

# Studies in the Gospel of John

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Folsom church of Christ  
January 2001 & April 2002

## Preface

Only God can “declare the end from the beginning” (Isa. 46:10) but the gospel of John helps us see the “beginning from the end.” John said he wrote this book for one primary purpose: “that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name” (Jn. 20:31). So, each time John dipped his pen in the ink, he breathed a silent prayer: “Lord, help these people to believe by what I write.”

This is truly an amazing and wonderful book. It is simple and profound and the same time. The simplest person can read it and learn, and yet one scholar, after years of deep study, said, “it remains strange, restless and profound.” For anyone, each reading of the book will uncover some new jewel of spiritual insight, whether at the basic level or at the deeper level. Our goal in this study is to help you to explore the gospel and discover truth at both levels.

John’s gospel is decidedly different from the so-called “synoptic gospels” (Matthew, Mark and Luke), so called because they are more or less similar in the material they present. John, written about 20 to 30 years later, takes a fresh approach. He presents the life of Christ, but does it within conceptual frameworks, such as light and darkness, good and evil, love and hate, falsehood and truth, and life and death. These themes are developed around seven “signs” that John has selected among the many miracles Jesus did during His ministry. Some are developed

through the speeches of Jesus, including seven “I am” statements scattered through the book. Whether sign or discourse, John’s purpose is clearly stated in 20:30-31: “Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.”

The Holy Spirit inspired John to write the gospel in order to produce faith. But instead of describing great feats of faith, John takes us on a journey through the throes of *unbelief*. This is the “gospel of rejection.” This unfolds dramatically in chapter 6, where the people want to make Him a king (v. 15) until He teaches some “hard things.” Then they depart from Him altogether (v. 66), presumably to find a teacher more to their liking. Jesus is seen sifting the false disciples from the true and thereby He becomes a crisis in the lives of everyone He meets. It is an engaging study of choice and conflict.

We profit most from the study of John if we constantly check our spiritual pulse as we read. Ask: “What is Jesus doing here and why is He doing it?” “Why are people acting like this toward Him – why are they following Him or why are they rejecting Him?” “What would I do?” “What *am* I doing?” “What choices does this reading impose upon me?” “What conflict does it bring to my life, if I really put to practice what I’m reading?”

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January, 2001

# Introduction

## Author

There is little doubt among scholars that the beloved apostle John, the son of Zebedee and brother of James (see Mk 9:38; 10:35-37; Lk. 9:54ff.) wrote this gospel. There is substantial external evidence that he penned it. Iranaeus, a contemporary of John, wrote: "John, the disciple of the Lord who also leaned upon His breast, did himself write a gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia." The evidence is even stronger when the gospel is compared to John's letters, where similarity in the use of terms is striking.

## Date

The most generally accepted time frame for the writing of the gospel is the latter end of the first century. There are various reasons for assigning this date. The tone of the gospel seems to suggest an audience that was made up of people who had not been eyewitnesses of the events of Christ's life. John often translates a term for his readers (cf. Jn. 1:38), terms they probably would have known if they had lived at time closer to the events mentioned.

It is also supposed that he is confronting fledgling Gnosticism. The Gnostics denied the fleshly existence of the Messiah, viewing flesh as inherently sinful and vile. Therefore, in its various forms, it held that the Son of God in the flesh was only apparent; that the appearance of a bodily Christ was just a Phantom or an illusion. It is not hard to see how John may have been dealing with this falsehood in its early stages (cf. 1:14; 6:51ff.; cf. 2 Jn. 9-11).

## Theological Outline

John structures his book around seven signs and seven "I Am" statements (see Ex. 3 for the significance of "I am"). The signs were not meant to draw attention to themselves but were meant to *signify* something greater. They are recorded so that we may "believe, and believing have eternal life" (cf. 10:35ff; 20:30-31).

## The Seven Signs

1. Water to Wine (2:1-10)
2. Healing of Nobleman's Son (4:46-54)
3. Healing of Infirm Man (5:1-9)
4. Feeding of the 5,000 (6:1-14)
5. Walking on the Water (6:15-21)
6. Healing of the Blind Man (9:1-41)
7. Raising of Lazarus from the Dead (11:1-44)

## The Seven "I Am's"

1. "I am the Bread of Life" (6:35-48)
2. "I am the Light of the World" (8:12; 9:5)
3. "I am the Door" (10:7, 9)
4. "I am the Good Shepherd" (10:11, 14)
5. "I am the Resurrection & Life" (11:25)
6. "I am the Way, Truth and Life" (14:6)
7. "I am the True Vine" (15:1-5)

## Outline (Part I)

### A. Revelation of Jesus to the World. The Book of Signs (Chapters 1 through 11)

- a. Prologue (1:1-18)
- b. Testimony about Jesus (1:19-51)
- c. **First sign** and cleansing of the temple (2:1-25)
- d. Nicodemus and the new birth (3:1-21)
- e. John's witness concerning Christ (3:22-36)
- f. Jesus and the woman at the well (4:1-42)
- g. Jesus in Galilee and the **second sign** (4:43-54)
- h. **Third sign** and conflict with Jews (5:1-30)
- i. Fivefold witness (5:31-47)
- j. **Fourth and fifth signs** (6:1-21)
- k. Discourse on the bread of life (6:22-59)
- l. Rejection by many disciples and Peter's confession (6:60-61)
- m. Conflict with Judaism (7:1-52)
- n. Woman caught in adultery (7:53-8:11)
- o. "Light of the world" discourse (8:12-59)
- p. **Sixth sign** and conflict with Pharisees (9:1-41)
- q. "Door" and "Good Shepherd" discourses (10:1-21)
- r. Conflict with Jews (10:22-42)
- s. **Seventh sign** and conflict (11:1-57)

## Outline (Part II)

### **B. In the Shadow of the Cross (Chapters 12–17)**

- a. A Famous Anointing and an Object Lesson (12:1–13:35)
- b. The farewell discourses (13:36 – 16:33)
  - (1) Forecast of Peter's denial (13:36-38)
  - (2) Christ comforts His disciples (14:1-31)
  - (3) The Vine and the branches (15:1-11)
  - (4) Relationships in Christ and to the world (15:12-25)
  - (5) The promise of the Holy Spirit (15:26-27)
  - (6) Prediction of suffering for the disciples (16:1-15)
  - (7) Prediction of Christ's death & resurrection (16:16-33)
- c. The prayer of the Lord for unity (17:1-26)

### **C. The Death and Resurrection of Christ (18:1– 21:25)**

- a. The arrest and trials of Jesus (18:1– 19:16)
- b. The crucifixion and burial (19:17-42)
- c. The resurrection and appearances (20:1-29)
- d. The purpose of the book (20:30-31)
- e. The commission to the disciples and epilogue (21:1-25)



## Part I: The Book of Signs

### John 1:1-18

### The Prologue

#### Paragraph Analysis

E.g. vv. 1-5						
Jesus Christ was there before the beginning began. He is Creator, and Life and Light. Cannot coexist with darkness						

#### Questions for Review

[Numbers in brackets are the verses to which the question refers.]

