

The Bible Notebook

© 2011 Johnny L. Sanders

# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

*That you may know Him*

*(John 20:31)*

Volume 6

*Chapters 16-18*

By

Johnny L. Sanders, D. Min.

# DEDICATION

*To*

Jacob Sean Sanders  
*(My 21 Month Old Grandson)*

*And*

To The Memory

Of

The Countless Millions of Babies  
Who Never Saw the Light of Day

*Because*

They Were Killed in  
The Most Dangerous Place on Earth

Their Mother's Womb!

# JOHN, THE UNIQUE GOSPEL

Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the Synoptic Gospels. The word means seeing alike. Any Harmony of the Gospels (A. T. Robertson, Holman) will show a parallel between those accounts. The Gospel According to John is often called the Evangelistic Gospel, for reasons that become obvious to the serious student of the Word. The Fourth Gospel is unique for other reasons. In John, miracles are often called signs because the Lord used these miracles to signify something that is... well, significant. Then, there are the I Am sayings, which are unique to this Gospel account of the Life of Christ. Consider the following lists:

## SIGNS IN THE JOHN'S GOSPEL

1. Changing water to wine, 2:1-11.
2. Healing of an official's son from a distance, 4:46-54.
3. Healing the sick, 5:1-14.
4. Feeding 5000 men, plus women and children, 6:14.
5. Walking on water, 6:16-20.
6. Healing of a blind man, 9:1-34.
7. Raising of Lazarus from the dead, 11:38-44

## THE I AM SAYINGS OF JESUS IN JOHN

1. I am the bread of life - 6:35.
2. I am the light of the world - 8:12.
3. I am the door of the sheep - 10:7-9.
4. I am the good shepherd - 10:11.
5. I am the resurrection and life - 11:25 -26.
6. I am the way, the truth, and the life - 14:6.
7. I am the true vine, 15:1ff

## JESUS' SEVEN SAYINGS FROM THE CROSS

1. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." (Luke 23:34, NKJV)
2. And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise." (Luke 23:43)
3. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!" Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home. (John 19:26-27)

4. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46)

5. After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!" (John 19:28)

6. So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit. (John 19:30).

7. And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.'" Having said this, He breathed His last. (Luke 23:46)

## About The Bible Notebook

This is the sixth volume in the verse by verse study of the Gospel According to John, which this writer has included in what he calls The Bible Notebook. Dr. Mike Minnix, who created PastorLife.Com web site, lists all volumes under Commentaries. This is the forty-third volume written by this writer. A few other outlined studies have been prepared over the years but they have not been developed as far as those on the Georgia Baptist Convention web site. In other volumes, I have encouraged those who go to the site and use my sermons or commentaries and improve them before they use them. I can see a lot of work that needs to be done on all of them. Dr. Minnix has created a new website, SermonCity.Com, which carries the same material as the original, site, with the exception of Volumes VI and VII in this series from John, which do not at present appear in the GBC web site.

Dr. Paul Brown, retired president of Hannibal LaGrange College, and a native of my hometown of Sledge, Mississippi, said of my commentaries, "You remind me of something Dwight L. Moody once said. You put it on the lower shelves." He was kind enough not to say that I couldn't reach the higher shelves, but that would probably be a fair assessment. I began writing these Bible studies when I was teaching various books of the Bible in local churches, and then expanded them when I was teaching lay persons and bi-vocational pastors in seminary extension classes. For some thirty years I also taught from four to six Bible studies in churches every year.

I am flattered when pastors with seminary training express their appreciation for the commentaries and sermons on the web site, but I continue to prepare these studies with the lay person, and the pastor without seminary training in mind. The studies the Book of Acts and the Gospel of John are divided into a number of volumes in order to keep the volumes small enough send by e-mail, and to upload or download by those who do not have high speed Internet. The Scripture, unless otherwise noted, will be from the Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB). I love the King James Version and the New King James Versions, and preached from the KJV for years, even though I used the American Standard Bible or the New American Standard Bible in my study.

When I was elected to the Board of Trustees for LifeWay Christian Resources, I was assigned to the

Broadman and Holman Committee. It was in the first committee meeting that I met Dr. Ed. Blum, the General Editor of the Holman Christian Standard Bible. After some discussion, we went into executive session and voted to recommend to the full board that we go forward with this word for word translation of the Bible. This is the first translation that was done with the computer and the Internet as tools for the many translators (around 100) who worked on the project. The Greek and Hebrew scholars used their computers to check for consistency in the translation of words, and by the Internet they were able to communicate with each other when there were problem texts or manuscript questions.

I asked a friend at Broadman and Holman to send a copy of the HCSB to Dr. Bill Cooper in England. Among other things, Dr. Cooper has written challenging books (*After the Flood*, and *the Flood*), and he “translated” the 1388 Wycliffe NT and the 1526 Tyndale NT into modern English. This was a monumental task, especially so, since he was battling an untreatable form of leukemia while he was doing this work. Dr. Cooper works in Greek, Hebrew, Latin, and a host of other languages. He read the HCSB and wrote to tell me that this is the first modern translation he had read that he likes.

Documentation is found within the body of the volume, with the first reference identified in full, and later quotes from the same volume indicated by the initials. For example, the New Commentary on the Whole Bible will be identified as NCWB, and the New American Commentary as NAC.

## This Volume in the Series

I planned for many years to research and write a verse by verse study of the Gospel According to John. It is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, so I think of it as the Gospel according to the apostle John. I can remember being asked, What is your favorite Book in the Bible? I might have answered that it was whatever I was working on at the time, but in reality I would have to say that it is the Fourth Gospel. I love the Synoptic Gospels, but I really love the “I AM” sayings and “signs” in this Gospel. I also love the eye witness notes the disciple Jesus loved includes in this Gospel. In addition, this was the last of the Gospels to be written, and it was written by the one apostle whom the Lord kept alive long enough to train many early church leaders, and to write this Gospel, as well as the three Epistles that bear his name, and finally, the Revelation.

I cannot prove this, but I believe, despite what various authorities claim, that at the end of the First Century the Apostle John could have told anyone which books should be included in the New Testament. Dr. Bill Cooper is convinced that the Gospel of Matthew reached his island of Briton within a generation following the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. I would refer anyone who questions Dr. Cooper’s qualifications to make such a claim to his book, *After the Flood*, to see if he has the credential and expertise to make such a statement. He has access to ancient documents not readily available to scholars in other places, and he has the ability to translate many of them. Dr. Cooper has shared with me his belief that Polycarp was a disciple of John’s and in the one letter of his that has survived, he identified the books that make up the New Testament.

The more I read this Gospel the more I love it. There are all those favorite passages I have been

blessed to study in the earlier chapters, and now we come to Chapter 16 where we will learn more about the ministry of the Holy Spirit. There is Chapter 17 where we see our Savior praying (this really is the Lord's prayer!). In Chapter 18, we find John's unique account of the arrest and trials of Jesus.

Throughout this series on the Gospel According to John every effort is made to keep both the opening declaration (the Prologue) and the stated purpose of the Book in mind. The Prologue begins with the words: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1, HCSB). Everything else we find in the Fourth Gospel fits perfectly between that statement and the John's stated purpose: "Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of His disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may believe Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and by believing you may have life in His name" (20:30-31).

In Volumes IV and V (Chs. 10-12, and Chs. 13-15) this writer begins with highlights or major themes of chapters 1-9. This volume will begin with a similar brief recap of chapters 1-12.

In Chapter One, there is the Prologue, in which we find a statement about Jesus that destroys all cults, all false religions, and all heresies, as well as atheism and agnosticism. Yes, this Gospel has been around two thousand years and we still have cults, false religions, heresies, atheism and agnosticism, but their demise has been assured, as has the reward for all who embrace them. John begins this Gospel with the words, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. All things were created by Him, and without Him was not anything created that was created" (KJV). The first chapter proclaims Jesus to be life, light, Savior, the Lamb of God, the Messiah.

In Chapter Two, Jesus, through the First Sign, declares Himself to be the fulfillment of all Messianic prophecies. In Chapter Three, we read: "For God so love the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him will not perish, but have everlasting life" (my paraphrase). In Chapter Four, He says to the woman at the well in Samaria, "Everyone who drinks from this water will get thirsty again. But whoever drinks from the water that I will give him will never get thirsty again—ever! In fact, the water I will give him will become a well of water springing up within him for eternal life"(John 4:13-14, HCSB). Also, in Chapter Four, we have the Second Sign, the healing of an official's son from a distance.

In Chapter Five, we find the Third Sign, the healing of a man who had been sick for 38 years (on the Sabbath), as well His declaration about Jesus' relationship with His Father. He also offers witnesses who support His claim to be the Son of God. In Chapter Six, He feeds five thousand men, plus women and children with a child's lunch (the Fourth Sign). That evening His disciples were caught in a violent storm in the middle of the Sea of Galilee when Jesus came to them, walking on the water (the Fifth Sign). The next day, He declared, "**I am the bread of life.**"

In Chapter Seven, Jesus went to the Temple privately, but in the middle of the Festival of Tabernacles, He stood up and cried out, "If anyone is thirsty, he should come to Me and drink! The

one who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, will have streams of living water flow from deep within him” (7:37-38). Without saying it in so many words, He is saying that He is water of life. He continues to make statements that support the great claims set forth in the Prologue.

In Chapter Eight, Jesus masterfully deals with a crowd bent on trapping him by forcefully dragging into His presence a woman caught in the act of adultery. When the scribes and Pharisees sought to paint Him into a corner from which there was no escape, He brilliantly put the ball back in their court. When they gave up and left, He dismissed to woman with an order for her to “Go, and from now on do not sin any more” (8:11).

In Chapter Nine, Jesus gives the sixth sign, the healing of a man born blind, after He had dealt with the question: whose sins caused his blindness, his or his parents’? The Jewish religious authorities were enraged that Jesus made a paste of spittle and placed on the eyes of the blind man on the Sabbath Day. They questioned the man about the One who had healed him and “He answered, ‘Whether **or not He’s a sinner, I don’t know. One thing I do know: I was blind, and now I can see.**’” (9:25, bold added by this writer). Wow! What a testimony.

Chapter Ten is very special for a number of reasons. First, Jesus makes two unforgettable “I AM” statements in this passage. He said, “**I am the door to the sheepfold,**” and then He declared, “**I am the Good Shepherd.**” Second, this chapter reveals that Jesus fulfills the hopes and promises of Psalm 23. Third, Jesus offers assurance of eternal security to every single person to whom He gives eternal life, whether they understand it or not (and whether they believe it or not!). The Savior never announces anywhere that He will grant temporary life to anyone who believes in Him.

In Chapter Eleven, Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead after making another of those amazing I AM statements. He declared to Martha, “**I am the resurrection and the life.**” In Chapter Twelve, we have the anointing at Bethany by Mary and the Royal Entry (commonly called the Triumphant Entry).

In Chapter 13, Jesus washed the feet of His disciples and explained the significance of it. He then predicted His betrayal by Judas. Next, He gave them His new commandment, that they should love one another.

In Chapter 14, as a part of His Farewell Discourse, Jesus announced that He was going to the Father to prepare a place for His followers. He then declared, “**I am the way, the truth, and the life.**” Also, in chapter 14, Jesus promised, “Whatever you ask in My name, I will do it so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.” Also, Jesus promised that when He returned to the Father He would send the Holy Spirit to minister in and through true believers.

In Chapter 15, Jesus said, “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vineyard keeper.” He went on to explain that those who love Him are the ones who Obey Him. Jesus taught that the world hates Him because it hates the Father, and it will hate those who follow Him. He also taught them about the ministry of the Counselor, the Holy Spirit.

# CHAPTER 16

16:1 - KEEP YOU FROM STUMBLING. *“I have told you these things to keep you from stumbling.”* Jesus had begun the Farewell Discourse at the Last Supper in the upper room. After Judas had been dismissed, He continued speaking with the eleven apostles who remained with Him. At one point, He had said, “Get up; let’s leave this place” (John 14:31), meaning the upper room. He then continued to talk with them as they moved out toward the Garden of Gethsemane, stating, “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vineyard keeper” (15:1); and, “ I am the vine; you are the branches” (15:5). So, when He said, “these things”, they would understand that He meant the entire Farewell Discourse up to this point.

He had said all “these things to keep them from stumbling.” At first, it would seem that He had failed, because stumble is about all they did do. However, when He returned to the Father He would send the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, to come and indwell all true believers. He would cause them to remember, and understand all Jesus had taught them, and He would empower them to carry out the Great Commission (Acts 1:8). They would be confused when He was arrested, defeated when He was condemned, and crushed when He was crucified. Then He arose from the dead and revealed Himself to them, as well as to many others over a period of time. He ascended to the Father, as He had promised, before a multitude of people, with a promise from an angel that He would return in the same manner in which He departed from them (Acts 1:11).

Believers would continue in prayer in a large upper room until the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit would come and indwell them and empower them for the ministry to which Jesus had commissioned them (Acts 1:8). They may have stumbled initially (Peter wanted to return to his former work as a fisherman), but after Pentecost, these eleven men, and many others, would become powerful witnesses, mighty soldiers in the Lord’s army. Each apostle would become a martyr for the Lord, and the more the Jews and the Roman Empire tried to destroy the church the more it grew. A professor at Mississippi College once said, “If I poured a little puddle of water on this desk, and wanted to get rid of it, what could I do? If I take the palm of my hand and slap that little puddle of water, does the water disappear? No, we could look around and find drops of water all over the desk. That is what happened to the early church. Every time someone thought they had destroyed the church, other churches sprang up in the area.” These disciples did not stumble after the Counselor came to indwell and empower them.

16:2 - THEY WILL BAN YOU. *“They will ban you from the synagogues. In fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering service to God.”* One would hardly try to start up a “religion” by prophesying that those who signed on would be banned from their current house of worship. This was especially true of the Jew and his synagogue. To illustrate the seriousness of such a threat, all we have to do is turn back to chapter nine and read John’s account of Jesus’ healing of the man who had been born blind. Jesus had healed the man on the Sabbath,



which, according to the narrow interpretation by the Pharisees was a sin. Those religious leaders were not concerned that the blind man had been healed. They only sought to have Jesus killed for performing that amazing miracle on the Sabbath. The religious authorities summoned the man's parents and "They asked them, "Is this your son, [the one] you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" (9:19). Their response shows how they feared expulsion from the synagogue:

"We know this is our son and that he was born blind,' his parents answered. 'But we don't know how he now sees, and we don't know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he's of age. He will speak for himself.' His parents said these things because they were afraid of the Jews, since the Jews had already agreed that if anyone confessed Him as Messiah, he would be banned from the synagogue. This is why his parents said, 'He's of age; ask him'" (John 9:19-23, bold added by this writer).

The joy these parents must have felt was overshadowed by their fear or being banned from the synagogue by the Jewish authorities. Sadly, many professing Christians do not take the Lord's Day or the Lord's worship service so seriously today.

ANYONE WHO KILLS YOU. Jesus added, "In fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering service to God." No human being would ever start a new religion like this. **Mohamed didn't say, "People will kill you." What he said was, "You will kill other people."** They would declare war on those who refuse to convert to Islam). There is no way around what Jesus said to these eleven apostles. When asked about the future, Jesus stated very clearly in that well known Eschatological passage in Matthew's Gospel: "Then they will hand you over for persecution, and they will kill you. You will be hated by all nations because of My name. Then many will take offense, betray one another and hate one another" (Matt. 24:9-10).

Jesus' words are clear enough, but hardly what a disciple would anticipate from One who has been training them for three years to carry on His work. Why is the Prince of Peace predicting martyrdom for His followers? True Christianity is the most peaceful force on the face of the Earth, but for two thousand years Christians have been shedding their blood for their loyalty to Jesus Christ. The sad part of that is that for centuries, professing Christians were killing others who professed to be Christians. Muslims marched across Europe conquering nations with sword, arrow, and spear, but when those who professed faith in Christ fought to stop their march across Europe. Their resistance spawned such hatred among Muslim people that was so intense they passed it on to their descendants, and their hatred for Christians is still raging centuries today. Such is the vile, murderous nature of their god, Satan.

Christians were slaughtered by gladiators for the entertainment of the citizens in Roman. Some were crucified, some were beheaded, and others were devoured by half starved lions in a Roman arena. Those who stood up for the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ during the Dark Ages could expect to be burned at the stake, and that at the hands of bishops and priests. Those who led in the Reformation were often persecuted, and many killed, not by gladiators, but by those who professed to be serving

God. Dr. William R. Cooper, of Middlesex, England, has documented the persecution of saints by those who professed to be serving the Lord. Her has uncovered some interesting facts in his many years of research in the libraries and museums of England. In His work, *Old Light on the Roman Church*, he points out that many of the first century saints became martyrs for Jesus Christ. In that volume, Dr. Cooper introduces Caradoc, the King and commander of the armies of Briton who defeated the Romans in 30 pitched battles before he was betrayed by a jealous relative. His family was captured in A. D. 49, and Caradoc fought on for some time before he was captured and taken to Rome. He stood before the Emperor of Rome and refused to bow. Crossing his arms, he apparently gave the emperor a piece of his mind. Those present insisted that he was too brave to be put to death, so he and his family were assigned to the home of Lady Pomponia, whose husband (Pudens) was a Roman Senator. Lady Pomponia was a believer and it seems that she led the family of Caradoc to faith in Christ. She was apparently charged with a foreign superstition, but because her husband was a senator he was permitted to judge her. She may well have been put to death if that had not been the case. Paul greets both her son Rufus Pudens and his wife Claudia (daughter of Caradoc) in his Epistle to the Romans, and in an epistle to Timothy. Dr. Cooper provides some interesting information on Rufus and Claudia. We shall consider that and then look at what he has to say about Linus.

“Paul clearly knew Pudens and Claudia on a personal level, just as he knew Linus, Claudia’s brother, so tradition would seem to be entirely accurate when it says that Paul was entertained at their house. That is not really surprising, but what is surprising is that neither Pudens nor Claudia appear to owe their conversion to Paul in any direct sense, for they were already Christians when Paul first contacted them. They seem rather to owe it to a person known to history as the Lady Pomponia, and we shall consider the circumstances of that conversion (and why she is only referred to but not named in the New Testament) in its due place. Its great importance as far as this paper is concerned, however, lies in the fact that the modernist assertion that the Gospel was a late composition (late 1<sup>st</sup> - early 2<sup>nd</sup> century) is shown by the Lady Pomponia’s own faith to be patently absurd. The Lady Pomponia’s conversion had clearly taken place some years *before* Paul ever reached Rome, and indeed could have occurred at any time between AD 35 and AD 43, thus demonstrating that the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ had power to save from the very beginning in the years and months immediately following the Resurrection. We shall deal with this question in greater depth later, but could this be the reason why this period of Church history is ignored? Undoubtedly.

“**However, Claudia is the only one of Caradoc’s immediate family who is said to have died a “natural” death, meaning that she wasn’t martyred,**<sup>43</sup> and according to Morgan she is also credited with the composition and writing of many of the early Christian hymns.<sup>44</sup> The records are silent concerning the actual fate of Pudens, although the *Roman Martyrology* has the following entry for 17<sup>th</sup> **May**: “**Natal** day [i.e. a euphemism for day of martyrdom] of the blessed Pudens, father of Praxedes and Pudentiana [see below]. He was clothed with baptism by the

apostles, and watched and kept his robe pure and without wrinkle to the crown of a blameless life” [Cooper, Bill, *Old Light on the Roman Church*, unpublished at this time, pp 18-19, bold added by this writer].

The following paragraph provides information on Linus, the first person to serve as bishop of the Roman Christians, before there ever was a Roman Catholic Church.

“Known in the British records as *Llyn ap Caradawc*, Linus was taken to Rome under the care of the Lady Pomponia with his sisters and brother, and under her tutelage was converted to the Christian faith. Irenaeus, in *Adversus omnes Haereses*. III. iii. 3, and Eusebius, in his *Historia Ecclesiae*. iii. 2 & v. 6., both identify Linus as the man whom Paul mentions (2 Tim. 4:21), and they also tell us that he (not Peter!) was the first bishop (*episkopos* - then meaning steward or overseer) of the early Roman Christians. A portrait of Linus, painted from life, has survived and is preserved in the church of *S. Paulo fuori le Mura* (St Paul’s-outside-the-Wall) in Rome. It is reproduced as an illustration for this paper, and it is important to note in estimating the date of the painting that he wears the robes of a Roman patrician, and neither the ecclesiastical garb nor the ridiculous halo that adorns the later ‘pictures’ (or icons) of even his most immediate successors. Linus survived the persecution under Nero, only to perish in ca AD 81 under Domitian, the third of the Flavian Caesars. His sarcophagus, which lies deep beneath St Peter’s in Rome (and which bears his name), was seen in the year AD 822 by the poet Maurus, and eight centuries later in 1629.<sup>46</sup> Clemens Romanus, who succeeded Linus as bishop of the Roman Christians, calls him, “*Sanctissimus Linus, frater Claudiae*” - the most saintly Linus, brother of Claudia.” [Cooper, Bill, *Old Light on the Roman Church*, unpublished at this time, p. 19, bold added by this writer].

Dr. Cooper provides a Chronology which underscores the martyrdom of key individuals in the early church. Countless Christians were slaughtered in the Roman arena by wild animals, as well as Roman gladiators for the entertainment of pagans. It would be interesting to know how many Christians were crucified for their faith. Those listed in the chronology are but a very few of the martyrs of the period. During the middle ages, many Christians were slaughtered by those who thought they were doing God a favor by killing them.

### Chronology

AD 29.....Aulus Plautius Consul of Rome, afterwards Governor of Pannonia.  
AD 30.....(?) The year of Pudens’ birth. His father, Pudentinus dies in this decade.  
AD 33.....Our Lord’s death and resurrection.  
AD 36.....Birth of Claudia, daughter of Caradoc. Matthew’s(?) Gospel is finished.  
AD 37.....(?) Gospel arrives in Britain according to Gildas. Death of Tiberius Caesar.  
AD 40.....(?) Aulus Plautius marries Pomponia. Pomponia converted by Gospel.  
AD 41.....Death of Tiberius Caesar. Claudius becomes Emperor.

- AD 43.....Claudian Invasion of Britain. Arrival here of Aulus Plautius and Pomponia. Judicial murder in Rome of Julia by Messalina, the wife of Claudius.
- AD 49.....Capture of Caradoc’s family by Ostorius Scapula. They are placed in the care of Pomponia who converts them to Christ.
- AD 51.....Caradoc is betrayed by Queen Cartimantua (Aregwedd Foeddawg).
- AD 52.....Caradoc appears with his family before the Senate. Pudens returns to Rome, leaving his land in Chichester to the pagan temple there.
- AD 54.....Death of Claudius Caesar. Nero becomes Emperor.
- AD 57.....Trial of Pomponia. Retirement of Aulus Plautius from public life.
- AD 58.....Return to Britain of Bran, accompanied by Aristobulus.
- AD 59.....March 15th, Aristobulus martyred. Paul writes letter to Romans.
- AD 60.....(?) Murder by Nero of Aulus Plautius the Younger.
- AD 67.....Paul is martyred at Rome.
- AD 68.....Nero commits suicide.
- AD 81.....September 23<sup>rd</sup>, martyrdom of Linus under Domitian.
- AD 83.....Death of Pomponia (said to be forty years after Julia’s death in AD 43).
- AD 107.....May 19<sup>th</sup>, Pudentiana is martyred.
- AD 124.....Beginning of Lucius’ reign.
- AD 140.....(?) Timotheus is martyred with one Marcus.
- AD 142.....Pius becomes bishop of the Roman Christians.
- AD 151.....June 20<sup>th</sup>, Novatus is martyred.
- AD 201.....December 3<sup>rd</sup>, death of Lucius.

Note: These are but a few of the martyrs of the early church. I am indebted to Dr. Bill Cooper, Middlesex, England, for the above chronology, as well as his permission to quote from his amazing book, **OLD LIGHT ON THE ROMAN CHURCH** ( Bold added by this writer).

16:3 - THEY WILL DO. *“They will do these things because they haven’t known the Father or Me.”* By “they”, Jesus means those mentioned in 16:2 who thought they were doing God a service by killing His followers. The question is, why would they believe they were rendering God a service by killing Christians? Many who betrayed the saints, and others who cheered their martyrdom did so because they did not know the Father or the Son. “Tragically, the post-resurrection enemies of Christ have misunderstood his words as grossly as his pre-crucifixion antagonists (cf. 2:19-22; 5:16-18; 6:28-66; 7:16-52; 8:12-59; 10:1-42), and many anti-Christian zealots have deluded themselves into thinking they were pleasing God by killing Christians, exactly as here predicted by Christ (cf. Acts 5:33-40; 7:54–8:3)” [The New Commentary on the Whole Bible - after this, NCWB].

Many early believers were betrayed by Jews who were convinced that they were serving the Father by killing Jesus, so they naturally held that when they persecuted the disciples of Jesus they were rendering a service to God. The Romans thought they were doing their gods a service killing followers of Christ, whom the Jews insisted were heretics. Muslim terrorists today believe they are

serving their god when they kill Christians, Jews, and westerners in general. Nothing speaks louder of their complete ignorance of the God of creation, redemption, sovereignty, and judgment.

16:4 - I HAVE TOLD YOU. *“But I have told you these things so that when their time comes you may remember I told them to you. I didn’t tell you these things from the beginning, because I was with you.”* Most students understand what is meant by cramming for a test. They may have not applied themselves as they should have during the semester, but now the final exam is set for the next day and a group of students get together and try to anticipate what will be asked on the final exam. They discuss, debate, and finally agree on what seems to prepare them best for the test. There was a professor of Latin at Mississippi College, Dr. Roy Watkins, who would meet with students to help them prepare for his tests. Jesus had but a few hours to give His disciples His final instructions and He was making the most of it. He gave this warning to His disciples about coming persecution “in order to strengthen their faith. By recognizing His knowledge of the future they would grow in their confidence in Him. Jesus did not give them this warning before because the world’s hatred was directed against Him. He shielded them with His personal presence, but now they would be His body on earth (Eph. 1:22-23)” [Bible Knowledge Commentary, QuickVerse Bible Library - after this, BKC].

YOU WILL REMEMBER. After the crucifixion His disciples would be confused and defeated. When He was with them they looked to Him for answers and guidance, but after He was gone they would have to stand alone against His enemies until He arose and appeared to them. They would receive instructions and encouragement from the risen Christ, but then He would ascend to the Father, leaving them alone again. However, on the Day of Pentecost, He would send the Holy Spirit to indwell each true believer. The indwelling Spirit would empower them and call the words of Jesus to their remembrance. They would face obstacles, threats, and martyrdom, but never alone.

“The second part of v. 4 serves as a link to what has gone before and connects with what is said in this section. The evangelist alludes to the previous Paraclete statement in 15:26-27 by returning to the idea of ‘from the beginning’ (ex archees), but there is here a slight change of focus. In the previous chapter he referred to the fact that they had accompanied Jesus from the beginning. But here Jesus provides the rationale for not telling them earlier about the Paraclete: namely, he was still with them” [New American Commentary, LifeWay Christian Resources, Technology Division - after this, NAC].

## The Counselor’s Ministry

16:5 - I AM GOING AWAY. *“But now I am going away to Him who sent Me, and not one of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’”* His disciples had asked earlier about what was going to happen to Him (13:36; 14:4, 5), “but had apparently never inquired about his subsequent resurrection and ascension to the Father” [NCWB]. This is His Farewell Discourse and He is trying to prepare them for what is about to happen, for indeed the events that were about to come cascading down before them over the next three days would try their faith and test their mettle.

Jesus makes two statements in the first half of this verse. First, He says He is “going away”; and second, He says He is going to “Him who sent Me.” He had tried to prepare them for His death, but now it is imperative that they understand that this is the purpose for which He came into the world. When the Jewish authorities arrest Jesus and drag Him into three illegal hearings, and twist the arm of the Roman governor to crucify Him, it is imperative that the disciples understand that the world can do nothing to Him against His will. It is also important for them to know that He is voluntarily submitting to the arrest, trials, torture, and crucifixion for a purpose. Otherwise, the events of the next day would have come close to crushing them. Jesus loved them and wanted to prepare them for that which was about to happen. He might have let them be traumatized by what was going to happen, and then set it right with them after He arose from the dead. Instead, He seeks to prepare them for what is about to happen.

**NOT ONE OF YOU ASKS.** This is especially interesting, because Jesus states that, “not one of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’” Has He forgotten that Peter (13:36 and Thomas (14:5) have asked Him about where He was going? Or is it possible that, as liberal theologians have insisted, John reveals what a poor historian he is by contradicting himself on this matter? “On the contrary, the organization of the pericopes in John serve his theological goal of communicating the vivid message of Jesus. The solutions of Brown, Schnackenburg, and Beasley-Murray reject structural reorganization but blame such poorly aligned statements on a forgetful editor who failed to remove such inconsistencies” [NAC].

The author of the material in the NAC seeks to “explain why such noticeable inconsistencies remain” by answering those who believe John mixed up the events and statements in this Gospel. For example, he notes that “Dodd argued similarly but restructured the statement at 14:4 to imply that the disciples do know the way but not the goal. But such a manipulative rendering has inadequate support” [NAC]. He goes on to say,

“From my point of view, part of our problem is tied into our human commitment to read John within sequential time and space frames. That does not work with the cleansing of the Temple or the relationship of chaps. 5-6, and it certainly does not work in the Farewell Cycle. One must read each section of John's Gospel for what it says, not what we readers might want the text to say. The issue here is not where Jesus is going; the issue is that he is going to the one who sent him. He is leaving them, and they unhappily saw no benefit accruing to their messianic hopes. They were clearly filled with sorrow (v. 6). Morris says here that ‘the perfect is somewhat strange since sorrow was to give way to joy (16:20).’ But that again is a time-oriented sequential statement. It is true, however, that the word for grief or sorrow (lype) here occurs both in vv. 20 and 22, thus linking it verbally with the next section of the Gospel. In contrast to that section, Jesus is here trying to help them understand the nature of the spiritual resource that will be supplied to them. But their minds have become stuck on the physical presence of Jesus in the midst of the hostile world. Therefore the task was to help these disciples realize that another powerful resource would be made available to them in the coming of the Paraclete” [NAC].

Perhaps there is another solution. They had asked before this night (before He went to Jerusalem), but during the Farewell Discourse they have not interrupted Him to ask Him where He is going. If that is the case, He may simply be stating the obvious in order to better prepare them for shocking events which will challenge their faith and test their sanity.

**16:6 - SORROW.** *“Yet, because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart.”* The disciples had been excited when they anticipated the blessings associated with the Messiah, who would fulfill the promises of the Davidic Covenant. The Romans would be driven out of the land and Israel would once again occupy all the land from the Mediterranean Sea to the Euphrates River. James and John had requested the positions of honor, one at the right hand and the other at the left hand of Jesus. The others were outraged at such a request. They were focused on temporal blessings and the thought of losing them has brought sorrow to their hearts. It would get a lot worse, beginning with Jesus’ imminent arrest, trials and death. “They do not see their way to go on without Jesus” [A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, The Bible Navigator, LifeWay Christian Resources, Technology Division - after this, ATR].

**16:7 - FOR YOUR BENEFIT.** *“Nevertheless, I am telling you the truth. It is for your benefit that I go away, because if I don’t go away the Counselor will not come to you. If I go, I will send Him to you.”* This verse provides us with “the crucial statement for understanding the previous verses” [NAC]. Robertson renders these words, “It is expedient for you (sumpherei humin). Present active indicative of sumpherô, old verb to bear together. See John 11:50 where the phrase is used by Caiaphas ‘for us,’ here ‘for you’ (humin ethical dative)” [ATR].

Jesus affirms the promise He is making with the word, “I am telling you the truth.” The earthly rabbis traditionally quoted older rabbis as the authority for what they taught, but Jesus is the authority for the promise He is making. All the blessings for which they hoped were to be theirs, not by His avoiding the Cross, but by His death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and His ministry in their behalf from His rightful position at the right hand of the Father in heaven.

**THE COUNSELOR.** (Gr, Parakletos, one called along side to help, counsel, comfort). Jesus is preparing the apostles for His arrest, humiliation, torture, and death by assuring them that “It is for your benefit that I go away, because if I don’t go away the Counselor will not come to you.” The coming of the divine Paraclete would not happen until after Jesus returns to the Father. They did not understand all of this at this time, but they would soon realize the presence, the indwelling, the filling, and the ministry of the Counselor (Comforter in the KJV). The coming of the Paraclete would bring the blessings for which they had looked as they followed Jesus and learned from Him. That is the definition of the word disciple: one who follows another to learn from him. As Jesus spoke these words the disciples did not understand them, but the coming of the Counselor would be a blessing to them, even if they did not have that understanding at the moment. They would understand, and when John was writing this Gospel, we can be sure he understood the significance of that statement very clearly.

“Moreover, he understood the reverse side also. Fulfilling the condition for the

coming of the Paraclete necessitated both Jesus' going and his sending the Paraclete to them.

“Although theologians might wish to discuss the issue, the question of whether Jesus and the Paraclete could be present together ‘with’ and ‘in’ the disciples (cf. 14:17) is not treated here. Nor is the issue one of determining the relative merits of the presence of the Spirit as over against the bodily presence of Jesus. Instead, the issue here involves what would trigger the Spirit’s coming to the disciples. The answer is the departure or the atoning death of Jesus. This act of Jesus’ glorification set in motion a number of significant consequences, among them the inauguration of the era of the Spirit/Paraclete and the dawn of Christian discipleship. The Lamb of God would have to die before the new era would come. In the new era of the resurrection Jesus would breathe on them as God breathed on Adam in creation (Gen 2:7), and the Spirit era would begin (John 20:22)” [NAC].

16:8 - WHEN HE COMES. *“When He comes, He will convict the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment...”* When I was growing up in Tunica County, Mississippi, seven miles west of the Quitman County town of Sledge, my father hired cotton pickers each Fall until he bought a mechanical cotton picker. Few things were more predictable than the revival that would be scheduled in a small framed church building a mile from our farm. I don’t know if it was associated with any denomination but we began calling it “the sway-back church” after the center of the roof began to droop lower than the ends. There was very little money in the Delta except during cotton picking time. Many of the hands wanted to be paid at the end of each day, a few at the end of the week.

Some cotton pickers would come to work in the morning looking like they had lost sleep the night before. Someone would ask how they were doing and one of them would say, “We didn’t get out of church until 10:30 last night.” On one occasion a young man told us they were there until midnight. It seemed that the offering was short for the night and the preacher had the ushers to pass the plate over and over. Finally, he laid his Bible down in the door and told them that if anyone left the service before they got the amount of money the Lord told him he should receive they would be “walking over the Word of God.”

The one statement I heard over and over was that Aunt Betty got “it” last night; or Tommy “prayed through” last night and he finally “got it”; or, Sally “got the Holy Ghost” last night and spoke in and unknown tongue. They called the Third Person of the Trinity “it”! Little did I realize that I would encounter seminary professors who could top that. There were some who rejected the whole idea of the Trinity in favor of the unitary theory, which recognizes only One Person in the Godhead. To them, God was playing the role of Father in the Old Testament, the Son during the earthly ministry of Jesus, and the Holy Spirit from Pentecost forward.

