

NOTES & QUOTES
on
THE GOSPEL OF SAINT JOHN
(Compiled by Brock Johnson)

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Prologue is not so much a preface to the gospel as a summary of it.

vs. 1 & 2 make mention of a state before the creation of the world.

v. 3 – the world's creation

v. 4 – the time of man's uprightness

v. 5 – the time of man's decline

Saint John uses the verb form to believe nearly a 100 times, yet the word faith is not explicitly used in his Gospel even once.

We are here concerned with the relation between what is finite and temporal and what is infinite and eternal, between 'flesh' and spirit and between 'flesh' and Word, the ultimate problem of all philosophy. John's treatment of Jesus' life is less historical than that of Luke's Gospel. The author occupies a position remote from the events which he describes; he is able to see the fulfilment of the original events in the condition of the Church about him. Jesus as the Christ not only fulfils the Jewish law, but is the fulfilment of the Truth, which is the heritage of humanity. As Christ, He establishes the organic unity of Christianity with Judaism and as the Son of God, He bears witness to the universality of his mission and liberates Christianity from Jewish limitation.

There is no mention of publicans in the Fourth Gospel, nor is there any picture of Jesus in the midst of the children. Its author is concerned with grown men and women as children of Abraham (8:39), children of God (1:12; 11:52) and the diminutive little children for the disciples of Jesus (21:5 φ. 1 Jn. 2:18; 2:1,12; 5:21. Possibly, John's omission of the Virgin Birth does not evacuate any meaning from the narrative; rather it confirms the Synoptic treatment of the beginning of Jesus' ministry – namely in the witness of the Baptist. A question arises here concerning John's sources. No doubt the Apostles frequently conversed with one another about what Jesus said and did, so that His teaching gradually was completely known to each of His disciples. So, why did John exclude the story of the Nativity, especially when Mary the mother of Jesus came to live with John after the Crucifixion? This is to say, did not John have the

“inside story” on the Annunciation, the flight into Egypt, and His appearance among the Temple’s doctors at age twelve? Why would John omit sections that the Synoptists treated in some detail?

Undoubtedly there are echoes of Genesis 1 in the Word as that which God uttered to bring forth light and life. This leads to a consideration of God the Creator and God the Redeemer. William Gouge has listed eight particular differences:

“1) In the Creation God brought something out of nothing; but in redemption out of one contrary he brought another, out of death before life. This was a work of far greater power, wisdom, and mercy. Death must first be destroyed, and then life brought forth.

2) In creation there was but a word, and thereupon the work followed. In redemption there was doing and dying, and this for redemption could be done by none but God. God must come from heaven, God must be made man, God must be made sin, God must be made a curse, 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal 3:13.

3) In the creation God arrayed himself with majesty, power, and other like properties fit for a great work. In the work of redemption he put on weakness; he assumed a nature subject to infirmities, and the infirmities of that nature; he did as David did when he fought Goliath; he put off all armour, and took his staff in his hand, and drew near to the Philistine, 1 Sam. 17: 39,40.

4) In the work of creation there was nothing to withstand; in the work of redemption there was justice against mercy, wrath against pity; death, and he that had the power of death, was to be vanquished.

5) By creation, man was made after God’s image, like to him; by redemption, man was made a member of the same mystical body, whereof the Son of God is the head.

6) By creation, man received a natural being, by redemption a spiritual.

7) By creation, man received a possibility to stand; by redemption a certainty of standing, and impossibility of falling.

8) By creation man was placed in an earthly paradise; by redemption he is advanced to an heavenly paradise.”

- END GOUGE -

“When once we have conceived and accepted God as eternal Father, we are in a position to assume that the Logos, not merely as the principle of the divine self-expression but as God Himself self-expressed, must manifest Himself universally as Son or in sonship; since universal and everlasting Sonship is the only expression of eternal and essential Fatherhood.”

