



JOHN

Survey of the New Testament: The Gospels & Acts Winter 2005

Introduction

Author

John was universally accepted as the author of this book until the 19th century. Liberal theologians dated the book around 200 A.D. A later date would exclude the 1st century authorship of the Apostle. These theologians pointed to differences between John and the Synoptic gospels. In addition, it was asserted that the Gospel of John contradicted the Synoptics.

Reasons for John's authorship¹

1. The author was a Jew

- A. Normally he quotes from the LXX but 3 times (6:45, 13:18, 19:37) he quotes from the Massoretic Text because it disagrees with the LXX rendering.
- B. He is acquainted with the Jewish feasts
Passover-2:13, 23; 6:4; 11:55, 12:1, 18:28 Tabernacles-7:2 (5: 1 ?) Feast of Dedication-10:22
- C. He is acquainted with the Jewish customs
Arranging of the water pots-2: 1 -10 Burial customs of the Jews-1 1:38,44; 19:40
- D. He knew the feeling between the Jews and the Samaritans--4:9

2. The author was a Jew from Palestine. He knows the minutest geographical details.

- A. He knows that Jacob's well is deep-4:11
 - B. He knows that there is a descent from Cana to Capernaum/Sea of Galilee-2:12
 - C. He distinguishes Bethany (1 /2 mile east of Jerusalem) from Bethany beyond the Jordan (21 miles east of Jerusalem)-1:28; 11: 18
- Note: Luke, the historian, is frequently vague about Palestine. Luke 10:38 "He (Jesus) entered a certain village."

3. The author was an eyewitness of what he wrote

Minutest details regarding the person, time, number, place which could only come by direct experience.- 1: 14, 3 9 (1 01h hour, John's conversion??) 13:16 Judas slipping out at night.

4. The author was an Apostle

He had intimate knowledge of what was going on. He knew the thoughts and feelings of the apostles-2:11,17,22; 4:27; 6:19, 60; 12:16; 13:22, 28; 20:9; 21:12

5. The author was the Apostle John

- A. The author was exact in mentioning names of the character of the book. If someone else had written the book he would certainly not have omitted one of the most famous

¹ Westcott's concentric circles

apostles. YET John is not mentioned in the Gospel but he is mentioned in Mt, Mk, Lk. If someone else wrote it, it would be unthinkable that he would not have mentioned John by name.

B. In 1:6 John the Baptist is mentioned "and there was a man sent from God whose name was John." He did not say, John the Baptist (as do the Synoptics in order to prevent confusion with the Apostle John. WHY? Because the Apostle John wrote the book and his readers knew this. Utter confusion would result unless the Apostle John is the author.

6. John's relationship to the family of Jesus

John is on intimate terms with the family of our Lord 19:25-27-"beloved disciple" (13:23-30; 20:2,8; 21:2,7, 20-23) 21:24-25-"this is the disciple who bears witness of these things and wrote these things" 21:2, 7-"sons of Zebedee" refer to James and John and they are closely related to Peter. 21:7-narrows down the "beloved disciple" to either James or John.

However, the Synoptics suggest that Peter was closer with John than with James.

Conclusion:

Beloved disciple= John the Apostle. The early church supports this.

Date

Liberal scholars often dated the book of John late in the 2^d century (150-200 A.D.). This late date was abandoned when fragments of the book were discovered in Egypt. The fragments were dated at 125 A.D. This discovery demanded a 1st century dating of the original.

Most scholars date this gospel between 85 and 95 A.D. However, a growing number are dating the book between 65-70 A.D. I prefer the early dating.

1. Destruction of Jerusalem not mentioned.

Since the book has so much about Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem and Judea, it is strange that nothing is mentioned of its destruction somewhere in the book.

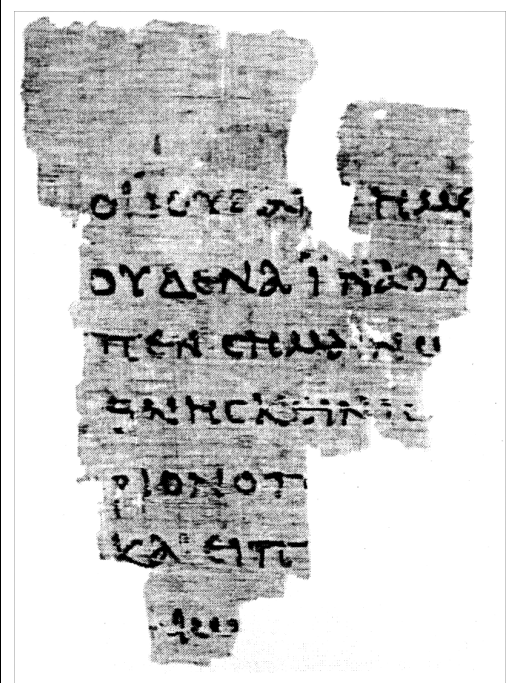
2. Pool of Bethesda

John 5:2 says "Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades." Notice it is present tense. It is true that John can and does use the historical present when referring to the past but the use of the verb "is" is unusual in the historical present.

3. Literary independence of John and the Synoptics.

4. Reference to Jesus' disciples.

Jesus' followers were called "disciples" - not "apostles" which indicates an early writing. A late writing would most likely call them apostles. The word "apostles" is used infrequently in the Gospels (8 times) but is used frequently in Acts (28 times). The expression "His disciples" is unique (2:22). John designates them as His disciples to distinguish them from the disciples of other rabbis. But later followers of Jesus, the Christians, are most often called "the disciples (Acts 1: 15). This supports an early date of John before 70 A.D.

	DESCRIPTION	
	Language:	Greek
	Medium:	papyrus
	Size:	3.5 inches long 2.5 inches wide
	Length:	7 lines on each side
	Approximate Date:	c. 125-150 CE
	Place of Discovery:	Egypt
	Date of Discovery/ Acquisition:	1920
	Acquirer:	Bernard P. Grenfell
	Current Location:	John Rylands Library Manchester, England
	Inventory Number:	Rylands Greek Papyrus 457
	Manuscript Number:	P52
Manuscript Family:	Alexandrian	

Purpose

Purpose John's Gospel places an emphasis on the deity of Christ more explicitly than any other gospel. It begins with the evangelist's declaration (1: 1) and concludes with doubting Thomas' expression of faith (20:28). Clearly this gospel presents Jesus as the Son of God. But it does more than that. It also expects a response from the audience—a response of belief.

Regarding the purpose, the author states it in 20:3 1: "But these things have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, by believing, you might have life in his name."

Structure

Over 90% of the material in John's Gospel is unique, not found in the other gospels. The Gospel of John has four major sections to it: prologue (1: 1- 18), the Son of God's miraculous signs (1: 19-12:50), the Son of God's ministry to his disciples (13:1-17:26), and the Son of God's suffering and glory (18:1-20:3 1). An epilogue about the death of Peter is added almost as an afterthought (21:1-25). The two largest sections (public ministry and private ministry) contrast sharply with one another in many ways, not the least of which is in chronological progression (three or four years vs. one night!).