1. List the terms in that prove the deity of Christ [1-5].
  2. The New World Translation of the Jehovah's Witnesses translates v. 1, ". . .and the word was a god."  
What are they trying to prove? Why is that translation is faulty?
  3. What kind of "life" was in Jesus [4].
  4. Explain "the darkness did not comprehend it" [5]
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5. Which “John” is John talking about? What is affirmed about him? What kind of man was he, according to this report? [6-8, 15]
  
6. How does Jesus “enlighten every man”? [9]
  
7. Who did not know Him? What does it mean to “not know Him”? [10-11]
  
8. What did Jesus give to those who received Him? How do men “receive” Him? [11-13]
  
9. Analyze v. 14 carefully. What is being affirmed about Christ? Who does “we” refer to? What is “glory”? Describe how He was full of grace and truth.
  
10. What was the function of Jesus? What is His “fulness” that we have received? What does “grace upon grace” mean? How does Jesus compare to Moses? How do we know God? [16-18. See 14:6-11]

## Daily Bread



John is talking about the preexistence of Christ. His point, of course, is that the Jesus we know, who came to this earth, was God-in-the-flesh. Look at the text again and think about what kind of world this would be had Jesus never come. We were, by habitual practice, “children of wrath” (Ephesians 2:3). But Jesus came with His words and His deeds and brought new hope and the promise of a better world. He mined silver and gold from those He met who felt they were no better than dirt. He found in every soul a flicker of hope and yet most did not allow Him in. Without Him, we would have only a vague notion of grace and truth. With Him, we see it personified and displayed. And as we see Jesus, only then does the Father come into clearer focus.

## John 1:1-18

**I**n the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the Light, but *he* came to testify about the Light.

There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. John testified about Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'" For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained *Him*.



## Gnosticism

**G**nosticism was a form of heretical teaching that sprung up in many churches in the second century A.D. However, the roots of Gnosticism were beginning to spread in the late first century, when John wrote his letters and his gospel. A “Gnostic” felt he had special insight into God’s will for man and he alone was qualified to teach God’s will.

The basic tenet of Gnostic teaching was that only spirit was good and all matter was essentially evil. Adherents believed that the one main aim in life is to liberate man’s spirit from the “vile prison-house of the body.” The teaching took many forms.

There were other false teachers during this time, of course, but much of their teaching later became part of the Gnostic heresy. Some denied the Messiahship of Jesus (see I Jn 2:22) and others denied His incarnation (4:2-3). The denial of the incarnation of Jesus is essential in Gnosticism since they held that matter (and hence the *body*) was inherently evil. (John Calvin’s philosophy just turned this around; he taught that the *spirit* of man is inherently evil or “totally depraved.”)

The following is an excerpt from a Bible Dictionary entry on “Gnosticism”:<sup>1</sup>

...there is evidence that there was a good deal of “gnosticizing” thought even in the first century c.e. A question still in debate is the extent of “gnostic” influence on the New Testament, since the evidence has to be found in the New Testament itself, and there is always a danger of interpreting it in light of later systems, which may be to impose on it the ideas of a later period. There is still no gnostic document that in its present form can be dated prior to the New Testament.

The chief characteristics common to all the developed systems are: (1) a radical cosmic dualism that rejects this world and all that belongs to it; the body is a prison from which the soul longs to escape; (2) a distinction between the unknown transcendent true God and the creator or Demiurge, commonly identified with the God of the Hebrew Bible; (3) the belief that the human race is essentially akin to the divine, being a spark of heavenly light imprisoned in a material body; (4) a myth, often narrating a premundane fall, to account for the present human predicament; and (5) the saving knowledge by which deliverance is effected and the gnostic awakened to recognition of his or her true nature and heavenly origin. At one time it was thought, as the church fathers sometimes allege, that the gnostic was “saved by nature, and that mortality was therefore of no importance; indeed, since ethics is largely a matter of obedience to the law of the creator, who seeks to hold the human race in slavery, it could be seen as a positive duty for the gnostic to disobey all such commands. The evidence of the Nag Hammadi documents, however, suggests that while some Gnostics may have shown libertine tendencies, the main direction of the movement was toward asceticism. Some of the characteristics listed can be identified in other systems of thought, but that does not make these gnostic; it is the combination of those ideas into a new synthesis that is Gnosticism.

The idea that the body was evil and therefore Christ could not have actually lived on earth in the flesh, culminated in two major views:

- *Docetism* taught that Jesus only seemed to have a body; i.e., He was a “phantom.”

<sup>1</sup> *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, Gnosticism, by Robert McL. Wilson, p. 256

- The doctrine of *Cerinthus*. He drew a definite distinction between the human Jesus and the divine Christ. He said that Jesus was a man, born in a perfectly natural way, who lived in special obedience to God. After His baptism the Christ, in the shape of a dove, descended upon Him. The Christ then, according to Cerinthus, left the body of Jesus prior to His suffering on the cross. Therefore, Jesus as the Christ never really suffered at all (Read I Jn. 5:6 with this information in mind).

One great danger in this heresy is that it arises from mistaken reverence. It is afraid to ascribe to Jesus full humanity because of its bias against the human body. One emphasis in I John is that man's salvation is dependent on the full identification of Jesus Christ with him.

Gnostic belief led to certain destructive consequences in the lives of those who held it. The attitude about the body and the things of the body led to any one of three possible views:

**ASCETICISM** — fasting and celibacy and rigid control, even deliberate ill-treatment of the body. The view that celibacy is better than marriage and that sex, except for procreation, is a sin can be traced partially, at least, Gnostic belief. There is no trace of that particular view in this letter, however.

**LICENTIOUSNESS** — Since the body is unimportant, its appetites may be gratified without limit. There is some evidence in the letter that this view was held, in some form. See I Jn 1:6; 2:4-6 (cf. Jude 3). Some Gnostics took this even further: in order to realize *complete* knowledge, a person must enter into every experience, good or bad; i.e., he had an obligation to sin (see Rev. 2:24; I Jn. 1:5). These Gnostics held that you must penetrate the veil of both light *and* darkness.

**SPIRITUAL PERFECTION** — Because of the special knowledge that these Gnostics claimed, they felt they were above sin. John addressed them in I Jn. 1:8-10.

Gnosticism also led to an attitude that was detrimental to fellowship between fellow Christians. Gnostics claimed a special insight into God's will, clearly not for every man. Most people were too involved in everyday life to ever have the time for the study and discipline necessary to achieve this level of knowledge; and even if they had such time, they were probably intellectually incapable of handling the involved speculations and rituals of the philosophy. This, of course, resulted in two classes of people in the church. To the Gnostics, all non-Gnostics were second-class citizens. In fact, they considered themselves the spiritual "aristocracy" and looked with contempt, even hatred, upon those who would never know what real religion was all about (see 1:7; 2:9-11; 3:14-17; 3:23; 4:7-8; 4:10-12; 4:20-21).