I served on the board of trustees for LifeWay Christian Resources for seven years, during which time we had regular meetings in Nashville or the Conference Centers at Ridgecrest, North Carolina, or Glorieta, New Mexico. I believe it was at Glorieta that then President Jimmy Draper shared his list of Baptist Essentials, distinguishing them from “Baptist distinctives”. He told us that Dr. Morris



Chapman, President of the Executive Committee of the SBC until 2010, had a similar list. I asked Dr. Draper for permission to use his list and he assured me I could use it any time, so here is his list:

1. Salvation by grace, through faith, plus nothing
2. Sufficiency of Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16-17)
3. The Lordship of Jesus Christ
4. Autonomy of the local church
5. Religious Liberty
6. Trinitarian view of God
7. The Great Commission

A Trinitarian view of God is not a distinctive, it is an essential. The Muslims who insist that Christian worship three gods do not understand that we worship the great Three in One God: One in essence, three in Person.

The Counselor (Comforter) Jesus promised to send is the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity. To the lost person this may be a hard concept to grasp, but no one is saved apart from the work of the Trinity, and we will see in this chapter the work of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, when we pray we pray to the Father, in the name (Person) of the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:26) The late Francis Schaeffer said that it was when he came to understand the concept of the Trinity that he moved from the position an agnostic to that of a theist. The Holy Spirit, the Counselor, must be understood to be a “He” and not an “it”.

**HE WILL CONVICT.** Jesus promised that when the Counselor comes, “He will convict the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment.” “He will convict the world of being sinful, unrighteous, and certainty of the coming judgment. This is true, but the preposition implies more. He will convict the world *as respects* these three; that is, will convict it of ignorance of their real nature” [Vincent, QuickVerse Bible Library - after this, VINCENT]. “One of the Spirit’s new ministries was to **convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment.** Conviction is not the same as conversion but is necessary to it. The words ‘convict... of guilt’ translate the one word *elenxei*, ‘to present or expose facts, to convince of the truth.’ The Spirit works on the minds of the unsaved to show them the truth of God for what it is. Normally this process includes human aid (cf. 15:26-27)” [BKC]. Merrill offers the following commentary on this verse:

“Three major aspects of the ministry of the Holy Spirit are described in vv 8-15.

1. To the world - conviction of sin, righteousness, and judgment.
2. To the disciples - direction and guidance.
3. To Jesus - revealing Him more perfectly to and through those who represent

Him.

“The key to this first aspect of the Spirit’s ministry is the word ‘convict’ (*elencho*). KJV translates it ‘reprove,’ but that rendering is not strong enough. The word is a legal term that means to pronounce a judicial verdict by which the guilt of the culprit at the bar of justice is defined and fixed. The Spirit does not merely accuse men of sin, He brings to them an inescapable sense of guilt so that they realize their shame and helplessness before God. This conviction applies to three particular areas: sin, righteousness, and judgment. The Spirit is the prosecuting attorney who presents God’s case against humanity” [Merrill, John, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, Vol. 9, Regency, 1981, p. 157 - after this, MERRILL, bold added by this writer].

Whether the sinner understands it or not, no one comes to faith in Jesus Christ without this ministry of the Holy Spirit, who convicts the lost person that he is dead in sin and under a death sentence because of sin. He then reveals the righteousness of Christ which is freely given to each person who receives Him by faith. He also reveals the judgment that awaits every person who rejects Jesus Christ. Understanding of the truth set forth in this passage is essential to our understanding the Person and work of the Holy Spirit.

16:9 - SIN. “...*about sin, because they do not believe in Me;*” When we read David’s prayer for forgiveness (Ps. 51), and his prayer thanking God for His forgiveness (Ps. 32), we note that David confessed his sin, his transgression, and his iniquity. The word sin means to miss the mark. The sin may be unintentional, as in Numbers 15:25. David was a man after God’s own heart, but we can be sure that was not because of the depth of his sin. David, the one who was inspired to write so many of the Psalms, was not only a man who had committed despicable sins, he was a man who had been convicted of the depth of those sins and confessed them from the bottom of his heart. He was convicted of the depth of his sin and the magnitude of his guilt, and he confessed everything to the Lord and asked for His forgiveness and cleansing. Psalm 32 celebrates that forgiveness.

When considering the many things that made David such a great man, we may think of his incredible conquests, as he spread the boundaries of Israel from the Mediterranean Sea to the Euphrates River; his reign as the king who established a dynasty and established the monarchy under God’s mighty hand; or his gift as a musician and writer of psalms. We may not even consider the fact that his understanding of guilt, his appreciation for the depth of his guilt, and his gratitude for God’s forgiveness may have been a key to God’s approval of the man by whom all the kings of Israel would be judged. Read the words as David, inspired by the Holy Spirit, pours out his heart to his Lord: “Who perceives his unintentional sins? Cleanse me from my hidden faults. Moreover, keep Your servant from willful sins; do not let them rule over me. Then I will be innocent, and cleansed from blatant rebellion” (Ps. 19:12-13, bold added by this writer).

Suppose for a moment that someone is reading Second Samuel and pauses to ask, “How could God call an adulterer and a murderer a man after His own heart? Did God not remember his horrible sins? **No! He didn’t.** His sins had been separated from God as far as the east is from the west, never to be remembered again. Oh, God remembers them in their historical setting, but never with reference to their judicial consequences. He had pardoned David and those charges can never be

brought up to indict him before the Supreme Judge ever again. Remember that one ministry of the Holy Spirit is to bring charges against the sinner before God.

**THEY DO NOT BELIEVE.** One of my favorite people when I was a teenager was as distant relative of my Mother's. He was a kind, considerate and moral. When he was a younger man he often went to places where there would be fist fights. During the Depression he and my father served in the CCC in Coffeyville, Mississippi. They became good friends during those days, but went their separate ways after they left the camp. A professional heavy weight boxer lived in the camp and worked with the men for some time, and one day when he tried to get someone to spar with him in the ring. No one, except Ellis (not his real name) would get in the ring with him. Ellis weighed about 165 pounds at the time, but this heavy weight professional fighter told my father that, "if he had hit me with those first three left jabs he would have broken me in to, so I suggested that we just spar." The man outweighed Ellis by thirty pounds, but he was no match for him. Years later, he told my father about the years when he and his brothers would go to "joints" knowing some drunk would start something and he would have his fight. He looked back on those days and said to my father, one of the few men in whom he would confide, "I got where I could knock a man out with one hook from either hand." In another day he might have turned professional.

Ellis met a young lady and got married. They had two daughters. He settled down and worked to support his family. He would permit no family member or friend to come around his family if they had been drinking. His was a safe, moral home. Friends at work would try to get him to go to church when they had a revival, but he said, "I don't see what they have that I need. They slack off from their work, I don't. They steal from the boss, I don't. They use bad language, I don't. I don't see what they are getting out of going to church." It may have been ten years later that I stopped by to visit the distant relative, and when I had an opportunity to talk with him I talked with him about his need for Jesus Christ. His wife had wanted someone to "talk to" Ellis, but when I told him that he needed to ask the Lord for forgive his sin, his wife rushed into the room and said, "Ellis is not a sinner. He's a good man!" That was the end of the conversation that day. Years later, the wife called me from Memphis to tell me that Ellis had just passed away. She and her daughters wanted to know if I could come to Memphis to hold the service.

Ellis, in his younger days, loved to go to places where people would drink and wait for someone to pick a fight with him. Ellis, unless he was saved after I tried to witness to him, died and went to hell. He did not go to hell because of his drinking or his violence. The sin that condemned him to hell was unbelief. He refused to believe in Jesus Christ. Man's logic says we should earn our salvation through our good deeds and high moral standards. God says you don't have any! Paul was inspired to write, "All have turned away, together they have become useless; there is no one who does good, there is not even one" (Rom. 3:12). When I was in seminary and immediately after seminary I served as Youth Pastor, working with Dr. H. R. Herrington, pastor of First Baptist Church, Rayville, Louisiana. Several years later I asked Dr. Herrington to preach a revival in the church I served as pastor. I will never forget one statement he made that week: "The only thing God asks anyone to do to be saved is the one thing everyone can do, and that is to believe in Him."

16:10 - ABOUT RIGHTEOUSNESS. “...about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will no longer see Me;...” This seems to be a critical statement and we need to understand what Jesus is saying. To some, it applies to the righteousness of Jesus at that point in time: “This seems clearly to refer to the righteousness or innocence of Jesus himself. He was now persecuted. He was soon to be arraigned on heavy charges, and condemned by the highest authority of the nation as guilty. Yet, though condemned, he says that the Holy Spirit would descend and convince the world that he was innocent” [*Barnes' Notes on the New Testament*, The Bible Navigator, LifeWay Christian Resources, Nashville, TN - after this, BARNES]. Adam Clarke agrees with Barnes.

While I agree that the immediate and urgent ministry of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost centered around helping the disciples to recall these and other instructions Jesus had given before His death, I am persuaded that the ministry of the Holy Spirit of which Jesus speaks, relates to His ongoing ministry which enables and motivates lost people to place their faith and trust in Jesus Christ. Paul wrote: “But now, apart from the law, God’s righteousness has been revealed—attested by the Law and the Prophets—that is, God’s righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ, to all who believe, since there is no distinction. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:21-23). He added, “He presented Him to demonstrate His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be righteous and declare righteous the one who has faith in Jesus” (Rom. 3:26). In Romans 4, Paul wrote that Abraham believed God and it was imputed unto him for righteousness. When we believe in Jesus, His righteousness is imputed unto us. For more on this, read Romans 4. One writer stresses that

“In crucifying Jesus, the Jewish people showed that they thought He was unrighteous, that only a wicked person would be hanged on a tree and thus be under God’S CURSE (Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13). But the Resurrection and the Ascension vindicated Jesus as God’S righteous Servant (Acts 3:14-15; Isa. 53:11). The Spirit convicts men of their faulty views of Jesus when the gospel with its stress on the Resurrection is proclaimed (1 Cor. 15:3-4)” [*Bible Knowledge Commentary*, QuickVerse Bible Library - after this, BKC].

I AM GOING TO THE FATHER. Jesus has stressed (John 14) that He came to do the will of the Father, that He was obedient to the will of the Father, and that He was going back to the Father to prepared a place for all who believe in Him. Here, he specifically states that He is going to the Father. On the third day after the crucifixion they would understand more about the Resurrection. Then they would witness the Ascension. When the Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost they would understand the significance of all that had transpired, because He would call to their minds the promises Jesus had made to them.

NO LONGER SEE ME. Robertson does not comment on the word righteousness, but he offers the following here: “With the bodily eyes and without the Holy Spirit they are unable to behold Jesus with the spiritual vision (John 14:19). Without Christ they lose the sense of righteousness as is seen in the ‘new morals’ (immorality, loose views of marriage, etc.)” [ATR].

16:11 - JUDGMENT. “...and about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.”

There are people who seem to believe they can pick and choose the elements of “religion” they want. They approach the “Christian religion” as they would approach a buffet at a restaurant. They want to choose those things that make them feel good, but reject anything they deem negative. In my youth, one often heard some people say, “I want to hear a preacher who will step on your toes!” Of course, if the pastor really did step on their toes they would either run that preacher off or find another church. They wanted to hear him blast their neighbor, or rant and rave against the sins of people who never came to church. One popular television personality says he does not preach repentance, “because I just want people to feel good.”

How do we respond when someone declares, “A loving God will not send anyone to hell”? We respond with the truth, and the truth is that God has gone to unbelievable lengths to provide forgiveness for our sins, and salvation from the consequences of those sins. He sent His own unique Son into the world and watched evil people neglect Him, mock Him, deny Him, and finally frame Him and accuse Him before ungodly people who would deny Him justice, beat Him, and finally crucify Him. God loves us enough to give His Son to die for us, so that if we believe in Him we will not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).

There is more. God reveals Himself to us. Francis Schaeffer’s first book was, *THE GOD WHO IS THERE*. His third book was, *HE IS THERE AND HE IS NOT SILENT*. In other words, the God who is there reveals Himself to us. The God who created me permits me to know Him, which is absolutely amazing. Even more amazing is the fact that He permits me to address him as my Father. In the Book of Psalms alone, there are something like 85 references to God’s “faithful love” for His people. How then, can a God who loves us that much condemn anyone to hell?

Of course the answer is that the God who loves us and seeks to redeem us is Holy. People sing of His love, write books about it, and preach about it. At the same time, the world is ignorant of His holiness. In fact, the church is, to a great extent, ignorant of what the holiness of God really means. God is holy, set apart, different from all the so-called gods men, inspired by demons, have conjured up, invented, or devised. He is absolute good, so He is qualified to state that no human being is good, nor can man produce the righteousness required of anyone who would stand in His presence. The word “holy” appears something like 660 times in the Holman Christian Standard Bible. In Genesis 2:3, God declared the Sabbath day a holy day. In Exodus 3:5, God declared that Moses was standing on holy ground when he stood in His presence. In Exodus 22:31, God declared Israel to be His holy people. In Exodus 26, God told Moses to hang a veil between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. Exodus and Leviticus are filled with references to the things that are Holy because they involve worship of, and service to God. In the Psalms, the writers sang of His holy name, His holy throne, His Holy Spirit, and His holy mountain. In Ps. 71:22, He is the Holy One of Israel. They had the Holy Scriptures to teach them of the Love of God, and they also had Psalm 106 to remind them of their unfaithfulness to Him from the very beginning. How could they not know of His holiness? How could they sing of His holiness and not love and obey Him?

A better question is how can people who possess numerous copies of His Holy Bible today not comprehend His holiness? If anyone in America does not have an Bible, and wants one, someone

will provide for him or her. The Gideons International give millions of Bibles to people. Various Bible Societies seek to place Bibles in the hands of those who need them. When this writer was serving on the Board of Trustees for LifeWay Christians Resources, assigned to the B & H Publishing Committee, the board established the Broadman and Holman Outreach International (BHOI) in order to make the Bible available to those who indicate a desire for a copy. My friend, Ken Stephens, who was president of B & H Publishing when I was on the board, was instrumental in getting the New Mandarin translation of the New Testament into China. Another friend, Bill Pace, spent seven years teaching and witnessing for Christ in China. I requested copies of Scripture in the new Mandarin translation and gave him hundreds of copies of the Gospel of John and several boxes of the complete New Testament so that he could share them with Chinese students, teachers, and friends.

Jesus promised that He would send the Holy Spirit, the Counselor, to convict sinners of sin, to convince to turn to Jesus for His righteousness, and to warn them of the judgment to come. You do not have to “find” Him, He finds you. He takes the initiative. No one comes to the Father except through the Son, in the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Jesus urges us in the Sermon on the Mount to: “Enter through the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the road is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who go through it. How narrow is the gate and difficult the road that leads to life, and few find it” (Matt 7:13-14). Yet, when the Gospel is preached many will reject God and His gift of eternal life. My long time friend Wayne Whiteside has been ministering to people on death row in Texas for years. More recently, he has begun working in Arkansas and Mississippi. He sent me the following update and gave me permission to use it here:

I've taken a few weeks off from prison visitation; been running this year and needed a bit of a break. Let me try and give you a report of recent trips: In early November, I was with Khristian Oliver during his last days. He knew the Lord and had really grown in grace and knowledge of our King. His parents are just wonderful people. I've spoken with them a few times since their son's death. They were very faithful in visiting their son. He was on the row for over 10 years and they visited him each week (a 4 hour trip one way). I would not be surprised to see them in the near future trying to help another inmate. Danielle Simpson died on November 18<sup>th</sup>. I had numerous visits with him. He did not listen and heed the warning about eternity. I believe this man was demon possessed. A friend of mine was with him on his last day. He lived a lie, repeated his lies to all who would listen, and died an unrepentant liar. There were no indications that he repented before he died. I tell you this story, because I want you to know that many of these men reject Christ. I never want you to just hear of the victory stories. There are many victory stories and I glory in the Lord concerning them. However, I grieve the ones who do not repent and receive Jesus. Several years ago I was with a very mean and manipulative man during his last day. I honestly do not know what else I would have told him; we looked at multiple passages of Scripture, I pleaded with him to come to Jesus, warned him about the terror of an eternity in hell during the numerous visits that I had with him. Still, he did not repent. He clung to a false religion. And I watched him as he was launched into eternity from that gurney. The discipleship with a Mississippi inmate is going very well. One of the inmates there has quit doing the Bible studies. I think he is being influenced by some who are around him. Please pray for him; his name is Ben. Much fruit still on the row in Arkansas. I am so happy that one of the men on the row there is sharing the Lord with an "ad. seg." inmate (administration segregation). The ad. seg. inmate is housed

above the death row inmate and they talk through the ventilation system. I have known this man on the row for years and he fears the Lord. He is very evangelistic. Pray for him; his name is Jim. And please pray for the other inmate; his name is Kenny. This coming year looks to be a busy one. Thank you for your prayers. I do not know how to express to you how much I appreciate them. I'm so grateful for safe travel; I've only had to flats in all these years. During this time, let us ponder the wonder of the truth---God sent His Son. Eternity is too long to be wrong! We owe all people the opportunity to hear the message of God's love in Christ! Let us all be on mission, Bro. Wayne

For those who reject the grace of God there is nothing left but the wrath of God. There is nothing in between. If we do not harden our hearts against the ministry of the Holy Spirit we may know Him personally and intimately. If we reject Him we will find ourselves condemned forever. To look your Creator in the face and say, "I don't want you" is a serious sin, and the judgment of God will be very severe, and there will be no appeal if we do not repent while there is time.

**16:12 - MANY THINGS.** *"I still have many things to tell you, but you can't bear them now."* Jesus had been teaching them for three years, and though He had perfect knowledge of Scripture, creation and maintenance of the world, redemption, physiological and psychological issues that impact human life, and perfect knowledge of the future, He could only teach them so much. However, to assume that He had all these things in mind here is to remove this statement from the context. He had just made a profound statement about the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the Counselor Whom He would send when He returned to the Father. He has just stated that the Counselor would "convict the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment" (John 16:8), and then He had offered a brief explanation (vv. 9-11).

**BEAR THEM.** He was capable of teaching them "many things" concerning the ministry of the Holy Spirit, but they were not capable of bearing them at that time. Did Jesus refer to the mysteries of the universe, the mysteries of Eschatology, Soteriology, or even Sanctification? Or did He mean that because they were so sinful they could not comprehend the truth? One writer states, "The disciples were not able to receive any **more** spiritual truth at that time. Their hearts were hardened, their concern was for their own preeminence in an earthly kingdom, so they saw no need for Jesus' death. Sorrow over His departure and dismay over the prophecy of a traitor among them, along with the prediction of their own desertion, rendered them insensitive to more spiritual truth" [BKC, bold in the original].

One can see why some assume this to be what Jesus had in mind, but it may help to pursue this a little further. Robertson explains that "The literal sense of *bastazô*, to bear, occurs in John 12:6. For the figurative as here see Acts 15:10. The untaught cannot get the full benefit of teaching (1Co 3:1; Heb 5:11-14). The progressive nature of revelation is a necessity" [ATR]. While we can agree that the disciples had shown a concern for "their own preeminence in an earthly kingdom", we can also appreciate the fact that some knowledge is progressive in nature. It is also true that the human mind can comprehend only so much, and this is where the ministry of the Counselor is essential. People who have no understanding of Christianity or the Word of God often attack the Bible and Christian values with the arguments of the world when they have only a limited ability to understand either, as Paul explained in his First Epistle to the Corinthian church. There are things that are only spiritually discerned, and no one can understand them apart from the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Clarke offered

this comment:

“In illustration of these three points, Christ had many things to say; but he found that his disciples could only bear general truths; yet, in saying what he did, he sowed the seeds of the whole system of theological knowledge, and heavenly wisdom, which the Holy Spirit of this truth afterwards watered and ripened into a glorious harvest of light and salvation, by the ministry of the apostles. Dr. Lightfoot supposes that the things which the apostles could not bear now were such as these:

1. The institution of the Christian Sabbath, and the abolition of the Jewish.
2. The rejection of the whole Jewish nation, at the very time in which they expected to be set up and established for ever.
3. The entire change of the whole Mosaic dispensation, and the bringing the Gentiles into the Church of God” [CLARKE].

Clarke’s second point (above) will raise questions in some quarters. Did God reject the nation of Israel totally and completely? Will He not honor His commitment to the nation of Israel? Do prophecies concerning Israel have no Eschatological implications? Some may point to the curse Jesus placed on the fig tree as proof that God rejected Israel: “He said to it, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again!” (Mark 11:14). Mark continues the narrative: “Early in the morning, as they were passing by, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots up. Then Peter remembered and said to Him, ‘Rabbi, look! The fig tree that You cursed is withered’” (Mark 11:20-21). Since the fig tree (like the vine) is a symbol for Israel, some people have assumed that this curse on the fig tree means that Jesus placed a curse on the nation of Israel. If that were so, one might look to other passages for proof that this was the case. Many reject that claim, holding to the eternal nature of the promises God made to Abraham concerning Israel. Others believe that when Jesus placed the curse on the fig tree (and its withering in response) He was making the statement that from that time forth His plan to reach out to the world with the Gospel of hope and redemption would shift from national Israel to the church (“spiritual Israel”). The Great Commission was given to the church, not to national Israel. Sadly, some professing Christians have done little more to take the Gospel to the lost world than national Israel.

16:13 - SPIRIT OF TRUTH. *“When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth. For He will not speak on His own, but He will speak whatever He hears. He will also declare to you what is to come.”* The NASB begins the verse with “but”, and the NKJV begins it with “but”. Robertson explains that the verse begins with (de), “One of the most delicate and difficult particles to translate, varying from ‘and’ to ‘but’ [ATR]. I have been somewhat biased in favor of the HCSB since my first meeting of the Broadman and Holman Committee, as a member of the Board of Trustees for LifeWay Christian Resource. In that meeting, Dr. Ed. Blum, the General Editor, met with us to answer questions about the new translation we were considering. After that meeting our committee recommended to the entire board in a plenary session that we go forward with the



translation. I received copies of various books of the Bible from B & H Publishing as they were completed and I had the privilege of observing the process and reading the product as it progressed, so it should not be surprising that I should like this translation: “When the Spirit of truth comes...” This is not the first time the Counselor is referred to as the Spirit of truth. Jesus had promised: “When the Counselor comes, the One I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father—He will testify about Me. You also will testify, because you have been with Me from the beginning” (John 15:26-27). They are going to need the truth, as will all believers of all ages, and Jesus would return to the Father and send the Holy Spirit to indwell each believer to provide power (Acts 1:8) all believers need to live the Christians life, to be His witnesses, and to understand “all the truth.”

**HE WILL GUIDE YOU.** We should never use the word “it” when we refer to the Third Person of the Trinity, as some who want to get “it” so they can speak in another tongue (or an unknown tongue). One teenager tried to explain what his church teaches about salvation: “You see, we believe you have to speak in tongues in order to be saved, and I haven’t spoken in tongues.” How sad! An elderly man confided in a retired pastor, “I am not sure I am saved. My church teaches that you have to speak in tongues to be saved.” Anyone who wants to understand the true ministry of the “Spirit of truth” should begin right here. When you are saved, you are indwelt with the Holy Spirit, the “Spirit of truth”, who “will guide you.” He is our Guide, never to be confused with the so-called “spirit guide” of New Age mis-guidance.

The Holy Spirit will convict the lost person of his need for Jesus Christ. A university student saw my Mississippi College T-shirt at the health club and said, “Mississippi College. Did you go there?” He went on to tell me he had visited the Mississippi College School of Law. The young man then told me that his girl friend had recently broken up with him, and he was sitting alone on December 23, 2009, so he picked up a Bible and began reading it. He said, “I went to church when I was growing up, but we didn’t take it seriously. I became an atheist, and then a deist, but I was saved December 23.” The Holy Spirit was convicting him of sin, and guiding him to the Scripture he needed to understand his lost condition, and God provision for His salvation.

The Holy Spirit will guide the saved person so that he might grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2Peter 3:18). The Spirit of truth guides our study of the Scripture so that we may understand it. He then guides us so that we will know how to make an application of what we know. There are many professing believers who see nothing wrong with immodest dress, viewing “R” rated movies, taking the Lord’s Day for personal pleasure or profit, or drinking alcoholic beverages (in moderation, of course). I cannot do that. In the first place, I signed a pledge when I was thirteen years old that I would never consume, sell, or serve an alcoholic beverage. I would be lying or violating that pledge if I did drink, serve, or sell an alcoholic beverage. Yes, I know I was only thirteen years old, but even at that age, I understood a lot about the effects of alcoholic beverages on individuals and their families.

I grew up in Mississippi when it was a dry state - and people everywhere joked about it: “They claim to be a dry state but anyone can get liquor who wants it.” While it was true that those who wanted it

could find “boot-leg” whiskey, beer, or home-brew, I never walked into a grocery store and saw beer, wine, and whiskey on a shelf in my entire life unless I was out of state. I never saw a liquor store in my home state. It was not served in restaurants, at picnics, or ball games. Respectable men and women did not buy alcoholic beverages in public places. There was a stigma associated with it that those living in other places would not fully understand. I moved from Mississippi to Louisiana and transferred my automobile insurance coverage - same company, same coverage - to Louisiana, and learned that I would be paying two and one-half times what I had paid in Mississippi.

Many people would assume that I am simply naive, since I grew up the way I did. I have a collage of pictures made by my great Aunt Deylar Cofer in the 1920s in Yalobusha County, Mississippi. She was an exceptional photographer, who developed her own pictures (from glass negatives!). One picture is a shot of a fully operational whiskey still. One man in that picture made a small fortune in timber, but he obviously wanted more. He didn’t drink, but he made and sold it on a large scale. One can take that picture and see the damage done to generations of relatives. The comment made about one family might well apply to others: “Her parents made her life a living hell.” Lives, over the next three generations were destroyed by alcoholic beverages.

I spent many hours with prisoners in the Hinds County Jail, Jackson, MS, and the Mississippi State Penitentiary. On one visit, I asked the man who was everyone’s hero at Parchman if he agreed with a recent study that stated that alcohol was involved in 94.6% of the cases in which a person was convicted of a crime. He said, “It’s higher than that. It’s involved in all of them.” That, I am sure, was an overstatement. I realize that today drugs are also a major concern, but beer and liquor are the gateway drug for many people. One teenager explained that he like to take certain drugs to get a “rush” and then drink beer to keep a “buzz”.

The Holy Spirit convicts us, not only about the things we should avoid, but He convinces us of the things we should do for the glory of the Lord. When we submit ourselves to Him, He will conform us to the image of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29). That, to me, is a good working definition of Sanctification: being conformed “to the image of Jesus Christ.” Paul wrote to the church at Philippi, “Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5). When you begin to think like Jesus you will begin to act like Jesus.

**HE WILL SPEAK.** If you want to understand the Person and work of the Holy Spirit, go to the Scripture which He inspired, and learn from the Spirit of truth. Jesus said, “For He will not speak on His own, but He will speak whatever He hears.” The Holy Spirit came from the Father, to reveal the Son, and to focus out attention on the message the Father wants us to understand. There is never a time when the Holy Spirit draws attention to Himself. He directs us to the Father through the Son. We pray to the Father, in the name of (Person of) the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit. If we pray to the Holy Spirit instead of the Father, have we missed this point? It may pay us to consider that question.

**WHAT IS TO COME.** Jesus said, “He will also declare to you what is to come.” In the first place, Jesus was talking to His eleven faithful disciples concerning events that about to begin happening

that very night. He would be arrested, tried illegally, charged and convicted with absolutely no real evidence, brutally treated, and finally crucified between two thieves. The disciples would be defeated, despondent, desperate. Then, the resurrected Christ would appear to them to reassure them and to promise them that He would return to the Father and send the Counselor, who would come to reveal the mysteries of which He had spoken.

16:14 - GLORIFY ME. *“He will glorify Me, because He will take from what is Mine and declare it to you.”* There! Jesus states it as simply as it can be stated. **The Holy Spirit’s ministry is to glorify Jesus Christ.** His ministry is not to focus our attention upon Himself, but to lead us to the Father through the Son. If He indwells the believer to glorify Christ, what should the believer be doing? If he is obedient to the Holy Spirit he will glorify Christ. He will seek to glorify Him in all places and in all circumstances. Many people who claim to be Christians do not hesitate to pull their family out of church for even the flimsiest of excuses. It doesn’t take much effort on the part of friends to persuade some professing Christians that there is nothing wrong with devoting every Sunday during football season to their favorite team or teams. I live in north Louisiana and a lot of people in the area drive to Baton Rouge on Friday, go to the LSU football game on Saturday night, and drive home on Sunday. There is nothing wrong with driving to Baton Rouge, or going to an LSU football game. But how does one glorify Jesus Christ with an empty pew in his or her home church on Sunday?

Many of those same people drive to New Orleans to see the Saints play. This happens all over the country, as people follow their favorite team, or teams. I realized at one point that while I did not miss church services to attend football games, I was not completely innocent. I would go home from church and watch any sport that was on television that day. I watched practically every sport that was televised. Some would argue that there is nothing wrong with that, but it might depend upon the time and emphasis one places upon it. If we look forward to Sunday with greater anticipation and enthusiasm for a football game than a Sunday School class and worship service, has that become idolatry of us? Paul wrote to the Colossians, “Therefore, put to death whatever in you is worldly: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry” (Col 3:5). Anything you let come between yourself and the Lord is idolatry.

There are a lot worse things we can do than watch football, but we must also remember that Sunday is called the Lord’s Day for a reason. Sunday is a holy day and to keep it as a holy Day is to acknowledge the fact that Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath (Matt. 12:8). In the same way, the tithe is the Lord’s. But one may give ten percent of his income to the Lord and then spend another ten percent on worldly things, such as alcohol, gambling, or questionable entertainment. We are told to bring the tithe to the storehouse, the church, but the Christians must understand that we are held accountable for the way we spend the rest of our money. If it does not glorify the Lord it is sin.

BECAUSE. Jesus explained how the Holy Spirit glorifies Him: “because He will take from what is Mine and declare it to you.” The Holy Spirit will convict us of the fact that we should glorify Jesus Christ in all things, whether it is our work, recreation, the Lord’s Day, the Lord’s tithe, or personal relationships. We must seek to glorify Jesus at church, but you cannot do that if you do not glorify

Him in your home.

My wife has spent years teaching sixth and seventh graders in a public school, and she has taught the same age group in Sunday School for just as long, or longer. She can tell you that when parents promise their children that as soon as the worship service is over they will go to little league practice, to visit friends, or to a movie, some of them are only with them in body. Their mind is on what will happen as soon as they get out of church. Sadly, many of them know their parents will pick them up as soon as Sunday School is over so they can go fishing or hunting. All of those things are wholesome when Christians participate in them in a way that allows them to glorify the Lord without violating His command to remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy.

One of my close friends, a dedicated Christian and deacon today, once told me that when he was a young man he loved to hunt, and he would go to Sunday School and worship service and then rush home for a quick lunch and then rush off to the place where he was going to hunt that day. He said, "I would tell people I was in church - but I know where my mind was."

One mother expressed concern that her husband's family would want to take her children out of church to spend week-ends with them in their new camp house two hours away. It was my understanding that the grandparents encouraged their grandchildren to be faithful to their church. That mother, however, like many other church members, pulled her son out of church when he made a "traveling team" in baseball. For years, the family drove their son to some city in a two or three state area where he was scheduled to play baseball. It is an honor to be chosen to play on a traveling team, but it is not honorable to dishonor the Lord of the Sabbath, and parents are going to answer for encouraging their children to violate the Lord's Day, the Lord's Name, the Lord's tithe, or the command to assemble together to worship Him. One may not honor the Lord by sitting on their hands at home, but they must be careful to lead the entire family to glorify Him. Shouting, singing praise songs, and swaying to the music at church before heading to the restaurant and to the movie on Sunday may not glorify Jesus Christ. Worshiping, studying His Word and making an application of it in the power of the Holy Spirit does honor Him.

16:15 - EVERYTHING THE FATHER HAS. *"Everything the Father has is Mine. This is why I told you that He takes from what is Mine and will declare it to you."* Wow! This is amazing. In all eternity, only one Person could make that statement and that is the Son of God. In other volumes in this series on the Gospel According to John, this writer has reminded the reader that we must continually go back to the Prologue, and then look to the stated purpose of the Fourth Gospel in order to get the full meaning. Remember that this Gospel is not the product of the mind of the Apostle John, it is the product of the mind of the Holy Spirit. With that in mind, recall the opening verse: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). The Prologue to the Gospel According to John destroys every myth, false god, and false religion in history. Now, look at the stated purpose of this Gospel: "Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of His disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may believe Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and by believing you may have life in His name." (John 20:30-31).

How can we explain the claim that everything the Father has belongs to the Son as well? John has answer that question in the Prologue: “He was with God in the beginning. All things were created through Him, and apart from Him not one thing was created that has been created. Life was in Him, and that life was the light of men” (John 1:2-4). That which belongs to the Father belongs to the Son by right of creation, sustenance, identity and sovereignty. The Father and the Son are One, and the Third Person of the Trinity is the One who inspired the writing of these words. The Psalmist wrote: “for every animal of the forest is Mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird of the mountains, and the creatures of the field are Mine” (Ps. 50:10-11).

That which belongs to the Father belongs to the Son, and that does not end with the cattle on a thousand hills, or the animals of the forest. It is amazing how some environmentalists seem determined to protect God’s creation from those whom the Lord gave responsibility for their protection and for their use. Christians should be the best stewards of God’s creation in the world, but that is not always the case. It is one thing to hunt animals legally for food, or even for recreation, yet another to slaughter animals simply to satisfy the lust for killing them. A fellow pastor once invited me to go hunting with one of his church members. My friend and I had met at an agreed upon time and we had started back to the car when we heard a gunshot. On the way back we saw a dead doe near our path. It was a fresh kill. When we got back to the car my friend asked if either of them had heard a shot. His church member said, “We got one shot, but missed him.” That is just one form of abuse, but there is a difference between use and abuse.

Mutual ownership between the Father and the Son does not end with the cattle on a thousand hills or the animals in the forest. When one is saved by the grace of God he or she becomes the property of God. He is bought with a price, and that price is the blood of Christ. This is the reason Dr. Ed Blum, the General Editor of the Holman Christian Standard Bible, explained at lunch one day at my table that the translators of the new word for word translation of the Bible used the word “slave” rather than the traditional translation, “servant”. The translators felt that the world slave more accurately translated the Greek, and portrays the right relationship between the believer and the Master. He explained, “When you become a Christian you belong to Him. You are bought with a price.” For those who question that, we might remind ourselves that slavery was a good metaphor at the time because there were sixty million slaves in the Roman Empire.

**DECLARE IT.** Jesus explains, “This is why I told you that He takes from what is Mine and will declare it to you.” The Holy Spirit came to earth to indwell and empower believers so that they might glorify Jesus Christ. He will never lead anyone to violate the Word of God or the will of Jesus Christ. He came to earth to declare the will and purpose of God. Therefore, anyone who says that the Holy Spirit told them to do something that violates Scripture is deceived, and may be deceiving others. The New Commentary on the Whole Bible has a fitting summary of verses 13, 14, and 15. Those verses:

“display a sublime picture of the inner workings of the three members of the

Godhead, and special detail is given to describe the Spirit's function of conveying the Father and the Son to the believers, and of leading the believers into the Son and the Father. Here the Spirit is seen in full submission to and in harmony with the Son and the Father. He does not act or speak from himself; nothing originates from him, for all comes from the Son and all is done to glorify the Son. Just as the Son did not do anything from himself, but only that which he heard and received from the Father (see 5:19, 30; 8:28, 38; 14:10, 24), so the Spirit never acts independently from the Son. The Spirit appropriates the aggregate totality of Christ's person and reveals it, item by item, to the believers. Yet in revealing Christ (and all that he is) the Spirit is actually revealing the Father, because all that Christ has is the Father's. Thus, the Spirit reveals the Son, who, in turn, expresses the Father” [NCWB].