The book of John does not follow a chronological or geographical structure. Instead, the author uses numerous thematic structures. The most striking structural element is John's use of the number seven. The book lists 7 signs, 7 sermons, and 7 "I Am" statements of Jesus.

The Seven Signs

1. Water to wine (2:1 ff)
2. Nobleman's son healed (4:46 ff)
3. Lame man healed (5:1 ff)
4. Feeding the 5,000 (6:1 ff)
5. Walking on Water (6:16 ff)
6. Blind Man Healed (9:1 ff)
7. Lazarus Raised (11:1 ff)

The Seven Sermons

1. Nicodemus (3:1 ff)
2. Jesus as Judge (5:1 ff)
3. Bread of Life (6:22 ff)
4. Living Water (7:1 ff)
5. Light of the World (8:12 ff)
6. Good Shepherd (10:1 ff)
7. Upper Room (14-17)

The Seven "I Am" Statements

1. The Bread of Life (6:35)
2. The Light of the World (8:12)
3. The Gate for the Sheep (10:7)
4. The Good Shepherd (10:11, 14)
5. The Resurrection & the Life (11:25)
6. The Way, the Truth and the Life (14:6)
7. The True Vine (15:1)

In addition, John uses the occasion of several Jewish festivals to provide structure to book. Each of these festivals has Jesus going to Jerusalem, and the incidents surrounding the festivals take place either in Jerusalem or on the way to and from Jerusalem. The incidents outside of Jerusalem are chosen to illustrate and elaborate on discourses that Jesus makes while in Jerusalem.

- The First Passover (2:13, 23, 4:45)
- The Unnamed Feast –(The Sabbath) (5:1)
- The Second Passover (6:4)
- The Feast of Booths (7:2, 8-14, 37)
- The Feast of Dedication (10:22)
- The Third Passover (11:55-56, 12:1,12,20, 13:1)

John's major division break comes in chapter 13. Up to this point Jesus has been revealing himself to the world as the son of God. He has done so by providing numerous witnesses or testimonies for his nature. However, in chapter 13 Jesus' focus shifts to the cross, wherein he would find glorification by the father. These two major sections can be titled the Book of Testimony (chapters 1-12) and the Book of Glory (chapters 13-21). Preceding the Book of Testimony is a Prologue (1:1-18) highlighting the themes of the book and establishing Jesus as divine from eternity past. After the Book of Glory is an Epilogue (20:30-21:25) that explains John's purpose in writing his gospel and an affirmation of apostolic authority.

		Feast	Signs	Discourses	I Am	
1	Prologue					
2	Book of Testimony	1st Passover	1. Water to Wine (2:1)			
3				1. Nicodemus		
4			2. Nobleman's son healed (4:46 ff)			
5		Sabbath	1. Lame man healed (5:1 ff)	2. Jesus as Judge		
6		2nd Passover	4. Feeding the 5,000 (6:1 ff) 5. Walking on Water (6:16 ff)	3. Bread of Life	1. Bread of Life	
7		Booths		4. Living Water		
8				5. Light of the World	2. Light of the World	
9			6. Blind Man Healed (9:1 ff)			
10			Dedication		6. Good Shepherd	3. Gate for the Sheep 4. Good Shepherd
11		Book of Glory	3rd Passover	7. Lazarus Raised (11:1 ff)		5. Resurrection & Life
12						
13						
14					7. Upper Room	6. Way, Truth & Life
15						7. True Vine
16						
17						
18						
19						
20						
21	Epilogue					

Prologue The Logos as God and Man (1:1 – 1:18)

A. The Deity of the Logos (1:1-5)

The meaning of Logos

Translating verse 1

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God. NIV*

*"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with
God, and the Word was a god." New World (J.W.)*

- Verse 4: John uses the term "life" 37 times.
- Verse 5 introduces a major theme in this book: The opposition of light and darkness. Up to this point every verb is past tense. Now John switches to the present. The LIGHT is here right now! The nuance is important. John is communicating that the light

B. The Humanity of the Logos (1:6-18)

1. The Witness of John (1:6-8)

John introduces another major theme of his gospel: The concept of Witness. The word occurs 33 times in the book.

2. The Light: Rejected and Received (1:9-13)

Here is another important word: World (Cosmos). This does not refer to the entire universe but to the world of men and human affairs.

- Verse 12 is a familiar verse to bible students. John uses the word "believe" nearly 100 times.

3. The Incarnation of the Logos (1: 14-18)

- This is a concise statement of the Incarnation in the New Testament. It's clear that the logos is God and also fully human. This is the last time that John uses the logos in his gospel.
- Glory: A clear reference to God's glory in the tabernacle. see Exod 33:7, 9,10,11,20,23
- "One and Only" or "Begotten"

The Testimony of John (1:19-34)

a. John's Self-Denial of Being the Christ (1: 19-28)

- Are you the Messiah? Are you Elijah? Are you the Prophet?

b. John's Affirmation of Jesus as Elect One of God (1:29-34)

- Notice the Baptist's witness is 3-fold
 - Jesus is the Lamb of God 1:29
 - Jesus is the pre-existent One 1:30
 - Jesus is the One who baptizes 1:33

The Testimony to the Disciples

The First Disciples (1:35-51)

- a. Andrew and Peter (1:35-42)
- b. Philip and Nathanael (1:43 -5 1) Fig Tree:

All of these events seem to take place over a three day period:

Day 1	The commission from the Baptist 1: 19-28	
Day 2	The Baptist points out Jesus 1:29-34	
Day 3	Two of John's disciples follow Jesus 1:35-40	
Day 4	Andrew brings Peter 1:41-42	
Day 5	Philip and Nathanael come to Jesus 1:43-51 (next day)	
Day 6	No events recorded (another day)	
Day 7	A wedding took place 2:1 (On the Third day)	

The Testimony of the Son of God (1:19-12:50)

The Testimony to Individuals: The Cana Cycle (2:1-4:54)

The first part of Jesus ministry takes place around a trip to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover feast. The trip begins in Cana, where Jesus turns the water to wine. He then travels to Jerusalem, where He encounters Nicodemus in chapter 3. On His return trip to Galilee He encounters the Samaritan woman (chapter 4). Then He returns to Cana where He heals the nobleman's son. This section of the book is often called the "Cana Cycle" due to its route from Cana to Jerusalem and back to Cana.

The First Sign: Water to Wine (2: 1 -11)

John authenticates the witness of chapter one by showing Seven Signs or miracles. The first signs the turning of the Water into Wine. Jesus authenticates what they say about Him with this miracle. This miracle is a sign of the type of ministry Jesus will have - one of introducing a new age of joy and abundant life.

In verse 2:11, the purpose of this miracle (and all the miracles) is stated:

(John 2:11 NASB) This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.

Jesus has made the visible fullness of God come to light. This miracle shows a God who cares about mundane things, like weddings. He is a God who wants to share joy and excitement, like what happens at a wedding party. This is in contrast to the picture of God in John's day, where God was distant and serious.