Wm. Dubose

or: “If \underline{x} represents the Divine Nature, the equation for the Trinity is $\underline{x} = 3x$. This seemingly impossible statement was made possible by the mysterious nature in this case of \underline{x} , a nature quite beyond the discovery or comprehension of human minds.”

GOODENOUGH

There remains God the Holy Spirit, God the Sanctifier. Jesus’ pioneering work made it possible for the Holy Spirit to be sent to dwell in our hearts. Jesus’ words in the Farewell Discourse teach us everything we might know of Him. A gradual revelation: in O.T. Father hints at Son, in N.T., Son hints at Holy Ghost. Matter tied up in prophecy and covenant.

Verse 1

“In the beginning was” Says Marsh, “It is impossible not to comment on the word was, for in the Greek language it represents that part of the verb (the imperfect tense) which refers, not to an isolated past event, but to a continuous condition.”

Suppose 2 or 3 people are talking together about 2 or 3 other people who happen to show up on the scene while the conversation about them is taking place. One says, “That was weird – we were just now talking about you.” Another says, “It was coincidence because here you are while we were just mentioning you.” A third says, “It was God – we just now were thinking of you.” Whether it was “weird”, “coincidence”, or God amounts to the same thing in the use of the past tense. It is because it was. We say was because we cannot speak of the present without confusion or presumption; therefore out of clarity and respect we describe the event as lying in the past. The use of the present in “I am” and “It is finished” has a far greater impact in Greek than in translation into English.

Ἐ ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος.

If you look at verse 1, you see that it is divided into 3 phrases separated by commas. In verse 1c, the transliteration is “and God was the Word.” But the phrase is anarthrous, meaning it has no “joint”, (no article). Thus it might closely be translated, “And the Word God.” This indicates an even greater reality of identity superseding proximity and anticipating the poetic phrase of verse 18c: “in the bosom of the Father.” Notice also that in the same verse (1:18d) the word him is italicized. This word is not actually in Greek text, but the KJV adds it to give the phrase a clearer transliterative value. Read the phrase without the italicized word, and you are technically closer to what John, the son of Zebedee, an “illiterate fisherman”, wrote.

The term λόγος is Classical but has several meanings: inward thought, outward expression of thought, even “promise” as “I give you my word.” Hoskyns writes, “The Word which the Apostles had received from Jesus was no new thing. It had its origin neither in recent nor ancient history [the mind of man itself a fragment of the universal mind was thought to indicate a natural kinship between the soul of man and the rational soul of the universe, Barrett.] The word had no origin in the rhythm of the original act of creation [God is greater than creation, in the same way that you are greater than what you do or make]. It belongs to eternity, and therefore to every epoch in time and to every race of man. The Word neither grows old and outworn, nor does it ever become some new thing. The Word of God is the Word of God. It is His meaning and will, and, for this reason, it is the meaning of the whole universe, which is the creation of God by His Word. The Word of God is, however, no second entity, like Him, but less than He. Therefore, if it be said that the Word is with God, it must immediately, and in the same breath, be said that He is God. In Jesus, the Word came forth from God. This going forth carried with it, however, no diminution. The Word was not thereby separated or liberated from God.”

- END HOSKYNS -

It has been suggested that God created the earth and placed man in it for the sole purpose of establishing a covenant with him, i.e. God cannot withhold any good thing about Himself and, if He (God) withhold any goodness that He is or has, He would cease to be God.

One last thought on λόγος from Alan Richardson, “Saint John never uses the word ‘wisdom’ (sophia) probably because he wished to dissociate himself from the Hellenistic speculation, which made great play with the notion of emanations or intermediaries, such as gnosis (knowledge) and sophia, which budged the chasm between the world-order and the far-off, unknowable, transcendent, divine Being of Greek philosophy. Saint Paul, on the other hand, has no hesitation in describing Christ as the Wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:24,30; Col. 2:3), whereas he never calls him the Word of God; yet Paul and John are affirming the same truth.”

