to him or to his government.
6. This latest effort to save Jesus’ life also failed. Barabbas, the insurrectionist, murderer, and thief was the overwhelming “people’s choice” to be set free.

7. Jesus, in whom resided every human virtue in the ultimate degree, was to be crucified. Of course, in his frustration Pilate had no hint that any other decision about Jesus was impossible. The verdict that the people made opened the way for the culmination of every plan that God had made for the death of His Son. If the voice of the people had spoken otherwise, there could have been no forgiveness for these sins against the Savior or for any other transgression by man from eternity to eternity. They were only offering Jesus the "cup" that His Father wanted Him to drink.
8. This **BOLD REPRISAL** of the Jews against God's Son would fail in its purpose, along with every other device of Satan intended to do Jesus harm.

**Complete These Statements:**

1. Jesus crossed the \_\_\_\_\_ to a \_\_\_\_\_ which He and His \_\_\_\_\_ entered.
2. When Jesus identified Himself by saying, “\_\_\_\_\_,” the troops and officers \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to the ground.
3. The apostle \_\_\_\_\_ cut off the \_\_\_\_\_ of a man named \_\_\_\_\_, who was a \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ was the father-in-law of \_\_\_\_\_, who was the \_\_\_\_\_ that year.
5. The servant who kept the \_\_\_\_\_ asked \_\_\_\_\_ if he was a \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ asked Jesus about His \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
7. From the house of \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus was taken to \_\_\_\_\_, the official \_\_\_\_\_ priest.
8. One accuser claimed to have seen \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_.
9. The Jews would not enter the \_\_\_\_\_, lest they be \_\_\_\_\_ and be unable to \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_.
10. If His kingdom were of this \_\_\_\_\_, Jesus’ \_\_\_\_\_ would have \_\_\_\_\_ to prevent the \_\_\_\_\_ from taking Him.

**True (T) or False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Jesus had never been to Gethsemane before this night.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The Jews sent only a small group of people to capture Jesus.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Jesus said, “I am He” three times.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The Lord was first taken to Caiaphas, the high priest.

**True (T) or False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Both John and Peter were known to the high priest.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Jesus declined to discuss His disciples and His doctrine with Annas.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. One of Peter’s accusers was a relative of the man whose ear was cut off.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. The Lord was taken to Pilate early in the morning.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Requesting a Roman sentence on Jesus was a fulfillment of Bible prophecy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Jesus’ servants would fight only if His kingdom were “of this world.”

**Match the Persons, Places, and Things:**

- |                        |                |
|------------------------|----------------|
| _____ 1. Simon Peter   | a. High priest |
| _____ 2. Caiaphas      | b. Pilate      |
| _____ 3. Father-in-law | c. Robber      |
| _____ 4. Praetorium    | d. Sword       |
| _____ 5. Barabbas      | e. Annas       |

**Answer These Questions:**

1. Pilate spoke *two* times of the “King of the Jews,” first to \_\_\_\_\_ and then to \_\_\_\_\_.
2. *Two* people spoke of “truth”: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
3. John recorded *two* acts of violence: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
4. *Three* details about Caiaphas are given: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
5. *Two* practices connected with the Passover were: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

**BONUS QUESTION:**

**Ten (10) places or locations are mentioned in this chapter. Find and list them with the verse(s) in which they appear.**

### CHAPTER NINETEEN: “BOLDNESS ABATES”

“So he delivered Him to them to be crucified.”

**Boldness** had characterized the entirety of the Lords’ presence on the earth. It was His Father’s plan that Jesus should seize the initiative and exercise control of every situation in order to maximize His opportunities to impress friends and foes alike that He was exactly what He claimed to be--the Son of God, possessed of the “fullness of the Godhead bodily.” However, God’s plan also called for the Savior to come under *man’s* "control" for a short time so that His sacrifice on the cross could be accomplished. Consequently, **BOLDNESS** now must *abate* [“diminish”] and must be replaced by **Submission** until the heavenly purpose can be executed.

**Jn.19:1-4**    “HAIL, KING OF THE JEWS!”

Mt.27:27-31

Mk.15:16-20

1. Pilate, not willing to be caught up in a religious controversy between the Jews and their would-be “king,” had sought to release the Lord from Roman custody and let the dispute be settled elsewhere than in his own court. Taking an active role in deciding Jesus’ fate could only result in ill feelings among his subjects toward him and his government.
2. He thought that a good solution to his problem would be to release a prisoner of the people’s choosing, which was a practice already in place for this feast. He was surprised, however, when the choice was for Barabbas and not for Jesus.
3. “Plan B” attempted a compromise with the crowd. Perhaps punishment instead of death would satisfy their obvious anger toward this strange man, an anger he couldn’t understand. All he had been able to decide thus far was that the prisoner had been delivered to him by the Jews “for envy” (Mt.27:18) and that Jesus posed no particular threat to the stability of the province.
4. Pilate had Jesus scourged, a punishment which always inflicted severe damage on the victim. This punishment sometimes was so extreme that it often was in itself sufficient to cause death. Josephus and others say that those to be crucified were routinely scourged beforehand.
5. The soldiers amused themselves by paying mock homage to this “defenseless” prisoner. They clothed Him with crown and robe and pretended to proclaim the majesty of this “King of the Jews,” all the while striking Him with their hands.
6. Pilate was resolute in his conviction that the Lord wasn’t guilty of anything worthy of death, and he said so to this gathering more than once. He likely was convinced that Jesus had probably been guilty of behavior that deserved some kind of punishment short of the *ultimate* penalty.

**Jn.19:5-16** ***“CRUCIFY HIM, CRUCIFY HIM!”***

1. Pilate then brought out Jesus again for the crowd to see. He now bore the awful marks of His scourging. Christ would have presented a pitiable figure to anyone possessed of even limited human sensitivity. Bleeding and abused by blows from the cruel hands of the soldiers, displaying the deep slashes on His body inflicted by their metal-laced whips, and dressed in the mocking garb of royalty, He appeared before this senseless mob as *anything but* a noble and conquering king of whom they could be proud and in whom they might safely place all their hope for restored national prominence.
2. “Behold the Man!” seems more of a plea than a directive. Pilate’s aim still was to release, not execute, Jesus. He likely thought that the bloody image of this hapless man might induce some semblance of pity in the clamoring mob. Maybe he might also be able to avoid an inner confrontation between his own sense of justice and his strong instinct for self-preservation.
3. He was mistaken in his hope to change the mood of the crowd. Their cry for crucifixion continued. But *his* law would not allow the execution of a man on a charge that could not be proved against him, so again the Roman governor declared, “I find no fault in Him.”
4. It was time for the Jews to change their approach to secure Jesus’ destruction. If they couldn’t make their charge stick that Jesus was guilty of the most serious of all crimes against the *civil law* [sedition], perhaps they could convince Pilate that He deserved death because He was guilty of the most serious of all possible offenses against their own *religious law* [blasphemy] (Lev. 24:16). “He made Himself the Son of God!”
5. Roman culture was dominated by stories about divine beings merging with humans, as ancient mythology confirms. Pilate could not have been unaffected by the popular acceptance of tales of gods in human bodies. Jesus had already impressed him with the fact that He was no *ordinary* man. Now, his unrest about his prisoner grew. He feared that if Jesus’ claim for kinship with some superhuman deity was true, mistreating Him might be risky. Besides, at some point in these events his wife warned him about an unsettling dream that had convinced her that any contact with Jesus was dangerous (Mt.27:19).
6. This new and disturbing accusation needed some investigation. Therefore, Pilate asked Jesus where He was “from.” He already knew the *physical* location from which Jesus had come (Luke 23:6,7). But he was bothered that He might have some origin that *wasn’t* geographical. The Lord refused to answer. Mark’s account emphasizes Jesus’ silence throughout these proceedings. The Lord’s **BOLDNESS** had **ABATED** to an extent that Pilate “marveled” that He “answered nothing” in response to the numerous charges of the chief priests (Mk.15:3-5).
7. Pilate was annoyed that a man whom he was trying to help would choose not to give him the courtesy of an answer to his questions. His personal pride of office prompted him to declare that Jesus’ life was in *his* hands, whereupon Jesus declared to him that the governor’s political authority existed only because His own Father had seen fit to entrust him with it. Pilate’s sin would be in his *moral*

*weakness* of not using his authority in behalf of an innocent man. Caiaphas, who had delivered Jesus to Pilate's authority, was already guilty of the "greater sin" of *moral depravity* when he deliberately condemned that same innocent man.