- 20 to 30 gallons Each
- It was possible in certain circumstances to take legal action against the man who failed to provide an appropriate wedding gift
- Verse 4: "Woman" is a term of respect. "Why do you involve me" is a Hebrew idiom meaning "it's none of my business."

Interesting Note: Mary, the mother of Jesus, is never mentioned by name in the Fourth Gospel.

- What is the purpose of this miracle? The author tells us in 2:11 that Jesus performed miracles in Cana to reveal His glory. The result is that the disciples believed in Him. Jesus performed miracles to show that He was the Messiah. This is the first of the seven signs.

Cleansing the Temple (2:12-22)

a. *The Setting at Passover (2:12-14)*

- What is the Passover?

b. *The Temple Cleansing (2:15-22)*

- Why did John include this story? The synoptics include the cleansing at the end of Jesus' ministry. Apparently there were two cleansing events.
- Zechariah 14:20-21 On that day HOLY TO THE LORD will be inscribed on the bells of the horses, and the cooking pots in the LORD's house will be like the sacred bowls in front of the altar. 21 Every pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be holy to the LORD Almighty, and all who come to sacrifice will take some of the pots and cook in them. And on that day there will no longer be a Canaanite (The word Canaanite can be translated Merchant) in the house of the LORD Almighty.
- The cleansing of the temple is connected to the coming of the Lord. Furthermore, Jesus says he will rebuild the temple which is a reference to future temple in Ezekiel chapters 40-48.

The Testimony to Nicodemus

Jesus is approached one night by Nicodemus, a prominent Jewish leader. This discourse, with Nicodemus, establishes that it is “belief in” Jesus that gives eternal life.

Nicodemus tells Jesus that he and the other leaders know that he is from God. Jesus tells him that he “must be born again.” This is confusing to Nicodemus, so he asks how one can be born again. Jesus tells him, in one of the most important messages recorded in scripture, what one must do to be born again. Included in the message is the famous verse, John 3:16:

*For God loved the world so much that He gave His only son.
God gave his Son so that whoever believes in Him, may not be
lost but have eternal life.²*

Jesus doesn't preach at him but engages Nicodemus in a dialogue. Jesus makes statements that invite a response or a question from Nicodemus. As the conversation progresses, Jesus then ends up answering his questions. Jesus is seemingly harsh with Nicodemus because he should know better as a teacher. Jesus is relating to Nicodemus such that will cause him to think differently. For someone confident of his status with God, Jesus shakes up that confidence slightly to open a crack for the gospel to enter.

The Testimony to the Samaritan Woman

Christ is pictured here as the living water to the woman at the well and many Samaritans. The emphasis here is that anyone can "believe in" Jesus and receive personal fulfillment in life (an in death).

² John 3:16, NCV.

Notice the contrasts the John makes between Jesus' discussion with Nicodemus in chapter 3 and with the woman at the well in chapter 4:

Nicodemus	Woman at the Well
a Jew	a Samaritan
Pharisee	A woman of ill repute
Respected member of the Sanhedrein	An outcast to her own people
Understood theology correctly	Had heretical beliefs
Nicodemus sought Jesus	Jesus sought this woman
Nicodemus came by night	Jesus came by day (noon)
Nicodemus knew who Jesus was	The women did not know Him
Jesus deals bluntly with Nicodemus	Jesus deals carefully with the woman

Jesus deals with each person individually. With the religious leader He is blunt and harsh. With the sinner He is gentle and kind. How unlike the way the church deals with people today, being harsh and blunt with the sinner and gentle and kind with the "religious." Jesus' message is clearly for everyone, from respected leaders to women of ill-repute living among a despised nation.

John uses great artistic care in these two discourses. He goes out of his way to contrast these approaches in order to show a fuller picture of God. He is strong, firm, and to the point when dealing with religious leaders, yet sensitive and gentle to the heretics.

Yet the purposes of both discourses was to bring them both to "belief in" Him.

The Testimony to the World: The Festival Cycle (5:1-12:50)

The Sabbath (5:1-5:46)

The Setting

Jesus is traveling to Jerusalem to celebrate a feast. The name of the feast is not revealed to us. However, the events of chapter 5 take place on the Sabbath, which was a weekly feast for the Jews. As He enters the city, Jesus goes to the pool of Bethesda.

The Sign: Healing the Lame Man at Bethesda (5:1-17)

Verses 3b-4 in chapter 5 are not contained in the earliest of manuscripts, suggesting that the belief in an angel who stirs the waters of Bethesda is probably not a true belief. Nonetheless, this non-canonical commentary does reveal to us why the sick, blind and lame people surround this pool. Here Jesus finds a man who has been lame for 38 years.

Jesus asks the man a profound question: “do you wish to get well.” It would seem that his very presence near the pool would suggest that he does. Jesus heals the man and he is able to walk. But more than physical healing, Jesus reveals that the man’s primary problem was not his physical ailment, but his spiritual ailment, for he tells him, “do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you.”

The Response (5:17)

Jesus, however, performed this miracle on the Sabbath day. This begins the Jews opposition of Jesus. The Jews were more concerned about the breaking of the Sabbath laws than they were with having compassion on the lame man.

The Sermon: The Son Gives Life and Judgment (5:19-47)

Jesus the Judge

Jesus justifies his working on the Sabbath by saying that God the Father is working on the Sabbath as Jesus works on the Sabbath. This further outrages the Jews, for now, not only has He broken the Sabbath, but has made himself out to be equal with God.

Jesus then declares that He has not done anything on His own authority, but all that He does is because the Father has instructed Him to do so (5:19, 30). Jesus was merely obeying the Father when he healed this man, and since God.

However, Jesus goes on to state that the Father has given the Son the power to judge (5:22, 27). As judge Jesus will only give eternal life to those who “believe in” Him (5:24).

The Testimony for Jesus

To confirm that the Son has this authority, Jesus demonstrates that this authority has been attested to not only by himself (5:31-32), but by four other witnesses: 1) John testifies to the truth (5:33). However, Jesus states man’s testimony is not as important as the others but included John’s testimony because the Jews seemed to respect John (5:34-35); 2) The works which the Father gave Jesus to accomplish testify about Jesus, testifying that the Father has sent Jesus (5:36); 3) The Father himself also has testified (5:37a); 4) However, because no one has seen the Father, one can not hear his testimony directly (5:37b). Instead the Father’s testimony is contained in His Word. Therefore, the Scriptures also testify about Jesus (5:39b). But the Jews, while searching the scriptures for life (5:39a), do not let the Word abide in them, so they don’t believe in Jesus (5:38) or come to Him to obtain life (5:40).

The Second Passover (6:1-71)

The Setting

The events of chapter 6 take place in Galilee. However, John makes a point to connect these events with the Passover (6:4), for these signs and his subsequent sermon would be a reminder to the events surrounding that first Passover when God redeemed the nation Israel from Egypt.