## Irenaeus' Second Century Account of the Apostle John

**P**olycarp also was not only instructed by apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but was also, by apostles in Asia, appointed bishop of the Church in Smyrna, whom I also saw in my early youth, for he tarried on earth a very long time, and, when a very old man, gloriously and most nobly suffering martyrdom, departed this life, having always taught the things which he had learned from the apostles, and which the Church has handed down, and which alone are true. To these things all the Asiatic Churches testify, as do also those men who have succeeded Polycarp down to the present time, a man who was of much greater weight, and a more steadfast witness of truth, than Valentinus, and Marcion, and the rest of the heretics. He it was who, coming to Rome in the time of Anicetus caused many to turn away from the aforesaid heretics to the Church of God, proclaiming that he had received this one and sole truth from the apostles, -that, namely, which is handed down by the Church. There are also those who heard from him that John, the disciple of the Lord, going to bathe at Ephesus, and perceiving Cerinthus within, rushed out of the bath-house without bathing, exclaiming, "Let us fly, lest even the bath-house fall down, because Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is within." And Polycarp himself replied to Marcion, who met him on one occasion, and said, "Dost thou know me?" "I do know thee, the first-born of Satan." Such was the horror which the apostles and their disciples had against holding even verbal communication with any corrupters of the truth; as Paul also says, "A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself." There is also a very powerful Epistle of Polycarp written to the Philippians, from which those who choose to do so, and are anxious about their salvation, can learn the character of his faith, and the preaching of the truth. Then, again, the Church in Ephesus, founded by Paul, and having John remaining among them permanently until the times of Trajan, is a true witness of the tradition of the apostles.

Taken from *Ante-Nicene Fathers: History of the Christian Church*, Vol. 1, page 416 by Irenaeus.

# 2

## John 2:1-25 The First Sign, Temple Cleansing

### Paragraph Analysis


### Questions for Review

[Numbers in brackets are the verses to which the question refers.]

1. Why does John tell us it was the “third day” that Jesus went to the wedding? [1; see 1:29, 35, 43].
  2. Was Jesus being rude to His mother when she told Him the wine ran out? If not, what was His point? [4]
  3. What is the rite of “purification”? What is the significance of “they filled them to the brim”? [6-7].
  4. What was the quality of the wine that Jesus made? Is that important? [9]
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5. Jesus “manifested His glory”: what does that mean?
  
6. Galilee is in the north of Palestine; so how does Jesus go “up” to Jerusalem? [13]
  
7. Why did Jesus react so strongly to the activities in the temple? [14-17]
  
8. See Matthew 21:23. By what authority *did* Jesus do these things? How did He answer the request for a sign, as recorded in the John account? Why did He answer in that way? [18-22]
  
9. The Jews referred to the temple as being 46 years in the building. What were they talking about? [19-20]
  
10. What is progress of the disciples’ belief at this juncture, both the twelve and the crowd of disciples? [22-25]
  
11. Who can “know all men” and “knows what is in man”? [24-25; See 1 Cor. 2:11]

## Daily Bread



Jesus performed a remarkable miracle in Cana, turning water into wine. And it was the best wine, not the poor stuff usually served after everyone is mostly satisfied. Perhaps He was telling them something – *the best is yet to come!* And so it was; Jesus’ coming into the world was the best news the world had ever known. And yet, there was something even better coming. Jesus refers to it in verse 19: His resurrection from the dead. That sign was not only the most meaningful act for us, but it was the most probative. Through it, He was “declared the Son of God with power” (Romans 2:4), the very point John seeks to drive home in his gospel.

## John 2:1-25

### Miracle at Cana

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; and both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said\* to Him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said\* to her, "**Woman, what does that have to do with us? My hour has not yet come.**" His mother said\* to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it." Now there were six stone waterpots set there for the Jewish custom of purification, containing twenty or thirty gallons each. Jesus said\* to them, "**Fill the waterpots with water.**" So they filled them up to the brim. And He said\* to them, "**Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter.**" So they took it *to him*. <sup>9</sup>When the headwaiter tasted the water which had become wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called\* the bridegroom, and said\* to him, "Every man serves the good wine first, and when *the people* have drunk freely, *then he* serves the poorer *wine*; but you have kept the good wine until now." This beginning of *His* signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.

After this He went down to Capernaum, He and His mother and *His* brothers and His disciples; and they stayed there a few days.

### First Passover—Cleansing the Temple

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated *at their tables*. And He made a scourge of cords, and drove *them* all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables; and to those who were selling the doves He said, "**Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a place of business.**" His disciples remembered that it was written, "ZEAL FOR YOUR HOUSE WILL CONSUME ME." The Jews then said to Him, "What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?" Jesus answered them, "**Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.**" The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" But He was speaking of the temple of His body. So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.

Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing. But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man.



## Notes on “Wine” in the New Testament

**P**roverbs warns, “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler and whosoever is led astray by them is not wise” (20:1), and “it is not for kings, O Lemuel, to drink wine, nor for princes to say, where is strong drink?” (31:4). So also Isaiah: “Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink” (Isaiah 5:22). In these verses “wine” and “strong drink” are strictly forbidden.

On the other hand, the same Solomon who warned men to stay away from wine in Proverbs 20:1 urges his readers in Ecclesiastes 9:7 to “eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart.” Even more significant, Jesus miraculously provided wine to a wedding feast in Cana, and Paul urged Timothy to “use a little wine for your stomach’s sake and your frequent infirmities” (I Timothy 5:23).

Whether wine, as used in Scripture, proves a blessing or a curse depends entirely upon what is meant by the words used. The normal meaning of “wine” in both Old and New Testaments is that of the fermented juice of the grape (Arndt & Gingrich, p. 564). But there are important exceptions. The two words most translated wine in the Old Testament are also used to describe juice fresh pressed from the grape (Isaiah 16:10; 65:8).

It is possible that positive biblical references to wine are speaking simply of the juice of the grape. But there is another important distinction. The Bible treats wine in two ways, as a drug or social drink (bad) and as a food or table drink (good). Some have suggested that the only difference between the two is in the amount one drinks and not in the nature of the beverage. But the evidence does not support that view.

The wine used as a table drink in the ancient world was not pure wine, but was liberally diluted with water. It was a family food, not a social beverage. The wine was customarily stored in large pointed jugs called *amphorae*, and from these jugs was poured into large bowls called *kraters* where it was mixed with water (Greek for unmixed or pure is *akratos*). From there it was poured into cups. The ratio of water to wine varied, perhaps with the strength of the wine. Homer mentions a ratio of 2 to 1 (*Odyssey*). In the first century, Pliny refers to the mixture in the same district as 8 to 1 (*Natural History*). The fullest source of information is Athenaeus (200 AD) who in his *The Learned Banquet* quotes earlier writers who spoke of mixtures of 3 to 1, 4 to 1, 2 to 1, 5 to 2, and called 3 to 2 “strong.” Mnesthus of Athens observed: “Mix it half and half, and you get madness; unmixed, bodily collapse.” Plutarch,

early in the second century AD, said, “We call a mixture ‘wine’, although the larger of the components is water.” in both the Greek and Roman world, to drink unmixed wine was considered intemperate (Will Durant, *Caesar and Christ*, p. 71).