8. Pilate was visibly affected by Jesus' declaration, and he sought even more to secure Jesus' release, perhaps now by some physical action. But the crowd wouldn't have it. "If you release this man who claims to be a king, you are disloyal to our only real king Caesar!"
9. Historians says that Pilate had already found himself in trouble with Roman headquarters about a couple of other documented disputes with the Jewish people. Complaints had been lodged against him by the offended parties, and his political future could now very well be jeopardized by any further negative reports about his governance of the district entrusted to him.
10. Realizing that his efforts in behalf of Jesus were in vain, Pilate resigned himself to making a formal judgment about Jesus' fate. About the sixth hour [Roman time?] he sat on his seat of judgment ["The Pavement"] and made one final appeal for *logic and justice in this case*: "Behold your King-- surely you can't believe that there's anything to this claim of 'kingship.'" "
11. The mob was persistent-- "Away with Him...Crucify Him!" Pilate offered Jesus' accusers one last chance to avoid a terrible miscarriage of justice. "Do you *really* want me to crucify this [*pseudo*] king?" They did. In other circumstances it would have been laughable for them to claim, "We have no king but Caesar," since they really hated Caesar and all he stood for.
12. Pilate decided that further maneuvering was pointless. His capitulation to the unjust demands of the Jews was inevitable. So he delivered Him to be crucified and "So they took Jesus and led Him away."
13. It was still true that a simple request by the Son would bring "twelve legions of angels" (Mt.26:53) to rescue Him from His enemies. But this was not the time for His usual **BOLDNESS**. It was "His hour," and **BOLDNESS must ABATE** for a little while until the "eternal purpose" was "accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:10,11).

#### **Jn.19:17-24** *THE KING ON A CROSS*

- Mt.27:32-54  
Mk.15:21-39  
Lk.23:26-47
1. John omits several details of the crucifixion that are included by one or more of the Synoptic writers. On the other hand, he presents several things that the others don't discuss. A survey of all four accounts, of course, is necessary for the student to obtain a complete description of the Savior's shameful treatment.
  2. Brief references are made by John about:
    - a. Where Jesus was crucified: the "Place of a Skull" [Heb.-- *Golgotha*]. The origin of that name is uncertain. Many think that the site's appearance had some similarity to a human skull. It was "near the city."
    - b. With whom Jesus was crucified: two others [unspecified by John but called "robbers" and "criminals" in the other accounts]. Jesus was placed between the others, perhaps suggesting that He was the one most "worthy" of death.

- c. *With what* Jesus was charged in His crucifixion: A placard, such as were commonly used to publicize the deeds of criminals, proclaimed Him to be “*Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.*” It was written in Hebrew [Aramaic], the language of the Jewish populace; Greek, the tongue of culture and conversation in the eastern provinces; and Latin, the official speech of Roman soldiers and public servants. All passersby would thus be duly warned in graphic fashion about the dangers of seditious behavior against the Roman government.
3. Although Pilate had been outmaneuvered by the Jewish authorities in the contest for Jesus’ life, he was making one last public statement of his opinion of those leaders and their selfish accusations when he identified Jesus as “The King of the Jews.” The national dignity of the Jews was insulted when their “king” was nailed to a criminal’s cross. The strength of Rome and the weakness of Israel could not escape the notice of all who witnessed the fate of this Jewish “troublemaker.”
  4. Naturally, Pilate’s message displeased the Jews. They demanded that the shame should rest on Jesus alone and not on the nation. “Write that the claim of ‘king’ was *His*, not *ours!*” Pilate, who had displayed so much indecision and weakness in his previous negotiations with the Jews, now pronounced his latest action as unnegotiable. “What I have written, I have written.” Pilate’s irresolution, of course, had been a tool in God’s hand to implement the Divine Plan. Now, his display of strong determination would make no difference in the scheme of things.
  5. Many *prophecies* had been made about the events of the crucifixion. They were all fulfilled, one by one, before the curtain closed on that shameful episode. One of the forecasts of the prophets even related to Jesus’ clothing. His garments would be gambled for and divided among those in charge of His death (Psa.22:18). The clothing of executed persons became, by Roman practice, the rightful property of the executioners. Jesus likely wore the usual garments of Jewish men: sandals, turban, outer cloak, girdle, and inner tunic. This tunic [coat] was somewhat unusual. Tunics ordinarily were in two pieces, but Jesus’ was a single piece. Some associate this one-piece tunic of Jesus with those worn by priests under the Law [Keil and Delitzsch, II, 204] and with the fact that He, too, is our High Priest after the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 7,11, 15). After everything else had been divided, the soldiers cast lots for the tunic.
  6. John intended that the readers of his Gospel not miss the fact that God’s hand was in each detail of Jesus’ sacrifice. “Therefore” [because of the prophecies to be fulfilled] the soldiers did these things.”

**Jn.19:25-27** **MOTHER AND SON**

Mt.27:55,56

Mk.15:40,41

Lk.23:48,49

1. Faithful women have always played a vital role in the cause of Christ. Upon them has depended much of the success of the Gospel in the world. It was no different as Jesus’ time on earth drew near its end. John identified four [some say three] female disciples who exhibited remarkable faith and courage as Jesus’ life ebbed away on the cross. Mary, the mother of the Lord; her sister [Salome]; Mary, wife of Clopus; and Mary Magdalene stood *by* [near] the cross, refusing to be intimi-

- dated and separated from their Master just because it might be dangerous to display their devotion to Him in the presence of His enemies.
2. The Lord was concerned about His mother's welfare. He had always been a good son (Luke 2:51), and good sons provide for the needs of their mothers (1Tim.5:8). It's not surprising that in the midst of His own agony Jesus made arrangements for Mary's care. John was also near the cross, and it was to him that Christ gave the responsibility to see that her needs were met. Joseph evidently was no longer alive and His brothers were still unbelievers. John, both a cousin [?] and an apostle, was a logical choice to become Mary's caretaker. He apparently accepted his assignment willingly "from that hour."

**Jn.19:28-37** **ALREADY DEAD**

1. The Christ had now accomplished everything He had come to do in the world. The groundwork for the kingdom had been done. The principles of truth within which the disciples would glorify Father and Son had been taught. The necessary preliminaries to the kingdom's establishment had been performed, and the completion of other things relevant to man's salvation had been arranged with the Father in plans that had been made to dispatch the Holy Spirit. "It is finished!"
2. There was no further need for Jesus *to prepare* for His glorification as the Lamb of God (John 1:36); the only thing He needed to do now was *to die* (John 12:32). And so, He did, bowing His head and giving up His spirit.
3. The Jewish law forbade leaving a body to hang on a tree overnight, and one who was hanged was accursed of God (Deut.21:23). On the other hand, the Romans usually didn't remove a body from its cross, leaving its disposition to birds and animals. John implies that the Jewish ordinance wasn't ordinarily observed at this point in history. But because it was the "Preparation Day" before a "high day," it became very important to these Jewish "law keepers" [?] that Jesus' body be handled in strict conformity to God's instructions. Again, their hypocrisy raised its ugly head!
4. The first day of Passover was, according to the Law, a "sabbath" (Exo.12:16). It was always celebrated on the first day of the month Abib [later called Nisan]. It might or might not fall on the seventh day of the week [regular sabbath]. This year it *did*, making the sabbath following the crucifixion a "high day." Perhaps the Jews felt a special obligation at this time to keep themselves in strict observation of the Law's requirements.
5. The legs of crucified persons were often broken in order to hasten death. This further violence to the body didn't directly cause death, but it prevented the suffering victim from using his legs to raise his body in order to breathe. When breathing became no longer possible, death came quickly to the condemned.
6. The thieves' legs were broken by the soldiers, but there was no need to perform this cruel operation on Jesus. He was already dead. Upon making this discovery, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with his spear. Blood and water flowed from the wound. Various medical explanations for this phenomenon have been

offered by scholars, but we must remember that the Lord's death was not wholly controlled by the laws governing man's physical nature. Perhaps we should look instead for supernatural causes to explain things that were out of the ordinary.