The Sign: Feeding of the 5,000 (6:1-14)

In 6:14, when the crowd says, “surely this is *the* prophet,” they were referring to Deuteronomy 18:15, where Moses prophesied that a prophet greater than he would some day come. At the time of the first Passover, Moses had provided food for the multitudes through Manna. Now Jesus has provided food for the multitudes. The crowd would have then been thinking, that Jesus must also be here to deliver us, just as Moses delivered us.

The Sign: Walking on Water (6:15-25)

Just as the sign of the feeding of the 5,000 would have reminded the crowd of the manna that came after the first Passover, now also Jesus’ sign of walking on the water would have reminded the disciples of the crossing of the Red Sea which took place after that first Passover. Both of these signs would have reminded the Jews of Micah 7:15, which states that the Messiah would perform miracles as in the days of the Exodus.

The Sermon: I Am the Bread (6:26-71)

However, the Jews did not seek to see and understand the nature of these signs, but only to get free food. The people ask Jesus, what do we have to do to earn God’s favor. Jesus response is simple: “believe in me!”

Jesus makes his bold statement with the first of John’s seven “I Am’s”: “I am the bread of life.” John closely connects this statement not only with the feeding of the 5,000, but also with the Exodus. The response of the Jews is to grumble, just like the Israelites did (6:43). Furthermore Jesus makes states that He is greater than Moses, for the manna of the Exodus did not bring eternal life (6:49), but whoever eats of Jesus flesh will never die! (6:54)

The Response (6:66-71)

This troubles his listeners, so much so, that many who considered themselves Jesus disciples left Him (6:66). However, when Jesus turns to Peter, we see one of the great responses of faith. For even though Peter may not have understood the teaching, Peter recognized the Jesus was the one who had power to give eternal life! (6:69)

The Festival of Booths (7:1-9:45)

The Setting

Jesus is in his discussions with His unbelieving brothers about whether or not to leave Galilee and go to Judea for the Feast of Booths. Jesus does not plan to go to Judea, for His “time is not yet here.” He is referring to His crucifixion, for the world hates Him and desires to kill Him. So Jesus decides not to go up to festival with his brothers, but later in secret (7:1-5).

The Sermon: The Living Water (7:1-52)

The feast of booths was a reminder to the people of the wilderness wandering of the Israelites (Leviticus 23:33), and its celebration included a number of ceremonies. One of those ceremonies was intended to remind the people of how God miraculously provided water to the nation while in their desert wanderings. In this ceremony a priest would go down each day of the feast to the

Gihon spring and fill up a pitcher with water, and then return to the temple altar and pour it out (Psalm 78:15-16)

On the last day of the festival, Jesus interrupts this ceremony, crying out, “if anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me, and drink”(7:37). Jesus was referring in this case to the pouring out of the Holy Spirit that would come after Jesus was glorified (7:39). All that would be necessary to receive the Spirit was belief in Him (7:38).

The Response (7:40-52)

The crowd gave a mixed response, some seeing Jesus connection and again proclaiming Him as *the prophet* of Deuteronomy 18, and others seeing him as the Messiah. But the Pharisees have rejected Him.

The Sermon: I Am the Light of the World (8:12-59)

Note: The story of Jesus and the adulterous woman is not in the earliest manuscripts and very likely does not part of the original, as it interrupts the flow of the narrative as it relates to the Festival of Booths.

Jesus does show up in Jerusalem on the last day of the Feast of Booths and proclaims, “I am the Light of the World.” Those who follow Jesus will not walk in darkness but will have the Light of life (8:12).

In Zechariah 14:6-16, the prophet stated that in the coming Messianic kingdom, that the nations would celebrate the festival of booths with the Messiah. But there would be no rain or light from the heavens, for the Messiah would cause water to flow out of Jerusalem, and the Messiah himself would be a light to the world. The entire world would have to come to Jerusalem to celebrate the festival of booths and get their sustenance from the Messiah.

The Pharisees protest this claim by saying that it cannot be true, because He is testifying about Himself (8:13). Jesus responds that if He is the only one testifying, that doesn’t mean it’s not true. Jesus knows where he came from (i.e., heaven), so He knows of what He speaks (i.e. his testimony is eyewitness testimony) (8:14). But since they are judging from the flesh (8:15), He will give a second witness, as required by their law (8:17). The Father who sent Him also testifies about Him. But they don’t know the Father (8:41-42). If only they were to believe Him, they would “never taste of death” (v. 52).

The Father, the Son, and Abraham

The Jews respond by stating that Abraham and the prophets died, and question Jesus as to who exactly he thinks he is. Does he really regard himself as more than Abraham? (vs. 52-53)

Jesus’ response astounds these people. In verse 56 He states, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.”

This was a preposterous claim. Jesus was a relatively young man who was claiming to have seen Abraham. The Jews must think at this point that Jesus is nuts, and say so.

Jesus’ response is an even more preposterous (or shall we say blasphemous) statement.

“Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.”

Note, he does not say that before Abraham was born, he was. He said I AM. He is specifically using this to assert his claim that He is Yahweh, the Great I AM. He is claiming to be God himself, in the flesh, having existed from eternity past, self-existent, independent, and here willing to reach down and redeem His people.

The Response (8:59)

The Jews understand this claim and immediately seek to execute this blasphemer. They have rejected the bread of life and the light of the world, and because of their unbelief they will face judgment.

The Sign: The Healing of the Man Born Blind (9:1-41)

Jesus healing of the blind man is a sign that he truly is the light of the world, for he can cause the blind to see, and blind those who have eyes (6:39). The Pharisees had seen all the signs and heard the claims of Jesus, but refused to believe Him, remaining in the dark. The blind man, however, didn't even know who Jesus was (9:36), but was willing to believe.

The Feast of Dedication (10:1-45)**The Setting**

The sermon of the good Shepard takes place in winter during the Feast of Dedication, or Hanukah. This feast celebrates the last deliverance of the nation of Israel from their oppressors when the Maccabees successfully won independence from the Antiochus Epiphanies.

The Sermon: I Am the Good Shepherd (10:1-21)*The Good Shepherd Cares for His Sheep (10:1-19)*

Jesus states that He is the "Good Shepherd." Like His other "I Am" statements, this has divine overtones, as God is referred to as the shepherd of his people throughout the Old Testament (Gen 49:24, Psalm 80:1, Psalm 23:1, Isaiah 40:10-11). But the greater theological theme is that of the atonement, for Jesus declares that the shepherd will "lay down his life for the sheep" (10:11, 17-18).

The Response (10:19-21)

Some people respond that Jesus is talking like a crazy person, while others are inclined to listen due to his ability to heal the blind.

The Sheep Know the Shepherd (10:22-38)

But Jesus appearance at the Feast of Dedication has other people wondering if He is the Messiah who will deliver them as the Maccabees delivered them in the past. So they ask him bluntly, "Are you the Christ?"

Jesus answers them by stating that He has already answered their question, and that the works that He has done has testified to that answer. However, they do not believe His answer, because they are not His sheep. He gives His sheep eternal life. Those sheep are placed into His Father's hand, and Jesus claims in verse 30, "I and the Father are One."