The Talmud states that the wine of the four Passover cups was to be three parts water to one part wine (note also Maccabees 15:39). Justin Martyr (150 AD), speaking of the Lord’s Supper, wrote, “bread is brought, and wine and water ... 11 (*Apology 1*, 67, 5). Clement of Alexandria (late 2nd cent.) said, “It is best for the wine to be mixed with as much water as possible . . . (*Instructor II*, ii, 23.3-24.1). Hippolytus (215 AD) and Cyprian (250 AD) speak of the same practice. (Most of above information from “Wine as a Table Drink in the Ancient World,” Everett Ferguson, *Restoration Quarterly*, 3rd Quarter, 1970, and “Wine-Drinking in New Testament Times,” Robert H. Stein, *Christianity Today*, 6-20-75).

The ancient world knew nothing of distillation, of the modern alcoholic drinks that are 40-50% alcohol. Their wines were a maximum of 14% alcohol and Palestinian wines no more than 8%. Unless diluted with three or more parts of water, even pagans considered them strong drink to be avoided. The purpose of that dilution was to make the wine a harmless non-intoxicating table food. By these standards every modern alcoholic beverage from beer to whiskey is strong drink. Christians should avoid all of them. Surely the Bible’s demand for sobriety must be more stringent than that of ancient paganism.

Since the beginning, alcohol has been used in America primarily as a drug, a “feel good” beverage, and the use of the most innocent non-intoxicating wine would likely be perceived that way by others. We are living in a culture in which it is imperative that God’s child walk circumspectly, neither bringing an occasion of stumbling to others (Romans 14:21) or shutting hearts against the gospel (I Corinthians 9:19-23). Better it is by far that we avoid even the most diluted form of beverage alcohol so that our “good” may not “be evil spoken of” (Romans 14:16) and Christ may be exalted.

# 3

## John 3:1-21 The New Birth

### Paragraph Analysis


### Questions for Review

1. Who was Nicodemus and why did he come to see Jesus? [1-2]
  2. What did Jesus tell him to do? Describe the nature of his confusion. How did Jesus respond? [3-8]
  3. What is the “new birth”? What does it mean to be “born again”? [3-5]
  4. Explain v. 8.
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5. Who is v. 13 referring to?
  
6. What does the statement in v. 16, “gave His only begotten Son,” mean? Does v. 16 contain the whole plan of salvation? Why or why not? [14-16]
  
7. Why are men condemned? Who is not afraid to expose himself to truth? Who is afraid of truth? [17-21]
  
8. In a concise paragraph, describe the importance of baptism in God’s plan of salvation.

## Daily Bread



Have you ever wished you could start over – on a project, on a trip, on a job, even life itself? Do you suppose that was what Nicodemus was struggling with? “How can one enter the womb again. . .” Wouldn’t that be nice! Especially if we could start over with all the knowledge we have now. Man is a sum of his yesterdays, not all of them pleasant. But the offer to start over is too good to be true.

Well, Jesus says we can! We are born again, not in a fleshly sense, but in a spiritual way. Not through the womb, but in the waters of baptism, arising to walk “in newness of life” (Romans 2:4). Moreover, after we become children of God, we have the opportunity to start fresh over and over. “My little children, these things I write to you, that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” What a Savior!

## John 3:1-21

**N**ow there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.” Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?” Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. “Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ “The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

Nicodemus said to Him, “How can these things be?” Jesus answered and said to him, “Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things? “Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony. “If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? “No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man. “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. “For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. “He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. “This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. “For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. “But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.”



## Faith and Belief

These are the definitions for “belief” and “faith” (they share the same Greek words) exactly as they appear in the most prominent Greek lexicon<sup>1</sup>

### ΠΙΣΤΕΥΩ (*pisteuo*)

1. believe—**a.** believe (*in*) *some*th., *be convinced of some*th., w. that which one believes (*in*) added. **β** by means of a *oti*- clause believe that (Mark 11:23; John 8:24; 11:27, 42. . . .**δ.** by means of the *dat.* of the thing, give credence to, believe. John 2:22; Acts 24:14; II Thessalonians 2:11.

2. believe (*in*), trust of relig. belief in a special sense, as faith in the Divinity that lays special emphasis on trust in his power and his nearness to help, in addition to being convinced that he exists and that his revelations or disclosures are true. In our lit., God and Christ are objects of this faith.

3. *entrust* τινα τι *something to someone*. Romans 3:2; Galatians 2:7; I Thessalonians 2:4; I Timothy 1:11.

### ΠΙΣΤΙΣ (*pistis*)

1. that which causes trust and faith—**a.** *faithfulness, reliability*. Matthew 23:23; Romans 3:3; Titus 2:10; Galatians 5:22; II Thessalonians 1:4. **b.** *solemn promise, oath, troth.* **c.** *proof, pledge.* II Timothy 4:7.

2. trust, confidence, faith in the active sense=‘believing’ in relig. usage. In our lit., directed toward God and Christ, their revelations, teachings, promises, their power and their readiness to aid.

**a.** God. **b.** Christ **c.** obj genitive of the think: “faith in Jesus’ name” Acts 3:16. **d.** ΠΙΣΤΙΣ is found mostly without obj., *faith* — **a.** as *true piety, genuine religion* which for our lit. means being a Christian: Luke 18:8; 22:32; Acts 6:5; 6:7; 13:8; 14:22; 15:9; 16:5; Romans 1:5, 8, 12, 17a, b. . . .Galatians 3:7, 9: If Christianity is essentially faith, then π. can be understood as *the Gospel* in terms of the commitment it evokes. . . .**d.** faith as recognition and acceptance of Christian teaching as such. This point of view calls for εργα as well as the kind of ΠΙΣΤΙΣ that represents only one side of true piety: James 2:14a, b, 17, 18, 20, 22a, b, 24, 26.

3. That which is believed, *body of faith or belief, doctrine*. Jude 3, 20; Romans 1:5; Galatians 1:23, etc.

### ΠΙΣΤΟΣ (*pistos*)

1. pass. *trustworthy, faithful, dependable, inspiring trust or faith.*

2. act. *trusting, cherishing faith or trust; also believing, full of faith, faithful.*

### ΠΙΣΤΟΝ (*piston*)

1. *show oneself faithful, prove oneself faithful* to someth.