7. Two more prophecies found their fulfillment in the soldiers' actions. The God-breathed words of David (Psa.34:20-- "Not one of His bones shall be broken.") and Zechariah (Zech.12:10-- "They shall look on Him whom they pierced.") had long before determined exactly how these pagan crucifiers would behave as they became accessories to the most significant death in all the history of the world!

**Jn.19:38-42** **A BORROWED TOMB**

Mt.27:57-61

Mk.15:42-47

Lk.23:50-56

1. Two persons new to the events of the crucifixion now surface to supply a loving and necessary part of the story of Jesus. The Gospel would soon proclaim to the lost that Jesus had died, had been buried, and had been raised from the dead (1Cor.15:3,4). Moreover, sinners would be commanded to be baptized for the remission of their sins, and their compliance would imitate the death, *burial*, and resurrection of Christ. Burial would become as vital an element in the glorification of Father and Son as death and resurrection.
2. We meet Joseph in the Gospels only in connection with Jesus' burial. Information about him is sparse but significant. He was:
  - a. From a place called Arimathea, whose location is uncertain;
  - b. A council [Sanhedrin] member;
  - c. A rich man and the owner of a new tomb close to the place of crucifixion;
  - d. A disciple of Jesus "in secret" for fear of the Jews;
  - e. A "good and just man" who was "looking for the kingdom" of God.
3. Nicodemus has appeared twice before in John's Gospel. He engaged Jesus in a discussion of the "new birth" in chapter 3. He suffered the scorn of other Jewish leaders when he protested their hasty condemnation of the Lord in chapter 7.
4. As mentioned earlier, the Romans didn't usually remove dead bodies from their crosses. The bodies of criminals such as Jesus was proclaimed to be would particularly have been left where the empire's warning to potential lawbreakers could be seen for as long a time as possible. It is apparent that the disposition of the Lord's physical remains was really in God's hands, not Pilate's.
5. There were three possible factors that contributed to Pilate's willingness [if not eagerness] to co-operate with Joseph and Nicodemus in the burial of the Christ:
  - a. The Jewish leaders insisted that the body be taken down as soon as possible. Its removal would allow Pilate to "wash his hands" completely of any further dealings with these difficult individuals. Burial of the body would allow him to close this troublesome episode forever;
  - b. Pilate may have learned something of Jesus' popularity among the people throughout much of His ministry. A prolonged display of their "king's" body might well become the source of unnecessary unrest and reprisal;
  - c. The governor himself would be relieved of having to look at the body of a man that he knew had been executed unjustly as a result of his own failure to

intervene in His behalf. Of course, he had no way of knowing that he, like all the others, had simply been playing a predetermined role in executing a *Man from Heaven*, while at the same time playing a part in executing a *Plan from Heaven*!

6. The two no-longer-secret disciples of Jesus buried His body in keeping with Jewish burial customs, using large amounts of expensive spices and lovingly depositing the physical remains of the slain Lamb of God in a new tomb where no other body had ever been placed.
7. The Preparation Day was fast drawing to a close and time was of great importance. The burial must be completed before the sabbath began. The location of Joseph's tomb was nearby and was suited to finishing on time the task at hand. "So there they laid Jesus."

**NOTE:** John makes a special effort to impress his readers with the truthfulness and importance of his description of Jesus' crucifixion, "so that you may believe." "And he who has *seen* has testified, and his testimony is *true*; and he *knows* that he is telling the truth" (verse 33). This rather unusual affirmation becomes more understandable when we remember that this Gospel was not written until late in the first century and was separated from John's other three letters by only a few years. The doctrines of **Gnosticism** were gaining momentum among the churches by that time, and the truths about Jesus, sin, and Christian living were being eroded in some places. First John was devoted largely to combating the pernicious gnostic teachings about the nature of Christ and the obligation of His disciples to be godly people. "So that you may believe [the truth about Jesus as God's Son]" was also John's reason for inserting his personal testimony into the record.

Gnostics taught : (1) Sin resides wholly in the physical body; (2) The body exists in opposition to everything good; (3) Jesus [good] had no real physical body [bad], only a "phantom" body; (4) only the *man* Jesus suffered crucifixion; the *spiritual* Jesus departed prior to the crucifixion; (5) resurrection is impossible because it defeats the goal of liberating the soul *from* the body; (6) the righteous "enlightened" have no duty to do good for others because God cannot be concerned with *any* physical relationship among men. We can detect John's opposition to these false doctrines in the latter part of chapter nineteen:

Verses 26,27-- Emphasis on Jesus' and John's care for Mary's physical welfare;

Verse 28-- Jesus "thirsted" as a part of the crucifixion experience *before* the spirit left (v.30);

Verse 34-- His side was physically pierced; literal blood and water came from His body;

Verse 36-- His bones not broken to fulfill prophecy and fill image of paschal lamb (Ex.12:46);

Verse 38-- His body was handled by reputable men who knew it was a *real* body;

Verse 39-- His body treated in its burial as a normal body with spices and linen strips;

Verse 42-- His dead body was *buried* just as all *physical* bodies are buried;

Chapter 20-- Many details of Jesus' resurrection and of physical events that transpired *after* His resurrection will be related...

***"So that you may believe."***

**Complete These Statements:**

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ put a \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ on Jesus' head and put a \_\_\_\_\_ on Him.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ said he found no \_\_\_\_\_ in Jesus.
3. The \_\_\_\_\_ said that by their \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus should \_\_\_\_\_.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ claimed power to \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord.
5. Pilate judged Jesus at a place called \_\_\_\_\_ about the \_\_\_\_\_ hour of \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Jesus' \_\_\_\_\_ were divided into \_\_\_\_\_ parts by the \_\_\_\_\_, who then \_\_\_\_\_ for His \_\_\_\_\_.
7. The \_\_\_\_\_ whom Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ took His \_\_\_\_\_ into his own \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Jesus was crucified on the \_\_\_\_\_ Day, which was followed by a " \_\_\_\_\_ " day.
9. Jesus' side was \_\_\_\_\_ by a \_\_\_\_\_, after which \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ came out.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ furnished a \_\_\_\_\_ and many \_\_\_\_\_ for Jesus' burial.

**True (T) or False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Pilate announced twice that he found no fault in Jesus.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Jesus told Pilate that He was from Galilee.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Pilate was guilty of the "greater sin" against Jesus.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Pilate said, "Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar."
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The chief priests claimed to have no king but Caesar.

**True (T) or False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Jesus' garments were divided among four soldiers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. John calls Jesus' aunt [?] by her name.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. When Jesus thirsted He was given new wine to drink.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. The legs of all three men on the crosses were broken by the soldiers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Joseph's tomb was located near to the cross.

**Match These Persons, Places, and Things:**

- |                       |             |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| _____ 1. The Pavement | a. Spices   |
| _____ 2. Tunic        | b. Golgotha |
| _____ 3. Skull        | c. Tomb     |
| _____ 4. Garden       | d. Gabbatha |
| _____ 5. Nicodemus    | e. Lots     |

**Answer These Questions:**

- 1. Five Scriptures were fulfilled in this chapter (references only): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- 2. *Seven* parts of the human body are mentioned: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3. *Five* verbs [past tense] cite violent acts against a physical body: \_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4. *Six* verses contain "king" (capital or small letter). They are verses: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5. *Six* numbers are used by John in this chapter: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

**BONUS QUESTION:**

**At least twenty-five proper names of particular persons, places, or things are found in this chapter. List them and the verses [NKJV] where they appear (don't repeat).**

### CHAPTER TWENTY: “BOLDNESS REAPPEARS”

“I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.”