The author of the material in the New American Commentary outlines the material on the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel like this:

The First Spirit Statement: The Coming of the Paraclete (14:15-17)

The Second Paraclete Statement: Interpreter of Jesus (14:25-31)

The Third Paraclete Statement: Witness in Persecution (15:26-16:4a)

The Fourth Paraclete Statement: Counselor and Judge (16:4b-11)

The Fifth Spirit Statement: Authentic Guide (16:12-15) [NAC]

APPLICATION: In 1 Corinthians 2:6-16, Paul explains something of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in helping us to understand spiritual things. A lost person may read the Bible and remember certain historical events, people, and lessons, but there are things in the Christian life no lost person can understand for the simple reason that they are spiritually discerned. Only one who has been indwelt by the Holy Spirit (and filled with the Holy Spirit) can discern the deeper things of the inspired Word. A lost person can understand the rules set forth in the Ten Commandments, but if he rejects Jesus Christ he cannot possibly understand the deeper significance of the Two Great Commandments. The deeper things of the Word of God are missed by the lost person.

Sadly, some non-Christians assume they know more about the Bible than a true believer. Just as sad is the fact that many who profess to be Christians may know less about the Bible than a lost person who loves to confront believers with questions he believes disproves the Bible. Years ago, a professional person at a health club in Jackson, Mississippi, was arrogantly challenging the Bible to a retired pastor. I normally do not interfere in a conversation like that, but since the retired pastor was nodding and smiling as though he had never heard that before, I stepped over and said to the man who was challenging the Bible, “You will find that concept in the book, *From Eternity to Eternity*, by a German writer, Eric Sauer. I mentioned the man's thesis and offered a Biblical perspective.

More recently, while I was getting ready to leave my health club in Monroe, Louisiana, I was talking with a man across the dressing room from me. At one point, a younger man cut in: “The Gospel of John is simple? I never thought John was simple!” I explained that it is especially deep, but its basic message is simple. I was thinking of passages like John 3:16, which young children memorize and

quote.

The man began to attack the Bible, using history as the test by which he would prove that the Bible was simply a matter of “faith”. He claimed that only Luke and Acts have any historical value. The simple truth, as I tried to point out, is that the Bible is accurate when it speaks to historical issues. I would assume that this man may have tried this argument on many others, because he made a number of claims that he believes disproves the Bible. I mentioned a number of historical references, and pointed out that many of the attacks made by non-believers over the years have been disproved. History must be continually revised, but the Bible needs no revision. This young man attacked the claims that Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible. I offered some arguments for the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, but he said, “There is NO WAY Moses could have written those books. That’s as clear as the nose on your face.” What was clear as the nose on my face was that this man had probably been watching the History Channel!

In the Wilderness, God told Moses to write things in the book. Joshua said that whatever God told Moses to write in the book, that’s what we did. I offered a number of answers, but I knew he was not going to believe anything I said. Why? There are certain things that are spiritually discerned. Once we are indwelt with the Holy Spirit, and filled with the Spirit, He will reveal things to us we can never discover or discern on our own, as Paul explains in his First Corinthians.

While I was talking with the young man at the health club I was conscious of the attention being given to our debate by a local Assembly of God pastor. Finally, he cut in and said, “I read my Bible every day!” I welcomed his comment, and since he is an acquaintance I had anticipated a comment from him. I appreciate the fact that he reads his Bible and trusts the Lord to help him to understand it, and later told him so, but his answer only adds fuel to the fire for someone like this young man. He had already stated that the Bible was a matter of “faith”, and I agreed that the only way anyone will ever be saved is by through faith. His reaction to that surprised me. He changed the subject.

I tried to talk with the man about the problem of historical revisionism, and he assured me he deals with that all the time. If that man will read the Bible with an open heart and open mind, the Holy Spirit will reveal divine truth to him. The Scripture inspired the Scripture and He illuminates the hearts of believers so they can understand it and apply it in their daily life. If that person is not indwelt and filled with the Holy Spirit, there are divine truths he can never grasp. That is by divine plan, and it is no reflection on the intelligence of the reader.

## From Sorrow to Joy

16:16 - A LITTLE WHILE. *“A little while and you will no longer see Me; again a little while and you will see Me.”* Their grief would be real and it would run deep. However, their intense sorrow would be for only “a little while.”

YOU WILL SEE ME. They would not see Him for three days, but after that time they would experience a joy like nothing else the world had ever known. They would see the risen Christ.

16:17 - SOME OF HIS DISCIPLES. “Therefore some of His disciples said to one another, ‘What is this He tells us: ‘A little while and you will not see Me; again a little while and you will see Me’; and, ‘because I am going to the Father?’” Is it possible that Jesus, after teaching these eleven apostles for three years is about to leave them confused? Has He failed them? Obviously, some of the disciples were confused. If it had been important for us to know which ones, the Holy Spirit would have seen to it that this information was revealed here. Those who have dealt with families in a time of grief have seen some family member make an effort to be strong for other family members at the visitation, only to need their comfort and encouragement at the funeral the next day.

All it takes is a word or a memory to come to mind to awaken the grief anew. If believers deal with grief in this day, after the Resurrection, and after the coming of the Holy Spirit to help us through those times, think how it must have been for Jesus’ disciples.

Jesus had begun the Farewell Discourse by urging them to not let their hearts be troubled, but clearly now they are confused about the time interval. “The words **they kept asking** (Gr. imperf. tense) indicate that considerable dialogue took place among the disciples without their arriving at an answer. They could not reconcile Jesus’ statements because He said: (a) **In a short time** they would not **see** Him, (b) they *would see* Him, and (c) He was **going to the Father**. Only His death, resurrection, post-resurrection ministry, and Ascension would make it all clear” [BKC, bold in the original].

A LITTLE WHILE. Jesus had just said, “A little while and you will not see Me; again a little while and you will see Me’; and, ‘because I am going to the Father?’” They immediately began discussing what he meant by that statement. They were clearly confused, but Jesus knew exactly where they were in their training, and He knew what it would take to reconcile all that He had taught them. He had promised that he would send the Holy Spirit to guide them, and to call to their remembrance the things He had taught them. The Holy Spirit miraculously inspired the writing of the Scripture, He has miraculously preserved it, and He miraculously illuminates the hearts of believers so that they may understand how to apply it.

We do not be able to explain why it is that a large number of lost people can hear the Gospel preached, but only a few of them are convicted of sin, repent, and profess their faith in Jesus Christ, but we can be sure the Holy Spirit knows exactly what is going on in each person’s heart. Some have deliberately closed their eyes to the truth so long that they are spiritually blind. Only He knows why some professing believers are convicted of sin when they violate certain commandments, while others see nothing wrong with it. Some people who profess to be Christians see nothing wrong with missing worship services to go to see their favorite football team play on Sunday. Others see nothing wrong with leaving after Sunday School to meet family or friends so they can watch the Super Bowl together. They miss both worship services and party all day long on the Lord’s Day, and never see anything wrong with that. Some bet on games, or go to casinos to gamble, and see nothing wrong with it, while others are convicted of the fact that they would be sinning if they did that. The Holy Spirit is guiding those who are responsive, but He is not guiding those who are spiritually blind.

ILLUSTRATION. Last Sunday morning, as I rewrite and correct notes on this chapter, a man came



to see me and asked to talk with me. He had actually asked our deacon chairman to ask me to talk with him. He is a big, strong 48 year old man who acknowledges himself to be a “tough” man who fights his own battles and stands up for his family and friends. During the Sunday School hour this man was reduced to tears by the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, who had used the man’s college aged son to witness to him the day before. The Holy Spirit had convicted him during a funeral service before his son began talking with him. As we looked at Scripture and prayed, this man trusted Jesus Christ to save him. Tears literally dripped from this man’s face faster than he could wipe them away. I held up the celebration of the Lord’s Supper and gave an invitation to allow him to make his public profession of faith. Immediately after the observation of the Lord’s Supper, I asked him to come forward so our people could celebrate with him.

Saturday evening, February 27, 2010, I sent the following note to my brother-in-law, Jimmy Furr, who in turn asked me to send it to the Louisiana Baptist Convention Evangelism Director Wayne Jenkins, and to the North American Mission Board, for whom he worked for 12 years before becoming a Director of Missions in the Huntingdon, Tennessee area. Here is that note:

“This morning the phone rang and when I answered it I heard this little boy's voice: ‘Brother Johnny, can we come up and talk with you?’ I expected the little boy and his mother to come to my study around 11:00 A.M. I was surprised to see the little boy, his mother, his younger brother, and then his dad.

“After they were seated, they looked to Brock and I asked him if he had something he wanted to say. He told me he did, so I asked him to move over closer to me and I opened the Bible and we looked at Scripture and then I we prayed and he asked the Lord to forgive his sin and give him eternal life.

“I talked with Brock about the Lord’s promise to bless him and protect him. He holds us in His hands, we do not hold him in our hands. After we talked about baptism his mother took Brock’s little brother Blake to the restroom and then the father asked them all to go out to the car and wait for him. He told me then that he wanted to talk with me.

“Last Sunday, a big, hard working man sat in my study with tears dripping from his face after he had asked the Lord to save him. This morning, I looked into the face of a rather shy, and much bigger man, as he mopped tears from his face. He said, “I want to make a profession of faith.” If he hadn’t lost about one hundred pounds I don't know if we could both get into the baptistry!

“He had told me before that he knew he was saved, but he had never made a profession of faith. He told me that Brock had brought some material in from the Mission Fair last night and he had been reading it. Brock got up this morning and began looking at it again, and he must have been talking with his mother. The father came under conviction when he saw that his son was under conviction. Then the devil would tell him that he really didn't have to do anything today. He could wait. He battled back and forth until he finally decided to come with his son to talk with me.

“He also wanted to tell me about the battle he had been going through for years. It was obvious that the Holy Spirit was convicting him, but Satan was throwing roadblocks in his path. He told me he didn't know how to say what he wanted to say. He made several attempts and stopped to say that he didn't how to begin. Finally, I asked him, “Is it that you were afraid you couldn't live up to it? Were you afraid that if you didn't ‘live up to it’ someone would laugh at you?” He said, “That’s exactly it!” I assured him that he cannot live up to it, but the Lord puts His Holy Spirit in us to empower us, to guide us, and to help us make an application of His Word in our daily life.

“I have heard many men say “I’m afraid I can’t live up to it”, but I have never heard a woman say that, that I can recall. I mentioned this to a young lady recently and she said, “We know we can’t live up to it!” Women do not have to deal with the male ego. The Holy Spirit not only knows how to deal with men’s fears, He knows how to reach a woman’s heart.”

Both of these men acknowledged an on going “battle” with Satan. Now they both know that the Holy Spirit was answering every objection the devil gave them to reject Jesus Christ, and if they didn't want to do that they could “just put it off for a little while”. This is the ministry of the Holy Spirit in reaching lost people.

16:18 - A LITTLE WHILE. *“They said, “What is this He is saying, ‘A little while’? We don’t know what He’s talking about!”* They continued to discuss among themselves what Jesus had meant, but they came up with no answer that would reconcile all He had said to them. The eleven disciples are faced with a dilemma. Jesus has been teaching them, but they were still confused.

16:19 - JESUS KNEW. *“Jesus knew they wanted to question Him, so He said to them, ‘Are you asking one another about what I said, ‘A little while and you will not see Me; again a little while and you will see Me’?”* “Their embarrassment was manifest after four inquiries already (Peter, Thomas, Philip, Judas). So Jesus takes the initiative” [ATR]. He will explain certain things to them, but the main thing He must do to help them understand all He had been teaching them tell them he must die before a large crowd of witnesses, be buried, rise on the third day, appear to them numerous times, ascend to the Father, and then send the Holy Spirit to call to their minds the things He has taught them. Through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, a mix of simple, uneducated fishermen, and other Galileans, would soon be the leading theologians in the world. They would have the answer to these questions.

16:20 - WEEP AND WAIL. *“ I assure you: You will weep and wail, but the world will rejoice. You will become sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn to joy.”* Understanding both their present confusion and their coming grief, Jesus continues to reassure them and prepare them for that which is about to happen. They would “weep and “wail.” Robertson notes that both words are used of the loud lamentations common in the east. Vincent, commenting on the three words here, weep, wail, and become sorrowful, notes that the last is the more general in meaning, “expressing every species

of pain, of body or of soul, and not necessarily the outward manifestation of sorrow. Both the other words (klaiô and thrêneô) denote audible expressions of grief.” The latter “ marks the more formal expression. It means to utter a dirge over the dead” [VINCENT].

Most pastors who have counseled people who have lost loved ones have seen both silent weeping and weeping that was not so silent. Occasionally, one hears loud wailing, but when the family has had prayer with the pastors, and gone to the visitation or wake, they have come to grips with their experience with the grief. At the close of the service, when the casket is open, the family watches friends walk by for the final viewing of the deceased, and then the funeral director invites the immediate family to go to the open casket. Sometimes, those who had been comforted break down again. Some will weep silently. The pastor sees tears in their eyes. Others may look into the casket and realize they will never see that face again and break down. The pastor will often step close enough to rest his hand on an arm and offer a word of comfort and encouragement. They may go through a similar experience at the cemetery, but since friends and the family do not pass by an open casket the grief does not seem as intense.

THE WORLD WILL REJOICE. The “world” denotes wicked men who are under the influence of the prince of this world. “The term world is frequently used in this sense. See John 16:8. It refers particularly, here, to the Jews who sought his death, and who would rejoice that their object was obtained” [BARNES]. The prince of this world, Satan, would orchestrate a celebration of the brutal death of Jesus of Nazareth. The Pharisees and Sadducees would wear smug expressions showing their approval of His death. There would be rejoicing among the rulers of the Jews, and their followers would be shouting insults even as Jesus was hanging from the cross.

YOUR SORROW WILL TURN TO JOY. The women on the way to the tomb of Jesus (Luke 23:27) were weeping in deep sorrow, but left the open tomb rejoicing. Picture Mary Magdalene before the open tomb (John 20:11), and then picture her when she sees the risen Lord (John 20:14-16). Her sorrow turned to joy. The apostles would soon see their sorrow turn to joy when Jesus appeared to them. “His resurrection and the Spirit’s work of interpretation would enable them to know that He had to die so that they could have forgiveness of sins. Later the church would rejoice in His death (cf. 1 Cor. 1:23; 2:2)” [BKC].

16:21 - WHEN A WOMAN IS IN LABOR. “*When a woman is in labor she has pain because her time has come. But when she has given birth to a child, she no longer remembers the suffering because of the joy that a person has been born into the world.*” What an appropriate illustration! A young wife is excited when she know she is pregnant, she celebrates with her husband, and they share the news with family and friends. She goes through months of discomfort, and then she goes to the hospital when she goes into labor. The labor pains are intense, but the moment the baby is born she forgets the pain. The pain is forgotten the moment the mother sees her baby, holds him or her in her arms, looks into his or her eyes, looks at his little mouth, ears, hair, hands and feet. If at that moment someone should step up and ask, “How can you be so happy with him? What about all the pain he caused you?” One can imagine that young mother looking at that visitor as if he had just asked the most foolish question she has ever heard. Her expression says, “What pain?!”

During the Super Bowl between the New Orleans Saints and the Indianapolis Colts on Sunday, February 7, 2010, there were many, many commercials, but the most controversial one featured Florida quarterback Tim Tebow and his mother Pam. It was a very mild statement about life, without mentioning abortion, but many of the so-called “pro-choice” people went ballistic. Tim’s parents were missionaries to the Philippines when Pam became pregnant. A doctor discovered some problem and recommended an abortion. Pam refused and later gave birth to one of the most outstanding quarterbacks the world has ever seen on the college level. Millions of people watched as a smiling mother enjoyed a hug from her son. The pain of childbirth had long since given way to the joy of her relationship with her son.

One of the most moving pictures from that Super Bowl was the shot of the New Orleans Saints quarterback Drew Brees, who stood for a long time holding his one year old son before the world. Occasionally, the Most Valuable Player of the Super Bowl would look at his little son and pick up his hand and kiss it. He would then look at his son and lean forward and kiss him, with tears of joy in his eyes. There is absolute joy in the eyes and smile of Drew Brees as he looks at his little son. I remember wondering what we would see if the cameras could search out that baby’s mother, Mrs. Drew Brees. I doubt that she would be thinking, “I remember the pain you caused me!” I feel sure she was rejoicing in the Saints’ victory, but the deep joy was in watching her husband loving their little boy.

**16:22 - SORROW NOW.** *“So you also have sorrow now. But I will see you again. Your hearts will rejoice, and no one will rob you of your joy.”* These disciples were about to enter “the process of pain (your time of grief), but the light of joy was just ahead. When they saw Him after His resurrection, their joy erupted—JOY that will never end since He died to sin once but now lives forever (cf. Rom. 6:9-10; Luke 24:33-52; Heb. 7:24-25)” [BKC]. They were about to be shocked to the core of their being, but following His resurrection and appearances they would know joy without end.

**I WILL SEE YOU AGAIN.** This is not the first time Jesus promises to see them again, “In verses John 16:16, 19 Jesus had said “you shall see Me”, “but here we have one more blessed promise, ‘I shall see you, ‘showing ‘that we are the objects of God’s regard’ (Westcott)” [ATR]. This promise is made to those eleven apostles, but that does not mean that the entire Farewell Address is limited to these eleven. He returned to His Father’s house to prepare a place for all true believers.

**AND NO ONE WILL ROB YOU OF YOUR JOY.** Their world was about to be turned upside down. He would be arrested, unfairly tried and condemned, sentenced, and crucified. However, Jesus promised, “... I will see you again. Your hearts will rejoice, and no one will rob you of your joy.” Looking back on the scene from our perspective one wonders how these disciples could have been so ignorant, or blind, that they could not comprehend what Jesus was saying. The great shame is that most people who profess to be Christians today, despite all the evidence we have, often give only a nod of agreement to account of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Lord has given us two gifts those early disciples did not have at that moment. We have the complete New Testament, and we have the Holy Spirit to guide our studies, illuminate our hearts so we can understand the Word, and help us with the application of the message. This verse promises a joy which can never be taken from true believers, just as it promised a permanent joy to those early

followers of Christ.

“This verse represents the typical application of a parabolic message to the listener or reader. ‘So with you’ followed immediately by the emphatic ‘now’ (lit. ‘therefore now’) leaves no question that the listener/reader is being addressed with an important message for the present situation. Then the Greek construction sets in bold relief the alternatives in the message. On the one hand the disciples are currently experiencing ‘grief’ (lypen), while on the other hand Jesus promised ‘I will see you again.’ The shift in the focus from the disciples to Jesus is significant. It should remind readers that they do not pull themselves up by their own bootstraps. The gaining of hope is not ultimately a result of our own efforts. Transforming hope comes because of divine action.

The resulting action is literally expressed by the statement that ‘your hearts will rejoice.’ For the Hebrew/Jewish writers, who loved to think in pictorial words, the heart was frequently regarded as the seat of the will (see Paul's threefold analysis of the fallen human person in Rom 1:24, 26,28; cf. Gen 6:5-6; Pss 7:10; 10:6-17; 14:1). Thus the transforming of the heart is regarded as crucial in gaining wholeness or salvation (cf. Jer 31:33; Ezek 11:19; 36:26). Here transformation is exemplified in the rejoicing heart.

It is also significant to remember that the rejoicing heart could be seen as a sign of the messianic era for Isaiah (Isa 66:14). Here this Johannine verse seems to suggest a similar understanding when it points to the fact that with the coming of the resurrection of Jesus ‘no one will take away your joy.’ Joy, then, is multidimensional and can have eschatological overtones. It also clearly reminds us that there are those who would try to scuttle the disciples' joy. The resurrection brings the beginning of a new age” [NAC].

16:23 - IN THAT DAY. *“In that day you will not ask Me anything. “I assure you: Anything you ask the Father in My name, He will give you.”* That day refers to the time after His death, resurrection, and ascension, and the coming of the Holy Spirit.

YOU WILL NOT ASK ME. Does Jesus mean that He will not be present with them after the Ascension, or is He telling them that after His departure to return to the Father they would not pray directly to Him? He answers that with a strong affirmation: “I assure you: Anything you ask the Father in My name, He will give you.” “Christ’s instruction to begin praying directly to the Father in Jesus’ name after the resurrection was another reminder that he would not remain on earth indefinitely after he rose from the dead. Other verses in John (14:12-14; 15:7) and in the NT epistles (Eph. 5:20; 1 John 5:13-15) show that Christ’s prayer instructions of verses 23 and 24 are valid directives for all of us today” [NCWB].

We pray to the Father, in the name of (the Person of) the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus repeatedly instructed and implored believers to ask anything of the Father in His Name. Paul was inspired to write: “In the same way the Spirit also joins to help in our weakness, because we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with unspoken

groanings” (Rom. 8:26-27).

We ask the Father in the Name of the Son, and the Father “will give you” that which you need. Jesus makes this statement to those eleven disciples, but the promise is applicable to all believers, as we shall see in His prayer both for them and for all believers of all ages. “Note, also, that this word for asking the Father marks the asking of an inferior from a superior, and is the word which Christ never uses of His own requests to the Father. Compare 1 John 3:22” [VINCENT].

**16:24 - IN MY NAME.** *“Until now you have asked for nothing in My name. Ask and you will receive, that your joy may be complete.”* “Up to this point the disciples had not prayed in the name of Jesus. Now they are to do this since Jesus’ death and the Spirit’s coming would enable them to enter into God’s new program of the Church Age” [BKC]. They have followed Him during the three years of His earthly ministry, but during that time they had not prayed to Him. They had often joined Him in praying to the Father, but at that time they did not pray, “in Jesus’ Name. Amen.” Adding the words, “in Jesus’ Name” is not some kind of magic formula believers add at the end of a prayer to force the Father to grant our request. I have been guilty of this and perhaps you have. You pray and close with the words, “In Jesus’ Name. Amen.” Immediately, you think of something else and said, “And Lord, please see Bill through the surgery. In Jesus’ Name. Amen.” Immediately, you remember that you forgot to pray for our missionaries, so you make that petition and add the same words, “In Jesus’ Name. Amen.” Then, you remember “our troops” and add the same words in closing again. Is that necessary? I don’t think so, while there is nothing wrong with saying the words, we must not use them as a part of a formula. Our faith must remain focused on the One to whom we are praying, and not on a formula at the close of the prayer.

**ASK AND YOU WILL RECEIVE.** Jesus does not equivocate as He makes this promise. There is nothing vague about it. He has already promised, “If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you want and it will be done for you” (John 15:7), so this is not the first time they have heard this promise. It is a part of His Farewell Discourse to prepare them for His death, burial, and resurrection.

“This great truth--that we must approach God in the name of the Mediator--was reserved for the last that the Saviour was to communicate to them. It was to be presented at the close of his ministry. Then they were prepared in some degree to understand it; and then, amid trials, and wants, and a sense of their weakness and unworthiness, they would see its preciousness, and rejoice in the privilege of being thus permitted to draw near to God. Though he would be bodily absent, yet their blessings would still be given through the same unchanging Friend” [BARNES].

**YOUR JOY WILL BE COMPLETE.** When they prayed to the Father in the Name of the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit, God would respond to them in a way that best blesses them and accomplishes His will. “Answered prayer brings complete joy (cf. 15:11; 16:22) because God is at work in them” [BKC].

## Victory in Jesus

16:25 - I HAVE SPOKEN. *“I have spoken these things to you in figures of speech. A time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures, but I will tell you plainly about the Father.”* Our first reaction to these words may be, “His time for teaching them is running out. Whatever He is going to teach them He had better say it quickly.” Why had He spoken to them in figures of speech rather than providing specific theological facts? One writer suggests that “Totally explicit predictions about future events would have overtaxed the disciples’ weak faith at this point (cf. 16:12, 13), so Jesus spoke to his disciples in allegories. After the resurrection the disciples would remember Christ’s words and understand their meaning (2:22; 12:16; 14:26; 20:8, 9), especially when Christ himself explained all these truths to them (Luke 24:13-32, 44-48; Acts 1:3-8)” [NCWB].

**A TIME IS COMING.** The time to which Jesus refers is “the interval from his resurrection to his ascension, which consisted of forty days, during which he instructed his disciples in the most sublime mysteries and truths of his kingdom. Acts 1:3” [Adam Clarke’s Commentary, QuickVerse Bible Library - after this, CLARKE]. A good illustration of the kind of instructions He has in mind is seen in His conversation with the two bereaved disciples on the road to Emmaus. The risen Lord joined them and engaged them in conversation about what had caused them such grief. After they told Him about the death of Jesus, He spoke to them:

“He said to them, ‘How unwise and slow you are to believe in your hearts all that the prophets have spoken! Didn’t the Messiah have to suffer these things and enter into His glory?’ **Then beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted for them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures**” (Luke 24:25-27, bold added by this writer).

16:26 - YOU WILL ASK IN MY NAME. *“In that day you will ask in My name. I am not telling you that I will make requests to the Father on your behalf.”* Jesus is not promising pie in the sky, bye and bye. He is telling them what He will be doing for them in the immediate future. As soon as He is resurrected, He will come to them and teach them in specific details that which they could not comprehend at the present time. Perhaps the most surprising thing to the modern reader is the statement Jesus makes that “I am not telling you that I will make requests to the Father on your behalf.” Is that not what He promises over and over in the Farewell Discourse? Is He contradicting Himself? The surest proof we have that one does not really know Jesus is to suggest that He contradicts Himself. This statement was made to magnify our understanding of our relationship with the Father and the Son. One writer explains it like this:

“The coming new **day** would give the disciples intimacy with **the Father** and clarity of understanding. The disciples would have direct personal access to **the Father** by the **name** of, that is, through Jesus (cf. “in My name” **in** 14:13-14; 15:16; 16:24). Jesus would no longer need to pray **on** their **behalf** since they could ask for themselves. This truth does not negate the promise of Christ’s intercessory work in overcoming a believer’s **SIN** (cf. Rom. 8:34; 1 John 2:1-2). The disciples were now in a personal love-and-faith relationship with the Father. Only children have this privilege of access to their

Father (Rom. 5:2)" [BKC., bold in the original].

Jesus explains what He means when He said, "I will make requests to the Father on your behalf" (verse 26). We must remind ourselves that it was not Jesus who divided His statement into chapters and verses. That definitely helps us find things in the Scripture, but we must keep His words in context.

16:27 - THE FATHER HIMSELF LOVES. "*For the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me and have believed that I came from God.*" Robertson has written, "Ye have loved me (pephilêkate). Perfect active indicative of phileô, 'loved and still love me warmly.' And have believed (pepisteukate). Perfect active indicative again. Recall the exhortation in John 14:1" [ATR].

Jesus saturates the Farewell Discourse with references to His relationship to the Father. Interestingly, Jesus here uses the word *philei* for loves, rather than *agapao*, the word used in John 3:16. Robertson points out that *philei* is the "Present active indicative of *phileo*, the word for warm and friendly love, here used of God's love for the disciples, while in John 3:16 *agapao* occurs of God's love for the world" [ATR]. The author of the material in the New American Commentary strongly rebukes the explanation often given by pastors in comparing the words *agapao* and *eros*, another word for love not found in the Bible. That writer rightly rejects the use of *eros*, the Greek word for a romantic love, in the current context.

The late W. O. Vaught used to explain the difference in *agapao* and *phileo* in a way that makes sense to this writer. It was not enough to say that *agapao*, is a godly (Christian) love, whereas *phileo* is a human love. A pastor I loved and respected preached a revival for me many years ago, and in one sermon he explained that *agapao* is godly love, and he went on to declare that you and I cannot love our enemies, "but Christ in you can." My first thought was that God did not command Christ to love my enemies through me, He commands me to love them. I did not challenge the man who had been one of my mentors a few years earlier, basically because I was still trying to work out just what He did mean by those words.

W. O. Vaught was highly respected by many conservative pastors, including Billy Graham and the late Dr. H. Leo Eddleman. Dr. Eddleman, who was president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary when I was a student there, was one of the most brilliant men I have ever known. I spent a lot of time with him in the gym and after I graduated I asked him to preach revivals in two different churches. He pointed Dr. Vaught out to me as one of the deepest pastors still active at the time, so I when I had an opportunity to buy a collection of his Bible studies I did so. One benefit was that I found his explanation of the Greek words for love convincing. I will offer my interpretation, which I confess was influenced by W. O, Vaught.

As Vaught taught that *agapao* is a mental attitude kind of love. It is a love that can be commanded. You cannot command romantic love (*eros*). Imagine telling your teenaged daughter, "I have found the perfect boyfriend for you. I have invited him over to meet you because I would like to see you date him. He is the one I have picked out to be your husband someday." That is the



last boy she is going to want to date, let alone marry.

The next word, *phileo*, is the word for the warm love that is cultivated between friends. You cannot command this kind of love, but you may bring individuals or families together in some situation in which they will determine whether or not they want to cultivate that warm, personal love (friendship) for each other. Suppose a new couple visit your church one Sunday morning. You meet them and discover that their name is Smith, they are forty years old, they have three children, they are affluent professions, and they love to play tennis. You look across the sanctuary and motion faithful members, Bill and Sue Jones to come over and meet the visitors. Then you tell them you would like for them to become best friends because “you have so much in common.” The Smiths have three children and they are about the same age as the Jones children. What you don’t realize is that Bill Jones hate tennis, but loves to hunt. They hold respectable jobs but they are far from affluent. Besides that, Mr. and Mrs. Smith are liberal Democrats and the Jones are conservative Republicans. Before long you see the Smith family going out together. They go out to eat together, and the Jones play tennis with the Browns. The Jones invite the Greens over to grill wild game Mr. Jones and Mr. Green killed on their hunting trip to Colorado. This is the way *phileo* works. It is a warm, personal friendship that is cultivated over a period of time.

That leaves us with the word *agapao* (*agape*’), which is often simply (at times, too simply) defined as Christian love. A teacher or pastor may tell his people, as my friend did, that *agapao* is Christians love. Consider this: (1) the Greek speaking world was using this for centuries before the saints were first called Christians in Antioch of Syria. (2) When John wrote, “The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hands” (John 3:35), the word he used for the Father’s love is *phileo*, not *agapao*. The Father loves the Son with more than a mental attitude kind of love. He loves Him personally and intimately. (3) When Jesus said, “This, then, is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil” (John 3:19), the word He uses for men loving evil is *agapao*. There are many definitions of *agapao* given by pastors and teachers as there are illustrations and applications. Vines offers these comments:

”Agape and agapao are used in the NT (a) to describe the attitude of God toward His Son, John 17:26; the human race, generally, John 3:16; Rom 5:8; and to such as believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, particularly, John 14:21; (b) to convey His will to His children concerning their attitude one toward another, John 13:34, and toward all men, 1Thess. 3:12; 1Cor. 16:14; 2Pet. 1:7; (c) to express the essential nature of God, 1John 4:8.

“Love can be known only from the actions it prompts. God’s love is seen in the gift of His Son, 1John 4:9, 10. But obviously this is not the love of complacency, or affection, that is, it was not drawn out by any excellency in its objects, Rom. 5:8. It was an exercise of the Divine will in deliberate choice, made without assignable cause save that which lies in the nature of God Himself, Cp. Deut. 7:7, 8.

“Love had its perfect expression among men in the Lord Jesus Christ, 2Cor. 5:14;

Eph. 2:4; Eph. 3:19; Eph. 5:2; Christian love is the fruit of His Spirit in the Christian, Gal. 5:22" [Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words - after this, VINES].

Now, to bring this together, while you cannot command *eros* or *phileo*, God does command *agapao*, and He does so unequivocally, and unambiguously. He does not just say, "Let Christ in you love your foul-mouthed neighbor." He does not say, "I know you don't like the drunk down the street, but you can let Jesus love him through you." What He commands is for us to love others, including people who do not appeal to us at all. How can we do that? How can God command us to love a profane, arrogant, dishonest co-worker who wants your job? Normally speaking, you are not going to love a despicable person without the love of Christ in your heart. A young man once told me about the choir member who called him and at some point began talking about the music ministry. She said, "I love Susie, but sometimes we disagree on some things." The young man said, "You don't love her. You can hardly stand each other!" Was the young man right, or was the woman right? Could both of them have been right? We will see if that is possible.

We can only understand this kind of love (*agapao*) when we realize that God can command it because it is a mental attitude kind of love. It is not first and foremost an emotional love. This kind of love seeks the highest good for others, whether or not we have anything common; whether or not we even like being around that person. I spent two and one-half years leading our BSU mission trip to the Hinds County Jail when I was a student at Mississippi College. For a year or more, I preached at the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman. I had a genuine love for some men in those institutions. There is no way I would have chosen them for my neighbor. Not at first, anyway.

Tommy killed a young woman in a drunken stupor. She was seven months pregnant when her boyfriend kicked her out. Tommy was working with them at the Mississippi State Fair in Jackson. He told the young woman, "You can move into the motel room with me. I can handle it." One evening he got drunk and decided that he could not handle it. He beat her and strangled her to death. He was convicted of second degree murder and sentenced to life at Parchman. Because Bill, in the next cell to him in maximum security, told him to stop talking to reporters, and wait and talk with me the following Thursday, Tommy listened to me. The next week, I received a letter from Tommy, and before long he was saved. Tommy still owed a debt to society, but I loved him as genuinely as I possibly could.

Taylor had married a woman, taken out a ten thousand dollar life insurance policy on her, and then killed her ten days later. It was cold blooded murder, first degree murder, but he was sentenced to life rather than execution. I preached at Camp Four at Parchman one morning, and as the prisoners passed by me after the service, one man stopped and asked, "Were you in Jackson last May?" I told him I was, and he went on to ask, "Did you visit the Hinds County Jail?" I thought a second and then assured him I did. He smiled and held up a New Testament, with the front cover opened to a note I had written when I gave it to him in the Hinds County Jail. He said, "I couldn't see you, but I remember your voice. I was permitted into the outer cell when I talked with Tommy, but I had to look through a wire mesh in the outer door when I talked with Taylor.

When I read about the crimes committed by Tommy and Taylor in the Jackson Clarion Ledger, I realized that I would possibly have an opportunity to talk with them personally. I was the leader of the mission trip and I knew I would take that assignment myself. When I first read about their crimes, I hated what they had done. When I met them I realized that I had the *agape*’ kind of love for each man. I certainly did not have the *phileo* kind of love for them. There was nothing appealing about them. They were about to get what they had coming to them! When Taylor showed me that New Testament, I knew I had both *agapao* and *phileo* kinds of love for him. When Tommy stopped to speak to me at Parchman after I had preached and said, “Johnny, when I get out of here I want to serve the Lord,” I knew I had both a mental attitude love for him, and a warm personal love that is still in my heart for Tommy.

16:28 - I CAME FROM THE FATHER. *“I came from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I am leaving the world and going to the Father.”* Is Jesus resorting to repetition because He knows these eleven apostles are hearing more than they can process at one time, or is He providing them with more details as He continues? Robertson renders this: “I came out from the Father (exêlthon ek tou patros)” and then explains that it means the “Definite act (aorist), the Incarnation, with repetition of ek (out of), while in verse John 16:27 we have para tou patros exêlthon) with no practical distinction between ek and para in resultant idea” [ATR].