Says Henry, “We learn, firstly, that our Lord Jesus Christ is eternal. Saint John tells us that ‘in the beginning was the Word.’ He did not begin to exist when the heavens and the earth were made. Much less did He begin to exist when the Gospel was brought into the world. He had glory with the Father ‘before the world was.’ (Jn. 17:5). He was existing when matter was first created, and before time began. He was ‘before all things’ (Col. 1:17). He was from all eternity.

We learn, secondly, that our Lord Jesus Christ is a Person distinct from God the Father, and yet one with Him. Saint John tells us that ‘The Word was with God.’ The Father and the Word, though two persons, are joined by an ineffable union. Where God the father was from all eternity, there also was the Word, even God the Son, - their glory equal, their majesty co-eternal, and yet their Godhead one. This is a great mystery! Happy is he who can receive it as a little child, without attempting to explain it.

We learn, thirdly, that the Lord Jesus Christ is very God. Saint John tells us that ‘the Word was God.’ He is not merely a created angel, or a being inferior to God the Father, and invested by Him with power to redeem sinners. He is nothing less than perfect God – equal to the Father as touching his Godhead – God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds.

We learn, fourthly, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Creator of all things. Saint John tells us that ‘by Him were all things made, and without Him was not anything made that was made.’ So far from being a creature of God, as some heretics have falsely asserted, He is the Being who made the worlds and all that they contain. ‘He commanded and they were created’, Psalm 40:8.

We learn, lastly, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the source of all spiritual life and light. Saint John tells us, that ‘in Him was life, and the life was the light of men.’ He is the eternal fountain, from which alone the sons of men have ever derived life. Whatever spiritual life and light Adam and Eve possessed before the fall, was from Christ. Whatever deliverance from sin

and spiritual death any child of Adam has ever enjoyed since the fall, whatever light of conscience or understanding any one has obtained, all has flowed from Christ. The vast majority of mankind in every age have refused to know Him, have forgotten the fall, and their own need of a Saviour. The light has been constantly shining ‘in the darkness.’ The most have ‘not comprehended the light’...

From the cosmic scale of verse 1-5, the reader’s attention is directed to a certain man, John, as son of Zacharias (a priest in the Temple). Here we enter the realm of time and of historical context. From the Word as the divine self-expression is added the Word of the Lord as the prophet’s message. John, as taught in this church, is the last of the Old Testament prophets, standing between two world-orders, and thus compared to Noah. A prophet speaks for God, telling forth the Divine counsels. This may include the idea of foretelling future events: John can foresee the effectual salvation accomplished by the Lamb of God. Jesus, as prophet, can foretell the destruction of Jerusalem, and the various problems His church would encounter, e.g. heresy or persecution. For John to speak of Messiah identified him with Elijah, who like Enoch, never suffered death but was translated and therefore yet alive.

John is the spoken word, whereas Jesus is the incarnate word. Mancah’s wife forbidden to drink strong drink; son is Samson, a mighty man (strong). Zacharias struck dumb, John Baptist is a voice “shouting” in the wilderness. He is a voice; Jesus is the word. John was a witness (vs. 7,8,15) and “witness” is a critical word in this Gospel, as we shall see.

Verse 13

“It remains possible that John was alluding to Jesus’ birth, and declaring that the birth of Christians, being bloodless and rooted in God’s will alone, followed the pattern of Christ himself” (Barrett). Circumcision and sacrifice (both bloody) are to be replaced by Baptism & the Paschal bread (both bloodless).

Verse 14

ἐσκήνωσεν. “tabernacled”, here “dwelt”. It means to live in “a tent” (with us). Says Henry, “he dwelt among us, he dwelt as in a tabernacle. First He dwelt here in a very mean circumstance, as shepherds that dwell in tents. He did not dwell among us as in a palace, but as

in a tent; for he had not where to lay his head, and was always upon the remove. Secondly, His state here was a military state. Soldiers dwell in tents; he had long since proclaimed war with the seed of the serpent, and now he takes the field in person, sets up his standard, and pitches his tent, to prosecute this war. Thirdly, His stay among us was not to be perpetual. He dwelt here as in a tent, not as at home...” God appeared at the tabernacle.