Chapter nineteen closed on the downside of John’s account of the story of Jesus, if it is measured only within its historical context. After completing three and one-half years of teaching His disciples and preparing them for the challenge of taking the Gospel into all the world, the Savior finally declared from the cross, “It is finished.” Then, John reports, “So there they laid Jesus...for the tomb was nearby.” From the world’s point of view, that simple statement proclaims the *defeat* of everything the Lord had worked for. His ministry had been no more than a lost cause that had come to nothing. But-- the record was *not complete*-- there was *much more* of the story to be told! Seeming defeat was turned into unquestionable victory when the gloom of crucifixion was swallowed up in the joy of resurrection. Farrar’s comments are arresting:

“At the moment when Christ died, nothing could have seemed more abjectly weak, more pitifully hopeless, more absolutely doomed to scorn and extinction and despair, than the Church which he had founded [only in prospect and preparation---Acts 2:47--RG.]. It [the band of disciples--RG] numbered only a handful of weak followers. They were poor, they were ignorant, they were hopeless. They could not claim a single synagogue or a single sword. So feeble were they, and insignificant, that it would have looked like foolish partiality to prophesy for them the limited existence of a Galilean sect. How was it that these dull and ignorant men, with their cross of wood, triumphed over the deadly fascinations of sensual mythologies, conquered kings and their armies, and overcame the world? There is one, and only one, *possible* answer--the resurrection from the dead. All this vast revolution was due to the power of Christ’s resurrection.”

#### **Jn.20:1-10** *THEY DID NOT KNOW THE SCRIPTURE*

Mt.28:1-10

- Mk.16:1-11
- Lk.24:1-12
1. Jesus’ body had been buried late Friday in some haste so that the Jewish sabbath [Saturday] would not be violated. Certain female disciples brought spices to the tomb on the “first day of the week” [Sunday] to complete the burial more satisfactorily. Jesus had been by this time in the grave for [parts of] three days, according to Jewish calculations. This was all done just as He had foretold (Mt.12:40).
  2. John mentions only Mary Magdalene, but Mary the mother of James, Salome, Joanna, and “the other Mary” [mother of Jesus] were also in that company (Mt.28:2; Mk.16:1; Lk.24:10). It was Mary Magdalene who would first bring the message to John that something unexpected had occurred regarding the Lord’s burial, and it is she who received John’s attention as he prepared to record what he had discovered upon investigating the situation.

3. The entrance to a tomb carved out of rock, such as this one, was usually sealed with a large rounded stone which rested in a slanted trench to facilitate its movement in opening and closing the grave. Mary and the others discovered that this stone had been rolled away from the cave's mouth, which led them to conclude that the Lord's body had been taken away by unknown persons to an undisclosed location. John fails to explain, as Matthew does, that an angel had been responsible for opening the grave prior to the arrival of the women (Matt.28:2-4). We need not conclude that the stone was moved to expedite the Lord's exit. It is much more likely that the tomb was opened to proclaim that God's own disposition of Christ's body had superseded anything that others might have had in mind to do with it.
4. Mary Magdalene ran quickly from the tomb to tell Peter and John about what the women had found when they had come there. The others tarried, and the Synoptics relate their encounter with an angel [Luke says *two*] who told them about the reality of the resurrection. They were instructed to go and tell the apostles what had transpired. John reports none of these details in his Gospel.
5. The initial *flawed* conclusion of the women about the removal of the body was swiftly relayed by Mary to Peter and John, and both men ran to the tomb to see for themselves what this unexpected development might mean. John, who probably was younger than Peter, outran his companion and came to the tomb first. The women by that time evidently had left to make their announcement.
6. John for some reason declined to enter the tomb, but Peter in his characteristic impulsiveness went in immediately to inspect the situation. Both men "saw" the linen cloths lying [there]. There is an interesting difference in the Greek words used by John to describe *how* the "seeing" varied between them. W. E. Vine says:
 

"In verse 5 *blepo* is used of John's sight of the linen cloths in the tomb, without his entering in; he saw at a glance the Lord was not there; in verse 6 the closer contemplation of Peter is expressed in the verb *theoreo*. But in verse 8 the grasping by John of the significance of the undisturbed cloths is denoted by *eidon*."
7. The appearance of the burial cloths clearly demonstrated that the emptiness of the grave was not the result of robbers or others simply taking away the Lord's body. In that event, either the cloths would have been left in disarray or, what is more likely, taken away with the body. Instead, they were still in place, and the head cloth was "folded together" by itself. The scene strongly suggested to a thoughtful observer that either a most unusual and careful operation had been performed on the wrappings or that the body which had been enclosed in them had "dissolved" out of them and had left the cloths exactly as they had been before.
8. John followed Peter into the tomb and apparently "saw" what Peter had yet to comprehend. What he "saw" caused him to "believe." R. L. Whiteside contends that John merely believed that *Mary's report* of the missing body was true, since "as yet" they "did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead." On the other hand, J. W. McGarvey concludes [as do most commentators] that "here was the first belief and the first believer in the resurrection." McGarvey further asserts:

“...and it is important to note that the Scripture did not suggest the fact, but the fact illumed the Scripture. Ps.vxi. 10 and Isa. liii. 10, and many other passages, set forth the resurrection of our Lord; his own words, too, had plainly foretold it, yet among the disciples it was so much beyond all expectation that the prophecies had no meaning until made clear by the event itself. Yet these are the men whom the Jews accused of inventing the story of a resurrection.”

9. Regardless of what John “believed,” both he and Peter went home in seeming resignation that there was nothing more that could be done at that time about the situation. They apparently had departed before Mary revisited the tomb.

#### **Jn.20:11-18 “WOMAN, WHY ARE YOU WEeping?”**

1. Mary, whose flight from the grave had deprived her of the “fear and great joy” experienced by the other women when they received the angels’ message of hope, was still engulfed in sorrow as she returned to the burial site. Looking again into the cave, she saw the same angels the others had seen earlier. She then engaged in a remarkable conversation with these beings whom she seemingly did not perceive to be supernatural.
2. In reponse to their question about her weeping, she repeated her conviction that “they” had taken Jesus’ body to an unknown location. It is uncertain whether Mary supposed that “they” were disciples who had removed the body for reburial elsewhere or enemies who were bent on inflicting further indignities upon the physical body of Jesus.
3. John adds nothing more to this exchange between Mary and the angels. Still outside the tomb, she next encountered Jesus but did not recognize Him. Some suppose that He deliberately withheld His identity from her, as He did when He met two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:16). Others surmise that Mary’s eyes were so filled with the tears of convulsive mourning that she was simply limited physically in her ability to see clearly.
4. The Lord asked her the same question that the angels had asked, “Woman, why are you weeping?” Now, Mary assumed that Jesus was the caretaker of this burial place and that *he* was the one responsible for whatever had been done with the body of Christ. Perhaps Joseph or someone else had directed him to move the body. In her desperation, she offered to take control of the body. Unless Mary was a woman of substantial means, it seems doubtful that she would have been able to fulfill that offer, despite her sincere intentions.
5. Jesus spoke to Mary in a way that caused her *ears* to hear what her *eyes* had failed to see-- this was her Lord, her Master, and *not* the gardener! “*Rabboni*” [Aramaic] and the more common “*Rabbi*” have about the same meaning, although some claim that the former carried somewhat more force and honor in its tribute to the person addressed with the term.
6. Just as John is given the distinction by most scholars of becoming the first *believer* in a risen Christ even before he had the opportunity to witness the resurrection by sight, Mary Magdalene became the first *eye-witness* to one of the most significant events in the history of the world. Many others would follow, but she was the *first* to