I was reading some book on Feb. 13, 2010, when something came to my mind: Only God can make sense of God. Only God understands God. Only God can reveal God. No one finds God, He finds us. No one ascertains God, He reveals Himself to us. Man’s best efforts give man only (1) false gods; (2) a false view of the true God; (3) False religious practices; (4) false worship practices; and (5) false hopes.

God has given us Himself:

- 1) He didn't wait for us to find Him, He revealed Himself as Creator, Sustainer, Redeemer.
- 2) He reveals His redemptive love to us.
- 3) He reveals His attributes to us.
- 4) He reveals His Messiah to us.
- 5) He reveals His plans for us here on earth.
- 6) He reveals His plans for us in heaven.
- 7) He reveals Himself as the Father to all who believe.
  - a. He offers us a **relationship**
  - b. He offers us His **protection**
  - c. He offers us His **provisions**

This is the sixth volume in this series of verse by verse studies by this writer, and in earlier volumes I have stressed that we need to go back to bear in mind the Prologue as we go through the Fourth Gospel, and at the same time we need to keep in mind the stated purpose which John was inspired to give us. We have the Synoptics (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) so why do we need a fourth Gospel? A young lady came to see me a number of years ago and told me that she was Catholic but she

wanted to convert to Baptist because she was engaged to a Baptist. I tried to explain to her that one does not simply convert to being a Baptist. I went on to share with her the Lord's provision for our salvation, but when it became obvious that she had no idea what I was talking about, I asked her to read the Gospels. One day she came by and said, "I have been reading those Gospels but." she hesitated as looking for the right words, and then added, "isn't there a lot of repetition in there?" I explained the Synoptics, pointing out that the word means seeing alike, so there is a lot of repetition from one to the other.

Several months later this young lady saw me at church and told me she had been saved. She was working in some home for troubled young people as a part of her assignment in a criminal justice class. One day, a truck driver came by to speak with the young people. He shared his personal testimony and explained to them how to be saved. This young university student saw it clearly at that moment. That is the ministry of The Word of God and the Holy Spirit. That young lady would go on to be active in the music ministry of her church for a number of years.

God reveals Himself through His Word and through the Holy Spirit, whose ministry includes (1) Divine Inspiration of Scripture, (2) Divine preservation of the Scripture, and (3) Divine Illumination of the hearts and minds of those who read with a mind to obey the Word of God. With that in mind, recall that in the John began the Prologue by stating that Jesus, "the Word", is God (1:1f), and in verse 14, he adds that "The Word became flesh and took up residence among us. We observed His glory, the glory as the One and Only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). With that in mind, flash forward to the stated purpose of this Gospel: "But these are written so that you may believe Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and by believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31). The Incarnation is revealed in Matthew and Luke. John helps give us a fuller understanding of the significance of it in the Prologue, and underscores it here.

**GOING TO THE FATHER.** Jesus said, "Again, I am leaving the world and going to the Father." As He had stated already, they were hearing more than they could comprehend at the moment, but they would understand after his death, burial, resurrection, appearances, ascension, and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. He came out from the Father and He is returning to the Father.

**16:29 - SPEAKING PLAINLY.** *"Ah!" His disciples said. 'Now You're speaking plainly and not using any figurative language.'* This is interesting. Has Jesus wasted three years speaking to them in figurative language they could not understand, and waited until this late hour to speak plainly to them? Or, do they mean that in the Farewell Discourse He has spoken plainly to them? Jesus had been teaching these disciples during His entire three year ministry, but they were often in groups of people who were looking for a political/military Messiah who would deliver them from their bondage to Rome and drive off the Roman soldier who controlled their land. Jesus had explained that He often spoke to them in parables when speaking to those who did not understand Him:

"Then the disciples came up and asked Him, 'Why do You speak to them in

parables?’ He answered them, ‘Because the secrets of the kingdom of heaven have been given for you to know, but it has not been given to them. For whoever has, [more] will be given to him, and he will have more than enough. But whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. For this reason I speak to them in parables, because looking they do not see, and hearing they do not listen or understand’ (Matt 13:10-13, bold added by this writer).

**16:30 - NOW WE KNOW.** *“Now we know that You know everything and don’t need anyone to question You. By this we believe that You came from God.”* Has Jesus waited until now to speak plainly to them? No, His final few words to them “were no more explicit than any others he had spoken up to this point (remember that the ‘plain speaking’ of verse 25 refers to Christ’s resurrection ministry), but Jesus’ repeated predictions of his imminent death, resurrection, and ascension (Matt. 17:22, 23; 20:17-19; John 7:33; 10:11-18; 12:23, 24, 30-36; 13:18-38; 14:1-5, 15-31; 16:5-7) finally left their mark on the disciples. Now they were convinced that Christ’s impressive knowledge about future events marked him unquestionably as the Son of God come from God” [NCWB].

**BY THIS WE BELIEVE.** They perceived His meaning, and now they profess, You know “everything and don’t need anyone to question You.” Do they understand the full significance of what they are saying? Do they mean that He has full knowledge of “everything” there is to know, or are they thinking only of the statement He is making about going to the Father?

“Their difficulty had been to understand what was the meaning of his declaration in John 16:16. About this they conversed among themselves, John 16:17-19. It is evident that they had not mentioned their difficulty to him, and that he had not even heard their conversation among themselves, John 16:19. When, therefore, by his answers to them (John 16:20-28), he showed that he clearly understood their doubts; and when he gave them an answer so satisfactory without their having inquired of him, it satisfied them that he knew the heart, and that he assuredly came from God. They were convinced that there was no need that any man should ask him, or propose his difficulties to him, since he knew them all and could answer them” [BARNES].

**16:31 - JESUS RESPONDED.** *“Jesus responded to them, “Do you now believe?”* They have declared that they believe, so Jesus asks them to affirm their understanding of what He is saying. Jesus, who knew what all around Him were thinking, understood that His closest disciples now comprehended a little more than they had before He began His Farewell Discourse, but He also knew that they did not know as much as they thought they did. Their response proves what He knows. Had He not foretold Peter’s denial? He knows that they will be confused, frustrated, and discouraged when He was crucified, but He knew that they would soon understand what they could not comprehend at this moment.

**16:32 - AN HOUR IS COMING.** *“Look: An hour is coming, and has come, when each of you will be scattered to his own home, and you will leave Me alone. Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.”* The disciples had said, You are speaking plainly now (16:29), and we now believe You

came from the Father (16:30). Jesus then asked, “Do you really believe?” He then adds, “an hour is coming, and has come...” There will be no more waiting. The time of His departure (14:1ff) is at hand. He would be crucified the next day. “The long-looked-for hour (hōra) is so close that it has virtually begun. The time for the arrest of Jesus is near. See also John 17:1" [ATR]. “Though the disciples were honest and sincere in their affirmations of faith (v. 30), Jesus knew their limitations far better than they did (cf. 2:24-25). The words **You believe at last!** could also be translated “Do you now believe?” (niv marg.) This seems to capture the thought better. They did believe but it was not complete faith or strong faith until after the death and resurrection of Jesus and the advent of the Spirit” [BKC, bold in the original].

The author of the material in The New American Commentary goes beyond translation and interpretation to application and illustration throughout his commentary on the Gospel According to John. Here he tries to put this in perspective:

“The reality bomb then was dropped by Jesus in the great reversal statement of this section. Their hour (hora, the NIV has the less adequate ‘time’) would soon be coming, and it would bring a dramatic shift. The Anxiety Circle began with the disciples’ concern about Jesus’ departure (14:1) and their obvious feelings of abandonment (14:18). But while the disciples’ fears were real, Jesus made it clear that in the forthcoming scattering of the disciples they would ‘abandon’ Jesus (‘leave me all alone,’ kame mono aphete), not the reverse.

“This statement structures the connections within this two-part section on anxiety and loneliness and in fact illuminates the entire Farewell Cycle. It is a masterpiece of literary construction, a fact overlooked by most commentators as they quickly move to discuss his nonabandonment by God. The glue of Christianity is not the disciples; it is Jesus, who will not abandon the disciples or let them become orphans (14:18) even though they would leave Jesus when the pressures came to them (16:32)” [NAC].

**YOU WILL BE SCATTERED.** Robertson offers critical analysis of these statements: “Ye shall be scattered (skorpisthête). First aorist passive subjunctive of skorpizō, used in John 10:12 of sheep scampering from the wolf. Cf. Mat 12:30; Luke 11:33. To his own (eis ta idia). ‘To his own home’ as in John 1:11; John 19:27. So Appian VI. 23. Shall leave (aphête). Second aorist subjunctive of aphîemi with hina. And yet (kai). Clear case of kai in adversative sense, not just ‘and’ [ATR].

This statement is “a fulfillment of Zechariah’s words which spoke of the Shepherd (the Messiah) smitten by decree of the Lord Almighty, which resulted in the scattering of the sheep (Zech 13:7). In spite of the disciples’ loyalty, faith, and love, they soon failed Him miserably” [BKC]. There is no doubt that these eleven apostles believe in their hearts that they will be faithful to the end. Peter would even try to defend Jesus with a sword against such odds that his death would seem certain, so how could Jesus know they would all be scattered? Is Jesus recalling Scripture here and quoting it, or is He simply fulfilling it? This writer comfortably assumes the latter. When Jesus was dying on the Cross, was He crying out in agony, or was He thinking, “I must be sure to quote from Psalm 22, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” I prefer to believe that the psalmist was writing history one

thousand years before it happened, a statement that either declares my naivete, or recognizes the fact that Jesus fulfilled an incredible number of prophecies.

**YOU WILL LEAVE ME ALONE.** This statement was of course fulfilled when His disciples deserting Him (Matt. 26:56), and dramatically underscored after His arrest when Peter denied Him three times (John 18:17, 25-26). It is a fact that Peter did deny Him, and it is a fact that He faced His accusers alone, but when exactly did His disciples desert Him? At the time of His arrest Peter and John followed Him back to the court yard of Annas, where John was admitted but Peter was stopped at the gate. John went back and asked the slave girl who guarded the gate to let Peter in, and she did so. We are not told where the others were at the time. Was the beloved disciple an exception to the statement Jesus make here, or did he, too scatter at some point? John was at the foot of the cross offering support to Mary, the mother of Jesus, while He was on the cross, and Jesus committed her to John's care (not to her own sons!). However, when Jesus died on the cross, John joined the others in defeat, grief, and a sense of loss.

**YET I AM NOT ALONE.** Even though His closest disciples would be scattered, He said, "Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me", an emphasis He has made before (John 8:29) and prophesied in Psalm 23:4; and 73:25-26, "though the Father did forsake Jesus when He was on the cross (Matt. 27:46)" [BKC]. Jesus was fully aware of the presence of the Lord, and He would be painfully aware of the moment when His Father turned His head from Him as He took our sins on Himself just before His death on the cross.

**16:33 - IN ME YOU MAY HAVE PEACE.** *"I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world."* Jesus has carefully gone over that which was about to happen with His disciples so that they would not be totally unprepared. He knew they would be in shock, they would be scattered, they would be dealing with grief, defeat, and a humiliating sense of loss as they thought about what might have been. Yet, Jesus has carefully gone over the things He knew He was facing so that they might have peace. That peace would come, but first they would be scattered. Peter made a decision at one point to return to his life as a fisherman (he was not talking about a recreational fishing trip when he said he was going fishing).

Peace is an interesting word. Vines notes that the Greek word *eirene* has to do with a harmonious relationship between individuals or nations. "It denotes freedom from molestation, friendliness, harmony, peace (quietness) in the church, and a harmonious relationship between God and individuals (Acts 10:36; Eph. 2:17) [VINES]. The Greek word *eireneuo* means primarily to bring to peace and reconcile, "denotes in the NT, 'to keep peace or to be at peace:' in Mark 9:50, RV, the Lord bids the disciples 'be at peace' with one another, gently rebuking their ambitious desires... in 2Cor. 13:11 it is rendered 'live in peace,' a general exhortation to believers; in 1Thess. 5:13, 'be at peace (among yourselves)" [VINES].

**APPLICATION.** What person who sets out to start a new religion would do so by promising suffering, deprivation, and death to those who committed themselves to that new religion, or to a god they invented in their own minds. The world promises peace, fulfillment, and success. Sadly, some

tel-evangelists seem to promise to make their followers healthy, wealthy, and wise. Is Jesus promising peace ultimately after a life of hardship, torture, deprivation, and shame, or is He promising peace in spite of everything Satan, his demons, and all those who are enslaved by him can throw at believers?

A number of years ago when I wrote a commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians, I talked with the publisher I told him I wanted the sub-title to read: The Epistle of Joy. The publisher said, "Joy is a woman's word. Men won't buy it." I was somewhat surprised, but realized that he understood the marketing of books a lot better than I, so I changed the title to *UNDEFEATED: Finding Peace in a World Full of Trouble*. To the world, peace has to do with the cessation of the tension, friction, and agitation that falls upon individuals from time to time. In some situations that which is at stake may only be a peace of mind, but in other cases this may involve literal persecution. Paul faced all sorts of threats, yet his peace was never shattered and his joy was full. I don't know many men who could stand up under the hardships, abuse, torture, and deprivation that he faced time after time. It would be interesting to see how long some of those macho types who drink, brawl, and boast could stand up under the kind of torture to which Paul was subjected over and over.

Like Paul, those early disciples would face imprisonment, scourging with whips (forty stripes less one), beatings with rods, stoning, and death on Roman arenas for the entertainment of the emperor's guests and the people of Rome. They would be slaughtered by gladiators, devoured by half-starved lions, or crucified for their faith in Jesus Christ. What did Jesus promise for their loyalty, love, and labor? He promised not only peace, He promised joy. The following is an excerpt from the above mentioned commentary:

(Philippians) 1:2 - GRACE TO YOU AND PEACE. As we have seen, Paul begins Philippians with the typical style for a Greco-Roman letter of the day, including the author, and the recipients, and a greeting. But Paul's greeting is not the standard greeting, either for the Jewish readers or the Greek readers. It is a combination of the Greek and Jewish greeting which brings together concepts precious to the early church. The normal Greek greeting (*chairein*) carries the basic idea of joy, pleasure, beauty. Grace is from the Greek word *charis*, which in NT means God's unmerited favor and love.

In a Greek letter, it could simply mean "greetings" (James 1:1). As used in the New Testament, it refers to the unmerited favor of God. It is easier to define than to believe. To believe in grace we have to give up our arrogance, and ideas about our own worth (self esteem). We can never accept something as ours because of our own merit. We can never claim God's blessings as our right or as our property by our own merit.

"Peace (*eirene*, Gk.; shalom in Heb.) is the usual Hebrew greeting. The word carries the idea of joining, or weaving together. "Peace in the Jewish sense is the symphony



of life made meaningful through a right relationship with God. The theological order is significant as well; it is only through the grace made available by the shed blood of the spotless Lamb of God that peace will come". Peace is positive and not negative. It connotes far more than the absence of strife and hostility - it expresses the desire for harmony with God and with other people.

"Here, peace has to do with a new relationship and points to blessings we receive because of grace. There is a problem, however. Today we usually understand peace to mean an inner peace of mind, but Paul was not a post-Freudian psychologist. God seeks to save neurotics. There are sincere Christians who are deeply troubled. Believers are often put to the test. How, then, does grace bring us peace? When one accepts Christ, the warfare between himself and God is over. So, Paul prays for them to realize what they already have (it was not dependent upon his prayer). From the point of one's new birth in Christ the Lord seeks to make the peace that passes all understanding a reality in every aspect of the life of His children.

"That other Christian writers would be influenced by Paul's new letter writing style is seen in the writing of the early Church Fathers. Polycarp, who was probably an infant at the time of Paul's martyrdom, would write to this same church a half-century later. He began his letter,

"Polycarp, and the presbyters with him, to the Church of God sojourning at Philippi: Mercy to you, and peace from God Almighty, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, be multiplied."

"Paul prays for both grace and peace. They can only come in that order. Grace is the source of peace - peace is always dependent upon grace. If God withdraws his grace, there will be no peace and we would be lost. Prayer for grace recognizes a continuous need. The grace of God always comes as His free and unmerited gift; it is never our private possession - not an inalienable right. "That Gentiles have finally been made partakers in this marvelous mystery of God is the prime cause of the keynote of joy sounded throughout the epistle".

"Millions are seeking peace today, but they will never find it anywhere except in the Prince of Peace. Perhaps you have seen the bumper sticker, or read the words on a church sign: NO JESUS, NO PEACE, KNOW JESUS, KNOW PEACE. Let me try to adapt that to this Scripture - there is

No joy without peace,  
No peace without grace,  
No grace without Jesus.

[Sanders, Johnny L., UNDEFEATED, Finding Peace in a World Full of Trouble,

Second Printing, Brentwood, 1998, pp 22ff].

## CHAPTER 17

This prayer follows the symbolic washing of the disciples' feet (13:1-30) and His private instruction of the apostles (14-16). It will be stressed in the comments below that this prayer is rightly called "the Lord's high-priestly prayer," and "the Lord's prayer."

"Jesus had ended His teaching of the disciples with a shout of victory: "I have overcome the world" 16:33). This was in anticipation of His work on the cross. Throughout His ministry Jesus' work was done in obedience to the Father's will (cf. Luke 4:42; 6:12; 11:1; Matt. 26:36). As He turned again to His Father, He prayed first for Himself (John 17:1-5), then for His apostles (vv. 6-19), and finally for future believers (vv. 20-26)" [BKC].

The author of the material in the New American Commentary introduces this chapter like this:

### The Magisterial Prayer as the Final Preparation for Passover (17:1-26)

"Unlike the Synoptic Gospels, which highlight the Prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane as the final preparation of Jesus before his arrest (cf. Matt 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-43; Luke 22:39-46), the Gospel of John does not include that pericope but has instead this magnificent prayer of chap. 17. This chapter has been labeled with many titles such as 'The Consecration Prayer,' or 'The Prayer of Consecration' (Westcott, Hoskyns and Davey, Beasley-Murray), 'The Prayer of the Departing Redeemer' (Schnackenburg), 'The Farewell Prayer' (Bultmann, Ridderbos), 'The Sage's Prayer' (Witherington), 'The Prayer'/'Final Prayer of Jesus' (Barrett, Carson), 'Jesus Prays for His Disciples' (Newman and Nida), and 'The High Priestly Prayer' (Agourides, Haenchen, Morris). Brown designates the chapter merely as 'The Last Discourse,' and Segovia does not even include the prayer in his Farewell study. Although there are a few manuscript variants, the chapter is surprisingly free of debatable textual issues.' Instead, the attention given the chapter has focused on theological concerns and more recently on structural issues" [NAC].

John was an ordinary fisherman, probably in his teens when the Lord called him to leave his nets and follow Him. It is obvious to those who understand the Greek that John was not as polished as the scholarly Paul. Through the centuries some of the most intelligent people in the world have spent years studying the Epistles of Paul. They have also studied the Gospel According to John in an effort to know Jesus, to fathom the depth of His love, to understand the Salvation He offers to all who believe in Him, and to better comprehend the wondrous life that is ours in Him.

As New Testament scholars seek to understand, and make known the beauty and depth of this

chapter, they often seek to outline it and organize it into one structure or another. We may need to understand something of the structure of this prayer in order to appreciate more fully why Jesus has stopped to pray with His disciples at this late hour, as well as what He may be trying to communicate to them. When we remember that this is a prayer we be surprised that anyone would seek to understand its structure. Just as a pastor today may seek to teach a child something while praying with him, Jesus is still teaching His disciples. At the same time, we must not lose sight of the fact that He is praying to the Father in their presence.

“But the structure is not merely developed in terms of the seven petitions. There also seems to be another structural marker, *eroto*, ‘I pray’ or ‘I ask’ at 17:9 and 17:20 that seems to signal major shifts in the petitions and therefore to divide the chapter into three major sections, as was suggested by Brown. But I would entitle these three sections (1) Finishing the Mission in a Hostile World (17:1-8), (2) Preparing the Disciples (17:9-19), and (3) Looking to the Future (17:20-26)” [NAC].

Because the author of the material in the NAC reviews the approach to this prayer taken by numerous scholars, I would like to quote him again as we begin to look at this prayer:

“In concluding these introductory remarks, I must also mention another important fact with respect to two verbs that are used repeatedly throughout this chapter. They are *didonai* (“give”) in 17:2,6,7,8,9,11,14,22,25 and *apostellein* (“send”) in 17:3,8,18,21,23,25. In using these verbs John was highlighting the fact that the main focus of the chapter was not to be put on Jesus but on his mission in the establishment and confirming of a community that would believe and obey him, God’s agent or *shaliach*.

“An understanding of this fact is absolutely crucial in expounding this chapter because many commentators have argued that the first part of this prayer concerns Jesus’ self rather than his work of establishing a community of disciples for the continuing divine purpose of mission. By missing this crucial element of the prayer interpreters can easily turn the prayer into a model for a mystical experience with God that neglects its overarching mission incentive. The same can be said of much of the preaching and debate concerning the use of the strategic verses on oneness in 17:21-22 during the last century, for they have often failed to recognize the centrality of mission in the quest for unity” [NAC,bold added by this writer].

Different writers see various divisions, or petitions in out Lord’s prayer. Consistent with the number of Signs and the number of I AM sayings, I will stay with the number seven:

- 1) He Prays for the Glorification in His Mission (17:1-3).
- 2) He Prays for the Return to Glory at the Close of His Earthly Ministry (17:4-8).
- 3) He Prays for the Protection of His Disciples in Their Ministry (17:9-15).

- 4) He Prays for the Holiness His disciples (17:16-19).
- 5) He Prays for Unity Among His Disciples in their Mission in the World (17:20-23).
- 6) He Prays for the Disciples to Realize their Eternal Destiny (17:24).
- 7) He Prays for all His Disciples, of all Ages (17:25-26).

## Jesus Prays for Himself

17:1 - JESUS SPOKE. “*Jesus spoke these things, looked up to heaven, and said: Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son so that the Son may glorify You...*” John 17 “contains Jesus’ sublime, high-priestly prayer. This petition, which consummates his discourse begun in John 13:31, expresses the deepest desires of God’s heart for his chosen ones” [NCWB]. Jesus withdrew to be alone with the Father many times during His earthly ministry: including when His withdrawals (1) following His baptism, (2) following the feeding of the five thousand men plus women and children. He communicated with the Father on a regular basis, which helps to explain why He taught His disciples so often concerning the relationship between the Father and the Son.

LOOKED UP TO HEAVEN. Where else would Jesus look to address the Father, but to heaven? Ten years after John wrote this Fourth Gospel he was inspired to write the Revelation from the Isles of Patmos. In Revelation, Chapter Four, the throne of Heaven is revealed by Jesus Christ: “Immediately I was in the Spirit, and there in heaven a throne was set. One was seated on the throne, and the One seated looked like jasper and carnelian stone” (Rev. 4:2-3).

David was God’s choice as king over His Chosen People, the king by whom all other kings would be judged, the king who star adorns the national flag of Israel today. David and other psalmists were inspired to write of God’s throne, and His rightful place on the eternal throne:

“For You have upheld my just cause; You are seated on Your throne as a righteous judge” (Ps. 9:4).

“The Lord is in His holy temple; the Lord’s throne is in heaven. His eyes watch; He examines everyone” (Ps. 11:4).

“Your throne has been established from the beginning; You are from eternity” (Ps. 93:2).

In the scene from Revelation 4, the ascended Son of God is at the right hand of the Father. That is the position He had occupied before the Incarnation, and that is the position to which He is returning. Robertson notes:

“Lifting up (eparas). First aorist active participle of epairō, old and common verb with ophthalmous (eyes) as in John 4:35; John 6:5; John 11:41. Father (Pater). Vocative form as in verses John 17:5, 11; John 11:41, Christ’s usual way of

beginning his prayers. **It is inconceivable that this real Lord's Prayer is the free composition of a disciple put into the mouth of Jesus.** It is rather 'the tenacious memory of an old man recalling the greatest days of his life' (Bernard), aided by the Holy Spirit promised for this very purpose (John 14:26; John 16:13). Jesus had the habit of prayer (Mark 1:35; Mark 6:46; Mat 11:25; Luke 3:21; Luke 5:16; Luke 6:12; Luke 9:18, 28 Luke 11:22, 42; Luke 23:34, 46; John 11:41; John 12:27)" [ATR, bold added by this writer].

In this prayer Jesus prayed (1) for Himself (John 17:1-5), (2) for the disciples (John 17:6-19), and (3) for all believers (John 17:20-26). The prayer, as some have noted, may be similar in spirit to the Model Prayer for believers (Matt. 6:9-13), but it distinctively, the Lord's Prayer.

FATHER. The Bible reveals a triune God, and while the concept of the Trinity may not offer some of the illustrations associated with a unitary theory of God, it is scriptural. I recall a time when the late Dr. Leo Eddleman, who had been president of my seminary when I was a student, told me that a well known pastor, whose books and articles churches had for many years been used to teach sound doctrine, had changed his position on the Trinity. He explained that this pastor, a man he had invited to speak in chapel during my seminary days, was attending a convention when he met with a highly regarded seminary professor, a theologian I heard other professors quote many times. Many people did not realize that the professor with whom he met was left of center on certain doctrines. The pastor wanted to visit with the professor and agreed to visit him in his hotel room. Dr. Eddleman said, "He went into that room with a trinitary view of God, and he came out holding a unitary view of God."

The professor probably explained that "in the Old Testament God played the role of Father; during the earthly ministry of Jesus He played the role of the Son; and following Pentecost he played the role of the Spirit." Or he may have explained, "I am one person, but I relate to different people in different ways: I am the son of my father, the husband of my wife, and the father of my son." Another explanation used to teach the unitary theory of God is that water is called water as long as it remains between 32 degrees and 212 degrees Fahrenheit, but below 32 degrees it becomes ice, and above 212 degrees it becomes steam. Those are wonderful illustrations, but the Bible does not reveal God in this manner. At the Baptism of Jesus the Son is baptized, the Spirit descends in a form like that of a dove, and the Father speaks. God reveals Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is One in essence, three in Person. We do not worship three gods as Muslims claim. We worship the great Three-in-One God.

Francis Schaeffer wrote that it was the understanding of the Trinity led him from being an agnostic to the position of a theist. If God had to create man in order to have someone with whom He could have a relationship, it seemed to him that there was a deficiency in God. When he came to understand that there has always been a horizontal relationship within the Trinity he knew that God did not have to create man because of some deficiency within Himself.

Jesus reveals the Heavenly Father in many ways, not the least of which is His Father. It should be

stressed that the Father reveals Himself as the Father of all who believe in Him. Man did not come up with that title in order to explain God. If someone calls the Bible a sexist book because God is called our Father, rather than Parent, that person misses the point that it was He who called Himself Father from the beginning.

This writer is convinced that only God can reveal God to man. Man's best attempts have given us all forms of idolatry, from the worship of the sun, moon, and stars, to animism, to the worship of the most vile forms conceivable. To think that man could reveal God without using His self-revelation set forth in the Bible is something like asking a pig to take us on a tour of the barn and explaining the difference between a horse, a cow, and a goat. I was sitting in a meeting of the Board of Trustees for LifeWay Christian Resources when one of the vice-presidents asked, "Have we moved beyond New Age to animism?" After that session I spoke with my friend and said, "No, we have not moved beyond New Age to animism. How can you move beyond anything and everything? New Age will expand the tent to include almost anything and everything except monotheism."

Why did God reveal Himself as the Father to all who believe in Him? What does the ideal father do for his family? He offers his family protection and provisions based on a personal relationship. David, in Psalm 23, gives us a beautiful picture of the relationship between the true Shepherd and His sheep. Jesus said, "I am the Good Shepherd." Jesus reveals the Father, and He addresses Him as Father. In the Model Prayer (Matt. 6:9ff), Jesus taught His followers to address God as Father. In the Farewell Discourse, Jesus brings together the ministry of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Jesus reveals the Father, as the Father reveals the Son, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

The more we come to appreciate the title Father, and the title which He has given us, the more we understand why Jesus prohibits the use of that title for any person on earth: "**Do not call anyone on earth your father, because you have one Father, who is in heaven**" (Matt. 23:9, bold added by this writer). Jesus is not ordering us not to call our biological father by that name, He is ordering us not to use that title for any spiritual leader, priest, or any object of worship. I may refer to Greg Dunn or Kenny Herring as "my son in the ministry" but I don't want anyone to call me father, except my sons.

THE HOUR HAS COME. Old Testament students are familiar with the term "the day of the Lord", and there was some confusion as to what that term really meant. New Testament students still debate the significance of the term today. Does it refer to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, or does it denote the period from His death, burial, and resurrection to His return to fulfill all end-time prophecies? Here, "the hour" points specifically to the hour of His glorification through the trials, torture, death, burial, resurrection, appearances, and Ascension. The hour for His glorification, had spoken (John 12:23; 13:31), had come.

GLORIFY YOU SON. This is the first aorist active imperative of *doxazo*, and it is the only personal petition in this prayer. "Jesus had already used this word *doxazō* for his death (John 13:31). Here it carries us into the very depths of Christ's own consciousness" [ATR].

“This request for glorification included sustaining Jesus in suffering, accepting His sacrifice, resurrecting Him, and restoring Him to His pristine glory. The purpose of the request was that the Father would be glorified by the Son, that God’s wisdom, power, and love might be known through Jesus. Believers too are to glorify God (v. 10); in fact, this is the chief end of man (Rom. 11:36; 16:27; 1 Cor. 10:31; Eph. 1:6, 12, 14; cf. *Westminster Larger Catechism*, Question 1)” [BKC].

**SO THAT THE SON MAY GLORIFY YOU.** “It is not merely for strength to meet the Cross, but for the power to glorify the Father by his death, resurrection and ascension, that the Son may glorify thee’ (hina ho huio doxasêi se). Purpose clause with hina and the first aorist active subjunctive” [ATR]. Jesus’ glorification is the “central theme of Jesus’ discourse in John 13:31 to 16:33. If the Father would glorify the Son in resurrection, the Son could in turn impart life to the believers (17:2) and so glorify the Father. Of course, Jesus viewed his glorification as being as certain as history (see 13:31, 32); nevertheless, he prayed for that which he believed would most certainly take place” [NCWB].

**17:2 - YOU GAVE HIM AUTHORITY.** “...for You gave Him authority over all flesh; so He may give eternal life to all You have given Him.” Five times in this prayer Jesus refers to that which is His as “a gift from the Father (17:2, 6 [two times], 9, 24). The words, **You granted Him authority over all people**, indicate that Jesus’ prayer request was in accordance with the Father’s plan. The Father has ordained the rule of the Son over the earth (cf. Ps. 2). So the Son has the authority to judge (John 5:27), to take up His life (10:18), and to **give eternal life to all those whom the Father gave Him.**” [BKC, bold in the original].

**TO ALL.** Jesus prays to the Father, acknowledging the fact that the Father had given him “authority (power) over all flesh”. “So that” speaks of purpose, and that purpose is that Jesus might “give eternal life to all” the Father has given Him. In John 6:37-39, “Jesus used the neuter singular ‘all which’ (Gk. *pan ho*) when referring to the **one corporate gift of all believers given to him by the Father**. But in the same breath he acknowledged **the plurality and individuality of the members of that group** by using a personal pronoun (*autois* in Gk.— ‘them’). (See 17:24 for the same pattern, and see 6:37-40; 10:29, 30 for a shift from the one corporate entity to each individual member.) Each and every member of that corporate ‘gift’ would be given the gift of eternal life” [NCWB, bold added by this writer].

**17:3 - ETERNAL LIFE.** “*This is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and the One You have sent—Jesus Christ.*” Eternal life speaks both of endless life and a special quality of life. That it will never end is a given; that it is secure is assumed; that it is of special quality is assured. “This is the source of eternal life; or it is in this manner that it is to be obtained. The knowledge of God and of his Son Jesus Christ is itself a source of unspeakable and eternal joy. Comp. John 11:25 6:63 12:50” (BARNES)].

Human beings often seek ways to add a few years to their life on this earth. Some search for the fountain of youth. Still others focus on the quality of life. Fortunes are spent on formulas, creams, and diets that promise to keep one looking younger for a few more years. Throughout history, people have been concerned about that which lies beyond death. Job declared, “But I know my living Redeemer, and He will stand on the dust at last” (Job 19:25). Jesus was the answer to Job’s hopes

and desires. Dr. Henry Morris wrote a book (*The Remarkable Record of Job*) a number of years ago that explores the many questions asked by Job that are answered by Jesus.

Islam promises a perverted view of heaven. Mormonism offers a heaven that is very different from the heaven of the Bible. Some teach that there is a heaven for believers, but no hell for the lost, only annihilation. Jesus clearly warns of hell, a place of conscious, eternal torment, for the lost. But He promises eternal life for all who believe (John 3:16). Clarke writes: “This is life eternal - The salvation purchased by Christ, and given to them who believe, is called life:

“1. Because the life of man was forfeited to Divine justice; and the sacrifice of Christ redeemed him from that death to which he was exposed.

“2. Because the souls of men were dead in trespasses and sins; and Christ quickens them by his word and Spirit.

“3. Because men who are not saved by the grace of Christ do not live, they only exist, no good purpose of life being answered by them. But when they receive this salvation they live- answer all the Divine purposes, are happy in themselves, useful to each other, and bring glory to God” [CLARKE].

**THAT THEY MAY KNOW YOU.** God the Father is the source of eternal life. The word “know” here means more than a recognition, or an awareness of the reality of eternal life. It speaks of experiential knowledge; personal, intimate knowledge of God. God created man with a capacity to know his Creator intimately. In fact, each person has within himself or herself a hunger for a relationship with the Creator that can only be satisfied by a personal relationship with the one true God. Countless millions reject the simple self revelation He gives each person, and they end up worshiping created things rather than the Creator (as Paul writes in Romans 1).

“Jesus defined eternal life. To experientially, progressively **know . . . God, and** his Son, **Jesus Christ**, is eternal life. In other words, eternal life is the ongoing knowledge of the Father and the Son. The Greek verb *gino-sko-sin* signifies the continual action of ‘**getting to know.**’ In colloquial English, we could render this verse: ‘And this is eternal life: that they may get to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent” [NCWB, bold in the original].

**THE ONLY TRUE GOD.** What an amazing revelation! The world recognizes many so-called gods, but Jesus tells us there is but one true God. Who should know better than the One who fulfilled so many prophecies given over a period of several millennia, beginning with Genesis 3, and continuing through the Pentateuch, the Books of History, Job, and the Psalms, not to speak of the Books of Prophecy? Who better to tell us that His Father is the only true God than the One who emptied Himself of His glory in heaven to come into this world miraculously by a virgin birth, live a perfect life, die for our sins, rise from the dead and appear numerous times before ascending back into heaven where He took His place at the right hand of the Father’s eternal throne to intercede for us? Jesus knew, and now we know: there is but one true God.



It is popular with many in America today to say there are many ways to God, a lie planted over the past generation by New Age religious leaders, who are not so easily identified as they were in twenty years ago. They dropped the name New Age and moved under the postmodern umbrella, and cover their ignorance, or rejection of Jesus with terms like “I’m spiritual,” or “I’m a person of faith.” A popular television show hostess yelled to a member of her audience, “Jesus can’t possibly be the only way!” The Bible states clearly that “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12 ).