The Response (10:39-42)

They pick up stones, ready to kill Him. But He asks why? He cites his works as evidence of this oneness with the Father, and then reasserts the claim in verse 38, "the Father is in Me, and I in the Father."

The Third Passover (11:1-12:50)**The Resurrection of Lazarus (11:1-55)***The Setting (11:1-25)*

We now enter a transition in the book of John. Beginning in chapter 11 we are approaching the few days of Jesus life. Jesus has been ministering in the wilderness beyond the Jordan River (10:40) because He knows that He is a wanted man. However, word gets to Jesus that his close friend Lazarus is sick and near death. Lazarus' sisters, Mary and Martha, have requested that Jesus come and heal Lazarus.

However, Lazarus lived in Bethany, which was only a couple miles from Jerusalem. For Jesus to travel back towards Jerusalem would put his life in danger from the Jewish officials. At first Jesus does not go and see Lazarus, and many of the disciples probably assumed this was

because of the threat of arrest and execution. However, Jesus was delaying specifically so that Lazarus could die and thus provide Jesus with an opportunity to show even greater glory by raising Him from the dead (11:4, 15). However, as they get ready to leave, the disciples are sure that this is a bad move and that they and Jesus are certain to be killed (11:16).

The Statement: I Am the Resurrection and the Life (11:25-27)

By the time Jesus arrives, Lazarus has been dead for four days. Martha is certain that Jesus could have healed her brother, but now it was too late. But Jesus assures Martha that it is not too late, for, as he says, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies." Once again, belief is the precursor to finding life in the Son. Martha responds that indeed she believes that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, sent by God.

The Sign (11:28-44)

Jesus has just stated His intention to raise Lazarus from the dead. Yet he does something remarkable. Jesus goes to Lazarus' tomb, and there he weeps. Even though Jesus purposefully let Lazarus die so He could demonstrate His glory, and even though Lazarus would soon rise from the dead, Jesus shows His compassion by mourning the death of Lazarus.

The Response (11:45-57, 12:9-11)

This ultimate of miracles polarizes the Jewish nation. Many come to believe in Jesus because of the miracle (11:45). Certainly this miracle makes Jesus famous throughout the region (12:17-18). But for the Jewish religious leaders, this was too much. They feared Jesus great popularity, fearing that he would upset the delicate political arrangement they had with the Romans (11:47-48). Finally they decide that they had to kill him, for "better for one man to die, than the whole nation perish" (11:50).

The Triumphal Entry (12:1-50)

The Setting (12:12-15)

Passover was approaching, and everyone wanted to know if Jesus would show up for the Passover. The crowd was anxious to see this man who could raise the dead. The leadership were anxious to find a way to arrest and kill Him. Everything is coming to a point of climax in the book. Chapter 12 serves as that hinge chapter between Jesus testimony to the world and his coming glorification through the cross.

The Response (12:17-19)

The multitudes who saw Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead were testifying about Jesus. Based on this testimony, many people went out to meet Jesus. This made the Pharisees bitter, stating, "the world has gone after Him." The religious leaders have denied the testimony offered to them up to this point, even when multitudes testify to the great miracle of raising a man from the dead. Their concern is no longer determining the truth, but getting rid of this man who threatens their authority and position of power.

The Glory of the Son of God (12:20-50)

The Jewish leaders were upset that everyone was following after Jesus, having heard of Lazarus' resurrection. Indeed now, even Greeks were seeking Him, such that the leaders said, "look, the world has gone after Him."

When the disciples asked if the Greeks should be allowed to come to Him, Jesus answers that now is the hour for His glorification. But this glory would not be what everyone expected. Instead, his glory would come through the crucifixion.

But this hour would not be easy for Jesus, and is even troubling Him as He thinks about it. But though it troubles Him, he does not ask God to deliver Him from it, because this is the focus of why He came in the first place. So, rather than avoid the hour, Jesus seeks instead to glorify the Father.

So in the hour of glorification for the Son of Man, the Son instead seeks to glorify the Father. Because the Son seeks to glorify the Father and endure this hour, the Father then cries out from heaven, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again." The Father glorifies Jesus through the announcing voice from heaven. The glorification of the Son of Man comes specifically through this announcement, but it will come "again" with the hour of His glorification as well.

John then comments how people, having seen the signs of Jesus, they nonetheless rejected Him. Isaiah prophesied of the rejection of Christ in Isaiah 53, which is quoted here. He himself was familiar with this rejection, for at His calling in Isaiah 6, which is also quoted here, the Lord told Him that people would reject Isaiah's prophecies as well. It is in this calling that Isaiah saw the Lord in heaven on His throne being worshipped by the angels. This is likely what is being referred when the passage says Isaiah saw the glory of Christ.

The point of decision

The Jewish leaders believed that Jesus was the Messiah (12:42), but did not confess Him. Confession would have meant being excommunicated from the synagogue. The leaders couldn't be thrown out, for they loved the glory of men rather than the glory of God.

John's stated purpose for the gospel is to bring people to a point of believing that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. But belief for John is not just knowing the truth, but placing your trust in that truth. The leadership knew that Jesus was from God (John 3:2). But they had not placed their trust in Him.

As John readies us for the final act of his gospel, already as readers we are being forced to decide for ourselves, do we believe in Jesus or not? We've seen the testimony, as delivered by John the Baptist, the miraculous signs, and even the voice of God the Father. Will we accept the testimony or will we reject it? Do we seek the approval of men or the approval of God?

The Glory of Jesus, the Son of God (13:1-20:29)

Teaching the Disciples the Way to Glory: Upper Room Discourse (13:1-17:26)

Illustration of the Way to Glory (13:1-30)

The Setting (13:1-4)

It is Thursday evening of the Passion Week, and He has gathered with His disciples for the Passover feast (13:1a). The prior Sunday Jesus entered Jerusalem with a large crowd proclaiming Him as Messiah (12:12ff). But Jesus is coming to be glorified not as they expect, but as a suffering servant (12:27). For Jesus, the way to glory is through the role of a servant, not a king.

Jesus knows that He is about to depart, and because of His love for the disciples, He sets forth to teach them the way to glory (13:1b). But Jesus is also aware that one of His disciples is about to betray Him (13:2). Nonetheless, Jesus picks up a towel, takes off his robe and begins his lesson with an illustration.

The Illustration (13:5-11)

The washing of feet would have been a normal practice in this day. When you wear sandals in the dusty streets of Jerusalem, you feet get dirty. It would be the normal practice for a servant of the host to come around with a basin and a towel and wash the feet of the guests before the meal starts. In this case, however, there is no servant; so, Jesus takes the role of the servant and washes the disciples' feet (13:5).

Peter is offended by this situation. He knows that Jesus is the Messiah, and therefore should not be taking the role of the servant. Jesus, however, patiently responds that he will soon understand this is an object lesson and it is okay for Him to do this (13:7).