- have *incontrovertible evidence* that the Savior had come forth from the grave!
7. Jesus' first words to Mary appear to be somewhat enigmatic in the light of what He would say to Thomas in just a short while. The apostle would be told *to* touch His body to confirm the claims made for its resurrection. Now, Mary was told *not to* touch His body at all. "Do not cling to Me."
  8. The explanation for this seeming contradiction probably lies in Jesus' own words that follow: ..."for I have *not yet* ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren..." It was inappropriate just then for Mary to "cling" to Him and detain Him from doing what needed to be done immediately. "I am [i.e., *soon will be*] ascending to My Father..." There were many things that had to be done before He would finally leave His apostles to pursue their mission in the world. There was no time to waste, not even for something so precious as this joyful reunion.
  9. The testimony of an actual eye-witness to the resurrection would serve to encourage the bewildered disciples as nothing else could. There would be time *later* for personal interchange, but not now. And so, Mary did as she was told and took the glad report of what she had seen and heard to the languishing spirits of the apostles.
  10. It is interesting that Jesus distinguished "My Father" from "your Father" and "My God" from "your God," rather than simply referring to "our" Father and God. It is certainly true that we and He *all* share a relationship with God as our Father, but it is also true that there is a *difference* in the bond between Jesus and His Father and the one that Christians enjoy as the children of God.
  11. Jesus intended that the spirits of His disciples be rejuvenated to learn that His **BOLDNESS** had **REAPPEARED** in His resurrection from the dead. It was back in a degree far greater than ever before! **BOLDNESS** had restrained itself for a short time to allow the forces of evil to assert themselves and accomplish their shameful purpose to crucify the world's Savior, but now-- **BOLDNESS IS BACK!**

**Jn.20:19-23** *A MEETING WITH THE APOSTLES*

Mk.16:14

- Lk.24:36-43
1. There were things needing Jesus' attention that John doesn't relate to his readers. There were appearances that must be made to various individuals. Two of these, unnoticed by John, were made to Peter (Luke 24:34) and to two disciples as they walked to the village of Emmaus (Mk.16:12; Lk.24:13ff.). And there likely were others that no writer saw fit to record. [See Acts 1:3.]
  2. John moves from the events of the resurrection morning to an appearance by Jesus in the evening of the same day [the "first day of the week"]. The apostles met behind closed doors "for fear of the Jews." Suddenly, Jesus was in their midst, apparently having entered the room by *supernatural* means. His resurrected body was no longer limited by the constraints of a *natural* law which prevents physical bodies from passing through the doors and walls of buildings.
  3. The Lord had concluded His lengthy discourses (John 14;15;16) with the promise of peace for faithful disciples, even as they suffered the trials of persecution in the world (John 16:33). Perhaps the recent events surrounding their Lord's death had caused them to wonder about the reality of that promised peace. Even the reports

of the Lord's resurrection that had come to them had failed to lift the spirits of some disciples whose hearts were yet filled with doubt (Mk.16:14; Lk.24:37,38). Jesus sought to reassure them with the blessing, "Peace be with you."

4. Peace of heart was possible only through personal conviction about the resurrection. It was needful that *each* disciple should have the opportunity to examine the evidence for himself and to learn beyond all doubt that his Master still lived. A close inspection of the wounds suffered on the cross should forever chase away any indecision about the outcome of Calvary's challenge to the claims of Jesus!
5. Now, the apostles were "glad" and ready for the task ahead of them. Their great work would not actually begin until Pentecost (Acts 2), but anticipating that work would help to make them ready when the time came. They could look forward to:
  - a. Being sent by Jesus to the lost with a message of salvation, just as He had been sent into the world by His Father with that same proclamation (John 3:17);
  - b. Receiving the Holy Spirit to guide them in their labors (John 14:26;16:13);
  - c. Facilitating the forgiveness of sins for sinners obedient to the Gospel (John 14:12).
6. Whatever is signified by Jesus' "breathing on them" and urging them to "receive the Holy Spirit," we know that this had no reference to the baptism of the Spirit realized on Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). Some days after this meeting with the apostles, Jesus instructed them to wait in Jerusalem for the "promise of the Father." They could expect to be "baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now" (Acts 1:4,5).
7. The apostles would participate in "forgiving" and "retaining" sins when they began to preach Christ's Gospel. Sinners who would respond to the truth would receive remission of their sins (Acts 2:38), and those who would reject the Lord's message would be held accountable for their sins in the judgment (2Thes.2:11,12). This brief statement is the only notice given by John to the "Great Commission," which the other writers announce in much more detail.

#### **Jn.20:24-29 "I WILL NOT BELIEVE"**

1. Thomas, also called Didymus ["twin"], had been absent from the first gathering of the disciples when Jesus appeared to them on Sunday evening of the resurrection day. The reason for his absence is unknown.
2. We know little about Thomas, except that he was portrayed as one who was pessimistic in his previous reactions to situations involving Jesus Christ [See John 11:16; 14:5.]. That same critical nature was exposed when he heard from the other apostles that they had seen the Lord. "You are surely mistaken in what you *think* you have seen. *I* won't accept something so unlikely as the raising of a dead body unless I can see the proof for myself!"
3. Sunday came again ["after eight days"], and Jesus reappeared to the group as it met once more with the doors shut. He repeated the same message of "Peace" to them, which possibly was most intended to bolster the confidence of Thomas, who had been quick to proclaim his *lack* of confidence in things promised by the Lord.
4. If Thomas was to fill his role of ambassador to the lost (2Cor.5:20), his faith in what he preached had to be as solidly founded as the faith of the others. Jesus is always

an “equal opportunity employer” (Acts 10:34), so we are not surprised that Thomas was allowed to examine the same evidence presented to the rest and by that evidence to overcome his unbelief. Jesus knew exactly without being told what Thomas’ objections were, and He provided the precise proof to address those objections.

5. It worked! Having confronted the facts face to face, the “doubter” became the “convert.” And he was *fully converted*-- “My Lord and my God!” He now saw Jesus not only as the one to whom the Father had given authority but also as the one who possessed that authority by virtue of His own right as the divine Son of God!
6. Jesus commended Thomas’ faith that had emerged out of hard physical evidence. Such faith was commendable, for many had rejected Jesus as God even in the face of such testimony. Something *more* commendable, however, would be the faith displayed by millions of disciples in future years who wouldn’t demand *tangible* proof of Jesus’ Sonship. They would embrace a faith generated by a Gospel that would only *tell about* the proof that Thomas had *seen* (Rom.10:17; 1:16,17).
7. Believers who place their trust in the Lord’s *message*, as Thomas had placed his confidence in the Lord’s *body*, are “blessed.” Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount had “blessed” disciples who display particular personal characteristics (Matt. 5:3-12). He had also “blessed” Peter when he confessed Him as the Son of God (Matt.16:17). This final “beatitude” holds out a wonderful promise that can be realized by *every faithful saint in every age*!

**Jn.20:30,31** **“THESE ARE WRITTEN THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE”**

1. The Gospels were not intended to serve as biographies of Jesus. Nor were they written to give a full account of every teaching and every action of the Lord. Rather, they were deliberately selective and sought to present a general picture of the *kinds* of lessons that Jesus taught and of the *kinds* of deeds that He performed while He lived in this world.
2. *Seven* impressive miracles have been presented to us by John to demonstrate the completeness of Jesus’ power as the Son of God. There were many others that John could have included in this Gospel. But these are enough to convince any honest-hearted seeker that his faith in Jesus is unquestionably well-placed. John’s Gospel, like the other three, sought not so much “to give information but to give life” [Barclay].
3. John’s stated purpose in giving us this wonderful record of the “man of Galilee” is realized when his readers have given due consideration to the things he wrote about Jesus and when they:
  - a. Believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God;
  - b. Have life in His name.