2. *feel confidence, be convinced.*

<sup>1</sup>Walter A. Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 2d Ed. revised and augmented by F. W. Gingrich and Frederick Danker, University of Chicago Press, 1957

# 4

## John 4:1-42 The Woman at the Well

### Paragraph Analysis


### Questions for Review

1. Why did Jesus “need” to go through Samaria? [4]
  2. How long had Jacob’s well been on that spot (i.e., when did Jacob live?). What is the “sixth hour”? [6]
  3. Who were the Samaritans? Explain the significance of the term in this incident.
  4. What is “living water”? [10]
-

5. Why did Jesus tell the woman to call her husband [16]? What was the result of that challenge? [17-19]
  
6. Explain the exchange about “worship”: how did they get on the subject? What is worship in “spirit and truth”? Explain each term. [20-24].
  
7. What was the result of this meeting? [28-42]
  
8. From this chapter, what would you say were the priorities of Jesus? [4, 7, 31-38].
  
9. Summarize the lessons we learn in this event about (a) how to approach a person about the gospel (b) the value of believing in Christ (c) worship (d) God & Christ

## Daily Bread



Jesus whets the appetite of the woman for “living water” and then tells her to get her husband. Have you ever wondered why Jesus told her to call her husband? He was pushing her to a crisis, a decision. Before she could have access to the living water, she had to amend her ways (Jeremiah 7). In her case, she had a relationship she needed to get out of.

But what would he tell us to “go get”? A check book register, to see how we spend our money? Restaurant receipts or Macy’s bills? How about a calendar crammed full of activities that dilute the work we can do for the Lord? Jesus challenges each of us at the point of our most severe need. Have we faced that crisis and chosen the Lord?

## John 4:1-43

**T**herefore when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John <sup>2</sup>(although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were), <sup>3</sup>He left Judea and went away again into Galilee. <sup>4</sup>And He had to pass through Samaria. <sup>5</sup>So He came\* to a city of Samaria called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph; <sup>6</sup>and Jacob's well was <sup>7</sup>there. So Jesus, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

<sup>7</sup>There came\* a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said\* to her, "Give Me a drink." <sup>8</sup>For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. <sup>9</sup>Therefore the Samaritan woman said\* to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) <sup>10</sup>Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." <sup>11</sup>She said\* to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do You get that living water?" <sup>12</sup>"You are not greater than our father Jacob, are You, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself and his sons and his cattle?" <sup>13</sup>Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; <sup>14</sup>but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."

<sup>15</sup>The woman said\* to Him, "Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty nor come all the way here to draw." <sup>16</sup>He said\* to her, "Go, call your husband and come here." <sup>17</sup>The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said\* to her, "You have correctly said, 'I have no husband'; <sup>18</sup>for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly." <sup>19</sup>The woman said\* to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. <sup>20</sup>"Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you *people* say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." <sup>21</sup>Jesus said\* to her, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. <sup>22</sup>"You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. <sup>23</sup>"But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. <sup>24</sup>"God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." <sup>25</sup>The woman said\* to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us." <sup>26</sup>Jesus said\* to her, "I who speak to you am *He*."

<sup>27</sup>At this point His disciples came, and they were amazed that He had been speaking with a woman, yet no one said, "What do You seek?" or, "Why do You speak with her?" <sup>28</sup>So the woman left her waterpot, and went into the city and said\* to the men, <sup>29</sup>"Come, see a man who told me all the things that I *have* done; this is not the Christ, is it?" <sup>30</sup>They went out of the city, and were coming to Him.

<sup>31</sup>Meanwhile the disciples were urging Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." <sup>32</sup>But He said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." <sup>33</sup>So the disciples were saying to one another, "No one brought Him *anything* to eat, did he?" <sup>34</sup>Jesus said\* to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work. <sup>35</sup>"Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, and *then* comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest. <sup>36</sup>"Already he who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for life eternal; so that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. <sup>37</sup>"For in this case the saying is true, 'One sows and another reaps.' <sup>38</sup>"I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored and you have entered into their labor."

<sup>39</sup>From that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all the things that I *have* done." <sup>40</sup>So when the Samaritans came to Jesus, they were asking Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. <sup>41</sup>Many more believed because of His word; <sup>42</sup>and they were saying to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world."



## What Happened Between Malachi and Matthew?

Between the last book of the Old Testament, Malachi, and the events recorded in the gospels, a period of 400 years passed. Many important events took place during this time. There are several things mentioned in the New Testament are not mentioned in the Old Testament. A good way to remember these events that came about between the testaments is to remember “Seven S’s.”

**Silence** — There was no inspired word from God written during the 400 years between Malachi and the events recorded in the gospels. See Amos 8:11, where a “famine of the words of God” was prophesied. This is not to say that God was not active in the lives of people — just that nothing was recorded during this time. This was not the only time in which God was quiet. During Eli’s time we read, “And word from the LORD was rare in those days, visions were infrequent” (1 Sam. 3:1).

**Septuagint (LXX) Written** — Due to the conquests of Alexander the Great, the Greek language became the language of the world. Alexander wanted to “Hellenize” (i.e., impose the Greek culture) the world and thus ordered all literature to be translated into the Greek language. The Septuagint is a translation of the Old Testament into Greek by a group of 70 (or 72) Jewish scholars (hence, it abbreviated LXX) completed in c. 275 BC. This was the first known translation of the Bible. Jesus and the apostles usually quoted from this version when they quoted Old Testament passages.

**Sects of Jews Developed** — The Pharisees and Sadducees appear on the scene for the first time in the gospels. They were the two dominant sects within the Jewish religion. The *Pharisees* (John 3:1; 4:1; 7:32, etc.) were the largest of these groups, though they numbered only about 6000 in Jesus’ day. They were the highly regarded religious leaders in Palestine at that time. Nicodemus, Saul of Tarsus (Paul) and Joseph of Arimathaea were well-known Pharisees. They accepted all the Law and prophets but also believed that the oral teachings about the law, the “traditions of the elders,” were just as important as the Law itself. They figure prominently in exchanges with the Lord in the gospels (Mt. 19:3). See also Mt. 15:1-9; 6:2,5,16; 23).

The *Sadducees* (not mentioned by name in John) were generally wealthy and powerful Jews, the aristocracy of Palestine. Though they were significantly fewer in number, they dominated the Sanhedrin (see below) and controlled the temple functions. Doctrinally, they accepted only the Torah (the first 5 books of the OT) as Law. They denied the existence of angels and did not believe in the resurrection (Mt 22:23-33; Acts 23:8).

There were several other Jewish groups that emerged during

this time (none mentioned by name in John).

The *Essenes*, from the Qumran region, was the sect responsible for writing what we call “The Dead Sea Scrolls.” They held to communal property and refrained from marriage. The Essenes numbered about 4,000 during the days of Jesus.

Other groups were the *Herodians*, a political group that supported Herod’s dynasty and their foes, the *Zealots*, Jewish revolutionaries who wished to overthrow Roman rule (Acts 21:38 — “assassins”).