**THE ONE YOU HAVE SENT—JESUS CHRIST.** He has just acknowledged His Father is “the only true God,” and now He states the He, Jesus Christ, is the One the Father had sent. As this writer has mentioned above, there has been a concerted effort in certain quarters to deny that Jesus is the only way to the Father, the only way to heaven. There is also a strong emphasis on tolerance: tolerance of other religions, watered down doctrines, and moral and ethical codes that fall short of the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount. Tolerance has become a major focus in certain quarters, but Jesus is exclusively the Son of God, as He is exclusively the One through whom God redeems sinners.

Merrill C. Tenney (The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Vol. 9, Regency, Grand Rapids, 1981 - after this, TENNEY) calls to our attention two sentences following the initial petition, which are parenthetical and explanatory:

“The first (v. 2) indicates the scope of the authority Christ exercises in His incarnate state. He was empowered to impart eternal life to those who had been given to Him. This Gospel is replete with assertions that life is in Christ: “In Him was life and the life was the light of men” (1:4). “The Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life” (3:15-16)”.... These words and others like them emphatically express the central purpose of Jesus: to glorify the Father by imparting life to men.

“The second sentence (v. 3) defines the nature of eternal life. It is not described in chronological terms but by a relationship. Life is active involvement with environment. A worm is content to live in soil; we need not only to widen our environment of earth, sea, and sky but also contact with other human beings. For the complete fulfillment of our being, we must know God. This, said Jesus, constitutes eternal life. Not only is it endless, since the knowledge of God would require an eternity to develop fully, but qualitatively it must exist in eternal dimensions. As Jesus said farther in this prayer, eternal life would ultimately bring His disciples to a lasting association with Him in His divine glory (v. 24)” [TENNEY, p. 1620.

**ILLUSTRATION:** One does not have to know how to define theology to know Jesus Christ. Nor does one have to understand theological terms before calling on Jesus Christ for eternal life. What one must do is simply believe that Jesus came and died for us on the cross, and was raised on the

third day, and that He is with the Father right now, offering us eternal life if we believe in Him. My good friend Wayne Whiteside spends a lot of time with prisoners on death row in Texas, and at times in Mississippi and Arkansas. He and I exchanged numerous e-mail messages about an unrepentant prisoner who adamantly refused to talk about his need for Jesus Christ until he received a letter from the mother of the man he had murdered, assuring him of her forgiveness and telling him he needed Jesus Christ in his life. Here is Wayne Whiteside's latest report:

"Franklin Alix was executed tonight. Please keep his family and the victims' families in your prayers. I've been at the unit the last two days; spent time visiting several of the men." "This morning I visited a bit with Franklin and then this afternoon after he was moved to Huntsville. He told me this morning that he had called upon the Lord last night. He received a letter on Friday from the mother of one of his victims. She told him that she forgave him, was praying for him and encouraged him to receive Jesus as Lord and Savior. He mentioned this to me yesterday." "He had not been open to a witness during the many visits that I had with him. He either changed the subject or told me that he didn't care to hear it. I was very surprised when he told me that he had surrendered to the Lord. You might think that all inmates start listening in the remaining days before their executions? Well, that is just not the case. Some are nervous, but they leave this earth without surrendering to the Lord. "I was disappointed in his final words, but they are his and not mine. I had hoped he would just express remorse, tell his family he loved them and praised the Lord. Instead, he spoke about his case a great deal. I don't think that honored the Lord. "There were around 30 of his family members on the grounds. Afterward, one of the elderly cousins led the family in prayer. It was very touching to hear this humble man pray. "Thank you for your love, prayers and support. I appreciate your prayers especially. These days are stressful and I am spent.

"Telling His Story" [Wayne Whiteside, bold added by this writer].

17:4 - I HAVE GLORIFIED YOU. "*I have glorified You on the earth by completing the work You gave Me to do.*" How did Jesus glorify the Father? By giving honor to His name, by magnifying His name, and by accomplishing the work for which the Father had sent Him. "Verse John 17:3 is parenthetical and so verse John 17:4 goes on after verse John 17:2. He had prayed for further glorification" [ATR].

BY COMPLETING THE WORK. "Our Lord, considering himself as already sacrificed for the sin of the world, speaks of having completed the work which God had given him to do: and he looks forward to that time when, through the preaching of his Gospel, his sacrifice should be acknowledged, and the true God should be known and worshipped by the whole world" [CLARKE].

With the final act of His ministry here on earth still ahead of Him, Jesus speaks as though everything had been completed. When I was growing up in the Mississippi Delta I would hear what was then

considered “an old saying”: “Don’t count your chickens before the eggs hatch.” We heard it from our parents, teachers, and friends. My father told me that he and my mother were talking about buying a certain farm which joined ours, but we were not to discuss it with neighbors until the papers were signed. He explained that if we started talking about buying the land and the deal fell through it might seem that we had misrepresented the truth, or that we had simply been bragging. He strongly opposed either. A few years later, when he began talking with someone about another farm, I knew we were not to mention it until the purchase had been officially completed. Things often happen to prevent our accomplishing our goals in this life.

When I was fifty years old, I bench-pressed one hundred pounds fifty times. Each birthday after that I benched one hundred pounds one time for each year. A few months before my sixtieth birthday I realized that a shoulder that had often given me a problem when I lifted heavier weights was not bothering me. That day, I moved from 200 pounds to 250, to 300, to 360. I got up and realized that my shoulder was not hurting, so right then and there I set a goal: on my sixtieth birthday I would bench press 400 pounds. I never mentioned that goal to anyone. On my sixtieth birthday I was limited to about ten pounds! I had no idea I was about to have a major heart attack. I had not planned on that, nor could I have done anything to prevent it without knowing I was at risk.

Jesus could speak of His work as having been completed because nothing on earth, nor above the earth, not under the earth could have kept Him from accomplishing His purpose. There is a good example of the of this kind of foreknowledge in Paul’s letter to the church at Rome: “For those He foreknew (redemptively) He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son (Sanctification), so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers. And those He predestined, He also called; and those He called, He also justified; and those He justified, He also glorified” (Glorification), (Rom. 8:29-30). The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write that when one is redeemed (justified, saved), God can write his name down as having been glorified, even while he or she is still living. He speaks of it as an accomplished fact.

17:5 - GLORIFY ME. “*Now, Father, glorify Me in Your presence with that glory I had with You before the world existed.*” Jesus looks to the Father to return Him to his pre-incarnate glory, honor, dignity, and majesty. To glorify, as mentioned above, is to give honor to another. The Institute for Creation Research sends out a daily devotional under the heading, DAYS OF PRAISE. Here is one that seems to fit here:

### My Glory

"O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory." (*Psalms 108:1*)

“This seems a somewhat strange expression. A similar statement is found in *Psalms 30:12*. ‘To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent.’ Also, note *Psalms 57:8*: ‘Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp.’

“The Hebrew word is the normal word for ‘glory,’ as in Psalm 19:1, for example: ‘The heavens declare the glory of God.’ But what, then, is meant by ‘my glory’? The explanation is found in the way the New Testament quotes Psalm 16:9: ‘Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth.’ In Acts 2:26, this verse is applied to Christ, and translated: ‘Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad.’

“It becomes clear, then, that in such passages ‘my glory’ simply means ‘my tongue.’ In fact, the word was translated ‘tongue’ in these and other similar passages in the Greek Septuagint translation of the Old Testament.

“But why, then, did the inspired Hebrew text here use the words ‘my glory’ instead of the usual Hebrew word for tongue? The answer probably is that, when our tongues are used to praise the Lord, they do, indeed, become our glory!

“It is this very ability, in fact, that primarily distinguishes man from the animals. Animals can bark, roar, grunt, and send out sonar signals, but they cannot speak in intelligible, symbolic, abstract speech. This is an unbridgeable evolutionary gulf that cannot be crossed, because only men and women were created in the image of God.

“Mankind alone has the ability to speak, for the simple reason that God desires to communicate with us so that we can respond in praise to Him. This is our glory! ‘I will sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations’ (Psalm 89:1).” [Dr. Henry M. Morris, *Days of Praise*, Daily Devotional from the Institute for Creation Research, April 16, 2010].

IN YOUR PRESENCE. Jesus prays, “Father, glorify Me in Your presence with that glory I had with You before the world existed.” Jesus is anticipating a full restoration to His pre-incarnate glory, honor, dignity, and authority. He knows He will be restored fully to the position He enjoyed before the Incarnation (John 1:14). “It is small wonder that those who deny or reject the deity of Jesus Christ have trouble with the Johannine authorship of this book and with the genuineness of these words. But even Harnack admits that the words here and in verse John 17:24 are ‘undoubtedly the reflection of the certainty with which Jesus himself spoke’ (What Is Christianity, Engl. Tr., p. 132). But Paul, as clearly as John, believes in the actual pre-existence and deity of Jesus Christ (Php 2:5-11)” [ATR].

## Jesus Prays for His Disciples

17:6 - YOUR NAME. “I have revealed Your name to the men You gave Me from the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.” The word “Name” in the Bible carries the idea of the person identified by the name. Jesus had come to introduce people to the One whom He addresses as Father. He came to make God the Father known to human beings. He had

revealed the Father to the eleven faithful apostles, as He reveals Him to all who believe in Him.

**YOU GAVE ME.** Jesus gave the Father full credit for giving these faithful disciples to Him. They were His by right of creation, and the Father gave them to His Son “from the world.” “The importance of v. 6 is that the disciples have become a strategic link in God’s work. The text states that they have kept/obeyed ‘your word.’ The verb is in the perfect tense, indicating the continuing implications of their obedience. The singular of ‘word’ (logon) is to be understood as a collective for God’s message, the good news or the gospel, and not as a reference to individual commands of God or to the teachings of Jesus” [NAC].

“All men are God’s by creation and by preservation, and he has a right to do with them as seemeth good in his sight. These men he chose to designate to be the apostles of the Saviour; and he committed them to him to be taught, and then commissioned them to carry his gospel, though amid persecutions, to the ends of the world. God has a right to the services of all; and he has a right to appoint us to any labour, however humble, or hazardous, or wearisome, where we may promote his glory and honour his name” [BARNES].

NOTE: Barnes states that “All men are God’s by creation and by preservation.” That statement should never be taken to mean that all people belong to Him in a redemptive sense, that all have eternal life, or that all will go to heaven. It does mean that He has the sovereign right, authority and power to do with them as He pleases. Read Jeremiah and highlight the places in which God tells the prophet to tell the people that if they repent they would be spared the judgment under which his wrath and fury would destroy them. Some claim a loving God would never send anyone to hell, but the truth is that a holy and righteous God cannot overlook the sins and rebellion of any individual, and that individual has only himself to blame if he is cast into hell for rejecting Jesus Christ.

**THEY HAVE KEPT YOUR WORD.** One may wonder how Jesus could say they had kept the Father’s word. Does Jesus mean that they have kept the Word of the Lord perfectly? Obviously, they had not. Had they fulfilled prophecy by following the Messiah? Of course they had, but is that what He means here? It seem more to the point to say that these eleven men had been loyal and faithful to Him, in spite of the fact that they had not been perfect. “He does not claim perfection for them, but they have at least held on to the message of the Father in spite of doubt and wavering (John 6:67-71; Mat 16:15-20)” [ATR].

“The disciples of Jesus had not been and would not be perfect models of consistently following Jesus, but Jesus knew their hearts. Peter is a good example of inconsistency in the sword episode (18:10-11), the denial (18:15-27), and the recommissioning (21:20-22). Yet in his heart he had committed himself to Jesus (6:67-69), was willing to lay down his life for Jesus (13:37), jumped overboard to be with Jesus (21:7), and three times affirmed that he loved Jesus (21:15-17). The disciples were merely human beings, but just think of what God was about to do with them!” [NAC].

17:7 - ALL THINGS YOU HAVE GIVEN ME. *“Now they know that all things You have given to Me are from You...”* He has taught His Apostles and they now know the basics of the Doctrine of Christ. They have a lot to learn, but they had learned the fundamental doctrines. An essential point has to do with the interrelationship between the Father and the Son. The Father is the source of all things the Incarnate Son has received. Jesus was about to depart from the world:

“and he was confident that the disciples would fulfill God’s goal of mission for them. The reason was that they had come to know (the Greek is perfect) that Jesus was the special agent of the Father because everything associated with Jesus had actually been given (another perfect tense) by God. The use of the perfect tenses here indicates that a stage had been reached in the disciples’ lives that (although they would fail) still gave Jesus the sense that the mission of God would go forward when he departed. Not only had he been given by the Father everything/everyone pertaining to his work, but these disciples had come to know that the source was the Father” [NAC].

17:8 - THE WORDS YOU GAVE ME. *“...because the words that You gave Me, I have given them. They have received them and have known for certain that I came from You. They have believed that You sent Me.”* Jesus uses the plural, “words” rather than the singular, “word” here. To Barnes, this denotes the doctrines He taught. “Christ often represented himself as instructed and sent to teach certain great truths to men” [BARNES]. The plural denotes “each word of God, as in John 3:34, and of Christ (John 5:47; John 6:63, 68), while the singular (ton logon sou) in verses John 17:6, 14 views God’s message as a whole” [ATR].

THEY HAVE RECEIVED THEM. Jesus had selected the twelve and had taught them the most essential tenets of the history of God’s dealings with man, from Creation up to the present moment when He stood in the shadow of the Cross. He had taught them theological concepts which they would not fully understand until after the Resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. No seminary could compare to the theological training these men had received. While their understanding was not complete, they have, at this point, received His doctrines “and have known for certain that I came from.”

17:9 - I PRAY FOR THEM. *“I pray for them. I am not praying for the world but for those You have given Me, because they are Yours.”* Jesus is now praying specifically for those eleven men, because they are the nucleus around which He will bring together a force that will carry the Good News unto all the world (Acts 1:8). He came to seek and save the lost, but right now He focuses on those apostles, now minus Judas, whom He has intensely trained to carry on His work when He is gone.

NOT PRAYING FOR THE WORLD. God loved the world so much that He sent His only Son to die for the sins of all the people of the world (John 3:16). However, at this point, He is praying specifically for those disciples He has trained to carry on His work in reaching out to the world, not for future generations of believers, or for the lost people of the world who cannot grasp the

significance of the words He is now speaking. That will come later. “In verse John 17:19 Jesus does pray for the world (for future believers) that it may believe (verse John 17:21). God loves the whole world (John 3:16). Christ died for sinners (Rom 5:8) and prayed for sinners (Luke 23:34) and intercedes for sinners (1Jn 2:1; Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25)” [ATR]. Clarke sees the reference to the world as a reference to the Jews.

“Jesus here imitates the high priest, the second part of whose prayer, on the day of expiation, was for the priests, the sons of Aaron: see on John 17:1. These words may also be understood as applying to the rebellious Jews. God’s wrath was about to descend upon them, and Christ prays that his own followers might be kept from the evil, John 17:15. But he does not thus pray for the world, the rebellious Jews, because the cup of their iniquity was full, and their judgment slumbered not” [CLARKE].

This writer acknowledges that the Jews were headed for disaster beyond anything they can imagine, but that doesn’t necessarily demand that we identify them as “the world” here.

**THEY ARE YOURS.** His Father could rightly and honestly give those who trusted Jesus to Him because they were His by right of Creation, by right of His protection, and by right of His sovereignty. All that belongs to the Father belongs to the Son, and all that belong to the Son belongs to the Father. The Prologue to this Gospel will affirm that.

**17:10 - YOURS ARE MINE.** “*All My things are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I have been glorified in them.*” In teaching, repetition serves a purpose, especially when there is no text book. For three years Jesus taught His disciples in the most intensive school, with the most fundamentally sound theological curriculum ever taught on this earth. Repetition is essential in a situation like that. However, at this point in His prayer He is pouring His heart out to His heavenly Father. He is not teaching His Father, He is praying passionately to Him. At the heart of His prayer at this point is His personal relationship to His Father, and the relationship of His disciples to both the Father and the Son. At this critical moment Jesus acknowledges that “All My things are Yours, and Yours are Mine.” Only Jesus could have ever honestly prayed that.

**GLORIFIED IN THEM.** In what does the wealthy person glory? For some, it is more wealth, or for the fame or the power that wealth may bring. Some donate large sums of money to charity, others use their wealth to seek political power, while others support social causes. We see athletes, entertainers, politicians, and writers who glory in their success. Jesus is glorified in His disciples. When news of Tiger Woods’ infidelity and immorality broke, what was the first concern of his fans and the media? After the initial shock, the question one heard over and over concerned what would happen with his all his endorsements. He acknowledge that he had reached the point that he thought he was special, that he was above concern for those things that guided other people. There have been a string of politicians, entertainers, athletes, politicians, and even a few well known tel-evangelists who have shocked followers by their selfish, egocentric pursuit of pleasure.

Think what it would mean if all Christians today sought glory for Christ with the same commitment some athletes and entertainer seek records, recognition, and endorsements. If that were the goal of all believers Jesus would be glorified beyond anything we could imagine. He would be pushing the ACLU out of our schools instead of their trying to push God out. One other point must be made here: Jesus is glorified by our fidelity, never by our infidelity.

17:11 - NO LONGER IN THE WORLD. *“I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, protect them by Your name that You have given Me, so that they may be one as We are one.”* Jesus was still standing on this earth when He spoke these words, so how could He say He was no longer in the world? His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension were so certain that He could speak of them as having been accomplished. No force in this world could prevent that which was about to happen. He would no longer be walking on earth in His incarnate state.

THEY ARE IN THE WORLD. He was not worried about Himself because His future was as sure and secure as His heavenly Father can make it ordered. Their future would involve tests that would demand a commitment to Him they could not realize at the moment. Jesus was about to depart to be with His Father and leave them “in the world.” His concern is not that they would survive, but that they would do the work for which He had called them and trained them. He had taught them what no rabbi, scribe, or religious leader could possibly teach them; things they could not imagine. Now He prays for them as they stay in this world and carry out His Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20) by spreading the Good News of His salvation throughout the world (Acts 1:8). They would be preaching the Gospel and planting churches throughout the world. They had to stay in the world in order to honor His teachings and His commission.

PROTECT THEM. They would remain in the world to do the work for which Jesus had called them and trained them, and promised to send the Holy Spirit to empower them and guide them. He prays for their protection because He knows Satan, the prince of this world, who hated Christ and sought His death, would motivate the forces of this world to kill them to prevent them from spreading the message of salvation around the world. For this reason, Jesus prayed for their protection.

“The hostility against God which fell on Jesus would now fall on the tiny band of apostles, and subsequently on many of Jesus’ followers. Jesus, in calling on His **Holy Father**, pointed up God’s distinction from sinful creatures. This holiness is the basis for believers’ separation from the world. He would **protect them** from the sin and enmity of the world **by the power of His name** (cf. Prov. 18:10). In Bible times a person’s name stood for the person. (In John 17:6, 26 the niv translates the Gr. “Your name” by the word “You.”)

“Why did Jesus pray for their preservation? It was to promote the unity of the believers, patterned after the unity of the Father and the Son: **so that they may be one as We are One** (cf. vv. 21-22). The unity here seems to be that of will and purpose. By being protected from the world they would be unified in their desires to serve and glorify the Son” [BKC].



**PROTECT THEM BY YOUR NAME.** God has the power to protect those who serve Him. When Sennacherib sought to destroy Judah in the days of King Hezekiah, the Lord stopped him: “that night the angel of the Lord went out and struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians. When the people got up the [next] morning—there were all the dead bodies!” (2 Kings 19:35). Why does the Lord not strike down the Muslims or Hindus who torture and kill Christians? For one thing, He is more interested in saving people than He is in killing people.

The Book of Acts is an inspired historical account of the early spread of the Gospel, the intense opposition which Satan and the world will launch against those who proclaim the message of Salvation. Luke, in Acts, records ways in which the Lord protects those who serve the Lord. As an historian, Luke researched everything of which he wrote. In Paul’s case, Luke was a witness to much of that persecution.

Those who faithfully proclaim the message of salvation today should expect to be persecuted. The surest way to avoid persecution for one who professes to be a follower and servant of Jesus Christ is to blend in with the world. Serious witness for Christ will be persecuted, even in America. They may not be tortured, imprisoned, or executed, but they will be persecuted. If one is never persecuted it may well be that Satan is pleased with the way he lives his life. Tel-evangelists promise that God will make those who follow them healthy, wealthy, and wise. Jesus prays that His true servants will be holy and that they will be protected by the heavenly Father.

**THAT THEY MAY BE ONE.** Jesus prays that His Father will protect His followers “so that they may be one as We are one.” It is the desire, and prayer, of our Lord that His followers “be as one.” Visit the average church and see if you find that kind of unity. Do we not find divisions in churches, divisions according to denominations, divisions according to missions and ministries? Of course we do, but there is within many churches a sense of unity that the world does not understand. Perhaps this is more pronounced where Christians are being persecuted, but there are many Christians who actively seek harmony and unity within the church.

**17:12 - I WAS PROTECTING THEM.** “*While I was with them, I was protecting them by Your name that You have given Me. I guarded them and not one of them is lost, except the son of destruction, so that the Scripture may be fulfilled.*” The verb (*tereo*) is imperfect active, which may be translated, “I continued to protect them.” He is saying that while He was teaching them they were surrounded by the people and the temptations of the world. “Jesus had now finished his work among the men of the world, and was performing his last offices with his disciples” [BARNES]. “Unlike the six other petitions in this chapter, this petition does not contain the usual pater (‘Father’). But there is no question that this verse contains a direct petition to the Father for the disciples” [NAC].

**BY YOUR NAME.** Jesus continually protected them in the Name (the Person and authority) of the Father. In this prayer He pours out His heart to the Father. In everything He has done He has been under the authority of the Father. “Prior to his departure Jesus had protected/kept safe the disciples in/by the name of the Father. This name or power of God in the world was God’s divine gift, and it

reflected a much earlier Mosaic experience on the mountain when God discussed his name with Moses (Exod 3:13-15). It was not to be used as a magical formula, but that name, Yahweh, represented the powerful personal presence of God in Israel” [NAC].

**I GUARDED.** This is the first aorist (constative) active of *phulassô*. Jesus was their sentinel [ATR], just as the guards Acts 5:23 guarded the jail where Peter was a prisoner.

**SON OF DESTRUCTION.** While He was guarding them no one was lost except “the son of destruction” (the KJV has “the son of perdition”). This is “the same phrase used for antichrist (2Thes. 2:3). “Note play on *apôleto*, perished (second aorist middle indicative of *apollumi*). It means the son marked by final loss, not annihilation, but meeting one’s destiny (Acts 2:25). A sad and terrible exception (Mark 14:21)” [ATR]. “Son of” means “in the character of”, so Judas possessed the character of his father the devil, who is a destroyer. “He was a traitor and a murderer. And this shows that he who knew the heart regarded his character as that of a wicked man--one whose appropriate name was that of a son of perdition” [BARNES]. Not only was Judas the weak link among the apostles, he was an “evil instrument in his fulfillment of Scripture. The title, the son of destruction, is also used in 2 Thes. 2:3, but there it refers to the eschatological man of lawlessness. For John, Judas probably was viewed as an early example of such an evil figure” [NAC].

**SO THAT THE SCRIPTURE MAY BE FULFILLED.** Does this mean that Judas was created for this purpose, and that he had no choice in the matter? Robertson notes here that “It is not clear whether this is John’s own comment or the word of Jesus. Not in John 18:9. The Scripture referred to is probably Ps 41:9 quoted in John 13:18 with the same formula *hina plêrôthêi* which see there” [ATR]. While it is not certain which Scripture reference Jesus (or John) had in mind here, “other New Testament texts related to Judas’s actions seem to suggest more specific references such as Matt 27:3-10, which probably refers to Zech 11:12-13 and Acts 1:16-20, which contains a free rendering of Ps 69:25” [NAC].

**17:13 - NOW I AM COMING.** “*Now I am coming to You, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have My joy completed in them.*” In verses 11 and 12 He speaks as though the Ascension was an accomplished fact, and Jesus could do that since the outcome had already been determined. Now, He speaks of that which is about to happen.

**MY JOY COMPLETED IN THEM.** This is a purpose clause. He is praying to the Father in their presence, announcing that He is about to return to His place at the right hand of the Father, and He states that the results will be that His joy would be “completed in them.” When I published my commentary on Philippians (*UNDEFEATED: Finding Peace in a World Full of Trouble*) I told the publisher that I wanted the subtitle to be “The Epistle of Joy”, but he said, “Joy is a women’s word. Men won’t buy it.” I thought about it and realized that it took me a long time to become comfortable using the world joy to express my inner emotions. I preferred the word happy. I had reversed the definitions. The word “happy” comes from the Old English word “happenstance”, and points to our feelings and attitude when circumstances are right to bring relief or cause a celebration. Joy, on the other hand, is abiding.

The words, “ so that they may have My joy completed in them”, are strategically place in our Lord’s prayer. One writer explains it like this:

“The contrast in this verse with what has come before and what comes after is fascinating. The texts on either side are filled with trauma and concern, but this verse is very different. The emphasis is not on the departure of Jesus but on the coming of Jesus to the Father. To speak of that imminent occurrence later must have brought a smile to the face of Jesus and to the faces of the disciples. Crucifixion must have brought concern and sadness, but not the resurrection and exaltation. The glory of the Father was a joyous thought for Jesus, and to speak of it must have been contagious because the text says that his joy filled them. This thought picks up the other references to joy in the Farewell Cycle like the joy related to the birth illustration in the Anxiety ring (16:20-22; cf. 14:28) and the joy the disciples can experience when they abide in Jesus and obey him (15:11). It also reminds us of the friend of the bridegroom who rejoices in the fulfillment of the wedding (3:29) and the rejoicing at harvest (4:36). More particularly, it reminds us of the resurrection, when the disciples finally realized that Jesus fulfilled his promise to bring them joy after sorrow (20:20)” [NAC].

As a pastor, I have stood with families as they waited for their love one to breathe his or her last breath. I have followed up by standing with many families at the funeral home during visitation at the funeral home or church. I have preached the funeral sermon, stood at the head of the casket as friends came by to pay their respects, and then watched the family come forward to view the body of the deceased family member. I have often witnessed the difference between lost family members and saved family members. Some people are more emotional than others, but there is an unmistakable joy in the hearts of Christians who are walking in the Spirit, as compared to those who are walking in the flesh. You can see it in the eyes of a committed Christian and hear it in his or her voice. This is especially true when the family knows their loved-one is now with the Lord. If their family member was not a Christian they are not happy, but their joy is not destroyed. There is an even more telling contrast between committed Christians and lost people.

This is not the first time Jesus has spoken to His disciples on the subject of joy: “I have spoken these things to you so that My joy may be in you and your joy may be complete” (John 15:11). He wants our joy to be complete in Him and He told them what it takes to bring them joy: “This is My command: love one another as I have loved you” (John 15:12).

17:14 - YOUR WORD. *“I have given them Your word. The world hated them because they are not of the world, as I am not of the world.”* Jesus came to bring the word of the Father to them, and He has faithfully proclaimed it to them. One may lament the fact that he or she has not had the privilege of hearing these words from the mouth of Jesus, but we have a privilege they did not have at this time. We have the written Word of God, the Bible, and we may read it daily. Every believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, the divine Author, who illuminates our hearts so that we may

understand the Word and apply it in his or her life.

**THE WORLD HATED THEM.** Often, in reading the Bible, or in speaking of the world in the biblical context, as in a sermon, we must distinguish between the physical universe and the moral world in which we live. Robertson explains it like this:

“They are ‘in the world’ (en tōi kosmōi, verse John 17:13) still and Christ sends them ‘into the world’ (eis ton kosmon, verse John 17:18), but they must not be like the world nor get their spirit, standards, and message ‘out of the world,’ else they can do the world no good. These verses (John 17:14-19) picture the Master’s ideal for believers and go far towards explaining the failure of Christians in winning the world to Christ. Too often the world fails to see the difference or the gain by the change” [ATR].

The sad thing is that the world cannot see any difference between the way many church members live and the way the unsaved people around them live, even though there should be a marked difference between the lost person’s life and that of the believer. There was a sign along side Interstate 20 between Vicksburg and Clinton, Mississippi, May 20, 2010, which read: DO NOT SERVE ALCOHOL TO TEENS. I read, and then repeated it aloud to my wife, Rebecca, who said, “Do not serve alcohol to anyone.” Wouldn’t be a testimony if the lost people of the world could distinguish Christians from lost people by convictions like that? A friend once told my wife and me about a group of doctors who were constantly making comments about a Christian doctor who abstained from serving or consuming alcoholic beverages. They continually offered him drinks at various events. One day, he took one drink, and the next week those same doctors, who pretended to be his friend, were ridiculing him and his faith. They were gloating over the fact that he had compromised. Jerry Ball, who lives in Bastrop, Louisiana, once told me he attended meetings where alcoholic beverages were usually served at meals. When asked what he would drink he would say, “I would like a Coke, and bring it in the bottle.” He did not want to be confused with the world.

A former college roommate at Mississippi College grew up in Arkansas where young people in his church saw nothing wrong with going to dances. One day someone challenged the young people to try witnessing to a lost person while they were dancing. The next opportunity he had, he asked his date, “Are you a Christian?” She said, “No. Are you?” When he told her he was, she stopped and looked up at his face and said, “Then what are you doing here?” When many Christians pray, “lead us not into temptation”, they might as well say, “Never mind, I plan to expose myself to the temptation.” They expose themselves to temptation by dressing “sexy, by watching movies that encourage and exalt an immoral lifestyle, by drinking or taking drugs. Many Christians see nothing wrong with going to gambling establishments, gambling on-line, buying lottery tickets, or participating in games of chance at a Halloween Carnival at the local school. The Lord expects His children to come out from the World and live a different lifestyle, but many church members do not want to appear to be different from the world. Don Antley, a long-time friend and deacon with whom I have worked from many years told me recently that on his trip to China a few years ago, their tour guide was an articulate young lady who spoke English fluently. At one point, she said, “I

became a Buddhist because it was convenient.” Membership in the body of Christ requires a total commitment, and it is never a matter of convenience. Those who attend worship services when it is convenient, speak a word for Christ only among Christians, and take a stand on moral issues only when it is convenient are walking in the flesh. They are not only “in the world”, they may well be “of the world.”

17:15 - I AM NOT PRAYING. *“I am not praying that You take them out of the world but that You protect them from the evil one.”* Perhaps someone would ask why Jesus does not take a people on to Heaven as soon as they are saved to avoid persecution and martyrdom at the hands of a fallen world which hates Jesus and everyone who professes Him. Emotionally, one might entertain such a thought for a moment, but practically, we must conclude that the only people who can take the Gospel to the world are those who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb of God.

THAT YOU TAKE THEM. Jesus was not asking the Father to take His disciples (then or now) out of the world. The Great Commission was given to those who have been born again by grace, through faith. It was not given to the people who are “of the world.” Lost people cannot give a testimony as to the power of Jesus Christ to redeem one from sin, the world, or eternal death. As Jesus came into the world to suffer and die for our sins, He commissions all believers to go into the world with the message of His salvation.

PROTECT THEM FROM THE EVIL ONE. Jesus is praying to the only One who can protect His disciples from Satan, the “evil one”. The devil is the prince of this world. He is real, no matter what liberal theologians may claim. A well known theologian and seminary professor was once asked to write a book on the Doctrine of Christ, which he did. Knowing this man’s position, when I was invited to teach the book in a church in Nebraska, I said, “If you will let me prepare my own study I will come and teach it, but if I have to use this man’s book I will not come.” That pastor said, “Prepare your own study and come on!” How can a man deal with the temptations of Satan if he doesn’t believe there is a personal devil? I taught the study and I was blessed, both in the preparation and the interaction with members of that church.

The “evil one” seek only harm to the followers of Jesus Christ. He does not seek our good, but the great deceiver will try to make us think it is for our good. America was founded on New Testament principles, as David Barton and The WallBuilders proclaim (see his web site and his books), but the world, under the influence its prince, Satan, has continually chiseled away at that foundation. In April, 2010, Franklin Graham was invited to speak at the Pentagon. A Muslim organization which is gaining power in America, protested that Graham believes Jesus is the only One who offers salvation. The Pentagon dis-invited Franklin Graham! They withdrew the invitation, lest they offend Muslims. Thus, a tiny minority controls the vast majority of Americans through fear, intimidation, and by playing on the emotions and professions of those of this world.

It was reported that Tony Perkins, President of the Family Research Council, experienced the same kind of invitation before being dis-invited by the same people. This small minority is able to do this, in part, because of the attitude of the mainline media in America. Of course Franklin Graham and

Tony Perkins believe Jesus is the only way of salvation. He has told us that, and the Bible states it clearly (Acts 4:12). If people do not stand up to this tiny minority they will continue to press their advantage, and as they do Americans will lose more freedoms. The physical world declares the glory of God's creation, but the moral universe is under the control of Satan, the enemy of Jesus and the enemy of all who openly profess Him.

**17:16 - NOT OF THE WORLD.** *"They are not of the world, as I am not of the world."* Jesus states a fact that every believer should understand and appreciate. True believers are "in" the world, but not "of" the world. "Just as Jesus did not belong to the satanic world system (**I am not of it**; cf.

v. 14), so believers do not. They belong to the heavenly kingdom (Col. 1:13) because of their new births (cf. John 3:3). Jesus had prayed for protection for His disciples (17:11)" [BKC]. We are very much a part of the physical universe in which we live, but we are not a part of the fallen world which is under the influence and control of the prince of the world, Satan."

**17:17 - SANCTIFY THEM.** *"Sanctify them by the truth; Your word is truth."* His second petition for His disciples is for their sanctification. Sadly, many who profess faith in Jesus Christ do not understand what He means by "sanctify them." The word "sanctify" does not denote some "second blessing" at which time a believer receives the Holy Spirit. It is not reserved for those who have ecstatic experiences or "speak in other tongues." Sanctification means to be set apart from the world, to be different from those who are a part of, and under the control of the prince of this world. When an individual believer is being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:29) through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, he, or she, is in the process of being sanctified.

**TRUTH.** How is the believer sanctified? He is sanctified by God's truth. "The **truth** is communicated in the **Word**, which is both personal and propositional. As the message about Jesus was heard, believed, and understood, the disciples' hearts and minds were captured. This change in their thinking resulted in changes in their living. The same is true of believers today. As they appropriate God's Word to their lives, they are sanctified—set apart for God and changed in their living in order to honor God (cf. 15:3). God's message set the apostles apart from **the world** so that they would do His will, not Satan's" [BKC, bold in the original].

**17:18 - AS YOU SENT ME.** *"As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world."* Jesus continues to acknowledge the fact that He was sent into the world by the Father. He was obedient to the will of the Father in all things.

**I ALSO HAVE SENT THEM.** Just as Jesus sent His disciples out on a mission trip, He commands all believers to go into all the world (the Great Commission, Matt. 28:19-20). He is sending those faithful followers into the physical world with a message that would save them from the fallen world.

He has warned them of the reception they would get when they went into the world. All of those men who heard His High Priestly Prayer would pay the supreme price for their obedience to His Great Commission, just as countless others would over the next 20 centuries.

**17:19 - I SANCTIFY MYSELF.** *"I sanctify Myself for them, so they also may be sanctified by the truth."* Jesus "consecrated himself to do the Father's will, to become an offering on the cross" [NCWB]. He sets

Himself apart from the world, and He must set His followers apart from the world. Actually, the word translated “sanctify” has two meanings:

“1. It signifies to consecrate, to separate from earth and common use, and to devote or dedicate to God and his service.