NOTE: Merrill Tenney offers some final thoughts about the twentieth chapter of this book:

“The twentieth chapter of John is the climax of the book. The tragedy of unbelief which culminated in the cross would remain forever unresolved were there no resurrection, for evil would have triumphed over good and the heroic and vicarious death of Jesus would be at best a magnificent but futile gesture. In that event, faith in a good

God would be irrational, the concept of a moral universe would be impossible, and stark pessimism would be the necessary philosophy of all humanity.

“The Johannine account of the resurrection is remarkable for several reasons. It is compact and tells the essential story in a surprisingly short compass. It is historical, for it connects spiritual meaning with events in space and time, and presents evidence which asserts the reality of the supernatural without employing the extravagant tales of apocryphal legend. It is personal and interprets the resurrection as it affected the personal lives of certain of Jesus’ disciples. It is coherent with the rest of the Gospel, for it summarizes by illustration the various effects of belief and brings that belief to its highest expression.”

**Complete These Statements:**

1. Mary came to \_\_\_\_\_ early while it was still \_\_\_\_\_ and found that the \_\_\_\_\_ had been \_\_\_\_\_ from the \_\_\_\_\_.
2. She quickly told \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ that the \_\_\_\_\_ had been taken from the \_\_\_\_\_.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ came to the tomb first, but \_\_\_\_\_ entered it first.
4. Mary saw two \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ inside the tomb who asked her why she was \_\_\_\_\_.
5. When Mary discovered that Jesus was not the \_\_\_\_\_, she called Him “\_\_\_\_\_,” which means “\_\_\_\_\_.”
6. Jesus met on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of the \_\_\_\_\_ with the \_\_\_\_\_, who were afraid of the \_\_\_\_\_.
7. At that meeting, Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ on the apostles and told them to \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_.
8. \_\_\_\_\_, also called \_\_\_\_\_, was not with the other \_\_\_\_\_ when Jesus met with them the first time.
9. Thomas confessed Jesus as his \_\_\_\_\_ and his \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Thomas believed because he had \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus; others would be \_\_\_\_\_ because they would \_\_\_\_\_ without \_\_\_\_\_ Him.

**True (T) or False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Mary reported to Peter and John that Jesus had been resurrected.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. John at first chose not to enter the tomb.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Peter and John both “knew the Scripture” as soon as they entered the tomb.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Jesus and the angels asked Mary the same question.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Mary called Jesus “Rabboni” or “Teacher.”

**True (T) or False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Jesus had already ascended to the Father when He spoke to Mary.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. A week passed before the resurrected Lord met with the apostles as a group.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Christ’s first words to the disciples were, “The Force be with you.”
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. The apostles were to receive miraculous powers immediately [See Acts 2:1-4.]
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. John wrote that his readers might believe and have life.

**Match the Persons, Places, and Things:**

- |                    |                 |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| _____ 1. Rabboni   | a. Resurrection |
| _____ 2. Assembly  | b. Jesus        |
| _____ 3. Scripture | c. Teacher      |
| _____ 4. Gardener  | d. Unwritten    |
| _____ 5. Signs     | e. First day    |

**Answer These Questions:**

1. John mentions only *three* people who came to the tomb: \_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The number of times John speaks of “the other disciple” is \_\_\_\_\_. These references are found in verses (list): \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Jesus urged “Peace” on the apostles \_\_\_\_\_ times in verses \_\_\_\_\_.
4. *Three* things occurred on the “first day of the week”: \_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The apostles are called by *three* terms in this chapter: \_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

**BONUS QUESTION:**

**“Disciple” or “disciples” appear eleven (11) times in this chapter. List the verses where they are found.**

### CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE: “BOLDNESS PERPETUATED”

“Feed my lambs...Tend my sheep...Feed my sheep.”

John chapter twenty-one is unique in several ways. The previous chapter seems to close the written record of Jesus’ life and work in the world. John even ends his discussion by restating the basic purpose for which the book was written: “...that you may believe... and that believing you may have life in His name.” That goal has been kept before the reader on every page, but now that it has been achieved, we are confronted with an additional narrative that may or may not seem to be an integral part of the whole book. Various views are held among scholars about the reason for its inclusion at this point in John’s revelation:

1. Some consider it to be an “epilogue” to the Gospel that adds information that enhances but is not essential to what has already been presented in the record;
2. More particularly, it is held that this chapter is designed to reaffirm the *reality* of Christ’s resurrection that has been set out in the previous chapter [chapter 20];
3. Some students reject this idea of confirming the resurrection and instead insist that the events were recorded to display the risen Savior in new and important relationships;
4. This chapter, in part or whole, is sometimes considered as something written later than the first twenty chapters and added to the Gospel by John or by others to whom the apostle had committed his revelation for publication.

We *cannot* know the truth behind the positioning of these verses in their present place, but we *can* have confidence that if they were not actually penned by John, they were at least approved by him as true and suitable for placing where we find them now. It is significant that history attests that John’s Gospel was never circulated without them.

#### **Jn.21:1-11 GONE FISHING**

1. Whether to reaffirm the reality of His resurrection or to display Himself in new and important relationships with His disciples, or perhaps both, Jesus “showed Himself” to the apostles at the Sea of Tiberias. This body of water had been called “the Sea of Chinnereth” (Num. 34:11), and now also bore the names, “Lake of Genesseret” (Luke 5:1) and “Sea of Galilee” (Mark 7:31).
2. Jesus had instructed the women who saw Him following His resurrection to tell His “brethren” to go to Galilee where they would “see” Him (Matt. 28:9). They had complied with His order, and He was faithful to keep His promise to them. John seems to place some emphasis on the fact that He “showed” [manifested] Himself

to the apostles. B.W. Johnson elaborates on this thought:

“There is a significance in the words, ‘Jesus showed himself,’ or that he manifested himself after the resurrection, showing that he was visible only as a distinct act of his own will. From the time of the resurrection the disciples did not *see* him, in the usual sense in which we use that term, but he *appeared* unto them, or *was seen*, of them when he so willed. The language is changed, and in language of this kind all his appearances after the resurrection are narrated. The same kind of language is applied to his appearances that is used of angels and all heavenly manifestations. Men do not *see* them, in the sense that it was a matter that lay in their will to do so or not, as we see any material object. Language that is appropriate to objects of *sense* is not appropriate to the manifestations. They rather *appear* to men and are only visible to those for whose sakes the appearances are vouchsafed, and to whom they are willing to show themselves. The risen Christ, therefore, though seen on many occasions by his disciples, and on one occasion by hundreds of them, does not reveal himself to his enemies. In his appearances to his disciples he leaves no doubt but that he is the risen Lord, yet there is a mystery, and an air of strangeness that inspires them with awe, and which restrains them from the former familiar fellowship.”

3. Five of the apostles, all Galileans, are named by John as members of the little company to whom the Lord appeared. Two others, who likely were apostles also but who were here called “disciples,” filled out the group. Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, and the sons of Zebedee [James and John] were together. John doesn’t reveal the whereabouts of the other apostles.
4. Peter made a decision which he announced to his companions. “I am going fishing.” That seemed to these men who had been fishermen for most of their lives a reasonable and desirable thing to do. They promptly decided to go fishing, too. They all fished together the entire night, which was said to be the best time for fishing, but they caught nothing.
5. The question has been debated about whether these men were wrong in going back to fishing instead of looking ahead to the new obligations that the Christ had placed on them to take the Gospel message to the lost world. G. Campbell Morgan surmises that they had become discouraged and confused by recent events and sought misplaced relief in this physical activity. J.W. McGarvey, on the other hand, observes that their return to fishing might have had little to do with any state of mind--they simply needed to make some money to finance themselves for future activities.
6. In the early morning they saw Jesus standing on the shore but couldn’t recognize Him. That might have been because of poor visibility in the limited light of daybreak, or Jesus could have restricted their ability to see His spiritual body clearly through their physical eyes. Compare the Emmaus episode in Mark 16:12,13.
7. This unidentified “stranger” asked if they had any “food,” i.e., if they had caught any fish. This was a question that any curious bystander might ask of fishermen. Of course, they could only reply with the fisherman’s lament, “No luck today.”
8. We can only guess what thoughts might have entered their minds when this unknown person told them to change sides of the boat so that their fishing could be successful. Perhaps they were resigned to the fact that things could get no worse and that taking another approach to their task could do no harm.