This verse marks the last time that John uses this expression, ‘the Word’, about Christ in his Gospel.

Verse 17

The law is a “gift”, but consider Christian exegesis. Moses was employed by God ‘as a servant,’ to convey to Israel the moral and ceremonial law (Heb. 3:5). As a servant, he was faithful to Him Who appointed him, but he was only a servant. The moral law, which he brought down from Mount Sinai, was holy, just, and good. But it could not justify. It had no healing power. It could wound, but it could not bind up. It ‘worked wrath.’ (Rom. 4:15). It pronounced a curse against any imperfect obedience. – the ceremonial law, which he was commanded to impose on Israel, was full of deep meaning and typical instruction. Its ordinances and ceremonies made it an excellent schoolmaster to guide men toward Christ (Gal. 3:24). But the ceremonial law was only a schoolmaster. It could not make him that kept it perfect, as pertaining to the conscience (Heb. 9:9). It laid a grievous yoke on men’s hearts, which they were not able to bear. It was ministration of death and condemnation (2 Cor. 3:7-9). The light which men got from Moses (and the law) was at best only starlight compared with noon day.

Zacharias, John Baptist’s father, was of the course of Abijah, a priest who served in David’s court during the time of the high priest Zadok > Sadducees. John is in the wilderness at Bethabara, a fiery house, and public crossroads. There he preached repentance, the equivalent of evangelists handing out tracts at airports (that’s where the crowds are!). The true priestly caste is in the wilderness; Jesus is in the Temple.

Verse 23

The expression ‘voice’ (v. 23) has often been remarked as a beautiful illustration of the general character of John’s ministry. He was eminently a humble man. He was one who desired to be heard, and to awaken attention by the sound of his testimony, but not be seen visibly

honoured.” (Henry) Wordsworth remarks that “More honour was paid by the Jews to John than to Christ, both in the person sent, and in the place from which they were sent. They esteemed John for his sacerdotal lineage. When Christ appeared they called Him the Carpenter’s son. Our Lord refers to this great respect at first shown to John, when He says, ‘Ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.’ (Jn. 5:35)” (Ryle)

“Art thou Elias?” is based upon Mal. 4:5: the manner, dress, and ministry of John the Baptist, as well as his appearing in the wilderness, constituted a great similarity between him and Elijah, and suggested the idea that John might possibly be Elijah. Verse 16: “we” may easily refer to the prophetic order, as well as the Church.

John’s answer to the Jerusalem delegation is a quote from Isaiah – a sublime example of Hebrew poetry.

“Prepare ye the way of the Lord
Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”

Verse 28

“beyond Jordan” symbolizes the truth that the Jews by their disobedience and forfeited their claim to be sons of Abraham (cf. Mt. 3:9) and had therefore to re-enter the Promised Land, by going through Jordan anew.

“In leaving this passage, let us remember that John the Baptist’s ministry left the Jews entirely without excuse, when afterwards they refused to believe on Christ. They could never plead that our Lord’s ministry came on them unawares and took them by surprise. The whole nation dwelling in Palestine, from the great ecclesiastical Council down to the humblest classes, were evidently aroused to a state of attention by John’s doings.” (Ryle) In Christian Veritas, Temple wrote “The Fourth Gospel does not anywhere use the words ‘forgiveness’ or ‘forgive’”.

Verse 29

“The title of Christ as Lamb of God is peculiar to this Gospel and to Revelation in which, however, a different Greek word for ‘lamb’ is used.