“2. It signifies to make holy or pure. The prayer of Christ may be understood in both these senses. He prayed-

“1. That they might be fully consecrated to the work of the ministry, and separated from all worldly concerns.

“2. That they might be holy, and patterns of all holiness to those to whom they announced the salvation of God. A minister who engages himself in worldly concerns is a reproach to the Gospel; and he who is not saved from his own sins can with a bad grace recommend salvation to others” [CLARKE].

**SANCTIFIED BY THE TRUTH.** In His communication with the Father, Jesus is proclaiming a great truth, not only for those disciples, but for all the saints of all ages. His disciples are “sanctified by the truth.” We are not sanctified by an emotional experience, by speaking in an “unknown” tongue, by “other tongues”, by either passing out in a service or by some great emotional display. I once heard someone say, “Sanctification does not have so much to do with how high we jump as it does how straight we walk when we come back down.” My purpose here is not to condemn those who long for, pray for, and seek an affirming experience, such as speaking in tongues, or being slain in the Spirit. What I am attempting is to assure those who see no need for that kind of experience that true sanctification points to the obedience, separation from the world, and holiness of the believer.

Years ago, I listened to a series of recorded messages by the late W. O. Vaught. I was a young man, seeking a greater knowledge of the Word of God and Dr. Vaught had been mentioned to me by a retired seminary president. Vaught had my attention when he declared that unity in the local church was not based on love, as many assume, and as important as that is: unity in the church is based on sound doctrine. Sound doctrine was His way of pointing to “the truth” on which Jesus place supreme importance.

The pastor today must never lose sight of that fact. Jesus is “the truth” (John 14:6) by which all true believers are sanctified. The human personality is intellectual, emotional, and volitional, and sanctification touches us on every level of the believer’s experience. We must embrace the actual meaning of the word, we must be willing to commit ourselves to the work of Jesus Christ, and we can anticipate emotional feelings to one degree or another. Emotions are important, but they must not override one’s intelligence or volition (will).

## Jesus Prays for All Believers

17:20 - I PRAY. “*I pray not only for these, but also for those who believe in Me through their message.*” Jesus has been praying for those eleven apostles (Judas had left), even as He was facing cruel, unjust trials, torture, brutal scourging, and finally an excruciation death on a Roman cross. Jesus, knowing what was in each disciple, and knowing how their faith would be put to the test in the

coming days, continues to pray for them.

**ALSO FOR THOSE.** Jesus now expands the scope of His prayer to include all those people who would be led to faith in Him through the preaching and witness of His disciples in the future. He has prayed for them, knowing that they would pay a high price for their faith in Him. These men would all die a martyr's death but before the last one (John) was dead there would be many thousands of believers left in the world to bear a witness for the Lord.

Knowing that through these men countless millions would eventually come to Him, He now includes all who would come to faith in Him down throughout the ages. "The thrust of Jesus' prayer is that disciples are to communicate the saving message to those who would come after them ('believe in me through their word'--logos). The good news was not intended to be held exclusively (monon, 'alone') by the first disciples. It was to be shared with succeeding generations of disciples. The prayer therefore is also a mandate to mission and to making new disciples (cf. Matt 28:19)" [NAC].

**17:21 - MAY THEY ALL BE AS ONE.** *"May they all be one, as You, Father, are in Me and I am in You. May they also be one in Us, so the world may believe You sent Me."* "The only possible way to have unity among believers is for all of them to find unity first with God in Christ" [ATR]. This was Jesus' top priority as He prayed for His church.

Some people watch tel-evangelists who promise their viewers they will tell them how to be healthy, wealthy, and wise. Some, in print as well as on television, promise health and prosperity to those who will send them an offering as "seed money" to test their faith. One woman, who is apparently popular with many who watch a certain network, reportedly challenged viewers to test God by sending them their "grocery money."

When I was still a young pastor an elderly woman called and asked me to visit her. When I arrived at her house she told me she had just learned that she had cancer and the doctor wanted to operate, but she had turned, instead, to two well known "faith healers" she watched on television. She was asking me to join those men in praying for her to be healed. She had already sent in her "prayer cloth", and wanted me to add my prayers to theirs. Months later, I was on vacation when I received a call from someone telling me the lady was in St. Francis Medical Center in Monroe, Louisiana, and that her condition was critical. I drove back to Monroe, arriving about midnight, and found my way to her room. She had finally given in to having the surgery they prescribed at the beginning, but, as I was told, "when they opened her up and looked, they just sewed her back up." In despair, the woman had turned to men who promised healing to those who would follow their prescription for healing, namely a prayer cloth (accompanied by a check?) and faith in those "faith healers."

Jesus, at this critical time, even as time was running out on His earthly ministry, prayed for His disciples. What is His fifth petition? He prays for unity within the body of believers: "May they all be one, as You, Father, are in Me and I am in You." If this was His urgent prayer for His immediate followers, it was His prayer for believers today. Did the early believers ever know such unity? "This prayer was literally answered to the first believers, who were all of one heart and of one



soul: Acts 4:39. And why is it that believers are not in the same spirit now? Because they neither attend to the example nor to the truth of Christ” [CLARKE].

Why are there so many division within the church today? What is the missing ingredient? Could it that the church is not being persecuted as it was at that time? If that is what it would take to bring the church of the Twenty First Century to the unity of which we read in the early chapters in Acts, would we dare pray for Christians to be persecuted, imprisoned, and tortured today? Sadly, organizations like *The Voice for Martyrs* tell us that Christians are being arrested, jailed, persecuted, and killed today because of their faith in Jesus Christ, but no news agency is covering their martyrdom. Why are we not hearing about their martyrdom? Is it that the networks fear a Muslim reaction? As the Muslims gain a greater voice in America, Christians will lose more freedom to declare the Word of God publically. In April, 2010, as previously mentioned, Evangelist Franklin Graham was invited to speak at the Pentagon, and then dis-invited when a Muslim group objected, stating that Graham believes that Jesus is the only way to be saved. Most of our Founding Fathers believed the same thing!

There was a report on a news spot on a Christian radio station on May 4, 2010, that a street evangelist in London was arrested for stating that he believes homosexuality is a sin. If some homosexual activists in America have their way those who made a statement like that here might in danger of being arrested in the future. No one wants to be persecuted, but should believers be persecuted for their faith, they might come together and pray as the early church did in Jerusalem. Those early believers spread the Gospel with amazing results.

**MAY THEY ALSO BE ONE IN US.** Jesus prayed, “May they also be one in Us, so the world may believe You sent Me.” Jesus is praying for more than a consensus within the fellowship. Various denominations may come together to condemn abortion and to support the sanctity of life, and then go out and fight each other over the doctrine of election, spiritual gifts, or missions. This is not the unity for which Jesus praying. He was praying for the same kind of unity that exists between the Father and the Son. Those early believers were united, not only by persecution, but by their commitment to help meet the needs of those who were being persecuted in Jerusalem. How long did that unity last? Read Paul’s two epistles to the church at Corinth! That church was deeply divided, so what can we learn from a church with such divisions? We can learn what some of the divisions were all about and then allow the Holy Spirit to help us avoid superficial, sinful divisions. If the issue is sin or worldliness, the believers may be forced to separate themselves from those who will not repent so that unity may be maintained within the fellowship. That which binds born again believers to each other is a commitment to the truth (sound doctrine) and love for one another. The Holy Spirit was sent to guide believer so that they can know the truth, to empower them to live holy lives, and to carry out the Great Commission.

**SO THAT THE WORLD MAY BELIEVE YOU SENT ME.** This is a “purpose clause with hina and the present active subjunctive of pisteuô, ‘may keep on believing.’ Beyond a doubt, strife, wrangling, division are a stumblingblock to the outside world” [ATR], and a hindrance to fellowship within the church.

17:22 - I HAVE GIVEN THEM GLORY. *“I have given them the glory You have given Me. May they be one as We are one.”* Jesus continues the thought of the previous verse. There are two themes which are interrelated: glory and union.

Literally, according to Robertson, this is: “And I the glory,” with emphasis on ‘I.’ It is the glory of the Incarnate Word (Bernard), cf. John 1:14; John 2:11, not the glory of the Eternal Word mentioned in John 17:24. Bengel says: *Quanta majestas Christianorum!* Then verse John 17:22 repeats the unity prayed for in verse John 17:21 [ATR]. To Barnes, the glory is in allowing believers the kind of union that exists between Jesus and the Father, and it is glorious to be united with the Lord and with one another. Some believe Jesus has in mind the power to work miracles, the power and gifts required to preach the Gospel of redemption, and the gifts to teach believers sound doctrine. However, we must remember here that Jesus is not just praying for those eleven apostles, but for all believers of all ages (17:20).

“As Christ, according to his human nature, is termed the Son of God, he may be understood as saying: ‘I have communicated to all those who believe, or shall believe in me, the glorious privilege of becoming sons of God; that, being all adopted children of the same Father, they may abide in peace, love, and unity.’ For this reason it is said, Hebrews 2:11, Christ is not ashamed to call them brethren. However, our Lord may here, as in several other places, be using the past for the future; and the words may therefore be understood of the glory which they were to share with him in heaven” [CLARKE, bold added by this writer].

17:23 - I AM IN THEM. *“I am in them and You are in Me. May they be made completely one, so the world may know You have sent Me and have loved them as You have loved Me.”* The New American Commentary offers this comment:

“This fifth petition concludes with a strategic step-ladder statement concerning this indwelling of Jesus in the disciples and the parallel indwelling of the Father in Jesus. The point of this indwelling is that the disciples might be brought to ‘complete oneness.’ The Greek construction here produces an emphatic statement that the NLT renders as ‘all being perfected into one’ and the NIV renders as ‘may they be brought to complete unity.’

“But unity is neither self-generated in the disciples nor their ultimate goal. Oneness is a means to enable the world to realize what God has been doing. The marvelous message is that God sent Jesus on an important mission to the world and that he not only loved his beloved Son but that he also loved the train of disciples who are fulfilling that continuing mission to the world. Accordingly, this verse reflects the significance love plays in the Farewell Cycle (cf. 13:34-35) and particularly in the core at 15:12-17” [NAC, bold added by this writer].

We should not lose sight of the fact that Jesus is praying, nor should we miss the point that He is revealing that He offers us the privilege of a similar relationship to that which exists between the Himself and the Father. He is praying, not just for those eleven apostles, but for all believers of all ages. He is asking the Father to grant believers the privilege of living in the kind of unity and harmony with one another that is not only similar to the relationship between the Father and the Son, but one based on that relationship.

THE WORLD MAY KNOW. He prays that we may be “completely one”, as He and the Father are One, so that the fallen world may know The Father had sent Jesus into the world to seek and save the lost. When the world sees believers whom the Father has made “completely one”, the lost people of the world may see that there is something different about Christians, and desire it for themselves.

By loving one another completely, Jesus prays, Christians are a living testimony that God loves them as He love His only begotten Son (John 3:16). For some reason, I have never forgotten a testimony a fellow student at Mississippi College share with me. Her name was Babbs Sheppard and she loved the Lord and she loved others. Several years later, my wife Rebecca and I saw her in Jackson, Mississippi and learned that she was married to a Methodist pastor and still serving the Lord. The testimony that impressed me so much was an experience that should happen to all believers. A twelve year old girl had called her on the phone after observing her for some time, telling her that “you have something I don’t have. Can you tell me how to find it? Will you tell me about God?” This young girl had observed that there was something very different about this young lady. She sensed that Babbs loved her, and that she loved others. How long has it been since someone has called you and asked something like this?

When I graduated from seminary I worked for a while as a minister to youth at First Baptist Church, Rayville, Louisiana. The pastor was Dr. H. R. Herrington and I shared with him my desire to work through books of the Bible, making notes and adding to them over the years ahead. He came in one day and gave me a box of file folders and encouraged me to get started with that study program. The first book I outlined was the Epistle of Paul to the Romans. I did rely to a great extent on outlines others had previously prepared, but I added points and details as I carefully worked my way through this epistle.

Several years later I had an opportunity to teach Romans a number of time and I began adding commentary to the outline. I used numerous sources in this study, one of which was a commentary, *A Practical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Romans*, by J. P. McBeth. I recall reading at some point in that commentary the statement that “God expects believers to live in the heart of the kingdom, but many live so close to the border line that they look and act like the people on the other side” (my paraphrase).

In 2009, three American hikers were captured by Iran and at this time (May, 2010) they are still prisoners, accused of being spies for America. They have stated that they had gone for a walk and strayed accidentally across the line. One may wonder how that can happen, but a friend told me that if you were standing some places in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, looking toward Iran, there is

nothing but sand. There is no line between the two countries in the area occupied by the Kurds, so hikers had no visible line to stop them. Why these three young people were in Iraq we were not told, nor have we told why they would be hiking near the border. I would not have been there in the first place, but if I had been there I would have been hiking in the opposite direction. However, we are talking about young people, and sometimes they leave their mind in neutral when their feet go walking. That was a serious mistake and they are paying a price for it.

What is even sadder is that so many people who profess to be Christians today have walked on the borderline so long that they look just like the people on the other side; they think like they think, they act like they act, and some even smell like the people on the other side! Some of those professing Christians have never been born again and they are not concerned about it. Some, however, are Christians who have never grown in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18). They are spiritual Pygmies who live for their own pleasure or profit. When lost people observe them they cannot see anything that distinguishes those profession Christians from themselves. There is nothing in their lives that attracts lost people or motivates them to ask, as that twelve year old girl asked Babbs Sheppard, “Will you tell me what you have that I don’t have. Will you tell me about God?”

**17:24 - I DESIRE THOSE.** *“Father, I desire those You have given Me to be with Me where I am. Then they will see My glory, which You have given Me because You loved Me before the world’s foundation.”* With the word Father, Jesus offers up the the sixth petition.” The KJV has “I will”, rather than “I desire”. The Greek word (*thelo*) shows desire (I would like for those you have given me to be with Me...).

**THOSE YOU HAVE GIVEN ME.** Jesus once again speaks of those the Father had given him.

By this He “designates all the believers as the one collective entity given as a gift to him from the Father. This is the same corporate group referred to in 17:2, and includes all the ones who have received and will receive the gift of eternal life. This corporate whole, then, is the universal church, the one Body of Christ” [NCWB].

**BE WITH ME.** This denotes the identity of his will with that of the Father in ‘this moment of spiritual exaltation’ (Bernard), though in Gethsemane Jesus distinguishes between his human will and that of the Father (Mark 14:36)” [ATR]. Another writer offers a different interpretation: “The Lord requests that each one of the corporate whole may be with him where he is—i.e., in glory with the Father” [NCWB]. While it is true that all true believers are in Him and He is in them in the glory of the Father, Jesus seems, to this writer, to be looking ahead to the consummation of all things, or to our glorification when we will be with Him in Heaven and we will be like Him.

**BEFORE THE WORLD’S FOUNDATION.** This is an amazing and revealing statement: the Father loved the Son before the foundation of the world. “There, in the Father, with the Son, they could view the glory which the Son received from the Father, because he loved him **before the foundation of the world.** What a revealing statement: the Father loved the Son

before the foundation of the world! Again, Jesus lifted the veil to give us a glimpse of his eternal, pre-incarnate relationship with the Father (see 1:1, 18)” [NCWB]. Jesus, in the Revelation, reveals Himself to be “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8), so this is not a new concept Jesus is revealing here.

“In this petition Jesus expresses his heart longing (thelo, ‘I want’). That longing is for the disciples, those whom (the Greek is a singular collective) the Father gave him, to witness firsthand the ultimate reality of who Jesus is. To do that, the disciples would also have to reach their ultimate destiny of being where Jesus would be and now is since the resurrection. That destiny, which was described elsewhere in the Farewell Cycle at 14:2 as the Father's house, is the destiny Jesus is said to be preparing for his followers” [NAC].

17:25 - RIGHTEOUS FATHER. “*Righteous Father! The world has not known You. However, I have known You, and these have known that You sent Me.*” Here the righteousness of the Father is appealed to as is His holiness in verse John 17:11. One psalmist wrote, “The heavens proclaim His righteousness; all the peoples see His glory” (Ps. 97:6). Other psalmists praise the Lord for His righteousness. I agree with the author of the material in the NAC who sees this as the seventh petition in this prayer:

“The address pater dikaie (‘Righteous Father’) announces the seventh and final petition in this magnificent prayer. Morris, however, is representative of scholars who seem bewildered by this segment. Indeed, he thinks ‘there is no petition in’ these verses but they are merely ‘something of a retrospect.’ There is a reason for this confusion because the petition is more implied than it is stated. The evangelist has supplied the introductory form for the petition in the use of the vocative pater. Moreover, he has also supplied Jesus' logic for the petition in these verses. Our task then is to infer the sense of the petition” [NAC, bold added by this writer].

THE WORLD HAS NOT KNOWN YOU. The world has never acknowledge the Father as Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer. Paul shows in Romans 1 that men commonly look at that which God has created and then, instead of worshiping Him, worship that which He has created. The fallen world has never known Him, even though He is constantly revealing Himself to all people, through creation, through the Scripture, and through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. In ancient times, people observed God's creation, but rather than worship the Creator they worshiped what He created, including the sun, moon, and stars. In this modern, enlightened age the world denies the existence of God, while religiously celebrating Earth Day. In reality fallen man with all his scientific knowledge is still turning his back to God. While there are animists among us, many who would never worship what God created, still serve that which the Creator created while rejecting Him. Some, the Green Movement for example, seem to be following New Age principles and goals.

THESE HAVE KNOWN. Jesus, returning now to those eleven disciples who are with Him,

speaks: “(1) Of their having received him as the Messiah; (2) Of his making the Father known unto them; (3) Of his purpose to continue to influence them by the Spirit of truth, that they might be perfectly united to God, by an indwelling Savior for ever” [CLARKE]. These apostles, who have walked with Him for three years knew that the Father had sent Him into the world, and John has written of His purpose in sending His Son (John 3:16).

**17:26 - I MADE YOUR NAME KNOWN.** *“I made Your name known to them and will make it known, so the love You have loved Me with may be in them and I may be in them.”* Jesus had made known the name of the Father to these disciples, and to all who would listen to Him. We must remember that the “name of” an individual in the Bible is often tantamount to the person himself. Jesus had made the Father known to them.

**WILL MAKE IT KNOWN.** Jesus is still making the Father known to those who believe in Him. How can Jesus be making the Father known to people today? He sent the Holy Spirit for that very purpose. Robertson notes that the Greek (*kai gnôrisô*) is the “Future active of *gnôrizô*, the perpetual mission of Christ through the Spirit (John 16:12, 25; Mat 28:20) as he himself has done heretofore (John 17:6)” [ATR, bold added by this writer]. One ministry of the Holy Spirit is to convict lost people of sin, convince them of the righteousness available to them through Jesus Christ, and warn them of the judgment to come for those who do not know the Father (John 16:8).

**SO THE LOVE.** Jesus prays, “so the love You have loved Me with may be in them and I may be in them.” It is astonishing “that Jesus asked the Father to love the believers with the same love he had for his Son. Jesus asked that the Father’s love would be in us, and that He himself (Jesus) would be in us. Because of the Father’s love, we are indwelt by the Son” [NCWB]. Prophets and poets may write of the love of God, and mystics may dream of it, but the love the Father has for the people He created in His image can only be known through the Son, whom He sent to reveal the magnitude of His love. This is the love expressed in John 3:16. He is the one way to know the Father, the only way to experience His love personally and individually.

**I MAY BE IN THEM.** What an amazing way to conclude this glorious prayer! “It expresses the kernel of God’s desire, which is to have his Son (the ‘I’) in a corporate people (the ‘them’): ‘I in them’” [NCWB]. Jesus has covered a number of issues in this prayer, and now as he closes it we must see that He is drawing back the veil so we can see the Father more clearly. Just as the veil separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place in the temple was split from top to bottom, Jesus has, in this prayer, pulled back the veil in order to permit us to see the Father more clearly.

Jesus, in this prayer, as well as in the Model Prayer, has revealed the name of the Father (see 17:6,11; 5:43; 10:25; 12:28). This is especially important in light of the fact that for ages now the Jews had been taught to revere the name of the God to such a point that they would not use his covenant name for fear that they might take His name in vain. Jesus reintroduced the necessity of direct encounter with God and reverently referring to God as Father, not some mysterious unapproachable deity. He Jesus also made known to the disciples the nature of God as a caring God of love. The Father to whom Jesus prays is the same God of whom we read in the Old Testament,

who demanded obedience from His Chosen People, but still revealed Himself as a loving and long-suffering God.

SUMMARY: The following notes provide us with something of a summary to our Lord's high priestly prayer:

“Now Jesus was coming to the end of his time with them. The prayer was drawing to a close. The Farewell Cycle was ending. The next chapter was to begin the death story of Jesus. What was left to say? The heart of Jesus has been opened by John. What impression was to be left? What was the point?”

“The world is a hostile place, and the disciples were now to be sent to that world. With what spirit should they go? And what would be their model and resource? Those questions are answered in the concluding words of the prayer, which are both an affirmation and a petition. The spirit of the disciples was to be that of love, not the love of which the world speaks but the kind of love God had for the Son. May that kind of love be in us! And the model and resource of the disciples? Surely not the power structures of the world. It must be Jesus himself. Jesus would act in them after the resurrection through the agency of the Paraclete. That is the reason he breathed on them as God breathed on Adam (cf. John 20:22; Gen 2:7). Jesus himself through the Spirit would be the focal resource of Christians, even though such a resource may seem foolish and weak to the world (cf. 1 Cor 1:22-25). The way of God in Christ Jesus is neither foolish nor weak because, as Pilate would learn, ultimate power is not in the world. It is from above (John 19:11)” [NAC, bold added by this writer].

Barnes concludes his remarks on this remarkable prayer like this:

“This prayer for the church will yet be fully answered; and he who loves the church and the world cannot but cast his eyes onward to that time when all believers shall be one; when contentions, bigotry, strife, and anger shall cease; and when, in perpetual union and love, Christians shall show forth the power and purity of that holy gospel with which the Saviour came to bless mankind. Soon may that happy day arise!” [BANES].

Different people see various petitions in the Lord's prayer in John 17. Some may in fact combine two or more. The NAC divides the prayer into seven petitions, which is interesting when we consider the number of signs, and the number of I AM sayings in this Gospel. My list of petitions roughly parallels that author's list. Jesus prays for:

- 1) He Prays for the Glorification in His Mission (17:1-3).
- 2) He Prays for the Return to Glory at the Close of His Earthly Ministry (17:4-8).

- 3) He Prays for the Protection of His Disciples in Their Ministry (17:9-15).
- 4) He Prays for the Holiness His disciples (17:16-19).
- 5) He Prays for Unity Among His Disciples in their Mission in the World (17:20-23).
- 6) He Prays for the Disciples to Realize their Eternal Destiny (17:24).
- 7) He Prays for all His Disciples, of all Ages (17:25-26).

## CHAPTER 18

In reading John's account of the betrayal and death of Jesus, one is aware of the fact that he skips over a number of things in telling this story. However, the Synoptics (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) have recorded them, and John was aware of the fact that they would be preserved for the church, just as the Old Testament had been preserved for his day. Here is a list of some of the things that are omitted in John's account:

- 1) There is here no kiss by Judas (cf. Mark 14:45).
- 2) There is no mention of the washing of his hands of Pilate (cf. Matt 27:24).
- 3) There is no mention of Simon of Cyrene's help in carrying His cross (cf. Mark 15:22).
- 4) There is no recognition by Judas of his sin
- 5) There is no mention of Judas' death ( Matt 27:38; Acts 1:16-20).
- 6) There is no mention of Jesus being abandoned by His followers.
- 7) There is no mention of the ripping of veil in the Temple (Mark 15:33-38).
- 8) There is no confession by the centurion that Jesus was the Son of God (Mark 15:39).
- 9) There is no mention of the guard at the tomb to prevent the theft of Jesus' body (Matt 27:65-66).

### Jesus Is Betrayed

John, in chapters 18 and 19, records the story of the death of Jesus. Many who read it cannot believe an ordinary Galilean fisherman could write such an exaltedamazing passage, in which we see various quotes, actions, and events so intricately woven together to show that Jesus was actually the One who was in charge of the events, not the Roman soldiers or the Jewish authorities. One writer sees the story of the death of Jesus as

“a most fascinating piece of literature. The evangelist has wonderfully woven together the positive subplots in a synthesizing manner and has integrated in a masterful way the harsh notes of the negative subplots in a magnificent literary framework. The result is that he has created a skillfully constructed symphony on death. These two chapters are a model of clever artistry, to say nothing of the theological finesse exhibited in the development of the argument....Throughout this



story Jesus is shown to be completely in control of the events, even though he apparently possessed no earthly political or economic power” [NAC].

Of course, that writer was well aware of the fact that this is the miracle of inspiration. The Holy Spirit is the divine Author of this account of the life and death of Jesus Christ. The fact is, the entire Fourth Gospel is so intricately woven together that I must conclude that the literary skill here is beyond any human author, especially a formally uneducated fisherman from Galilee. We may begin reading about the death of Jesus here on a positive note. It cries victory, not defeat; assurance, not doubt; hope, not despair.

**18:1 - HE WENT OUT.** “*After Jesus had said these things, He went out with His disciples across the Kidron Valley, where there was a garden, and He and His disciples went into it.*” What does John mean when he says “He went out”? Had He not already left the upper room where He had taken the Last Supper with His disciples? Various writers wrestle with this question. For example, the New Commentary on the Whole Bible carries this note: “All of **John 15-17** was apparently spoken as Jesus and his disciples walked from an upper room somewhere in the heart of Jerusalem to the Garden of Gethsemane, located outside the eastern wall of the city, at the foot of the Mount of Olives (Matt. 26:30, 36; Luke 22:7-13; John 14:31; 18:1)” [NCWB, bold added by this writer].

It seems obvious that Jesus had already left the upper room with His disciples and continued His Farewell Address as they walked from that house, moving east toward the Garden of Gethsemane. In which case, “went out” would mean that we went out from the city toward Gethsemane. The only other explanation is that John is thinking of this as a continuation of His move from the upper room to the Garden of Gethsemane.

**KIDRON VALLEY.** “The Kidron, the modern Wodi en-Nar, is a valley or torrent bed which starts north of Jerusalem and passes between the temple mount and the Mount of Olives on its way to the Dead Sea” [BKC].

**HIS DISCIPLES.** Judas had already left the group to carry out his plot to betray Jesus. The eleven apostles who continued with Him will prove their faithfulness to Him, but only after His resurrection, and after the Holy Spirit came upon them at Pentecost (Acts 2). One point we should underscore here is that John, who was inspired to write this material, was one of those disciples. That is not a matter to be taken lightly. John will close this Gospel with the note that Jesus told Peter what manner of death he faced. Peter then asked Jesus, “What about him?”, pointing to the “disciple Jesus loved”, whom I am convinced was John. Jesus told Peter that if He chose to let John remain on earth until He returned, that was not Peter’s concern. His concern was should be faithfulness to his calling.

This writer has concluded that the comments of Jesus at that point leaves the door open for speculation that Jesus knew even then the amazing role John would play in the spread of the Gospel before his own death. But there is more, and if I am right this is truly amazing. Jesus must have known that John would be the last of His apostles to be martyred, and before John’s death he would

serve a special purpose for the Lord. For one thing, he would, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, write this Gospel account of the life and death of Jesus. He would also write three small epistles, and then after being exiled to Patmos, he would record the Revelation.

I am convinced there is more. If there had been any confusion about which books belong in the New Testament, I am convinced that, as I mention in other places, John could have identified them. He was an apostle, with apostolic authority. He would have had many disciples as he preached and taught people in and around Ephesus. His closest disciples would teach the next generation, and they the next. Polycarp, for example, could say to his disciples, “I sat at the feet of the Apostle John, and he taught me the Scripture.” Can you imagine Polycarp, assuming that he was a disciple of John’s, living and learning from this eye witness to the life, ministry, and death of Jesus, sitting at the feet of John for years without ever asking which books completed the Bible? What believer would pass up an opportunity to ask that question? Bob Thiel, Ph.D, (identified as a COG writer) wrote an article that affirms my convictions on this subject. The article was published in a Christian publication under title: “Polycarp’s Letter to the Philippians with New Testament Scriptural Annotations.” Thiel is He wrote:

“The Apostle John, appointed as one of the original apostles by Jesus of Nazareth, appears to be the last one to die. He also was the last one to write of any of the books included in the New Testament canon. The literature places his death about CE 96.

“According to Tertullian, Polycarp of Smyrna was a disciple of the Apostle John (Tertullian, *Liber de praescriptione haereticorum*) and Irenaeus (Irenaeus, *Fragments from the Lost Writings of Irenaeus*). Irenaeus reports that the apostles appointed Polycarp as the overseer of the Church in Smyrna (*Ibid*).

“Polycarp was a major leader, if not the most important one, of the Christian church in the 2nd century. Although based in Asia Minor, he was the first known Christian leader to go to Rome for the express purpose of denouncing various heretics/heresies and to turn people back to the true Christian church (*Ibid* and Irenaeus, *Adversus Haeres*, Bk. III). Polycarp, according to Irenaeus, denounced the heretics Marcion and Valentinus as well as pointing out errors of the Bishop of Rome (*Ibid*).

“Despite his influence, only one document written by Polycarp remains. Commonly known as *Polycarp’s Letter to the Philippians*, or *The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians*, it dates to ca. CE 110-135). One of the letters more remarkable aspects is its clear demonstration of Polycarp’s heavy reliance on the New Testament.

“While different theologians have varying views on the number of New Testament books that Polycarp either quotes or alludes to, it seems that in his small letter he alludes to Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1,2,&3 John, Jude, and Revelation—which is to say, all of the 27 books of the New Testament” [Bob Thiel, Ph.D]/

I do not believe for a moment that the Holy Spirit could inspire the writing of the twenty seven books in the New Testament, but could not reveal to the early church what those 27 books were. There is no doubt in my mind that all anyone had to do to find out which books make up the New Testament Canon was to ask John. Or Polycarp, for that matter.

ACROSS THE KIDRON VALLEY. Literally, notes Robertson, this is “Kidron ‘of the Cedars,’ thus ‘Brook of the Cedars’ [ATR]. We may think of it as a wady, a normally dry stream bed that filled quickly and ran down toward the Dead Sea in a torrent after a heavy rain.

Vincent translates it “brook”, with the note: “Properly, a winter torrent. Only here in the New Testament. Rev., in margin, *ravine*. In classical Greek it occurs in Demosthenes in the sense of a *drain* or *conduit*. It may be taken as equivalent to the Arabic *wady*, which means a stream and its bed, or properly, the valley of a stream even when the stream is dry” [VINCENT]. The Kidron Valley has been identified as “the modern Wodi en-Nar.... a valley or torrent bed which starts north of Jerusalem and passes between the temple mount and the Mount of Olives on its way to the Dead Sea. David was betrayed by a friend (Ahithophel) while crossing the Kidron and going up to the Mount of Olives (2 Sam. 15:23, 30-31). So too Jesus was betrayed by His ‘trusted friend’ Judas while crossing the Kidron and going to the Mount of Olives” [BKC].

GARDEN. The Greek word (*kêpos*) is found only here and in John 18:26; 19:41; and Luke 13:19. John and Luke do not give the name Gethsemane, but Mark (14:32) and Matthew (26:36) do.

18:2 - JUDAS, WHO BETRAYED HIM. “*Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with His disciples.*” Vincent notes that the events of this verse are peculiar to John. Judas was the treasurer for the group, but he was a thief, stealing from Jesus and the others. According to (John 13:26ff), Jesus identified the one who would betray him to John, but when He told Judas to do what he had in mind to do, Judas left the upper room to carry out his evil plot the others thought he was going out to buy supplies. Instead, he went out to meet the religious leaders to betray the One he had followed for three years.

JESUS OFTEN MET THERE. Luke, who tells us he researched everything of which he wrote very carefully, wrote: “He went out and made His way as usual to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed Him” (Lk. 22:39). Judas knew exactly where he would find Jesus and he would tell those to whom he betrayed the Lord so that they could arrest Him away from the crowds, especially from those who were wondering if He was the Messiah.

18:3 - JUDAS. “*So Judas took a company of soldiers and some temple police from the chief priests and the Pharisees and came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons.*” John passes over the agony of Jesus in the garden, and the fact that He withdrew from His disciples to pray to the Father, possibly because this had been recorded by the Synoptics. We can be sure John was familiar with the Synoptic Gospels. Interestingly, one writer sees Judas as simply another man who commits a common sin, motivated by greed: “Judas was not an unusual monster but a common man caught in a common sin (greed) which Satan used to accomplish his purpose. Judas knew the habits of Jesus, and his deed stands out in black contrast with

Jesus' unselfish love" [BKC]. Is that author right, or was Judas, the "son of destruction" (Jesus' term for him in John 17:12)? If so he was an especially vile man. The answer to that question lies in whether or not he understood Jesus to be the Messiah. The facts presented in the Gospels would suggest that he did not know Jesus in a redemptive sense. He had seen all the miracles, he had been instructed by Jesus for three years, and he had heard Jesus preach the Sermon on the Mount, all of which compounds the detestable nature of his betrayal of the Son of God.

**TOOK A COMPANY OF SOLDIERS.** Judas had agreed to betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver and now he is leading the soldiers and temple police to the place he knew he would find Jesus. They could arrest Him away from the crowds, who might well have protected Him. The religious leaders were not going to take a chance on an uprising that might have brought the wrath of the Roman officials down on their heads.

The HCSB has "a company of soldiers." How many soldiers made up a company (Gr., spira for band or troop)? "Some think that the spira was the same as the Roman cohort, and was the tenth part of a legion, which consisted sometimes of 4200, and sometimes of 5000... But Raphelius, on Matthew 27:27, has clearly proved, from Polybius, that the spira was no more than a tenth of the fourth part of a legion. And as the number of the legion was uncertain, and their divisions not at all equal, no person can tell how many the band or spira contained" [CLARKE]. Considering the problems in marching in that terrain, even with a full moon and torches, a large number of soldiers and guards could not have marched in an orderly manner on that terrain, but more to the point, they would have carefully determined how many men they would need. The leaders were certain the number was adequate. Were those soldiers anticipating a bloody battle, or is it possible that they believed they could arrest Jesus without a battle? One writer who underscores the vile nature of Judas' betrayal of Jesus believes they were anticipating a bloody battle. He wrote, "So the heartless betrayer of Christ took advantage of his intimate knowledge of the Savior's devotional life to lead the Pharisees' hatchet men to the hallowed garden of prayer. But if the armed and lighted troops were savoring a bloody battle and conquest, they would be severely disappointed, for the omnipotent Son of God would voluntarily give himself up" [NCWB].

**LANTERNS AND TORCHES.** Barnes notes that "This was the time of the full moon, but it might have been cloudy, and their taking lights with them shows their determination to find him" [BARNES]. As a youth growing up in the Mississippi Delta, there were many times when I would walk down our long driveway, or on the gravel road near our home at night, usually without a light. The full moon would permit me to see the road, and to distinguish it from the ditch or the cotton fields on either side. I would have seen another person walking near me, but the full moon did not provide enough light to distinguish, or identify, another person without a significant possibility of error, until that person spoke. That was an error these people could not afford to make.