**Synagogues Established** — Most of the prominent cities in the New Testament had synagogues, gathering places for Jews to read and discuss the Old Testament. Jesus and the apostle Paul often taught in synagogues. In John 6, we read about Jesus coming to a synagogue in Capernaum, for example. The synagogues had chief seats (Mt. 23:6) and rulers (Mk. 5:22; Acts 18:17) and were the main meeting places for the religious activities of the Jews (see John 6:59; 12:42; 18:20).

**Sanhedrin** — The Sanhedrin was the Jewish Supreme Court, made up mostly of Sadducees. Sometimes it was called “the council.” There were 71 members (the high priest, plus 70 who were appointed). Jesus and the apostles appeared before the Sanhedrin to make their defense (cf. John 18:12ff; Acts 4:5ff; 6:12ff.; 22:1ff.; 23:1ff.).

**Samaritans** — The Samaritans are a prominent part of Jesus’ teaching (The Good Samaritan – Lk. 10:30-37; the thankful leper who was healed – Lk 17:12-19; the woman at the well – Jn 4:7-9). The Samaritans were Jews who had married into other nations after Palestine was repopulated after the Assyrian Captivity (722BC). By the time of the New Testament, the relationship between the Samaritans and the Jews had deteriorated so badly that the Jews would have nothing to do with the Samaritans (Jn. 4:9). But many of the Samaritans became followers of Christ (Acts 8:12).

**Secular Writings** — A group of Jews wrote a series of books between the Old Testament and the New Testament. They are called, “The Apocrypha.” There are 14 books with titles such as I & II Maccabees (a record of the Maccabean revolt), Judith, and Bel and the Dragon. Roman Catholics accept these writings as canonical, but the early church rejected them. Neither Jesus nor the apostles ever quoted them and they do not claim inspiration. They contain errors of history and are inconsistent with other Bible passages. For these reasons they are not considered a part of God’s word.

David Posey & Roger Shouse

# 5

## John 5-6 From Death to Life (5) A Sign, A Sermon, A Sifting (6)

### Paragraph Analysis


### Questions for Review

1. What did Jesus ask the lame man before He healed him? Why? What was the reaction of the Jews? Why? [5:1-17]
  2. Why were the Jews seeking to kill Jesus? What had Jesus done to cause them to draw the conclusion they drew? [5:16-23]
  3. Describe the process of passing from death to life [5:24-29].
  4. List the witnesses and the substance of their “testimony” as reported in 5:30-47.
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5. Describe the feeding of the 5,000 and the lessons we can derive from it [6:1-14]
  
6. According to 6:15, the people “were intending to come and take Him by force and make Him king.” What is the significance of that report? What happened between that and 6:66?
  
7. What is the “food” Jesus refers to in 6:27? Is faith a “work”? Who or what is the “true bread out of heaven”? [[6:26-34]
  
8. Describe what “I am the bread of life” means (a) in the text (b) to you personally. [6:35-58].
  
9. What was so “hard” about the teaching of Jesus? How did Peter respond when Jesus asked if the twelve wanted to go away also? [60-71]

## Daily Bread



To have life, we must “eat the flesh” and “drink the blood” of Jesus (6:53). What is He talking about? In the first century, Christians were accused of cannibalism because of statements like this applied to the practice of partaking of the Lord’s Supper. But was Jesus talking about communion in this passage? The readers of John, in AD 90 or so would undoubtedly think of the Lord’s Supper as they read this section, and there is some connection. But it goes much deeper than that; so deep, in fact, that this teaching was the precipitating event that caused many of His disciples to “withdraw and not walk with him anymore” (6:66). It was “hard teaching” (6:60).

Reflect on what Jesus might have been saying in this section beyond the memorializing of His death in the Supper. There was a time when I would “eat, drink and breathe” baseball. Do you think there is any similarity with what Jesus is saying? Christ must be our sustenance, or

we have no life in ourselves.

## Readings in John 5 & 6

### John 5:1-17

**A**fter these things there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup>Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porticoes. <sup>3</sup>In these lay a multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, and withered, <sup>4</sup>*waiting for the moving of the waters; for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool and stirred up the water; whoever then first, after the stirring up of the water, stepped in was made well from whatever disease with which he was afflicted.* <sup>5</sup>A man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. <sup>6</sup>When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he had already been a long time in that condition, He said\* to him, "Do you wish to get well?" <sup>7</sup>The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I am coming, another steps down before me." <sup>8</sup>Jesus said\* to him, "Get up, pick up your pallet and walk." <sup>9</sup>Immediately the man became well, and picked up his pallet and *began* to walk.

Now it was the Sabbath on that day. <sup>10</sup>So the Jews were saying to the man who was cured, "It is the Sabbath, and it is not permissible for you to carry your pallet." <sup>11</sup>But he answered them, "He who made me well was the one who said to me, 'Pick up your pallet and walk.'" <sup>12</sup>They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Pick up your pallet and walk?'" <sup>13</sup>But the man who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had slipped away while there was a crowd in that place. <sup>14</sup>Afterward Jesus found\* him in the temple and said to him, "Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you." <sup>15</sup>The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. <sup>16</sup>For this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath. <sup>17</sup>But He answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working."

### John 6:41-71

Therefore the Jews were grumbling about Him, because He said, "I am the bread that came down out of heaven." <sup>42</sup>They were saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does He now say, 'I have come down out of heaven?'" <sup>43</sup>Jesus answered and said to them, "Do not grumble among yourselves. <sup>44</sup>No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. <sup>45</sup>It is written in the prophets, 'AND THEY SHALL ALL BE TAUGHT OF GOD.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me. <sup>46</sup>Not that anyone has seen the Father, ex-

cept the One who is from God; He has seen the Father. <sup>47</sup>"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. <sup>48</sup>"I am the bread of life. <sup>49</sup>"Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. <sup>50</sup>"This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. <sup>51</sup>"I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh."