[Here, in verse 29, it is ἀμνός PIE *H₂eq^w-no->L. agnus] One thinks at once of the Passover Lamb (Ex. 12:5), for the Gospel is explicit in dating the death of Jesus on the afternoon of the ‘Preparation’ day when the paschal animals were slaughtered (Jn. 18:28; 19:14). The chronology of the Gospel is built around the three Passover seasons when Jesus performed impressive ‘signs’: the cleansing of the Temple (Jn. 2:13), the gift of the bread of life (Jn. 6:4), and the raising of Lazarus from the dead (Jn. 11:55).” New Interpreter’s.

“Let us learn here that Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God, which bespeaks him the great sacrifice, by which atonement is made for sin, and man reconciled to God. Of all the legal sacrifices he chooses to allude to the lambs that were offered, not only because a lamb is an emblem of meekness, and Christ must be led as a lamb to the slaughter (Isa. 53:7), but with a special reference. 1. To the daily sacrifice, which was offered every morning and evening continually, and that was always a lamb (Ex. 29:38) which was a type of Christ, as the everlasting propitiation, whose blood continually speaks [φ. Heb. 12:24]. 2. To the paschal lamb, the blood of which, being sprinkled upon the door-posts, secured the Israelites from the stroke of the destroying angel Christ. Christ is our Passover, 1 Cor. 5:7.

Read 1 John 2:2 φ. “Agnus Dei qui tolis peccata mundi, miserere nobis... dona nobis pacem.”

Verses 32-33

Some, including Augustine, say that the likeness of a dove answers the figure of Noah’s flood. At that time, a dove brought tidings of the abating of the water; here, it also indicates the abating of the wrath of God when the Gospel is preached. Others have seen a figure of Christ in the dove itself. It is the only bird which was used for the Temple sacrifices; it is gentle, mournful, and innocent. Others take notice of the Spirit hovering over the waters in the Genesis narrative, giving life and protecting His brood. Here after His baptism by John is the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry.

Verse 37

John spoke, his two disciples heard, and then followed Jesus, - a succinct summary of God’s way of saving myriads of souls.

Verse 38

“What seek ye?” may have a parallel in Jn. 20:15. Probably John the Evangelist was one of these two disciples who left off following the Baptist and became disciples of Jesus. Andrew brings his brother Peter to Jesus.

Verse 43

Jesus calls Philip who brings his friend Nathanael. Jesus at once shows his knowledge of and insight into the circumstances, characters, and possibilities of those brought into His presence (Lightfoot). Perhaps during the evening that Andrew (and John?) spent at Jesus’ house, conversation turned to Simon Peter, son of Jona (“dove”). Perhaps Philip and Nathaniel were in conversation under the fig tree when Jesus saw them. Still, Jesus may have had foreknowledge of all these men from Bethsaida, though it is highly unlikely He had any prior knowledge of the Samaritan woman at the well (ch. 4).

Verse 48

Nathanael is under a fig tree, the common opinion is that Nathanael was praying or holding communion with God. Zechariah 3:10 reads, “In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbor under the vine and under the fig tree.” At least four commentators think that Jesus’ words here refer to the conversation between Philip and Nathanael (vs. 45-47) which had taken place under a fig tree. There are other interpretations to be sure. One tradition in the Syriac dictionary holds “that Nathanael’s mother had laid him under a fig-tree when the infants were slain at Bethlehem by Herod”... and our Lord showed His perfect knowledge by referring to this fact. Another thinks that there is a reference to Zechariah’s prophecy... and that Nathanael drew the inference that Messiah’s days were come, and Messiah before him.

Augustine sees an allegory in the fig-tree, and gravely says that that ‘as Adam and Eve, when they had sinned, made themselves aprons of fig-leaves, fig-leaves must signify sins. Nathanael therefore being under the fig-tree signifies being under the shadow of death. See also Mic. 4:4; 1Ki. 4:25 for another interpretation – there dwelling under a fig tree is a picture of security. Nathanael, at first reticent, is called away from his privacy to follow Jesus.