Judas led the soldiers and temple police to the place in the Garden he had often visited with Jesus and the other apostles. There is, however, no mention of the kiss of betrayal by Judas (Mark 14:45).

**18:4 - JESUS, KNOWING EVERYTHING.** "Then Jesus, knowing everything that was about to

*happen to Him, went out and said to them, 'Who is it you're looking for?'*” Half a century had passed since John watched as Jesus stepped out to meet Judas, the soldiers and the temple police, but one can imagine that as he wrote these words he could see it in his mind as if it had been the day before. The soldiers and temple police were well aware of the fact that they would find Jesus with eleven of His disciples, so they were prepared for a fight. Did they have swords or spears drawn when they approached Jesus and His disciples? John, writing over fifty years after the events of this night, is more concerned here with what Jesus was thinking than some of the related details. From the Farewell Address, we know that Jesus knew the hour had come for his betrayal, trials, torture, and crucifixion.

“While He was in Jerusalem at the Passover Festival, many trusted in His name when they saw the signs He was doing. Jesus, however, would not entrust Himself to them, since He knew them all and because He did not need anyone to testify about man; for He Himself knew what was in man” (John 2:23-25).

**WENT OUT.** When Jesus saw Judas and the soldiers, he stepped out to meet them in a manner that would let them know He was not going to resist arrest. The amazing thing here is how clearly we can see that Jesus was in charge, not the soldiers, and not the religious rulers who, following the advice of Caiaphas, were plotting to kill Him. Matthew tells us that Jesus stopped Simon Peter from fighting to defend Him: “Then Jesus told him, “Put your sword back in place because all who take up a sword will perish by a sword. Or do you think that I cannot call on My Father, and He will provide Me at once with more than 12 legions of angels? How, then, would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen this way?” (Matt 26:52-54). A legion was made up of anywhere from 4500 - 6,000 men. Twelve legions of 6,000 would make 72,000 angels. One angel was enough to bring Pharaoh into submission in Egypt, and one angel slew 185,000 men who made up Sennacherib’s army in 701 B.C. (2 Kings 19:35).

**18:5 - JESUS THE NAZARENE.** *“Jesus the Nazarene,” they answered. “I am He,” Jesus told them. Judas, who betrayed Him, was also standing with them.”* They were looking for the man named Jesus from the town of Nazareth, but they did not say this until after Judas identified Him with his kiss of betrayal (Matt. 26:48).

**I AM HE.** He has submitted to Judas’ vile kiss of betrayal. Now, He affirms that He is indeed Jesus the Nazarene. His posture and demeanor must have affirmed His identity even as He spoke these words.

**JUDAS...STANDING WITH THEM.** Robertson translates this, “was standing” and explains that this is the “Second past perfect active of *histēmi* used as imperfect, a vivid picture of Judas in the very act of betraying Jesus. John does not mention the kiss by Judas as a sign to the soldiers and police. Tatian suggests that it came before verse John 18:4. Then Jesus stepped forth and affirmed that he was the one they were seeking” [ATR].

A pastor I knew well was preaching in revival services when he stated that while Jesus was God incarnate, Judas was Satan incarnate. The pastor was questioned later about what he meant. Did my friend really believe that Judas was Satan incarnate? I am sure that evangelist was speaking figuratively. Judas was a human being who was doing the work of the devil. Jesus not only knew what was in every man, He knew everything there is to know about Satan. Satan is still working to get people to deny Jesus, even in the face of the evidence we have in the Bible and the work of the Holy Spirit to convince us that He is indeed the Son of God.

**18:6 - FELL TO THE GROUND.** *“When He told them, “I am He,” they stepped back and fell to the ground.”* Jesus is facing Roman soldiers as well as the temple police, yet He has no fear of them. Instead, when he openly states, “I am He”, they “stepped back”, and as they did so they “fell to the ground.” They did not stumble in moving forward to take Him by force, they stumbled falling back from Him. “It was the glorious effulgence of Christ’s majesty which overpowered them. This would demonstrate that Jesus could have exercised his power to thwart his arrest, but he chose not to” [NCWB]. Clarke captures something of the significance of this second time Jesus identifies Himself to those who have come, with the betrayer, to arrest Jesus:

“None of the other evangelists mentions this very important circumstance. Our Lord chose to give them this proof of his infinite power, that they might know that their power could not prevail against him if he chose to exert his might, seeing that the very breath of his mouth confounded, drove back, and struck them down to the earth. Thus by the blast of God they might have perished, and by the breath of his nostrils they might have been consumed: Job 4:9” [CLARKE].

**18:7 - HE ASKED THEM.** *“Then He asked them again, ‘Who is it you’re looking for?’ ‘Jesus the Nazarene,’ they said.”* As John looked back on this exchange, it must have been especially clear to him that Jesus was the One in charge here, not the soldiers. His hour has come and He wants them to take Him to the religious and civil authorities. He is submitting Himself to them.

**18:8 - I TOLD YOU.** *“I told you I am [He],” Jesus replied. “So if you’re looking for Me, let these men go.”* There can be no mistake about His identity. He makes sure of that by once again identifying Himself again.

**LET THESE MEN GO.** Jesus also makes a point of asking that His disciples be permitted to go free. When we read about Simon Peter’s denial of Jesus we should recall this request by Jesus. It seems obvious from that which follows (John and Peter in the court yard of Annas during the first trial) that Peter was in no danger when he denied Jesus the first two times. The third time when he denied Jesus to a relative of Malchus he may have wondered if the man might cause trouble for him. Peter did not deny Jesus to either Roman authorities or to the religious leaders. He denied Him to slaves, people who had no authority over him. Why did he do that? This writer has concluded that it may well have been the fear of ridicule that led Peter to deny Christ. The worst thing those servants could have done was to have laughed at him.

18:9 - TO FULFILL. *“This was to fulfill the words He had said: ‘I have not lost one of those You have given Me.’”* Jesus fulfilled every prophecy ever given about His coming, His life, and His death. “As the Good Shepherd, Jesus laid down His life for the sheep (10:11). His protection of the apostles was a perfect illustration of His substitutionary atonement. He died not only for them but instead of them. As the Good Shepherd He did not lose any of His sheep but fulfilled His Father’S will for the apostles (6:38) and fulfilled His own prophetic Word (6:39)” [BKC].

18:10 - THEN SIMON. *“Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest’s slave, and cut off his right ear. (The slave’s name was Malchus.)”* It was Thomas who, on an earlier occasion, had said, “Let’s go so that we may die with Him” (John 11:16b), but Simon Peter who drew a sword and swung it at one of the men who had come with the soldiers and temple police to take Jesus prisoner. Was Peter wearing the sword openly, or had he hidden it under his robe? We are not given that information, but one wonders where he got the sword? Was it his custom to wear a sword in Galilee, or in Judea? Did they wear a sword to protect themselves against thieves who preyed on travelers? Or, did Jesus provide all the protection the needed?

We know the answers to some of those questions. In the first place, it was unlawful to carry a weapon on a feast-day but Peter, who must have decided that the enemies of Jesus were posing a greater threat than in the past, armed himself with a sword. “They had two swords or knives in the possession of the eleven according to Luke (Luke 22:38). After the treacherous kiss of Judas (on the hand or the cheek?) the disciples asked: ‘Lord, shall we smite with the sword?’ (Luke 22:49). Apparently before Jesus could answer Peter with his usual impulsiveness jerked out (heilkusen, first aorist active indicative of helkuô for which see John 6:44) his sword and cut off the right ear of Malchus (John 18:10), a servant of the high priest” [ATR].

**STRUCK THE HIGH PRIEST’S SLAVE.** It would be interesting to find someone who believes Peter was swinging at the ear of the slave of the high priest. John was standing there when this happened, so we are reading an eye witness account of the incident, but he was also writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, whose purpose obviously was not to provide the details of this attack. If Peter was right handed, the only way he might have cut off the man’s right ear would have been for the slave to have been ducking to his left to avoid the sword. If Peter had been left handed, it would still have been very difficult for him to cut off his right ear without hitting his head or neck. It would also be interesting to know whether or not this slave was his initial target. Why would Peter launch an attack against a slave of the high priest, rather than one of the soldiers? Was Malchus simply becoming a little more aggressive than the others? Is it possible that he was the first one to reach out to take Jesus into custody?

We are not given the answers to these questions, so we can only hypothesize. What we do know is that John was there, and there is no telling how many people had heard him tell this story in person over the past fifty years. The name of the high priest’s slave reminds us of the many times John gives a little extra information that only an eye witness would know. When Jesus fed the five thousand men, plus women and children, John is the one who tells us “There was plenty of grass in

that place, so they sat down” (John 6:10).

18:11 - JESUS SAID TO PETER. *“At that, Jesus said to Peter, “Sheathe your sword! Am I not to drink the cup the Father has given Me?”* Jesus acted quickly to rebuke Peter and, and possibly to stop this kind of action before others of the disciples joined in this assault on those who had come to arrest Jesus. Jesus had already rebuked Peter earlier this same evening (13:6-11), and now he rebukes him again, this time for not understanding God’s will and purpose in what was happening here. “In spite of constant teaching about His approaching death (3:14; 8:28; 12:32-33; cf. Luke 9:22) the disciples did not understand its need (cf. Luke 24:25)” [BKC].

Jesus told Peter to sheath his sword. Interestingly, He didn’t say, “Throw it down!” Later, Paul would write that well equipped Christian soldiers must take up the sword: “Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is God’s word” (Eph 6:17). He was of course not advocating the use of a literal sword either to conquer the world, or to defend oneself against charges that he is a follower of Christ. It is, however, important for us to know was Jesus was not some kind of peace-at-all-cost wimp who did not believe it was ever right to defend oneself.

Two Jehovah’s Witnesses showed up at my door one Saturday when I was pastor of a church in Bastrop, Louisiana. One was a young black man, who had very little to say. The other was an older black man who launched his attack as soon as I stepped out into the carport to meet them. He pointed to our church sanctuary and said, “You tell your people to love one another and then you go out and kill your brother!” I was a very young pastor and I had not taken any interfaith witness classes in those days, so I asked, “What are you talking about?” He replied, “You tell your people to love one another and then you go to war.” I said, “Our members have suffered and bled and died to keep this country free so people like you can walk up and down this street doing what you are doing right now. They have fought for your freedom to do what you are doing, and as far as I am concerned, a man who won’t fight for his country is like a man who won’t fight to protect his family. He’s not much of a man.” As I said, I was young in those days. Later, I would learn that there are ways to talk with Jehovah’s Witnesses if one is prepared to do so. A member of our church, Jesse Crosby, had two Jehovah’s Witnesses to come to his house one day and the report I receive was that the Jehovah’s Witnesses had a time trying to get away from him. He had his Bible, the Sword of the Lord, out witnessing to them.

Jesus was not some kind of peacenik who is opposed to war. The Prince of Peace (to believers) should be a holy terror to all who reject Him, especially to those who go to against Him. In Revelation 19:15, we are told that the day is coming when Jesus will wage war against His enemies with the sword of his mouth, the world of truth. All enemies will be destroyed.

**DRINK THE CUP.** Of course we now know that the cup which the Father had given Jesus refers to the suffering and death He would experience “under God’s wrath against sin (Ps. 75:8; Isa. 51:17, 22; Jer. 25:15; Ezek. 23:31-33). The words **the cup the Father has given Me** indicated that Jesus saw all the things coming on Him as part of God’s sovereign plan. His rhetorical



question to Peter was designed to prod Peter's thinking. Jesus had come to do the Father's will and so He must now embrace it" [BKC, bold in the original].

## Jesus Taken to Annas

**18:12 - ARRESTED JESUS.** *"Then the company of soldiers, the commander, and the Jewish temple police arrested Jesus and tied Him up."* The company of soldiers, accompanied by members of the temple police, had come to the Garden of Gethsemane to arrest Jesus of Nazareth. Also present was the slave of the high priest, whose ear Peter had cut off when they moved to arrest Jesus. Jesus restored the ear (see Luke 22:50) and identified Himself again at the One whom they sought.

**THE COMMANDER.** This is the first time the commander has been mentioned, but there can be no question that the commander of the Roman cohort stationed at Jerusalem. A cohort consisted of six one hundred man units, each commanded by a centurion. The top military figure in Jerusalem was commanding those who went out to arrest Jesus.

**ARRESTED JESUS.** The commander, to accommodate the religious authorities of the Jews, must have commanded the soldiers to tie Jesus up as soon as they arrested Him, but that may have been their standard operating procedure. They may have tied His hands behind His back. By this time, the disciples had scattered, but John will tell us that Peter and another disciple (John) remained close enough to observe what they did with Jesus. Matthew wrote: "At that time Jesus said to the crowds, 'Have you come out with swords and clubs, as if I were a criminal, to capture Me? Every day I used to sit, teaching in the temple complex, and you didn't arrest Me'" (Matt 26:55).

John tells us that the soldiers tied Jesus up as soon as they arrested Him. As in other cases, these soldiers, and their commander, assumed they were in control. Little did they realize that Jesus was in control, or that they were helping to carry out His plan. "Christ himself or his thousands of angels (Matt. 26:52, 53) could easily have broken the soldiers' ropes, but then the whole foreordained plan of human redemption would have been in jeopardy (Matt. 26:54; John 12:27; Eph. 1:4, 5), so Jesus quietly accompanied the soldiers to his fraudulent civil and religious trials (18:33 ff.)" [NCWB].

**18:13 - TO ANNAS.** *"First they led Him to Annas, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year."* It is interesting that they would take Jesus first to Annas, since Caiaphas, his son-in-law, was the high priest at this time. Some have speculated that they may have come to his house first. However, it seems to me that Annas, a former high priest, had a enough influence with the Roman authorities, and among the Sanhedrin to be able to keep a member of his family in that position for some time. "He had been himself a long time high-priest; he had had five sons who had successively enjoyed the office of high-priest, and that office was now filled by his son-in-law. It was of importance, therefore, to obtain his sanction and counsel in their work of evil" [BARNES].

"The elderly Annas had been deposed as the Jewish high priest by the Romans in a.d. 15, but he still wielded great influence over the ruling high priest, his son-in-law

Caiaphas. For this reason Annas was the first dignitary to interview Jesus (see 18:19-23). Because Annas was usurping the high priestly privileges through his own pride, Jesus answered his questions somewhat tersely (18:19-21) and was promptly punished for his integrity (18:22). Christ's response in 18:23 shows that a Christian defendant in a courtroom setting may rightfully elect to protect his legal rights rather than turn the other cheek. (Notice, however, that Christ did not always exercise this legitimate prerogative—Matt. 26:59-63; Mark 14:55-61.) [NCWB].

18:14 - CAIAPHAS. *“Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was advantageous that one man should die for the people.”* Writing decades after these trials, and the crucifixion of Jesus, John continues to provide such historical as this. Matthew wrote about this: “Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and they conspired to arrest Jesus in a treacherous way and kill Him” (Matt 26:3-4). John has already told us that Caiaphas had made the statement that got this diabolic ball rolling: “it is to your advantage that one man should die for the people rather than the whole nation perish” (John 11:50).

## Simon Peter Denies Jesus

18:15 - SIMON PETER WAS FOLLOWING . *“Meanwhile Simon Peter was following Jesus, as was another disciple. That disciple was an acquaintance of the high priest; so he went with Jesus into the high priest’s courtyard.”* We are not told where the other apostles had gone but two of them, Peter and “another disciple”, whom I am convinced was John were in the courtyard of Annas. John and his brother James had once sought a position of honor in the coming kingdom which Jesus promised. Years later, the very thought of his self-centered ambition back then must have been embarrassing to him. Half a century later, as John writes this Gospel account of the life and ministry of Christ, he refers to himself only as another disciple, or the disciple Jesus loved.

ACQUAINTANCE OF THE HIGH PRIEST. While John often mentions himself in the third person (the disciple Jesus loved, John 13:23; 19:26; 21:7, 20; and again in 19:35, where he identifies himself as writer of this Gospel) there are those who do not believe he could have been the disciple mentioned here. One writer points out that “he has mentioned no circumstance by which that disciple may be known to be John. To this may be added that John being not only a Galilean, but a fisherman by trade, it is not likely that he should have been known to the high priest, as it is here said of that disciple who followed Jesus with Peter” [CLARKE]. He makes a good point, but it would not be surprising to this writer if John had made a point of sticking with Peter. If John is this other disciple, there is no reason to assume that the young fisherman from Galilee knew Annas in any official, business, or social context. It is possible the slave who was the gate keeper recognized this disciple as acquaintance of the high priest. If this was some other disciple, like Nicodemus, we wonder why John did not mention his name.

18:16 - BUT PETER. *“But Peter remained standing outside by the door. So the other disciple, the one known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the girl who was the doorkeeper and brought*

*Peter in.*” The other disciple was permitted to enter the courtyard, but Peter had been stopped at the gate. The other disciple (John or some unknown disciple) went over and spoke to the slave girl who kept the gate and she permitted Peter to enter.

**18:17 - THE SLAVE GIRL.** *“Then the slave girl who was the doorkeeper said to Peter, ‘You aren’t one of this man’s disciples too, are you?’ ‘I am not!’ he said.”* If John was the disciple who gained entry into the courtyard for Peter, it is understandable that this slave would recognize Peter as one of those Galileans who had followed Jesus. After observing him for some time she asked if he wasn’t one of the followers of “this man” (Jesus).

**I AM NOT.** Can this be the same Peter who had so recently declared that he would lay down his life for Jesus (13:37)? Is this the same man who had that very night drawn a sword and cut off the ear of the high priest’s slave? Peter’s denial of Jesus to this slave girl comes as a shocking contradiction to his earlier boast and his action in the garden. “Evidently the other disciple was also in danger (perhaps greater) but he did not deny Jesus” [BKC].

**18:18 - SLAVES AND THE TEMPLE POLICE.** *“Now the slaves and the temple police had made a charcoal fire, because it was cold. They were standing there warming themselves, and Peter was standing with them, warming himself.”* John continues to add these little historical side notes that tell us he was a first hand witness to many of the things of which he wrote. There would have been lamps to provide light for those present, but because it was cold, the temple police had made a charcoal fire. Peter joined others around the fire to warm himself.

## Jesus before the High Priest

**18:19 - THE HIGH PRIEST.** *“The high priest questioned Jesus about His disciples and about His teaching.”* Technically, Annas was the former high priest, but as one continues to call a retired judge by that title, or a former president, “Mr. President”, John calls Annas the high priest. We are not told why they took Jesus to Annas, but he no doubt had a lot of influence on his son-in-law, Caiaphas, as well as the Sanhedrin.

**ABOUT HIS DISCIPLES.** This was the critical part of the charges they would bring against Jesus when they took Him to Pilate. Jesus had disciples, some of whom followed Him wherever He went. The Sanhedrin would have to have some charges that would justify their demand that Jesus be crucified. He had made a lot of disciples, and that was a concern, but the grounds on which He made those disciples was what they would make the issue as they prepared the charges. The obvious purpose in questioning Him about His disciples was to try to find grounds for accusing Him of a planned insurrection against Rome.

**HIS TEACHING.** The second line of questions had to do with his teachings. They were after any kind of charge they could take to Pilate, the Roman governor, and demand that he have Jesus crucified. The purpose in questioning Him about His teaching would have been to find something with which to charge Him with heresy. The Bible Knowledge Commentary helps us to keep this

entire section in focus:

“The events in the narrative in verses 12-27 are like a drama presented on two stages. Stage one was set (vv. 12-14) while the action on stage two went on (vv. 15-18). Then the action shifted back to stage one (vv. 19-24), and then returned to the other stage (vv. 25-27).

“The preliminary investigation of Jesus may be likened to what might happen today when an arrested person is first brought into a police station. Annas questioned Jesus about people who held His views and about the nature of His teaching. If an insurrection was feared (cf. 11:48), these would be normal questions” [BKC].

18:20 - I HAVE SPOKEN. “*I have spoken openly to the world,*’ Jesus answered him. *‘I have always taught in the synagogue and in the temple complex, where all the Jews congregate, and I haven’t spoken anything in secret.’*” Jesus is well aware of the fact that the purpose in this trial, or hearing, before Annas is to try to get Him to incriminate Himself. He is also aware of the fact that He is the One who is really in charge here, not Annas, Caiaphas, or Pilate. He makes no effort to try to avoid the Cross. That issue was settled before the foundation of the world, and affirmed before the Father in the Garden just a short time before this trial.

Jesus exposed the absurdity of questions about His teaching by reminding Annas that He had spoken openly in the two places where any and every person who was interested might have heard Him. He had taught openly, both “in the synagogue and in the temple complex.” Vincent notes that “The best texts omit the article. Render, *in synagogue*: when the people were assembled. Like our phrase, *in church*” [VINCENT].

WHERE ALL THE JEWS CONGREGATE. This the religious rulers knew very well. He had often taught in the synagogues in Galilee and Judea where any Jew might hear Him. He had taught in the temple complex where He was often challenged by leaders of the Pharisees, Sadducees, rabbis, and scribes. Annas is not interested in learning from Jesus. His purpose is to find some trumped up charge that he might use to condemn Him before Pilate, who had the authority to have Him crucified.

“For the temple teaching see John 2:19; John 7:14, 28; John 8:20; John 19:23; Mark 14:49 and John 6:59 for the synagogue teaching (often in the Synoptics). Examples of private teaching are Nicodemus (John 3:1-21) and the woman of Samaria (John 4:4-42). Jesus ignores the sneer at his disciples, but challenges the inquiry about his teaching as needless” [ATR].

Jesus’ response exposes the hypocrisy of the former high priest. He had not taught anything in secret. The people had listened to Him, and the religious authorities had questioned him relentlessly about His teachings and His actions. They had condemned Him for healing a blind man on the Sabbath Day. Jesus’ purpose now is not an exoneration of the charges, for He had come into the world to die for the sins of the world. He will not try to defend Himself in order to avoid the cross,

but His response does expose the vile nature of Annas, Caiaphas, and the other religious leaders who are determined to have the Son of God killed in their misguided effort to protect the worship of God.

18:21 - WHY DO YOU QUESTION. *“Why do you question Me? Question those who heard what I told them. Look, they know what I said.”* Jesus will make no attempt to escape the cross, so we observe two things here: (1) He makes no effort to conform to the theology of this self-righteous, self-serving religious tyrant, and (2) He offers no information that will help Him avoid the cross of the Romans or the wrath of the Jewish religious authorities. He makes one point with two parts. First, He has taught openly, both in their synagogues and in the temple complex, as he has just stated in the previous verse (see also, John 7:4; 8:26; 10:24, 39; 16:25, 29). Second, they might have asked any number of witnesses to His teaching what He had said. In fact, the Pharisees and Sadducees had been following Him, listening to Him, observing His work, and challenging Him, so they knew what He was teaching.

This answer would no doubt cause Annas and his minions to try even harder to have Jesus condemned to death. These self-serving guardians of the Ten Commandment are violating a number of those commandments: Murder, lying, and the first four which deal with our relationship to God. They think they are in charge, but when you consider the entire picture you will see that Jesus is the One who is really in charge.

18:22 - SLAPPED HIM. *“When He had said these things, one of the temple police standing by slapped Jesus, saying, ‘Is this the way you answer the high priest?’”* Jesus’ response to Annas, who was actually the former high priest, enraged a member of the temple police to the point that he slapped Jesus. I assume this means that he gave Him a forceful, painful slap across the face. There is no indication that Annas ordered him to slap Jesus, but the officer must have known he had his approval. Annas, Caiaphas, and the entire Sanhedrin are violating a number of laws during these trials. For one thing, a prisoner should not have been physically assaulted before being officially condemned. This was an outrageous act, but had justice been the purpose of Annas and the Sanhedrin He would not have been standing before Annas at this time.

18:23 - GIVE EVIDENCE. *“If I have spoken wrongly, Jesus answered him, ‘give evidence about the wrong; but if rightly, why do you hit Me?’”* It is interesting to note the condition often introduced by the little word the little word “if” in the New Testament. This is the condition of the first class, assumed to be true. The condition of the second class assumes a statement to be false, whereas the condition of the third class shows that the results have not yet been determined. “Jesus had not spoken evilly towards Annas, though he did not here turn the other cheek, one may note. For the sake of argument, Jesus puts it as if he did speak evilly. Then prove it, that is all” [ATR].

“It was easier to evade the truth or to silence the One who spoke the truth than to attempt to answer the truth. Truth has a self-evident power of persuasion and those who oppose it find it difficult to deny. Jesus pressed this point and exposed their hypocrisy. They knew the truth but loved error. They saw the light but loved darkness (cf. 3:19; Rom. 1:18)” [BKC].

Jesus had every right to challenge them for hitting Him, but there is more to His question. They assume they are in charge. The average prisoner standing before Annas and the temple police, especially one who knew they were urgently seeking grounds to have him condemned, would not have been so bold, but Jesus is not trying to escape the cross. In fact, since that is His purpose, He will be sure they are sufficiently motivated to have Him condemned and crucified.

18:24 - TO CAIAPHAS. *“Then Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.”* John furnishes another historical note here. It would be easy enough to skip over this statement, but Vincent make the point that the best manuscripts insert the word “therefore” after “Annas.” He adds, “The rendering of the aorist by the pluperfect here is inadmissible, and is a device to bring this examination of Jesus into harmony with that described in Matthew 26:56-68, and to escape the apparent inconsistency between the mention of the high-priest (Caiaphas) as conducting this examination and the statement of v. 13, which implies that this was merely a preliminary examination before Annas” [VINCENT]. Accordingly, we should render it, “Annas therefore sent him bound to Caiaphas.” The New American Commentary helps us to synchronize John’s account with the Synoptic Gospels:

“Because the hearing from the high priest’s perspective did not seem to accomplish anything except call into question his own procedural irregularities, the reader gets the impression that Annas turns the task of trying or interrogating Jesus over to his son-in-law, Caiaphas. This verse thus basically concludes the Jewish hearing in John.

“When one compares the Gospel accounts on this portion of the Death Story, it becomes apparent that John focuses his story on a failed hearing before Annas that is not mentioned in the Synoptics. But Mark and Matthew focus on a Sanhedrin (Council) hearing, probably chaired by Caiaphas (cf. Matt 26:57). In all three Synoptic Gospels, Jesus is also struck and in Mark (14:65) and Matthew (26:67) even spit upon in the convened night session. Such a spitting was a degrading and condemning act rendered against someone regarded as guilty in Jewish tradition. But this incident is missing in the Johannine portrait. Neither included are any conflicting testimonies given by witnesses, some of whom claimed that Jesus would destroy ‘this man-made temple and in three days build another, not made by man’ (Mark 14:58; cf. Matt 26:61). Nor is the high priest’s frustration after he could get little conclusive agreement from the witnesses or his questioning of Jesus about whether he was the Son of God/Son of the Blessed One/Christ and received Jesus’ response concerning being seated at the right hand of power (cf. Matt 26:63; Mark 14:61-62; Luke 22:67-69). Likewise missing in John is the tearing by the high priest of his robe (Matt 26:65; Mark 14:63) and his condemnation of Jesus to death for blasphemy (Matt 26:65-66; Mark 14:64). The frustration of the hearing before Annas and Jesus’ commanding serenity is the focus of John” [NAC].

**BOUND.** In verse 12, we read that the soldiers “tied Jesus up,” but now He is bound by the temple police before He is sent to Caiaphas. The soldiers had turned Jesus over to the temple police when

the reached the home of Annas, knowing that Gentiles would not have been welcomed into his home, especially now that they were celebrating a Passover. Jesus had, no doubt been untied before the examination began. Now, the bind him before sending Him to Caiaphas, the current high priest.

## Peter Denies Jesus Two More Times

18:25 - SIMON PETER. *“Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They said to him, ‘You aren’t one of His disciples too, are you?’ He denied it and said, ‘I am not!’”* “In this section Peter denied the Lord for the second and third times. His betrayal is reported in all four Gospels, which indicates something of the importance the Gospel writers saw in this defection by the man who was often looked to as their leader. “Since all men fail and even many noted Christians stumble greatly, the record of Peter’s denials (and his subsequent restoration; cf. chap. 21) is of great pastoral comfort” [BKC]. If one wonders why this account is related in all four Gospels, we must remind ourselves that the purpose of the Scripture is to glorify God, not any human being.

The Old Testament student may wonder why the Scripture records the story of David’s sin with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah the Hittite, her husband (2 Sam. 11:3). David is called a man after God’s own heart, but that image may seem to be tarnished by his sins. Why is that story included in the Scripture? I remember asking why that question myself. Then, as I read the account of all the other kings and found that they were all compared to David. I asked myself, “Did God not remember the sins of David?” The answer to that question is clear enough: No! God did not remember David’s sin in any judicial sense. He could recall it historically, but once He had forgiven him, he did not remember those sins in any way that would effect His relationship with the man with whom He had entered a special covenant (The Davidic Covenant, 2 Samuel 7). Psalm 51 is David’s inspired song of repentance, and Psalm 32 records his celebration after the Lord had forgiven him. The Scripture was not written to glorify David any more than the Gospels were written to glorify Peter.

John continues to give an inspired, yet an eye witness account of events leading up to the charges the religious leaders would make against Jesus before Pilate. The others wrote about it, and there is no doubt Peter’s denial was common knowledge among the saints, especially those in Judea and Galilee. It was cold, so a member of the temple police built a charcoal fire and the those in the courtyard were warming themselves by it when a slave girl asked him if he was not a follower if Jesus. Peter denied knowing Jesus for the first time (John 18:17).

STANDING AND WARMING HIMSELF. John tells us that Peter was still standing with the servants (slaves, HCSB) warming himself by the fire (18:18). The words, “was standing and warming himself” are the same words found in verse 18. “John alone gives the examination of Jesus by Annas (John 18:19-24) which he places between the first and the second denials by Peter. Each of the Four Gospels gives three denials, but it is not possible to make a clear parallel as probably several people joined in each time” [ATR]. According to Luke, the second denial came about an hour after the first one (see Luke 22:59). “The question and answer are almost identical with verse

John 18:17 and ‘put in a form which almost suggested that Peter should say ‘No’ (Bernard), a favourite device of the devil in making temptation attractive” [ATR].

**I AM NOT!** Peter’s denial carries all the passion of one who believes such passion will persuade others to believe him. Cop shows on television show criminals denying their guilt with such passion that we tend to believe them: “I didn’t have anything to do with it. I can prove I wasn’t even there!”

Then the officer produces the drugs and the man hangs his head. Peter is adamant, “I am not!”

A question came to mind as I studied this passage: did Peter deny Jesus in the presence of the other disciple? That would be especially interesting if that other disciple was John. Remember that the other disciple, because he was known to the high priest was permitted to enter the court yard of Annas, but Peter was stopped at the door (see 18:15-17). The other disciple went back to the door and asked the doorkeeper to let Peter enter. The report follows Peter’s denial, but neither John nor the Synoptics tell us where the other disciple was when Peter denied Jesus. Though Peter’s denial was well known to the early church, John once again writes as one who was there. The question is, was John standing near enough to hear Peter deny Jesus? Would Peter have denied the Lord in the presence of John? If so, he must have been shocked at the first denial of Jesus. Those accused of a crime commonly deny their guilt in the presence of others who are aware of their guilt, but Peter is not even being accused of a crime.

I have another question. Peter had denied Jesus the first time before Jesus was questioned by Annas, but now Jesus has been sent to Caiaphas. Did Peter deny Jesus after He had been taken away to appear before Caiaphas? That could hardly have been the case. Luke tells us that Peter denied Jesus to the woman (the doorkeeper), and then to a man, and then the third time he adamantly declared, “Man, I don’t know what you’re talking about!” Immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed. Then the Lord turned and looked at Peter” (Luke 22:60-61, bold added by this writer).

How do we reconcile the various accounts? We study them individually, and then compare them. When we do, we see no effort on the part of the Gospel writers to manufacture evidence, to synchronize the events, or to coordinate the time. We may first question the differences, but then we should come to see that there is no hint of collusion or deception. How then can we explain this seeming contradiction? Perhaps Annas gave the order to take Jesus to Caiaphas, but there has been a delay in carrying out the order.

**18:26 - ONE OF THE HIGH PRIEST’S SLAVES.** *“One of the high priest’s slaves, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, said, ‘Didn’t I see you with Him in the garden?’”* Once again, John provides us with that little extra bit of information that reminds us he was an eye witness to the events surrounding the arrest, trials, and crucifixion of Jesus Christ. There is no doubt in my mind that John was familiar with the Synoptics, and I am convinced that John was kept alive to record this Gospel account, the three epistles that bear his name, and the Revelation. He was also the final disciple of Jesus who could speak with apostolic authority to his disciples and answer the questions of men like Polycarp. With that in mind, is it not reasonable that before his death he could have identified the books that made up the New Testament? Generations later, religious leaders may have



struggled with this issue, but I do not believe John had any doubts about it.

John tell us that the man who asked Peter if he was with Jesus in the garden was a relative of Malchus, another slave of Annas. That tells us this slave was with Malchus at the time they went out to arrest Jesus. It was dark in the garden, except for the torches, so the man could not be sure. Whatever motivated Peter to deny Jesus the other times, this charge by a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off must have been a shock to him. Would he be attacked by that relative? This question must have shocked Peter to the core of his being. So how will he respond to this question?

18:27 - PETER DENIED IT. *“Peter then denied it again. Immediately a rooster crowed.”* Just as Jesus had prophesied, Peter denied Christ three times. This time the question was shocking, and the original shows that the relative of Malchus anticipated “an affirmative answer by the use of ouk, not mê as in verses John 18:17, 25, but Peter’s previous denials with the knowledge that he was observed by a kinsman of Malchus whom he had tried to kill (verse John 18:10) drove him to the third flat denial that he knew Jesus, this time with cursing and swearing (Mark 14:71; Mat 26:73)” [ATR]. Those who watch programs which feature law enforcement officers questioning a suspect before they make an arrest, programs like CSI New York, CSI Miami, or Cops, have seen that those accused of a crime usually deny that they are guilty. Sometimes they curse, take an oath, or claim they were somewhere else. You listen to them and you may be convinced that they may not be guilty, but the police officers arrest the suspect and when they search him they produce a little packet containing an illegal drug.

When I was in the sixth grade I had done something and the teacher, Miss Jackson, confronted me with it. I denied it, but she continued to confront me with whatever the issue was. I remember being determined that I, once I had denied my guilt, I would stick with the denial, no matter what evidence she had. After we had gone through the accusation and denial steps three or four times, I recalled something I had heard other students say, and decided that my last shot at getting out of trouble might be to employ their method of denying guilt. I had heard fellow students say, “I SWEAR I didn’t do it!” So, I surprised myself by saying, “I SWEAR I didn’t do it!” It didn’t work, but the Lord convicted me of my sin and to this day I have never forgotten how it felt to realize how I had lied and then tried to prove the lie by saying, “I swear” I wasn’t guilty.

IMMEDIATELY. As soon as the lie left Peter’s mouth, the rooster began crowing. Matthew records it like this: “I assure you,” Jesus said to him, **“tonight—before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times!”** (Matt 26:33-34, bold added by this writer). Once again, Jesus’ prophesy was right on target.

1) Matthew recorded Peter’s denial of Jesus like this: “Then he started to curse and to swear with an oath, ‘I do not know the man!’ Immediately a rooster crowed, and Peter remembered the words Jesus had spoken, ‘Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.’ And he went outside and wept bitterly” (Matt 26:74-75).