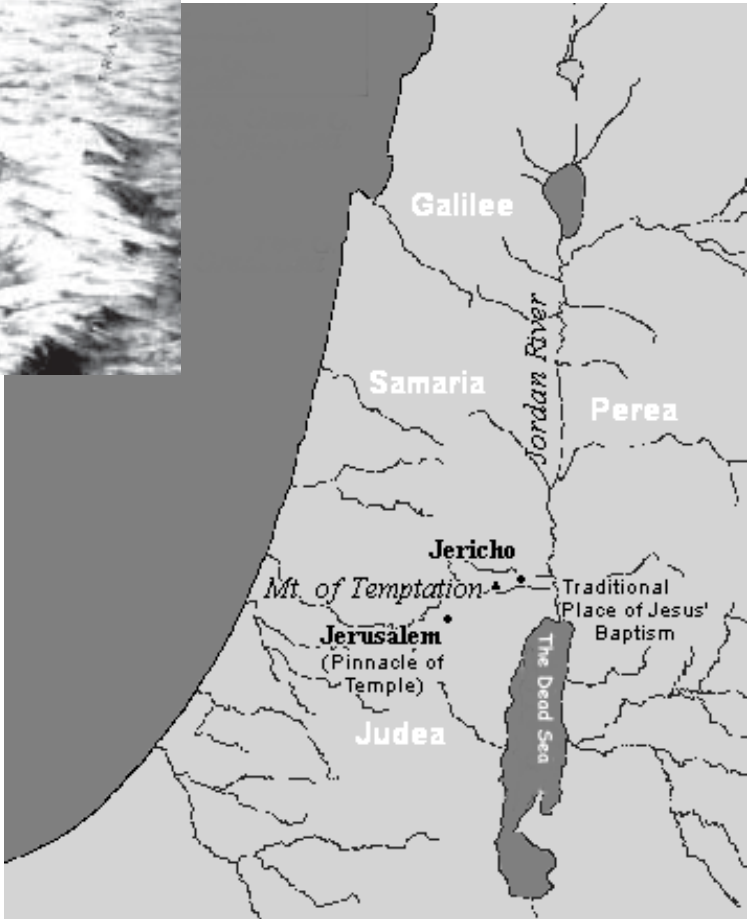
<sup>52</sup>Then the Jews *began* to argue with one another, saying, "How can this man give us *His* flesh to eat?" <sup>53</sup>So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. <sup>54</sup>"He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. <sup>55</sup>"For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. <sup>56</sup>"He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. <sup>57</sup>"As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me. <sup>58</sup>"This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live forever."

<sup>59</sup>These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.

<sup>60</sup>Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this said, "This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?" <sup>61</sup>But Jesus, conscious that His disciples grumbled at this, said to them, "Does this cause you to stumble? <sup>62</sup>"What then if you see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before?" <sup>63</sup>"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life. <sup>64</sup>"But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him. <sup>65</sup>And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father."

<sup>66</sup>As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore. <sup>67</sup>So Jesus said to the twelve, "You do not want to go away also, do you?" <sup>68</sup>Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. <sup>69</sup>"We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God." <sup>70</sup>Jesus answered them, "Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?" <sup>71</sup>Now He meant Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him.

# Where Jesus walked



Beginning of Jesus' Ministry

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# 6

## John 7-9 “I am the Light of the World”

### Paragraph Analysis


### Questions for Review

1. Why does the world hate Jesus? [7:7] What are the ramifications of that for us? [cf. 15:18]
  2. Read carefully the exchange between Jesus and the Jews in 8:12-59. Note some features of the discussion. What was the major stumbling block for the Jews? Whom does Jesus say will “never see death”? What does He mean?
  3. Chapter 9 records the healing of the blind man. Why did the disciples ask about who sinned to cause the man’s blindness? [9:2]
-

4. List the various characters in the story of the healing of the blind; note how each responds to the situation. What do you think is motivating each individual or group?

5. What was the impact on a Jew of being “put out of the synagogue”?

6. Does 9:31 teach that God never hears the prayer of a sinner?

7. Reconcile 9:39 with 3:17.

8. In 9:40, the Pharisees ask if they, too, are blind. Explain Jesus’ response [9:41]

## Daily Bread



“They were seeking to kill Him” (7:1). Isn’t it interesting that Jesus, who “went about doing good” (Acts 10:38) was hunted down like a dangerous animal? I wonder how people would react today. Do you think they would seek to kill Him? I doubt it. They may ignore Him. They may think that He was eccentric, and laugh at Him. Perhaps others would follow Him, out of curiosity or intrigue. I have a feeling, though, that what He said would stick in all of our minds. “Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks” (7:46).

How would you react to Jesus? Would you “see” or be “blind”? Be careful. Remember that Jesus said to those who thought they could see, “because you say, ‘we see’ your sin remains.” Reflect on the idea that we must first admit that we are blind before we’ll be able to see.

## Readings in John 7 – 9

### John 7:1-18

After these things Jesus was walking in Galilee, for He was unwilling to walk in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him. <sup>2</sup>Now the feast of the Jews, the Feast of Booths, was near. <sup>3</sup>Therefore His brothers said to Him, “Leave here and go into Judea, so that Your disciples also may see Your works which You are doing. <sup>4</sup>“For no one does anything in secret when he himself seeks to be *known* publicly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world.” <sup>5</sup>For not even His brothers were believing in Him. <sup>6</sup>So Jesus said\* to them, “My time is not yet here, but your time is always opportune. <sup>7</sup>“The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil. <sup>8</sup>“Go up to the feast yourselves; I do not go up to this feast because My time has not yet fully come.” <sup>9</sup>Having said these things to them, He stayed in Galilee.

<sup>10</sup>But when His brothers had gone up to the feast, then He Himself also went up, not publicly, but as if, in secret. <sup>11</sup>So the Jews were seeking Him at the feast and were saying, “Where is He?” <sup>12</sup>There was much grumbling among the crowds concerning Him; some were saying, “He is a good man”; others were saying, “No, on the contrary, He leads the people astray.” <sup>13</sup>Yet no one was speaking openly of Him for fear of the Jews.

<sup>14</sup>But when it was now the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and *began to teach*. <sup>15</sup>The Jews then were astonished, saying, “How has this man become learned, having never been educated?” <sup>16</sup>So Jesus answered them and said, “My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me. <sup>17</sup>“If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or *whether* I speak from Myself. <sup>18</sup>“He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

### John 8:31-33

So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine; <sup>32</sup>and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” <sup>33</sup>They answered Him, “We are Abraham’s descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, ‘You will become free?’”

### John 8:12-20

Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.” <sup>13</sup>So the Pharisees said to Him, “You are testifying about Yourself; Your testimony is not true.” <sup>14</sup>Jesus answered and said to them, “Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. <sup>15</sup>“You judge according to the flesh; I am not judging anyone. <sup>16</sup>“But even if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone *in it*, but I and the Father who sent Me. <sup>17</sup>“Even in your law it has been written that the testimony of two men is true. <sup>18</sup>“I am He who testifies about Myself, and the Father who sent Me testifies about Me.” <sup>19</sup>So they were saying to Him, “Where is Your Father?” Jesus answered, “You know neither Me nor My Father; if you knew Me, you would know My Father also.” <sup>20</sup>These words He spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one seized Him, because His hour had not yet come.

### John 9:35-41

Jesus heard that they had put him out, and finding him, He said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” <sup>36</sup>He answered, “Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?” <sup>37</sup>Jesus said to him, “You have both seen Him, and He is the one who is talking with you.” <sup>38</sup>And he said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped Him. <sup>39</sup>And Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind.” <sup>40</sup>Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things and said to Him, “We are not blind too, are we?” <sup>41</sup>Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.