9. The result of following the advice of this onlooker was astounding. Their net became heavy with fish and difficult to handle. John some time earlier had witnessed another incident (Luke 5) very much like what was presently taking place, and its memory suddenly filled his mind. Jesus had directed the fishing on that previous occasion, and a large catch resulted from complying with the “Great Fisherman’s” bidding. Now, following this stranger’s directions had produced the same remarkable outcome. This must be the same man as before. John couldn’t restrain the wave of recognition that swept over him. He said to Peter, “It is the Lord!”
10. Neither could Peter restrain his response to this **Bold Proclamation** by John. With not so much as a moment’s hesitation, Peter put on the outer garment he had removed for fishing, and he plunged into the water and made for the shore where Jesus was. One might not ordinarily put on clothes that would impede swimming, but it is suggested that Peter might have been reluctant to come only half-dressed into Jesus’ presence.
11. When the other apostles had covered the hundred yards [two hundred cubits] to shore, they discovered a fire on which some fish were cooking. Alongside was some bread. The Lord obviously was responsible for these things, by either *natural* or *supernatural* means. Normal acquisition under these circumstances might have been more difficult for Jesus than a miraculous act. He certainly had demonstrated previously His ability to produce bread and fish when had He fed gatherings in excess of four and five thousand hungry people (Matt. 15:32-38; 14:13-21).
12. Peter, displaying remarkable strength, brought the net to land with its bounty of 153 large fish, from which some were used to furnish a meal for Jesus and His disciples. There has been much speculation about John reporting the *exact* number of fish caught in their net. Some would consider that it was a rather normal thing for such fishermen as these to want to know and to tell just how successful their endeavors had been. Others attempt to assign all sorts of symbolism to the numbers involved. While we can’t know what real significance John might have given to “153,” it seems pointless to spend time in pursuing what can never be known for certain. Jerome long ago wrote that Greek zoologists claimed that there were precisely 153 kinds of fish in the seas, but that is probably a fanciful statement with little basis of truth.
13. Was Jesus’ ability as a “fish-locator” miraculous or non-miraculous? Many commentators see nothing unusual in an onlooker from shore being able to see a school of fish that for some reason those in the boat could not detect. However, John seems to have concluded without too much thought that this was something that could have been done only by a man who had been known for His miracle-working powers. “It is the Lord!”

**Jn.21:12-14** “COME AND EAT BREAKFAST”

1. These fishermen-disciples were not completely comfortable in the company of their new companion. Their *rationality* assured them that this was the same Jesus they had associated with intimately for more than three years. Yet, their *sensitivity* was

- not so certain. There was something distinctly *different* now about this man. None dared to ask Him about what made Him seem so different, though all must have been deeply troubled by their inability to identify with this “new” personality.
2. Jesus distributed the bread and fish among the apostles, and they all ate. In an earlier appearance, the resurrected Lord had requested food from His followers and in their presence had eaten the fish and honeycomb which they offered (Luke 24:41-43). This action now served to encourage the disciples in the fact that although some things about Him were different, many things were still unchanged and He was the same Master they had loved, followed, and depended on for a long time.
  3. John [some critics assume it was an “editor” who had a role in publishing John’s revelation] inserted the fact that this was not Jesus’ only manifestation to witnesses of His victory over the tomb. Rather, it was the “third” time He “showed Himself” to the disciples. Of course, we understand that John confines his remark to those showings that he had cited in his own Gospel. Other appearances than the two [three, including the one to Mary Magdalene] John described in chapter twenty (19-23; 26-29) had been made and were included by the Synoptic writers. But this was only the third time He met with the *disciples* [as a group] in John’s book.

**Jn.21:15-19 SIMON RECLAIMED**

1. It is thought that Jesus after breakfast had called Peter aside when the exchange between the two took place. Jesus had already made a personal and apparently *private* appearance to Peter (Luke 24:34). A reconciliation most probably had by now been accomplished. Perhaps, however, no *public* acknowledgement had announced that reconciliation to the other disciples. It was now time for that to be done.
2. Peter had denied the Lord *three* times prior to His crucifixion. *Three* times Peter’s real love for his Master had come under suspicion. Was his defection only temporary-- a mistake that would never be made again? Or, was it a significant indication of a lurking lack of commitment of which the apostle himself was unaware? We can imagine that Peter’s conscience harbored many self-doubts as it reflected on the stark cowardice and/or disloyalty he had displayed when he faced the pressures of religious opposition. These issues of worthiness had to be resolved if Peter was ever to become a useful soldier in the army of Christ.
3. The Lord asked Peter *three* questions, or to be more accurate, He asked the same question *three* times-- “*Do you love Me?*” To each question, Peter gave the same reply-- “*You know that I love You.*” On the surface, this seems to be a rather fruitless conversation.
4. A closer examination of the language used in these questions and answers reveals things that do not readily appear. There seems to be, however, a wide diversity of thinking about each issue raised by the language. The student can only attempt to digest the various positions taken by scholars and make a personal judgment about which ones seem to be most logical within the context of the entire exchange as reported by John.
5. The *first* question by Jesus was, “Do you love Me more than *these?*” To what or to

whom does “*these*” refer?

- a. Some contend that it is Peter’s commitment to the fishing trade that the Lord challenges. Does his love for the Savior surpass the deep attachment he still feels for the lifestyle he followed for so long? Do the boats, the nets, the fish, and the money hold a greater attraction than the prospect of going here and there and suffering the deprivations associated with a life of preaching?
  - b. Others are convinced that it is the love of “*these*” other disciples to which Peter must compare his own devotion. He once had boasted that his love was unsurpassed among the apostles and that although the others might desert the Lord, he would follow Him even to death (Mark 14:29; John 13:37). Ironically, he had been the disciple whose *disloyalty* was most glaring! How ashamed he must have been. How could he still claim that his love was even *equal* to that of the others, much less *superior* to theirs? Jesus’ question would surely call Peter’s attention to his need for an enduring humility that hadn’t been particularly evident before he betrayed the Christ.
6. In the first *two* questions Jesus uses *agapao* as the “love” that Peter and others ought to have. This is the lofty and unmitigated devotion, it is said, that man should give to God. On the other hand, Peter responded with another word for “love,” *phileo*, which is supposed to identify only a warm, kindly regard. Jesus’ last inquiry adopts the same *phileo* that Peter has used in his replies. Some scholars understand this shift of terms by Jesus to mean that He wanted Peter to question himself as to whether he even held the Lord in the deep *respect* and *tender regard* that he might extend to other men? This cut Peter badly, and it accounts for the apostle’s plaintive complaint that Jesus’ divine knowledge surely was sufficient for Him to know that the apostle loved his Master far more than he loved any man!
- a. F.F. Bruce calls attention to some possible difficulties with this view of these two Greek words, *agapao* and *phileo*:

“Of the four pairs of synonyms mentioned, it is the pair *agapao* and *phileo* that commentators have generally found most interesting. The risen Lord uses *agapao* in his first two questions and *phileo* in the third; Peter uses *phileo* in all three replies. But those who see a difference in force between the two verbs here are not agreed on the nature of the difference.” [Bruce then quotes differing comments on these words by R.C. Trench and B.F. Westcott, two eminent Greek scholars.] “When two such distinguished Greek scholars (both, moreover, tending to argue from the standards of classical Greek) see the significance of the synonyms so differently, we may wonder if indeed we are intended to see such distinct significance...More important still for our present purpose is the fact that John himself uses the two verbs interchangeably elsewhere in his Gospel...It is precarious, then, to press a distinction between the two synonyms here.

“What is important is that Peter reaffirms his love for the Lord, and is rehabilitated and recommissioned.”