Peter becomes indignant at this point, stating that He will not allow Jesus to stoop to such a low level (13:8). Jesus tells Him that if he doesn't let Him wash his feet, that He will have nothing to do with Peter. While this discussion is in the immediate context of the washing of feet, there is a foreshadowing to the upcoming death of Christ. If Peter does not allow Jesus to be servant, He is not allowing Jesus to die for him on the cross, and therefore he can not be in relationship with Jesus. Some refuse the tenants of Christianity because the picture of Messiah as a suffering servant is offensive and degrading to their image of God. Yet, like Peter, unless we let Jesus be our servant, we can have nothing to do with Him.

Peter, in his exuberance, asks Jesus then to wash his whole body (13:9). Jesus assures Him that this is not necessary, for he is already clean. The comparison to the washing of our sins here is clear. Those who have believed in Christ have had their sins forgiven. We have bathed. However, in our daily walk we continue to sin and are in need of our feet to be washed. We are still forgiven in the macro sense, but have sullied our feet such that we still need to confess and be forgiven as we walk through the dirty streets of our daily life.

However, Jesus says, "not all of you are clean." Jesus has washed Judas feet along with the disciples, knowing full well that in just a few short hours this man would betray Him.

The Lesson (13:12-19)

The lesson is simple: if Jesus is willing to take the role of the servant and wash the disciples' feet, so then how much more ought the disciples be willing to humble themselves and serve one another as servants. Jesus is illustrating that the path to glory is as a humble servant motivated by love and by the desire to meet the needs of others.

Jesus had plenty of reasons not to take the role of servant:

- In his position as their Lord, there is no reason why he should have needed to take this role. Therefore, we can never use our position as an excuse to not serve others.
- Jesus knows that He is less than 24 hours from suffering death on a cross and would soon be in great emotional distress. Therefore, we should never let our own needs get in the way of serving others.
- Jesus knows that Judas is about to betray Him, yet He washes Judas' feet. Therefore, we do not pick and choose who we serve based on how we will be treated back in response.

For Jesus, the path to glory is to take the role of a servant, whether that is a servant who washes feet or a servant who suffers death on the cross. For Jesus' disciples, then, the path to glory is also the path of a servant.

Teaching about the Way to Glory (13:31-16:33)

After dismissing Judas, Jesus continues his lesson on the path to glory through a teaching known as the Upper Room Discourse. The discourse begins with Jesus foretelling of His death and His departure, and includes commandments to love one another and abide in Him. He then concludes the discourse with a prayer to the Father.

Jesus Foretells of His Path to Glory (13:30-14:31)

Jesus announcement (13:31-35)

Jesus begins the discourse with an announcement that He is about to be glorified, and that God will be glorified through Him. But this path to glory will be a path on which the disciples can not follow Him. Therefore, while He is gone, Jesus has a *new* commandment: love one another.

Peter's Question: Where Are You Going? (13:36-14:4)

Peter is so struck by the announcement that Jesus will be leaving them and that they can't follow that he ignores the point of Jesus' announcement, namely that they love one another. Instead he asks the obvious question, "Lord, where are you going?"

Jesus reiterates that where he is going they can't follow right now, for He must take the path of glory alone. But later, they would follow him down this path. Peter, in his typically impulsive style, boldly states that he will follow, even if it cost him his life. Jesus answers that, not, indeed Peter will deny Him three times before the morning.

Jesus' words have troubled the disciples. But Jesus wants to assure them that it will be alright. Yes, he is going to leave them, but they are not to worry, for He is going to prepare a place for them, and then He will come back and they will dwell with Him in His Father's house. For you see, says Jesus, you already know the way.

Thomas' Question: How Will We Know the Way? (14:5-14:7)

Thomas, who is still thinking of the immediate, doesn't have a clue where Jesus is going or what is about to happen. So he asks, "How will we know the way?"

Indeed, the disciples may not know where Jesus is going specifically, but if they are looking for the path to the Father, indeed they know the way, for they know Jesus, for Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth & the life. No man comes to the father but by me."

Philip's Request: Show us the Father (14:8-14:21)

Philip requests something which seems ignorant to us now, but probably was seen by Philip as an earnest and legitimate request. He asks to see the Father, for that is indeed enough for Him. He only wants to connect with God and to have relationship with Him.

Jesus' response reveals what seems to almost be a frustration with Philip. It's as if Jesus responds by saying, "what do you think I've been doing for the last 3 years? Were you not with me all this time? Everything I've been doing up to this point is a revelation of the Father."

All of this question and answering, however, has been a rabbit-trail in Jesus discourse; so He returns to His primary message of encouragement in verse 15: love one another.

Furthermore, while Jesus will be leaving them, He is not going to leave them alone, for He will ask the Father to send the Spirit. That Spirit will dwell with them and will show them the truth of what Jesus is saying. The disciples will know where Jesus has gone (i.e. to the Father), for the Spirit will teach them that. However, the world, which does not have the Spirit, will not see Jesus any longer.

Judas' Question: Why aren't you revealing yourself? (14:22-31)

Judas (not Iscariot) has realized that when Jesus says He is about to be glorified, He is not not the Messianic glory he had in mind. Jesus is saying He is going back to the Father, but the world won't know what happened to Him. This troubles Judas, and He asks Jesus, "Hey, what happened to the plan? What changed?"

Jesus seems to ignore Judas altogether, and gets back to His original point: love one another!

One might think Jesus is frustrated with the disciples for missing His point. However, He is not concerned, because after He is gone the Holy Spirit will remind them of all the things He has taught them. They may not understand what He is saying now, but they will understand, for the Spirit will show them.

Jesus has been sharing this with them because when He suffers and dies, He wants them to remember that this is all part of the plan (14:29), and that they would have peace, not fear (13:27).

At this point it appears they leave the Upper Room and they head for the Garden of Gethsemane. (14:31b0)

Jesus' Instructions For the Disciples (15:1-16:33)

Abide in Me (15:1-11)

As they are walking Jesus gives an illustration of His relationship with His disciples. He is the vine, they are the branches and the Father is the vinedresser. If the branch remains connected it will bear fruit. If it is not connected, it can not bear fruit (15:4-6). If the branch does bear fruit, then the Father prunes the branch so that it can bear even more fruit (15:2b).

However if the branch is connected, but it is not bearing fruit, the vinedresser "takes away" (15:2a). This word literally means "to lift up"³ The picture here is not the vine dresser cutting off the branch and taking it away from the vine, but lifting the vine off the ground and hanging it again so it can begin to be productive.

This is all a picture of Jesus command to the disciples to "abide" in Him (15:4). To abide means to remain, to wait, to endure and to not depart⁴. There is no action required, no effort to be extended. Instead, to bear fruit only requires that we remain attached to vine.

This is the path to glory, for the Father will be glorified (15:8) by our abiding in Christ and the resulting fruit it bears. Jesus does not want the disciples to be troubled and worried about the future. If through all the suffering and crisis that is about to happen, they remain in Christ, not forsaking Him, then they will find joy in the midst of trouble (15:11).