Verse 47

Nathanael is called an Israelite in whom there is no “guile” – a word closely associated with Jacob whose name means “supplanter”. There is a cross-reference to Gen. 28:12 which concerns Jacob at Bethel. Here is some background: Abraham > Ishmael & Isaac > Jacob & Esau, Isaac’s sons. Esau forfeited his birthright and Jacob deceived their father in to blessing him primarily. Esau is livid and Rebekah sends Jacob away to Syria to find a wife. On his way there, he stops to rest, and using a stone for a pillow falls asleep and dreams. Read Gen. 28:12. The word “ladder” there is unique. It is not used in the Bible anywhere else. Now, the obvious comparison to make is with Jacob and Nathanael, both of whom might see angels ascending and descending. Jesus has called Nathanael an Israelite in whom there is no “Jacob”, so William Temple. What do Jesus’ words in verse 51 mean? There are no angels mentioned in John’s Gospel until after the Crucifixion. Are there words of Jesus merely symbolic? Perhaps not. Jesus begins verse 51, ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν. This formula of asseveration occurs 20 times in John. Its rightful force equals the O.T. affirmation, “Thus says the Lord.” In other words, this is no dream. Jacob was greatly comforted by God’s words after his experience. Was Nathanael reassured after hearing Jesus refer to Himself as the Son of man?

Consider Nathanael’s original apprehension, “Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?” Jesus then says, “I saw thee.” Nathanael then responds in verse 49, “Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.” This is a significant confession, especially the term King of Israel. Nathanael is the first disciple to call Jesus “the King of Israel.” On the day of the Crucifixion, the people that passed by were heard to say, “If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him,” Mt. 27:42. The point is that Nathanael (Bartholomew) called Jesus by a name that was used when Jesus was hanged on a tree.

So Nathanael is promised a vision that Jacob only foresaw at Bethel. Here is Lightfoot’s explanation: “On this ladder are actively engaged, in both directions, angelic ministrants. This figure of an angelic ministry is not used in John during the Lord’s ministry; we read only of His life of communion with and obedience to the Father, and of the Father’s love and work for Him. Possibly therefore it is significant that, when all is completed (17:4; 19:30), when the ladder which in and by the work of the Son of man has joined heaven and earth in an indissoluble is removed, then only do we read once more of angels (20:12), occupying the place where the Lord’s body, the instrument of His work on earth, had lain (19:42).”

“In leaving this chapter the observation of Aretius is worth quoting. He remarks that the chapter is singularly rich in names or epithets applied to the Lord Jesus Christ. He numbers up the following twenty-one. 1. The Word. 2. God. 3. Life. 4. Light. 5. The true light. 6. The only begotten of the Father. 7. Full of grace and truth. 8. Jesus Christ. 9. The only begotten Son. 10. The Lord. 11. The Lamb of God. 12. Jesus. 13. A Man. 14. The Son of God. 15. Rabbi. 16. Teacher. 17. Messiah. 18. Christ. 19. The Son of Joseph. 20. The King of Israel. 21. The Son of Man.” (Ryle) Read Hebrews 11:3.

“The beginning of Moses’ miracles was turning water into blood (Exod. 4:9; 7:20), the beginning of Christ’s miracles was turning water into wine; which intimates the difference between the law of Moses and the gospel of Christ. The curse of the law turns water into blood, common comforts into bitterness and terror; the blessing of the gospel turns into wine. Christ hereby showed that his errand into the world was to heighten and improve creature comforts to all believers, make them comforts indeed.