- b. Merrill Tenney responds to such arguments as those made by Bruce:

“To the first objection the answer may be given that Greek is more flexible than Aramaic, and that the use of a single word for all degrees and types of love may signify the poverty of Aramaic rather than confusion in Greek. In replying to the second objection, one may say that the frequent interchange of terms as

exact synonyms does not mean that they are absolute equivalents but only that they may be used as approximately equivalent in many cases. It is true that *agapao* is a more dignified term, while *phileo* connotes mainly emotional warmth and intensity. Both are to be distinguished from *erao*, which is never used in the New Testament, and which invariably means physical love.

“In any case, Jesus was seeking to probe Peter’s inmost purpose in following Him. The desire for personal success, eminence, achievement, reward, or even the relatively unselfish motive of doing something for needy humanity was not enough.. Only a complete love for Christ would be sufficient to carry him and his fellow-disciples through the careers which awaited them in the future. Peter’s response undoubtedly was sincere. He had learned by this time that he could not trust himself, but he was penitent and willing to obey.”

7. Finally, in response to Peter’s *three* avowals of love and loyalty, Jesus charges him with *three* serious responsibilities. Each charge employs a different emphasis:
  - a. “Feed my *lambs*.” Lambs are the newborn of the flock. They need special nurture and oversight to assure their growth and development into valuable wool-producers. Therefore, Peter and the rest were to be commissioned as general shepherds of the Lord’s church, and as such, were to be diligent to supply the needs of babes in Christ for growth and productivity;
  - b. “Tend my *sheep*.” Sheep of *all* ages and sizes need protection from marauding animals that only a good shepherd can provide. They also may wander from the flock and be lost without the shepherd’s diligent watchcare. Church members would likewise require that someone guard them from teachers of false doctrines and guide them tenderly into appropriate Christian conduct and away from spiritually destructive apathy and idleness;
  - c. “Feed my *sheep*.” Mature members of both literal and spiritual flocks require continued feeding. No sheep and no Christian ever grows beyond the need for nourishment. A single feeding lasts for only a short time. Growth and life must coexist. Peter would later feel as obligated to “stir up” mature saints by “reminding” them of Gospel truths (2Peter 1:13) as he did to teach those same truths for the first time to the immature--- “Peter,” Jesus says, “**BE BOLD!**”
8. Imparting these duties to Peter was concrete evidence that he was once again considered by Jesus to be worthy of His confidence. The pain that Peter felt in the subtle rebukes of Jesus’ questions was surely eased by the satisfaction that came from knowing that he had been completely forgiven for his failure. Henceforth, he would be depended upon by Jesus to function as *one* of the foundation stones by whom access to God would be made possible (Eph. 2:18,20).
9. Peter’s fishing went unrebuked by Jesus, who seemingly had no problem with it. But fishing, along with every other human activity, must be kept in its proper place. “Feed...Tend...Feed.” Some things are far more important than others. Those who can do necessary things must apply themselves to their execution--- “**BE BOLD!**”
10. Along with a charge to serve Him, Jesus also gave Peter a glimpse into his future. He would live to an old age and come under the control of other men. He would not be free to do what he wanted as he had done in his youth. This likely was a prediction of future tribulation to be endured by the apostle as he carried the Gospel into the far reaches of the earth. Tradition, which is not always dependable, claims

that Peter died by upside-down *crucifixion* at the hands of *enemies of the Lord*.

**Jn.21:20-23** “**WHAT ABOUT THIS MAN?**”

1. John apparently had stationed himself close to this private conversation between Peter and the Christ. Peter’s curiosity had been aroused when Jesus looked into his future and spoke of his old age and persecution. Perhaps Peter looked at John and wondered what the coming years held for his friend. “What about *this* man?”
2. Jesus’ response to Peter’s well-intentioned question about John was probably not what Peter expected or wanted. “What is that to you? You follow Me.” Each one of us has his own responsibility to God which no one else can discharge. Our particular work must be done by us! Our great challenge is to “mind our own business” in the Lord’s vineyard (1Thes.4:11).
3. The Lord gently rebuked Peter’s curiosity by stating that he should not be overly concerned about John’s future life, even if God should choose for John to live long enough for His Son to “come .” That remark was misconstrued by Christians prior to the writing of this Gospel. Some said that John would never die, since those who are living at Jesus’ return will be “changed” but will not die. The “disciple whom Jesus loved” wanted it understood that this was *not* what Christ meant. Jesus had simply attempted to make a point-- “*what if*”-- that even this scenario should be of little real concern to Peter or to other saints. “You follow Me.”

**Jn.21:24,25** **A FINAL TESTIMONY**

1. Some critics promote the idea that these last two verses were written by some author other than John, perhaps by one or more of the elders at Ephesus. However, it seems unlikely that anyone who had not actually been an eyewitness to the events recorded in this book would have dared to offer such a **Bold Testimony** with which to bring it to a close.
2. In the event that someone else *did* add these verses to John’s writing, we may be confident that it was with the apostle’s knowledge and permission that it was done. Even if the words appeared after John’s death, they pose no problem to the authenticity or the accuracy of this message of faith that John had written. “*We know that his testimony is true*” merely adds the weight of other spiritual men to the fact that John’s Gospel really could make it possible for all its readers to “**believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God**” and “**believing to have life in His name.**”
3. The Gospel of John contains only a fragment of the words and deeds of the Greatest Character ever to walk upon this earth. If every detail could be recited, the world [i.e., the *people of the world*] could not contain [comprehend] the vast amount of information that would be involved. It was John’s intention to include only enough of Jesus’ story to accomplish his and God’s *mutual purpose*:  
“**And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.**”

**Complete These Statements:**

1. Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ Himself to the \_\_\_\_\_ at the \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The apostles went \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ but caught \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Following the directions of \_\_\_\_\_, the disciples caught a \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
4. They saw a \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ when they returned to the shore.
5. This was the \_\_\_\_\_ appearance of Jesus to His \_\_\_\_\_ after His \_\_\_\_\_, according to John.
6. Jesus questioned \_\_\_\_\_ three times about his \_\_\_\_\_ for Him.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ was given responsibility for Christ's \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Jesus foretold how \_\_\_\_\_'s death would \_\_\_\_\_ God.
9. Peter asked Jesus about the future of the \_\_\_\_\_ whom Jesus \_\_\_\_\_.
10. A misunderstanding by the \_\_\_\_\_ led to an idea that \_\_\_\_\_ would not die.

**True (T) or False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Thomas first announced his intention to go fishing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Jesus directed the disciples to fish from the right side of the boat.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Peter was the first to realize that the stranger ashore was really Jesus.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Both fish and bread were provided by Jesus for the apostles' meal.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Some of the newly-caught fish were included in the disciples' breakfast.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. This was the last time the apostles saw the Savior on earth.

**True (T) or False (F):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Jesus had a lengthy conversation with John about love.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Peter was assured by the Lord of living to an old age.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Peter had asked at the Passover supper about the Lord's betrayer.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. The "world" could not "contain" all the writings about everything Jesus did.

**Match These Persons, Places, and Things:**

- |                    |                   |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| _____ 1. Cana      | a. Bread and fish |
| _____ 2. Peter     | b. Little boat    |
| _____ 3. John      | c. Judas Iscariot |
| _____ 4. Jesus     | d. Nathanael      |
| _____ 5. Disciples | e. Jonah          |

**Answer With a Number:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The number of disciples who were in the group of fishermen.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The number of post-resurrection appearances recorded by John.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The number of cubits (or yards) the disciples' boat was from the shore.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The number of men required to pull the fish-filled net to shore.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The number of questions that Peter was asked by Jesus (total).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The number of fish caught by the disciples by following Jesus' directions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. The number of apostles promised by Jesus that they would not die.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. The number of disciples mentioned but totally unidentified.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. The number of food items provided by the Lord for His apostles.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. The number of fish caught prior to Jesus' appearance.

**BONUS QUESTIONS:**

- 1. Three apostles are called by name in this chapter. List the names of the nine who are not named.**
- 2. How are six of the apostles designated without giving their names?**