## Sheep & Shepherd Facts

**SHEEP** Animals important to the economy of ancient Israel and her neighbors. Translation of seven different Hebrew words and expressions. *Ts'on* is a collective term for small domesticated animals, particularly sheep and goats. *Seh* is an individual member of the collective *ts'on*, one sheep or goat. *Kebes* is a young ram, as is the apparently related word *keseb*. *Kibsah* and *kisbah* are young lambs. *Tsoneh* is either a variant spelling of or the feminine of *Ts'on*. *Rachel* is the mother sheep. The male sheep or ram is 'ayil, which served as a symbol of authority and rule (Ex. 15:15; Ezek. 17:13; 31:11). Sheep symbolized people without leadership and unity, scattered like sheep without a shepherd (1 Kings 22:17), innocent people not deserving of punishment (1 Chron. 21:17), as helpless facing slaughter (Ps. 44:11, 22) and death (Ps. 49:14). God's people are His sheep enjoying His protection and listening to His voice (Pss. 78:52; 95:7; 100:3; compare Ps. 23).

Sheep represent economic prosperity (Ps. 144:13) or poverty (Isa. 7:21). Straying sheep illustrate human sin (Isa. 53:6), but the silent lamb at the slaughter prepares the way for Christ's sacrifice (Isa. 53:7). Ezekiel 34 uses the life of sheep and shepherds to picture God's relationship with His people and their rulers. Human value is contrasted to that of sheep (Matt. 12:12). The shepherd's separating his *ts'on* into sheep and goats illustrates the final judgment (Matt. 25). The search for one lost sheep depicts God's love for His people (Luke 15). Jesus contrasted His care for His flock with other religious leaders, especially the Pharisees who behaved as thieves and robbers (John 10). His commission to Peter was to take care of the sheep (John 21).

**SHEEPFOLD** English translation of several Hebrew and one Greek term referring to a place where sheep were kept. The basic meanings range from stone wall, to place of confinement, and home. Related words appearing in Genesis 49:14; Judges 5:16; Ezekiel 40:43; and Psalm 68:13 are variously interpreted from the context and translated: "saddlebags," "double-pronged hooks," and "campfires" (NIV), "sheepfolds" and "pegs" (NRSV), "sheepfolds" and "double hooks" (NASB), "cattle pens," "sheepfolds," and "rims" (REB), "burdens," "sheepfolds," "pots," and "hooks" (KJV), "saddlebags," "sheep," "sheep pens," and "ledges" (TEV). The latest Hebrew dictionary completed in 1990 but published in parts over two decades gives differing meanings for the two related terms: "saddlebags" and "sheepfolds," separating the Ezekiel passage out as a meaning unto itself.

**SHEPHERD** A keeper of sheep. The first keeper of sheep in the Bible was Adam's son Abel (Gen. 4:2). Shepherding was the chief occupation of the Israelites in the early days of the patriarchs: Abraham (Gen. 12:16); Rachel (Gen. 29:9); Jacob (Gen. 30:31-40); Moses (Ex. 3:1).

As cultivation of crops increased, shepherding fell from favor and was assigned to younger sons, hirelings, and slaves (compare David in 1 Sam. 16:11-13). Farmers such as in Egypt even hated shepherds (Gen. 46:34).

The Bible mentions shepherds and shepherding over 200 times. However, the Hebrew word for shepherding is often translated, "feeding." Shepherds led sheep to pasture and water (Ps. 23) and protected them from wild animals (1 Sam. 17:34-35). Shepherds guarded their flocks at night whether in the open (Luke 2:8) or in sheepfolds (Zeph. 2:6) where they counted the sheep as they entered (Jer. 33:13). They took care of the sheep and even carried weak lambs in their arms (Isa. 40:11).

Shepherd came to designate not only persons who herded sheep but also kings (2 Sam. 5:2) and God Himself (Ps. 23; Isa. 40:11). Later prophets referred to Israel's leaders as shepherds (Jer. 23; Ezek. 34).

In Bible times the sheep cared for by shepherds represented wealth. They provided food (1 Sam. 14:32), milk to drink (Isa. 7:21-22), wool for clothing (Job 31:20), hides for rough clothing (Matt. 7:15), and leather for tents (Ex. 26:14). Furthermore, sheep were major offerings in the sacrificial system (Ex. 20:24). They were offered as burnt offerings (Lev. 1:10), sin offerings (Lev. 4:32), guilt offerings (Lev. 5:15), and peace offerings (Lev. 22:21).

The New Testament mentions shepherds 16 times. They were among the first to visit Jesus at His birth (Luke 2:8-20). Some New Testament references used a shepherd and the sheep to illustrate Christ's relationship to His followers who referred to Him as "our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep" (Heb. 13:20). Jesus spoke of Himself as "the good shepherd" who knew His sheep and would lay down His life for them (John 10:7-18). Jesus commissioned Peter to feed His sheep (John 21). Paul likened the church and its leaders to a flock with shepherds (Acts 20:28). The Latin word transliterated "pastor" means shepherd.



# John 10-11

## “I am the Good Shepherd...The Resurrection and the Life”

### Paragraph Analysis


### Questions for Review

1. Describe the qualities of a good shepherd and the corresponding characteristics of a bad shepherd [ch. 10].
  2. Describe some characteristics of sheep. Why does Jesus use them as a figure for His followers?
  3. How do “sheep” (disciples) hear the voice of the Shepherd in practical terms? What does the word “hear” imply when used in Scripture?
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4. What simple appeal does Jesus make to those who are about to stone Him? [10:37-38]
  
5. What was Jesus' relationship to Mary, Martha and Lazarus? [11:5] Doesn't Jesus love everyone?
  
6. Why did Jesus say that "Lazarus is sleeping," instead of that he was dead? [11:11] Why did He stay two more days where He was after He heard Lazarus was sick? [11:6] Clue: remember the purpose of the book of John as stated in 20:30-31. See 11:15.
  
7. Describe "faith" from the exchange between Jesus and Martha and Jesus and Mary [11:20-40]
  
8. Why did Jesus weep? [11:35] Yes, Jesus had compassion, but what motivated His weeping in this case? Follow the context and keep the purpose of the book in mind. Also, be careful not to assign too much significance to what the Jews said. Actually, v. 37 is more important than 36 for knowing why Jesus wept.

## Daily Bread



Wouldn't it be great to be raised from the dead! Or for your dead loved one to be able to come back? Not necessarily. Consider that Lazarus was safely tucked away in Abraham's bosom (this, of course, is not the same Lazarus we met in Luke 16:19ff., but they shared the same blessing) when, all of a sudden, he gets a call — "Lazarus, you're going back!" "What? Where?" "Back to the world." "No!" Why would Lazarus want to come back to this world of sin and shame? Why would he want to suffer disease and death all over again? Not only did he give up Paradise, but he faced a death squad sent out by the chief priests (12:10).  
 I don't know about you, but I wouldn't want my mother to come back here. Oh, selfishly I would. I miss her every day and it would be wonderful if she could see our new grandbabies — she would love them so much and it makes me sad to know that they will never know Nana in this life. But I wouldn't bring her back if I had the power. My mother has reached her goal, her real home. It makes me appreciate Lazarus' great sacrifice even more when I think about it in those terms.