The manner in which the miracle was worked deserves especial notice. We are not told of any outward visible actions which preceded or accompanied it. It is not said that He touched the waterpots containing the water that was made wine. It is not said that he commanded the water to change its qualities, or that he prayed to His Father in Heaven. It simply willed the change, and it took place. We read of no prophet or apostle in the Bible who ever worked a miracle after this fashion. He who could do such a mighty work, in such a manner, was nothing less than very God.” (Henry)

Lightfoot suggests five reasons why the miracle now before us was purposely the first that Christ worked. (1.) As marriage was the first institution ordained by God, so at a marriage was Christ’s first miracle. (2.) As Christ had showed himself miraculous a little while ago by a fast, so He doth now by an extraordinary provision at a feast. (3.) He would not make stones into bread to satisfy Satan, but he was willing to turn water into wine to show forth his own glory. (4.) The first miracle wrought in the world by man was transformation (Exod. 7:9), and the first miracle wrought by the Son of man was the same nature. (5.) The first time you hear of John the Baptist, you hear of his strict diet, and so the first time you hear of Christ in His public ministry, you hear of him at a marriage feast. (Ryle)

Q. Why would He change so much water into wine? (6 x 20 gal.) Marriage feast lasted several days and many were invited. The changing of water into wine of surpassing quality “sets forth the relation of the old order and the new, of the Law and the Gospel; the latter is seen as the perfecting and transformation of the former. And this positive work of the Lord taken place is Galilee [the land of the Gentiles].

Says Mark, “The wedding feast lacked wine, not water; yet it is precisely to the water, concerned with the admission to the feast by purification, that Jesus turns to supply the

deficiency of wine. And this is the significant part of the miracle. That which had, as water, never been able, and never would be able, in any quantity, large or small, to prepare men by an adequate purification to enter worthily even into an earthly marriage or union of persons, was to turn, in the presence of the true bridegroom, and by his grace and power, into the very substance of the joy of the divine marriage between God and his people. The inadequate and insufficient preparatory water became the more than adequate and superabundant wine of actual celebration and enjoyment.”

Mark here refers back to 1:16 (“And from his fulness have we all received, grace upon grace”). He says, “Grace is not a once-given and once-received gift or act of kindness. It is a continual renewed giving and receiving, communicated by the personal relationship which the incarnate word made possible.” He stresses that Jesus was invited to the marriage and carefully considers the presence of Mary who was not invited.

Thus there is a consistency of God’s grace hitherto, known only in fits and starts. Marsh says, “Within the life of the old Israel communion with God could not, and did not, proceed continuously and for ever. Israel’s life with God had come to a stop. Jesus’ reply to his mother is, as some commentators have failed to see, entirely respectful; he addresses her in the same way from the cross (19:26). The strange phrase ‘What have you to do with me?’ derives from the O.T. (φ. Judg. 11:12; 2 Sam. 16:10), though its meaning can be seen from the New, when the demons claim independence of Jesus, e.g. Mk. 1:24, and perhaps more particularly Mt. 8:29 where there is a reference, as here, to the future. Jesus is claiming that the time has come when his actions derive no longer from Mary’s parental guidance and authority but are, as the story in Lk. 2:41-51 foreshadowed, from his own relationship with his heavenly Father.

When Jesus asserts that his hour is not yet come, he is again, in typical Johannine fashion, combining more meanings than one. The time has not yet come when he can assist the marriage festivities; it has not yet come for him to make a public manifestation of himself, in spite of his public appearance with his disciples; it has not yet come for him to offer himself as the Lamb of God for the sins of the world. The use of the word ‘hour’ in John makes it impossible not to read the last reference even into this early saying in the gospel. And the justification for doing so becomes clearer as the story proceeds.

In writing of Mary’s direction to the servants John is following the Lucan tradition about the mother of Jesus, for in the third gospel Mary knows from the earliest time something of the