Love One Another (15:12-17)

If indeed disciples abide in Jesus and His love, then we will keep His commandments and we will love one another. Jesus comes back to this point again. He is leaving, so they only have each other now. Therefore, love each other (15:17). He has illustrated that love through the basin and the towel in chapter 13, but now he would explain that love is not just washing feet, but love is laying down your very life, for "greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for

³ Thayer, "airo" G142.

⁴ Thayer, "meno" G3306.

his friends.” (15:13). And indeed, His disciples had become His friends. No longer is it a slave-master relationship (15:15).

Know the World Hates You (15:18-16:4)

Jesus declares that the world is going to hate the disciples, for the world has hated Him (15:18). But even though the world will persecute them, Jesus is not going to take them out of the world, for the disciples must remain and be His witness in the world (15:27). The Holy Spirit, sent by the Father, will come and be Jesus’ witness to the disciples (15:26), and they are to turn around and proclaim Jesus to the world.

Jesus warns them that this will be difficult and full of hardship (16:2-3). However, He is telling them this ahead of time so they will expect it and not falter when the persecution, their hour, comes (16:1).

It is Better that I Go: The Coming of the Holy Spirit (16:5-15)

Jesus then states something quite remarkable. He says “it is to your advantage that I go away” (16:7). If Jesus were not to go away, the Holy Spirit would not need to come. With Jesus, his ministry had been limited by Jesus’ physical presence. But now the Holy Spirit can come and multiply the ministry by indwelling each and every disciple. The Spirit will come to convict the world of sin (16:8), and He will guide the disciples into truth (16:13). But primarily, the Holy Spirit will glorify the Son (16:14).

Jesus Announcement: I’m going to the Father (16:16-33)

But now, Jesus must leave them (16:16). The disciples still don’t understand what he means by this (16:18-19). Jesus acknowledges that His leaving is an occasion for grief, and that indeed in a few short hours their grief would be intense (16:20-21). However, speaking of the resurrection, Jesus tells them that He will see them again, and that they will have great joy (16:22).

When they see Him again, everything will start to make sense. Jesus will speak to them plainly and not in figurative language (16:25). If things are unclear, they only need to ask, and He will grant it to them (16:23-24, 26-27). But, now, He must go to the Father (16:28).

The disciples say that they haven’t asked for anything at this point because they now understand—he is now speaking plainly. He is speaking plainly and they believe (16:29-30).

But Jesus asks, “do you now believe?” He is seeming to say, “do you really believe?” For in a few short hours they will all be scattered and abandon Him.

But He is telling them these things so they might have peace and courage, for though in a few hours it will look like the world has defeated Him, indeed has overcome the world (16:33).

Prayer for the Disciples to be Glorified: High Priestly Prayer (17:1-26)

Jesus then begins a prayer, which traditionally has been called the High Priestly Prayer of Christ, where Christ intervenes on behalf of the disciples asking the Father to protect, set apart, and unify the disciples. Finally, Jesus concludes His prayer by asking that the disciples be allowed to participate in the glory of God.

This prayer is most immediately asked on behalf of the 11 disciples who have been with Him. Yet, there seems to be an element where Jesus is asking these things not just for them, but for all who believe because of their ministry (17:20). Jesus prayed this prayer for all His disciples, including those who believe today!

Jesus Reason for Boldness in His Prayer (17:1-10)

Before Jesus makes His request on behalf of the disciples, He tells the Father that He has accomplished all that the Father has asked:

- Jesus has glorified the Father (17:1-5).
- Jesus has accomplished the work given to Him to do (17:4).

- Jesus has shown the Father to the disciples the Father gave Him (17:6).
- Jesus has taught the disciples the words the Father gave Him (17:7).

Jesus lists off His accomplishments not to brag to the Father, but as if to say, “I’ve done all you’ve asked me to do for these disciples, but now that I am about to return to you, I must leave them to your care.”

Jesus Request

Keep the Disciples Safe (17:11-19)

Jesus first requests that the Father would keep the disciples safe (17:11). Jesus had been guarding them (17:12), but now that he is returning to the Father (17:13), Jesus is concerned because the world will hate them (17:14) and Satan will seek to destroy them (17:15b). Jesus does not ask that the Father take them out of the world, for we know that Jesus has already commissioned them to be witnesses of the truth to the world (17:18, 15:27), but that the Father protect them while in the world. Jesus asks the Father protect the disciples in the midst of the world by sanctifying, or setting them apart in the truth (17:17,19).

Keep The Disciples Unified (17:20-23)

Jesus then asks on behalf of not just these disciples, but all future disciples (17:20), that the Father would unify the disciples (17:21a). That unity would be based in the unity of the Trinity, for just as the Father and the Son are One, Jesus requests that the Father cause the disciples to be one (17:21b-22), not just with each other but one with the Father and the Son (17:23).

The purpose for this unity is to demonstrate to the world that Jesus was sent by the Father (17:21b, 23b), and that Jesus loved the disciples in the same way that the Father loves the Son (17:23c).

The Participation in the Glory of the Trinity

At the beginning of the prayer, Jesus asked the Father to glorify the Son (17:1). While this may sound like a selfish request, it is anything but. First, this glory comes through the cross (“the hour has come”), which is an act of great humility. Secondly, Jesus requests this glory so that the Son can turn around and give that glory back to the Father (“that the Son may glorify You”).

Jesus entire ministry was to bring glory to the Father (17:4). But when He gave glory to the Father, the Father returned that glory to Him. In John 12:27-28, when Jesus submits to the Father and announces his intention to go to the cross, He asks, “Father, glorify your name.” The Father responds with an audible voice from heaven, “I have glorified it and will glorify it again.”

When the Son is glorified, the Father is glorified, and when the Father is glorified, so also is the Son (13:31-32). Jesus asks God to glorify Him so that He can glorify God (17:1) that together they can both be glorified (17:5).

This dynamic gives us remarkable insight to the inner workings of the Trinity. This passing of glory from Father to Son and Son back to Father is like a cosmic game of hot potato, with neither grasping onto the glory, but always passing back to the one from whom it came. Even the Holy Spirit is involved. His ministry is also to glorify the Son, for He does not take credit for His teaching as if it were His own, but only passes on what the Father gives Him (16:14).

But this mutual glorification is not limited to the Trinity. For in Jesus request for the disciples’ unity, Christ seeks to share His glory with His disciples:

*The glory which You have given Me, I have given to them
that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in
Me. (John 17:22-23a)*

Jesus is requesting that the Father allow Him to now include all His disciples in the unity of the Trinity, and to share in the mutual sharing of glory within the Trinity. He is asking the Father to include the church in the Trinitarian game of glory hot potato!

Jesus request for unity in His High Priestly Prayer is not merely a request that the church get along. There is a much deeper, much more glorious significance than just a call to quit squabbling in the church. It is a call to be included in the unity of the Trinity. It is a call to share in the glory of God. It is a call to not selfishly hold onto glory, but to pass that glory off to the Father, the Son, the Spirit.