2) Luke wrote: “ But Peter said, “Man, I don’t know what you’re talking about!” Immediately, while

he was still speaking, a rooster crowed” (Luke 22:60, bold added by this writer).

3) Mark tells us that the rooster crowed twice: “But he denied it: “I don’t know or understand what you’re talking about!” Then he went out to the entryway, and a rooster crowed” (Mark 14:68, bold added by this writer).

There was nothing magic about a rooster crowing, as those of us who were raised on a farm can attest. The rooster’s crow announces that dawn is approaching. There is also nothing unusual in a rooster crowing more than one time. For an hour or more, Peter was focused on what the slaves around this courtyard fire were saying, but the crowing of the rooster shocked him to the depth of his heart. He who had insisted both first and the loudest that he would follow Jesus, even if it cost him his life, had denied Him with curses and oaths.

For the third time, Peter denied being a follower of Jesus of Nazareth. How could he, of all people, have denied Jesus Christ? I have some thoughts on that. Some twenty years ago, I visited a Sunday School class one time and listened to a man teaching a group of older children. He asked, “Why did Peter deny Christ?” He waited only a matter of seconds before answer his own question: “He was scared, wasn’t He?” I was a little disappointed because I had only recently preached on the subject, “Why Peter Denied Christ.” I became convinced years ago that when Peter denied Jesus, there was more to it than physical cowardice. All of the disciples had to be wondering what was going to happen to them. People, like Thomas, who had been prepared to go to Jerusalem and die with Jesus had deserted Him. Since Jesus had secured their freedom, of what were they afraid?

I remember the feeling I had I first time I walk out onto a football field in a game and lined up to await the kick-off, with the realization that I might be the one to receive the ball. It surprised me to discover that I had “butterflies” in my stomach. I didn’t understand why, because I knew I was not afraid of any player on the other team. The instant the ball was kicked we went into action and that fear I had experienced never returned. Of what was I afraid, if not fear of being injured by someone on the other team? Well, in time I realized that there is more to this fear than I had ever considered. There was the fear that if I dropped the ball I would be letting my teammates down, but I was also aware of the fact that there were fans who would be a witness to it if I dropped the ball, or if I missed a block that might cost us the game. I loved the physical contact, but for a moment, I did experience some kind of fear. I could not identify it or understand it at the time.

A soldier might fight valiantly on the battle field in Iraq or Afghanistan, but return to his home community and shake in his boots at the thought of witnessing to a 12 year old boy. Simon Peter denies Jesus for the third time, but in the Garden just a little while before this he had drawn his sword and cut off the ear of Malchus, the slave of the high priest. That does not sound like cowardice, does it? Here are some reasons I do not accept the fact that Peter was a coward:

- 1) He had hidden away a sword to defend Jesus.
- 2) He had made his living fishing on the Sea of Galilee, which took a certain kind of courage.
- 3) His own life was not in danger (see John 18:8).

- 4) Peter would risk his life by preaching to multitudes in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost.
- 5) He would stand with John before the Sanhedrin and say, “We must obey God, not man.”
- 6) He would go to jail for preaching the Gospel, and refuse to be silenced.
- 7) He would die on a cross for the One he would deny this very night?

My answer is that Peter denied Jesus out of another kind of fear, the fear of ridicule. His life was not in danger when he denied Jesus, unless he feared retaliation by the relative of Malchus when he denied the Lord for the third time. Jesus has secured his freedom, for one thing. For another, He denied Christ to slaves, not to anyone in authority. What is the worst they could have done to him? They might have laughed at him, or they might have called him a fool for following the man who was about to be condemned. Peter would overcome that fear after He was filled with the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, but that does not mean that he never had to deal with it again. Paul would later rebuke Peter to his face in Antioch of Syria for withdrawing from a meal with Gentiles when a group of Jews from Jerusalem showed up there (Gal. 2:11). Just as Peter repented after denying Jesus, there is no doubt that he repented after his cowardly act in Antioch. When we fail to witness for Jesus for some reason, we must repent and ask for His forgiveness and depend on the Holy Spirit to empower us, encourage us, and motivate us, just as Jesus promised in Acts 1:8.

## Jesus Stands before Pilate

Jesus had been subjected to three religious trials. He had stood before (1) Annas, (2) Caiaphas, and (3) the Sanhedrin. Now He faces three civil trials as He appears before (1) Pilate, (2) Herod, and then (3) before Pilate again. The three religious trials were in violation of Jewish law because they were held in the middle of the night when the Sanhedrin was not supposed to convene. They approached Pilate’s Jerusalem residence in Jerusalem with murder in their hearts, but they would not defile themselves by entering the residence of a Gentile.

**18:28 - FROM CAIAPHAS TO THE GOVERNOR’S HEADQUARTERS.** *“Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to the governor’s headquarters. It was early morning. They did not enter the headquarters themselves; otherwise they would be defiled and unable to eat the Passover.”* John may have started out as a simple fisherman, and his Greek may never have become as polished as that of Paul, who was a Hellenistic Jew, but the Fourth Gospel is something of a literary masterpiece, not because of the vocabulary or Greek grammar, but because of the organization and presentation.

“Following the pattern from the previous section of interweaving stories in order to produce an integrated picture of the dynamics involved in interrogative hearings and trials, the evangelist in this section skillfully balances Pilate’s interrogation of Jesus with the Jewish charges and indictments leveled against Jesus. The means John uses is to alternate the scenes once again in a repeated pattern but this time from outside to inside Pilate’s hearing chambers” [NAC].

John had no doubt told this story countless times in and around Ephesus for decades. His account

has the tone of an eye witness, but we must remind ourselves that this Scripture is a testimony to the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

The secular scholar would love to have four detailed accounts of the death of any historical figure from that period. The first three Gospels, the Synoptics, were written at a time when many people would have known if they didn't get it right. John was written at a time when Church leaders knew the story from the Synoptics. He was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write the story of the life, teachings, and death of Jesus from a different perspective. The Holy Spirit, who inspired all Scripture, knew that He had the power to preserve the Scripture He inspired, and He has certainly done that. There are countless millions of copies of the Word of God, printed in many different languages and dialects in the world today. John is the evangelistic Gospel, so his purpose is not to produce another account that perfectly parallels the Synoptics. This is an amazing account of the trials of Jesus before the Roman governor of the area.

**IT WAS EARLY MORNING.** John continues to provide us with details that attest to the accuracy of the testimony. He does not tell us what happened in the trial before Caiaphas, or in the trial before the Sanhedrin. Matthew left out the trial before Annas: "Those who had arrested Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders had convened" (Matt 26:57).

Luke tells us of the trial before the Sanhedrin: "When daylight came, the elders of the people, both the chief priests and the scribes, convened and brought Him before their Sanhedrin" (Luke 22:66). That reveals that all the religious trials were illegal. They were held before dawn, which violated their law.

**THE GOVERNORS HEADQUARTERS.** Others translate it "to the praetorium." This was the house where Pilate lodged while he was in Jerusalem for one of the festivals.

"The praetorium where they led Jesus was the official headquarters, judgment seat, and command center of the military leader in an area. In the sub-province of Judea and Samaria the governor's headquarters was normally at Caesarea Maratima (by the sea), but during festival periods, which attracted flocks of visitors to Jerusalem, the governor moved his command center to Jerusalem, either to the Antonia Fortress north and next to the Temple or to the site of Herod's palace with its three great towers that served as part of the defense system for the Western (Jaffa) Gate. The most likely site for this stay by Pilate was not the Antonia (and the Lithostroton) but the great triple tower fortress palace" [NAC].

**THEY DID NOT ENTER THE HEADQUARTERS.** How ironic! With murderous rage and determination, they would bribe, lie, and break their laws to frame Jesus, but they would not defile themselves by entering a Gentile facility during the Passover festival. John explains that "They did not enter the headquarters themselves; otherwise they would be defiled and unable to eat the Passover."

"The Mishnah Ohol., 7-10 suggests that courtyards and some other outlying buildings

did not always come within the definition of Gentile places where Jews would be contaminated and rendered religiously unclean. Although the laws of clean and unclean in respect to eating the Passover were complex, it seems that entering the residence of a Gentile would have been a major problem and would likely have rendered a Jew unclean for at least seven days and required the postponement of eating Passover for a month. The basic logic seems to have grown out of an interpretation of the rule of contamination from the dead in Num 19:11-13. It was widely believed that Gentiles aborted babies in their homes and either buried them within their homes or ran them down through their sewers. The uncleanness here was hardly the usual uncleanness of public encounter that could by sunset have been removed through a regular lustration or bath as an appropriate purification rite (cf. Lev 15:5-11)" [NAC].

18:29 - PILATE CAME OUT. *"Then Pilate came out to them and said, 'What charge do you bring against this man?'"* The Holman Bible Dictionary carries the following information on Pilate (given in its entirety for the benefit of the reader of this material who may not have access to the HBD):

"Roman governor of Judea remembered in history as a notorious anti-Semite and in Christian creeds as the magistrate under whom Jesus Christ "suffered" (1 Tim 6:13). The New Testament refers to him as "governor," while other sources call him "procurator" or "prefect" (an inscription found in Caesarea in 1961). Pilate came to power about A.D. 26, close to the time when two of his contemporaries, Sejanus in Rome and Flaccus in Egypt, were pursuing policies apparently aimed at the destruction of the Jewish people. Pilate's policies were much the same. His procuratorship consisted of one provocation of Jewish sensibilities after another. He broke all precedent by bringing into Jerusalem military insignia bearing the image of Caesar in flagrant defiance of Jewish law. He removed them only when the Jews offered to die at the hands of his soldiers rather than consent to such blasphemy. He brutally suppressed protest by planting armed soldiers, disguised as civilians, among the Jewish crowds. Against such a backdrop, it is not hard to understand the reference in Luke 13:1 to "The Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifice (NIV)." Pilate was finally removed from office as the result of a similar outrage against Samaritan worshipers who had gathered on Mount Gerizim, their holy mountain, to view some sacred vessels which they believed Moses had buried there. When the Samaritans complained to Vitellius, the governor of Syria, Pilate was ordered to Rome to account for his actions to the emperor and is not mentioned again in reliable contemporary sources.

'In view of his record, it is surprising that Pilate allowed himself to be pressured by a group of Jewish religious authorities into allowing Jesus to be executed. A possible explanation is that he already felt his position in the empire to be in jeopardy (note the threat implicit in John 19:12)" [HBD. Note: this is part of a longer article found

in the Holman Bible Dictionary, and it while the reader may look up the entire article, this writer has included the lengthy note so that the reader is not forced to continually leave this page to look up information and then return to it].

Since the religious leaders could not go inside to meet Pilate he went out to meet them (18:28). Robertson explains: “Went out (exêlthen exô). Note both ex and exô (went out outside), since the Sanhedrin would not come into Pilate’s palace. Apparently on a gallery over the pavement in front of the palace (John 19:13)” [ATR]. Pilate had to know why the Jews would not enter His home of a Gentile court building on one of their holy days. He understood that they were determined to have Jesus killed on trumped up charges, but they would not defile themselves by entering the residence of a Gentile. Some see this as an act of condescension on his part, “but, as the Romans had confirmed to the Jews the free use of all their rites and ceremonies, the governor could not do less than comply with them in this matter”[CLARKE]. The governor may have been obligated to comply, but he didn’t have to like it.

Today, we may wonder why Pilate condescended to going out to meet these Jews who refused to defile themselves on a holy day by entering into his residence. What could these Jews have done if he had refused to see them? They could have fired off letters to Caesar, accusing him of failing to hear charges against an enemy of Rome. Caesar would have had someone to investigate Pilate if he had refused to meet with these people. Too many charges and Pilate might be replaced. The Jews were masters at such matters.

**WHAT CHARGES?** The Greek show that Pilate immediately asked for the formal charges against Jesus (see 1Tim. 5:19; Titus 1:6). “Pilate, the Roman governor, sensed the religious jealousy of Christ’s accusers and pressed them for a bona fide charge of criminality against their captive” [NCWB]. The governor was not interested in some religious squabble, so he cuts to the chase by asking for formal charges against Jesus. They would not have appeared before Pilate without formal charges, especially on this holy day. The word John uses (kategorian) denotes a formal charge. “The use of this term by John probably strengthens the view that the ‘hearing’ by Annas served to provide an indictment, although it is not clear, according to John, what may have occurred with Caiaphas (but contrast the reference to Caiaphas in Matt 26:57 at the beginning of the hearing scene in that Gospel)” [NAC].

**18:30 - THEY ANSWERED.** “*They answered him, ‘If this man weren’t a criminal, we wouldn’t have handed Him over to you.’*” It helps to read this in a Harmony of the Gospels in order to follow all four accounts of these trials. Their response suggests that they knew Pilate was demanding official charges, not a general condemnation of the prisoner. Their attitude seems to be: we are the religious leaders of the Jews, so do you think we, the Sanhedrin, would have appeared here unless we had formal charges to bring against this man? Luke wrote: “They all asked, ‘Are You, then, the Son of God?’ And He said to them, ‘You say that I am.’ ‘Why do we need any more testimony,’ they said, ‘since we’ve heard it ourselves from His mouth?’” (Luke 22:70-71). Matthew adds: “Then the high priest tore his robes and said, ‘He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? Look, now you’ve heard the blasphemy!’” (Matt. 26:65).

“In Luke the earlier hearing is clearly defined as a meeting of the Sanhedrin (22:66), and the charge in that scene would be akin to blasphemy (Luke 22:70-71; cf. Matt 26:65). But then Luke says the whole Sanhedrin came over to Pilate, and there they introduced the entire situation with a shift in the charge to treasonable offenses (Luke 23:1-2). In John the story seems to be crafted by the evangelist in stages so that the reader is engaged by the movement of the story. Pilate in this Gospel asked for the charge. The immediate response is not a statement of the charge but an accusation of Jesus being a criminal or literally ‘one who does evil’ [NAC].

**18:31 - JUDGE HIM ACCORDING TO YOUR LAW.** *“So Pilate told them, ‘Take Him yourselves and judge Him according to your law.’ ‘It’s not legal for us to put anyone to death,’ the Jews declared.”* Pilate didn’t get to be the Roman governor by being naive. He knew all too well what these Jewish religious leaders wanted, and probably resented their disturbing him this early in the morning. He knew they had the authority to try their prisoner themselves and sentence Him for anything that did not involve the death penalty. *“Pilate’s words display great practical shrewdness in forcing the Jews to commit themselves to the admission that they desired Christ’s death”[VINCENT].*

Some write about this as though Pilate was not aware of the identity of this prisoner, and they may be right. However, the Romans did not govern any land without having their finger on the pulse of the populace, especially their leaders. He may well have had spies mingling with the crowds and bringing him reports of what was going on at this religious festival. Rome permitted the Sanhedrin to deal with religious, moral, and civil issues without bothering the Roman governor with them. The only authority they did not have was the right to pass the death sentence, so when the governor saw the Sanhedrin and their followers with their prisoner he knew they were determined to see this prisoner crucified.

According to Josephus, Pilate and the Jewish authorities were not on the best of terms, so Pilate, knowing what these people wanted, and probably resenting both the fact that these piously arrogant Jewish authorities remained outside in the court yard because they believed they would be defiled by entering the home of court of a Gentile, and knowing they would settle for nothing less than the death of their prisoner, forces their hand by making them demand that he pass the death penalty for their prisoner.

**NOT LEGAL.** They responded to the suggestion that they should try Jesus themselves by saying, “It’s not legal for us to put anyone to death.” There can be no question about it now: he has forced them to admit that they want this prisoner crucified. Nothing else would satisfy them. “The Jewish leaders probably expected that if the Romans had helped in Jesus’ arrest (cf. 18:3,12) Pilate would accept any decision they would make concerning him and ‘rubber stamp’ their views. Accordingly, the Jewish leaders would not be put off by this dismissive attempt of Pilate. Instead, they called for dealing with Jesus by means of Roman law because their hostility against him could only be assuaged by a sentence of death” [NAC].

**18:32 - SO THAT JESUS’ WORDS.** *“They said this so that Jesus’ words might be fulfilled*

*signifying what sort of death He was going to die.*” What specifically, did John have in mind when he penned these words? Of course, this goes beyond human reason or conception, so the real question is, what did the Holy Spirit have in mind when He inspired John to write them? The traditional (and scriptural) Jewish form of capital punishment was stoning, whereas the Romans method was crucifixion. John’s statement here may refer to verses like John 3:14: “Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up.” Another time, Jesus prophesied, “As for Me, if I am lifted up from the earth I will draw all [people] to Myself” (John 12:32). John explains, “He said this to signify what kind of death He was about to die” (John 12:33). The Old Testament reference behind it is most likely Deut. 21:23, where it states that anyone who was hung on a tree would be under the curse of God. The idea of lifting up and/or hanging on a tree no doubt refers to crucifixion, the Roman method of execution rather than the Jewish punishment of stoning. Why would it matter what method of execution would be used to kill the Lamb of God? I believe there is another way of looking at this. The Old Testament writers, inspired by the Holy Spirit, were writing history in advance. Some 1400 years earlier, Moses, though he could not have understood the full significance of what he wrote, prophesies of the crucifixion of the Messiah. David (1000 years before the crucifixion of the Messiah ) provides us with a description of the crucifixion of the Messiah which no human being could have predicted. That still does not answer the question, why crucifixion rather than stoning. Perhaps the answer has to do with the pouring out of His blood. Life is in the blood, and Jesus gave His life for us. What a vivid picture we have of that when the Roman soldier thrust the spear into His side and both blood and water spilled out onto the ground. Did the water denote the trauma of the crucifixion, or did it denote the fact that Jesus poured out all of His blood for us? He did not donate an amount equal to that drawn for a blood transfusion, He literally shed His blood to provide for our salvation.

18:33 - PILATE... SUMMONED JESUS. *“Then Pilate went back into the headquarters, summoned Jesus, and said to Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?”* This historical note helps to keep the story moving forward, as it provides the information that, upon the insistence of the Jewish religious leaders, Pilate took Jesus into his headquarters to question Him. The religious leaders believed they would have been defiled by entering Pilate’s headquarters (which they would never do during a holy festival, but Jesus was taken into his headquarters where he would be questioned by the Roman governor.

ARE YOU THE KING OF THE JEWS? The Jewish leaders had accused Jesus of “perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, Luke 23:2,3” [BARNES]. When Pilate asked this question, the “you” is emphatic. “Jesus did claim to be the spiritual king of Israel as Nathanael said (John 1:49) and as the ecstatic crowd hailed him on the Triumphal Entry (John 12:13), but the Sanhedrin wish Pilate to understand this in a civil sense as a rival of Caesar as some of the Jews wanted Jesus to be (John 6:15) and as the Pharisees expected the Messiah to be” [ATR].

18:34 - JESUS ANSWERED. *“Jesus answered, ‘Are you asking this on your own, or have others told you about Me?’*” Jesus seems to be asking whether or not Pilate was asking this question because he wanted to ascertain whether or not his prisoner was some kind of king among his people, or simply repeating what the charges of the Sanhedrin.



“With v. 34 there begins an interplay of questions that reveals the genuine skill of the evangelist in presenting the story of the interrogation. Jesus parried the opening question of Pilate with his own question concerning the source of Pilate's question. A journalist learns to look behind people's questions for the reasons they are asking them. That is exactly what Jesus was doing when he questioned Pilate about the source of his question. As a result Jesus' question was not basically a question for information. It was actually a challenge concerning the basis for the interrogation” [NAC, bold added by this writer].

Jesus, as we have seen, knew what was in man. He understood the motives of the Sanhedrin better than they did themselves. He knows what Pilate is thinking and what motivated him. The high priest and chief priests wanted Jesus condemned to death, lest Rome interpret His popularity as a potential insurrection, especially since many of His followers were already wondering if He would deliver them from Roman control. Had there been any significant uprising, the Roman governor might have blamed them and stripped them of their power, position, and resources. They had something personal at stake, had Jesus continued to make disciples, so they were determined to force Pilate to condemn Him.

Pilate understood what they were doing and he had no desire to be used by them. At the same time, they could stir up a lot of trouble for him by sending letters to Rome claiming that they had taken an insurrectionist to the governor and presented evidence of His guilt, but Pilate refused to condemn him. Jesus had come into this world to die as a sacrifice for the sins of fallen man and He is not going to try to offer a defense that would motivate Pilate to release Him. Jesus is in charge, regardless of appearances.

18:35 - PILATE REPLIED. *“I’m not a Jew, am I?” Pilate replied. “Your own nation and the chief priests handed You over to me. What have You done?”* Pilate here reveals in his response to Jesus that his contempt for the Jews is every bit as strong as their hatred of him. Of course he knew the Jews would have hated any Gentile governor who ruled over the Chosen People. The Romans defiled their land by being there and Pilate was their governor. Their attitude was not lost on Pilate, nor was their plot to force him to condemn this prisoner. Robertson refers to this as a “Proud and fine scorn on Pilate’s part at the idea that he had a personal interest in the question. Vehement negation implied. Cf. John 4:29 for *mêti* in a question. The gulf between Jew and Gentile yawns wide here” [ATR]. It is obvious that Pilate did not like Jesus’ question so he deflects it with his response.

Pilate was an experienced official and he realized that he was being challenged by this defendant. That he was somewhat disturbed by the way the interrogation was going is seen in his response to Jesus’ question. He replied curtly, “I am not a Jew.” Such an idea was obviously odious to Pilate.

YOUR OWN NATION. Pilate was an old hand at interrogating prisoners and he knew Jesus’ question was a challenge to him. He meets that challenge with the statement, “I am not a Jew.” He

then pointed out the obvious: “Your own nation and the chief priests handed you over to me.” Pilate is simply reminding Jesus here that the charges were brought by His own people, or by their religious leaders. “By now readers should be realizing that in John ‘handing over’ is a recurrent theme that includes Judas’s ‘betraying’ (paradidous) of Jesus (18:5). It will conclude with Pilate ‘handing over’ Jesus to be crucified (19:16). The progression to death involves a series of people who participate in this great conspiracy” [NAC].

**WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?** Is Pilate asking Jesus to incriminate Himself? That would be a violation of American law. One writer suggests that this is the question Pilate should have asked at the beginning of the interrogation, but the order of his questions seems logical enough under the circumstances. The order of the questions seems to show that Pilate understood what the Jews wanted, but may not have fully understood what motivated them. However, he, as the Roman governor of the province, was not about to be forced to rubber stamp their charges. At the very least, he didn’t want it to appear that way, either to these Jews or to Rome.

**18:36 - MY KINGDOM.** *“My kingdom is not of this world,” said Jesus. ‘If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I wouldn’t be handed over to the Jews. As it is, My kingdom does not have its origin here.’* Pilate began the interrogation by asking Jesus, “Are you the king of the Jews?” (Vs. 33). In this exchange, Pilate shows nothing but contempt for the Jews, but since he was very much aware of the fact that they would not hesitate to send a letter to Caesar accusing him of a dereliction of his duty if he did not deal with this prisoner against whom they had brought such a serious charge, he asked Jesus what He had done (vs. 35). Jesus now responds by stating that His kingdom “is not of this world.”

**MY SERVANTS.** He added that, if His kingdom was of this world His “servants would fight” for Me. Only one servant tried to fight for Him in the Garden and Jesus stopped him. We might remind ourselves that Abraham had servants who were trained for combat. Is that what Jesus meant? Commentaries remind us that Greek here denotes those who are in the service of a master and they are prepared to work to honor him and support his cause. Jesus does not use the word for slave or servant, but the term used in John 18:3 for the temple police or guards. “Christ then had only a small band of despised followers who could not fight against Caesar. Was he alluding also to legions of angels on his side? (Mat 26:56)” [ATR].

Though Pilate did not understand the kingdom of God, he must have seen that Rome did not have to fear a political insurrection. He was not a zealot or a revolutionary guerrilla leader. His kingdom is not like that. His kingdom, unlike Rome, is not of this world; “it is from another place, that is, heaven. Therefore it comes not by rebellion but by submission to God. Its source was not from men’s acts of violence but from a new birth from heaven which transferred a person out of Satan’s kingdom into God’s kingdom (cf. Col. 1:13; John 3:3)” [BKC].

I have a question here: How did John know what Pilate said and what Jesus said in response to his questions? There would have been a written account of the official examination of the prisoner by the governor, so Pilate may not have been alone with Jesus. There would have been guards and there may have been an official who recorded what was said. How did Pilate’s wife know what was going

between her husband and Jesus, or between the governor and the Jews? How can we trust John's account, since he was not present for the questioning? We cannot stress too often that the divine Author of this material, the Holy Spirit, knew exactly what was said. Jesus was there and what He knew the Father knew and the Holy Spirit knew.

18:37 - YOU ARE A KING THEN? *"You are a king then?" Pilate asked. 'You say that I'm a king,' Jesus replied. 'I was born for this, and I have come into the world for this: to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to My voice.'* Pilate had asked Jesus if He was a king (vs. 33), but totally missed the statement that His kingdom is not of this world. So he asks again, but this time he anticipates a "yes" for an answer. The form of the word shows that he assumed that Jesus did claim to be a king.

YOU SAY. Pilate assumed that Jesus was admitting to being some kind of king, but Jesus when replied, "You say I'm a king," He was not admitting to being an earthly king.

I WAS BORN FOR THIS. Jesus stressed that He had been born into this world (the Incarnation) for a purpose. That purpose is stated in His High Priestly Prayer (John 17), as well as in John 3:16.

TRUTH. Jesus said, "I was born for this, and I have come into the world for this: to testify to the truth." From the beginning of His earthly ministry until now, His message has remained on track: He was born into this world to reveal the truth about God and His provision for the salvation of all who believe in Him.

At various points in this series of studies from the Gospel According to John, I have stressed the order and organization of this Gospel. The thesis is stated in the Prologue, and the purpose is affirmed in John 20:31. In one of His I AM sayings in this Gospel, Jesus stated, "I am the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). Now He is saying that He came into the world "to testify to the truth."

Even though Pilate would not understand the significance of these words, Jesus remains focused on the purpose for which He had come into the world. He is saying, "I was born into the world that I might set up and maintain a spiritual government: but this government is established in and by truth.

All that love truth, hear my voice and attend to the spiritual doctrines I preach. It is by truth alone that I influence the minds and govern the manners of my subjects" [CLARKE].

18:38a - WHAT IS TRUTH? *"What is truth?" said Pilate.* There is a strong temptation on the part of the reader to read into these words something of Pilate's attitude, demeanor, and psyche. Was he simply being dismissive? Did he say this with a sneer? Was he showing contempt? Was he simply impatient? Did his question show more impatience or contempt for Jesus or for the Jews who were demanding that Jesus be condemned? The Bible Knowledge Commentary "This famous question, **What is truth?** has echoed down through the centuries. How his question was intended is problematic. Was it a wistful desire to know what no one could tell him? Was it philosophical cynicism concerning the problem of epistemology? Was it indifference to anything so impractical as abstract thought? Or was it irritation at Jesus' response? These are all possible interpretations of his words" [BKC, bold in the original].

Robertson wrote, "This famous sneer of Pilate's reveals his own ignorance of truth, as he stood before Incarnate Truth (John 14:6)" [ATR]. Barnes believed this question "was probably asked in contempt, and hence Jesus did not answer it. Had the question been sincere, and had Pilate really sought it as Nicodemus had done (John 3:1), Jesus would not have hesitated to explain to him the nature of his kingdom" [BARNES].

We would love to know exactly what Pilate was thinking as he spoke these words, but if someone had asked him what he was thinking after he said it, he might have had trouble answering the question himself. I doubt that Pilate was actually expecting an answer, nor did he desire one. Rather, this was his way of ending the interrogation. "For politically motivated people, truth is frequently sacrificed on the altar of expediency. Many politically oriented people pretend they are interested in truth. But Pilate summarizes his politically oriented life pattern with the haunting question: 'What is truth?' The implications of that question are exceedingly far reaching for any person. For Pilate that question was an attempt to resist taking Jesus' statement seriously in his own life, but it did make an initial impact on his view of Jesus during this first interrogation session" [NAC].

## Will It Be Jesus or Barabbas?

18:38b - OUT TO THE JEWS. "*After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, 'I find no grounds for charging Him.'*" These words help us to understand what was on Pilate's mind as he turned from Jesus to go back out to speak to the Jews, who had remained in his courtyard because to enter Pilate's headquarters or residence would have defiled them so they could not have participated in the holy services of the day.

I FIND NO GROUNDS. The high priest, chief priests, and other members of the Sanhedrin had made charges against Jesus when they first approached Pilate, but upon examining Him the governor realized those were trumped up charges. Can we not imagine the contempt Pilate has for these people who were too holy to enter his dwelling or courtroom, but not too holy to concoct such a diabolical plan to have Jesus killed. They were super pious religious leaders, ready to lead their people in worship on one of the most holy days on their calendar. They were standing before him with murder in their hearts, but with no charges that merited His crucifixion. It is interesting that Pilate could find no grounds for an official charge against Jesus, but he still did not set Him free.

Inside his headquarters, after questioning Jesus, Pilate, finding no legitimate charge against Him, dismisses Him with the question, "what is truth?" Whatever his attitude might have been, "the significant thing is that he suddenly turned away from the *One* who is 'the Truth', (14:6) without waiting for an answer. Pilate's declaration of Jesus' innocence is important. He would die like a Passover lamb, a male in its prime without blemish (Ex. 12:5)" [BKC]. The Lord was in charge here, even though neither this pagan governor, nor these sanctimonious religious leaders realized they were fulfilling an ancient prophesy. Pilate was not concerned about these things, but these Jewish religious leaders were leading the Jewish people in celebrating Passover, totally ignorant of the fact that Jesus is our Passover (1 Cor. 5:7).

“Strategically John does not include any response on Pilate’s part. Pilate has revealed himself by his question in the last exchange of 18:38a to be an advocate of expediency, just as the Jewish high priest Caiaphas had done earlier (cf. 11:49-50). Whether to outfox the Jewish leadership or because he actually believed Jesus to be innocent, Pilate developed what he thought would be a successful plan to release Jesus and dismiss the interrogation. Accordingly, he went outside the Praetorium (judgment hall) and rendered his verdict of Jesus' innocence” [NAC].

18:39 - A CUSTOM. “*You have a custom that I release one [prisoner] to you at the Passover. So, do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?*” Pilate stated that he found no grounds for charging Jesus with a capitol offense, but rather than setting Him free, he sought to appease the Jewish religious rulers. He had a plan that might set Jesus free without giving these Jews a reason to fire off letters to Caesar, accusing him of a dereliction of his duties.

That there was a custom that a prisoner be released to the Jews at Passover seems obvious, both from the statement by Pilate and the response of these Jewish leaders. “The origin of the custom, however is not known. There is no Old Testament reference to it, and there is no historical reference to it, but all four Gospel writers mention it (Mark 15:6; Mat 27:15, is termed necessity (anagkê) in Luke 23:17” [ATR].

PASSOVER. The Bible has a lot to say about Passover, but what does the modern reader need to know to appreciate what was going on at this point in time. There was a power play in progress between Pilate and the Jews, but there is a lot more to it than that. Jesus, the lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Heb. 13:8). The Holman Bible Dictionary carries this article on the Passover:

“The first of the three annual festivals was the Passover. It commemorated the final plague on Egypt when the firstborn of the Egyptians died and the Israelites were spared because of the blood smeared on their doorposts (Ex. 12:11,21,27,43,48). Passover took place on the fourteenth day (at evening) of the first month (Lev. 23:5). The animal (lamb or kid) to be slain was selected on the tenth day of the month (Ex. 12:3) and slaughtered on the fourteenth day and then eaten (Deut. 16:7). None of the animal was to be left over on the following morning (Ex. 34:25). The uncircumcised and the hired servant were not permitted to eat the sacrifice (Ex. 12:45-49).

“The Passover was also called the feast of unleavened bread (Ex. 23:15; Deut. 16:16) because only unleavened bread was eaten during the seven days immediately following Passover (Ex. 12:15-20; 13:6-8; Deut. 16:3-8). Unleavened bread reflected the fact that the people had no time to put leaven in their bread before their hasty departure from Egypt. It was also apparently connected to the barley harvest (Lev. 23:4-14). Later references in the Bible to the observance of the Passover are found in Joshua 5:10-12 (the plains of Jericho near Gilgal), 2 Chronicles 30:1,3,13,15 (during

the reign of Hezekiah); and 2 Kings 23:21-23 (Josiah's unique Passover).

“During New Testament times large crowds gathered in Jerusalem to observe this annual celebration. Jesus was crucified during the Passover event. He and His disciples ate a Passover meal together on the eve of His death. During this meal Jesus said, “This is my body,” and “this cup is the new testament in my blood” (Luke 22:7, 19-20). The New Testament identifies Christ with the Passover sacrifice: “For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us” (1 Cor. 5:7) [HBD].

Pilate, as already noted, obviously sought to set Jesus free, and thought he had come up with a plan that would do just that. Little did Pilate count on the intensity of the hatred of these religious leaders for Jesus. Nor could he have realized how determined they were to see Him crucified.

18:40 - BARABBAS. *“They shouted back, ‘Not this man, but Barabbas!’ Now Barabbas was a revolutionary.”* Pilate offered the Jews a choice that must have seemed obvious to him. They could choose Jesus or a robber named Barabbas. There can be no doubt that Pilate was surprised when the people, who were controlled by their religious leaders, began shouting, “not this man, but Brabbas!”

“Mark goes further in 15:7 and identifies Barabbas as a murderer and an insurrectionist. This Barabbas was hardly the kind of person Pilate thought the Jews would desire to have loosed on their society. The obvious alternative from his point of view was the healer, wonder worker, and prophet-type king. He must have smirked at the choice he gave to the people. But Pilate had not calculated on the scheming way in which the Jewish leadership had readied the group outside the Praetorium to answer him. Pilate's shrewd plan was undone by the leadership when the people chose the scoundrel and rejected the King” [NAC] .

All we have to do to appreciate just how loud and boisterous a crowd like this can become is to watch the evening news when crowds in the Middle East begin demonstrating against Israel or the United States. This crowd was not throwing rocks, but they were vocal and emotional. Pilate could not have anticipated such a reaction.

Mark writes, “Again they shouted, ‘Crucify Him!’ Then Pilate said to them, ‘Why? What has He done wrong?’ But they shouted, ‘Crucify Him!’ all the more” (Mark 15:13-14).

Luke wrote, “Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again, but they kept shouting, “Crucify! Crucify Him!” (Luke 23:20-21).

Matthew's account may be even more disturbing:

“Pilate asked them, ‘What should I do then with Jesus, who is called Messiah?’ They all answered, ‘Crucify Him!’ Then he said, ‘Why? What has He done wrong?’ But

they kept shouting, 'Crucify Him!' all the more.

When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that a riot was starting instead, he took some water, washed his hands in front of the crowd, and said, 'I am innocent of this man's blood. See to it yourselves!' All the people answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" Then he released Barabbas to them. But after having Jesus flogged, he handed Him over to be crucified" (Matt 27:22-26).

Can this be the crowd that cried Hosannas to Jesus during the Royal Entry into Jerusalem? No. Those people were praising Jesus. These people were there to serve the purpose of the high priest and the Sanhedrin, which purpose was to have Jesus crucified. This is a different crowd.

QUESTION: Was this the darkest day in human history, or was it the brightest? See John 3:16!

Volume VII, notes on Chapters 10-21, will complete this series from the Gospel According to John.