It is also a call for us as Jesus disciples to humble ourselves before each other, and thus emulate the Trinity. Jesus demonstrated this for us in the foot washing of John 13. He commands it of us in 15:12 and 15:17, as we “love one another.” When Jesus’ disciples love one another, we prove we are His disciples (15:18), for that is the attitude the Son has towards the Father. Just as Jesus’ humility gave glory to the Father, so also the love and humility of His disciples will glorify the Father (15:18).

Jesus Taking the Path to Glory: His Death (18:1-19:42)

Jesus Arrest

Immediately after His prayer, Judas brought officers from the High Priests and a cohort from the Roman army to arrest Jesus. Jesus steps forth and asks the group who they seek. They answer, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus’ response must have carried some authority in it, for when he responds, “I am,” the crowd falls to the ground.

But when Jesus responds a second time, we see His love for the disciples become evident. In His prayer of chapter 17, Jesus tells the Father that He has kept and guarded His disciples and Jesus asks the Father to continue that protection. Now we see an illustration of that guardianship. For Jesus says to the arresting troops, “if you seek Me, let these go their way.”

Peter’s Denial

While Jesus is in the midst of His trials, John interjects into the narrative the account of Peter’s three denials. While Peter had been willing to fight the Roman cohort during Jesus arrest (18:10), now Peter feared for His life. In fact, Peter’s last denial was in response to a relative of one whose ear Peter caught off. Jesus had called on the Father to guard and protect the disciples, a request Peter likely would have heard. But now Peter sought to protect himself by denying His association with Christ.

Jesus Death

Jesus, even while on the cross was looking out for those whom He loved. Never selfish, even in the end, He sought to care for His own mother. In 19:25-27, Jesus asks John to care for Mary as he would for his own mother, stating to him, “Behold, your mother.” From that time on John declares that indeed he did care for Mary.

Having taken care of her, he was now ready to die. He proclaims, “It is finished!” bows his head, and gives up His spirit. Jesus voluntarily gave up His Spirit. The Jews, or the Romans, or anyone else did not kill Him. Jesus died because that was the very purpose for which He came (12:27). When his work on the cross was accomplished, He gave up His own Spirit.

Jesus in Glory: His Resurrection (20:1-21:25)

Believing Thomas (20:24-29)

John’s gospel is the only gospel that describes two appearances of Jesus in Jerusalem one week apart prior to his appearing to them in Galilee. At this first appearance, the disciple Thomas was not with them. His unbelief has given him the moniker, doubting Thomas. But John’s emphasis on Thomas is not his doubt but, in keeping the theme of belief, on Thomas’ belief.

At the second appearance of Jesus, Thomas sees the resurrected Christ. Jesus tells Thomas, "Do not be unbelieving but believing." This invitation on the part of Jesus to Thomas is used by the gospel writer as a call not just to Thomas, but to all who are reading the book to respond the way Thomas does: "My Lord and my God!" Jesus answer demonstrates this call to everyone to believe, as He states, "blessed are they who did not see, and yet believe."

The Purpose of the Book (20:30-31, 21:25)

John states in 21:25 that this gospel is not intended to be an exhaustive account of all that Jesus did and said while on the earth. Indeed, if they all of Jesus' life were written down, there world itself could not contain the books necessary. Even a cursory comparison of John with the synoptics has us wondering why he did not include the parables, the Sermon on the Mount, the Olivet Discourse, and so many other of Jesus miracles.

But John gives us his criteria for including the things He did in the book. John's book was compiled to point the reader to one purpose: belief in the Christ, the Son of God.

While Thomas needed to see to believe, John wants the reader to believe His testimony (21:24) of what he has seen so that they might be blessed as one who believes without seeing. But more, that John wants his readers to believe that they might "have life."

Restoration of Peter (21:1-17)

After Jesus appeared in Jerusalem, the disciples head back to Galilee to go fishing. Jesus appears to them again, providing them with a miraculous catch of fish, harkening back to the same miracle that he performed before calling many of them to become "fishers of men" (Luke 5:1-11).

As soon as Peter recognizes Jesus because of the miracle, he throws off his robe and swam to shore to see Jesus on the beach. The rest of the disciples follow in the boat. There, while eating a breakfast cooked by the Lord, Jesus seeks to restore Peter who had denied Him three times.

Three times Jesus asks Peter, "do you love me," and three times Peter responds that indeed he does love Jesus. But our English translations do not do justice to the interaction between Peter and John, for there are two different Greek words being used here, both of which are translated as love. The first two times Jesus asks Peter, "do you love me," he uses the Greek word *agape*, which is an unconditional, selfless love. Peter responds back to Jesus in each of these occasions saying he loves Jesus, but using the Greek word *phileo*, which is a brotherly or friendship love. The third time Jesus asks Peter if he loves him, he switches and uses the word *phileo*, which grieves Peter, not because Jesus doesn't believe him and has to ask him three times, but because Jesus has "downgraded" his question to a lower form of love.

Peter is grieved because he realizes that, due to his denial, he demonstrated that his love for Christ was not unconditional. Indeed, while Peter was boasting before the arrest that he would die for Jesus, and even took up a sword to defend him, when his life was on the line he denied even knowing him.

Jesus responds by asking Peter to tend His sheep, calling on Peter to take on a pastoral role. What a relief it is to all pastors and church leaders knowing that Peter's call as a pastor came only after Peter's admission of his greatest failure. But it is often only after we recognize our failures that God will call us.

Finally, then, Jesus foretells of Peters' martyrdom, announcing that as an old man he will be bound and imprisoned. This would have been an encouragement, for before when Peter faced death for believing in Christ, he failed. But Jesus shows Him that indeed he will stand firm in his faith and become martyred.

Final Comments Regarding John (21:18-24)

Regarding the death of John (21:18-23)

The book then ends with an unusual little epilogue concerning John himself. Jesus has predicted Peter's martyrdom. Peter, curious, asks Jesus if John would also be martyred. Jesus responds by saying, "if I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!" In other words, Jesus is telling Peter not to worry about what will happen to John, but to focus on devoting His life to Jesus.

However, evidently these words of Jesus had led to a belief in the church that John would not die until Jesus returned. Adding to this belief was the fact that John was probably a very old man when this book was written. But John dispels this belief by showing that Jesus was only telling Peter that it wasn't any of his business when or how John would die.

John's Witness (21:24)

Unlike the other gospel narratives, John's gospel is an eyewitness account. In 18:15, we discover that John was an acquaintance of the High Priest, and so was allowed to enter the court of the High Priest to hear what took place at His trial. John is also the only disciple who was an actual eyewitness to the crucifixion.

The fact that John is an eyewitness to these events is important to him. We can be assured of the truth of this gospel because of his personal experience. That is why John says in 21:24:

This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true.

John's eyewitness testimony is the basis for not just the truth of His gospel, but also His authority as a disciple, for as we see in John 17:20-24, unity with the disciples who were eyewitnesses means we have unity with the Father and the Son. For that reason in his first epistle John says:

What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.(1 John 1:3)

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