divine destiny of her son (Lk. 1:35; 2:19,51). And if we accept the statement as indicating a simple historical act of communication, we may also see in it two possible indications of a theological kind. In the first place the word used for servant [διακόνους “servants”] is not the one that is usual; John’s word transliterated as ‘deacons’ is still used of the Christian ministry, and supports the view that this whole incident is coloured by the sacramental experience of the Christian Church. Second, the figure of Mary, particularly since she is not named, may be intended to refer not only to the Lord’s mother, but to Judaism as such, in whose ‘womb’ Jesus was conceived. By a reference such as this the evangelist would be trying to indicate that the proper attitude of Judaism to the Church would be to point away from itself, to require no further obedience to itself, but to resign all its authority to Jesus Christ. This suggestion, as we shall see (cf. note on 19:25ff), can be pursued in the account of Jesus’ word to his mother from the cross [Marsh explains Woman, behold thy son]. More profoundly it can well be taken to mean that that which has come out of the root of Judaism. God’s people after the flesh, must henceforth find its proper home with that which has come out of the ministry of Jesus, the Christian church.

Further, when the servants deliver the wine to the steward, Marsh sees a spiritual structure, “The servants (deacons) of course know how the wine was procured, but the steward does not know. This indicates the position of the Jews and the disciples in the rest of the gospel, and in the story of the Church; it is the Church’s privilege to know whence true grace, true unity flows; but this is not seen by typical Jewry.

The final act in the miraculous drama arrived when the steward called the bridegroom and spoke of the unusual habit of keeping the good wine to the last. There is a world of silent comment in the sentence. Of course the bridegroom marrying the Galilean woman knew nothing of the source of the new, good wine. But the bridegroom knew. And as the synoptic writers themselves confessed, Jesus knew of the historical reality symbolized in the divinely given wine at the feast [Marsh refers to the Eucharist, because the synoptists do not treat of the miracle at Cana, nor even mention Cana, for that matter]. The same complex of ideas – the last being greater than the first, and the ignorance and opposition of the Jews is exhibited in the parable of the vineyard in Mk. 12:1-11, and the parallels in Mt. & Lk.” Marsh, it seems, does not make reference to Moses’ turning water into blood at Egypt, but may yet expound on what other commentators have seen in the symbolism of wine for blood. So far, he has avoided delving into all the possible comparisons with the marriage supper of Rev. 19:7-9 which he cites later in

reference to 3:29 (“He who has the bride”). For now, he has introduced the bridegroom while avoiding lengthy remarks on the bride as a N.T. metaphor (2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25-33; Rev. 21:2; 22:17) or of the synoptist’s inclusion of the marriage feast in Lk. 12:36-37. The new (“sweet”) wine described in Amos 9:13-14 is not mentioned in his commentary as part of the last times, but he has here in mind Jn. 4:13-15 about water and Jn. 6:53-56 about blood. He may have wanted not to combine the two sacramental elements that many have seen in the effusion from His side for the simple reason that Jesus is still alive and the importance of the Baptist’s ministry suffices for a fix on water’s ritual importance. As Hoskyns has shown, water in John’s Gospel moves past mere lustration to thirst-quenching (and thereby necessary for survival), to healing as demonstrated at Bethesda and Siloam.

“In Rabbinic Judaism wine is a symbol of the Torah. Therefore it is possible that when the steward speaks of the superiority of the later wine over that provided earlier in the feast he may well be held to make a veiled allusion to the superiority of the Gospel over the Torah. Christ would thus give the true wine, as he gives the true bread.” (Marsh)

The changing of water into wine Temple sees as a metamorphosis having another meaning which applies to us. There is better to come: we appear at first to others as kindly, considerate, etc. until they get to know us and see our faults. Yet as we deepen our fellowship with God, “we may say, ‘Thou hast kept the good wine until now.’” Barrett sees another parallel in Mk. 2:22, the parable of the wine and wineskins: “Over against Judaism the message of Jesus is essentially new.”

Verse 6

Stone waterpots, unlike earthenware, do not themselves contract uncleanness. “It is possible though by no means certain that the number six is symbolic; φ. 21:11. Six being less by one than seven, the number of completeness and perfection [e.g. the six days of Creation and the Sabbath], would indicate that the Jewish dispensation, typified by its ceremonial water, was partial and imperfect. Perhaps it should be noted that the event took place on the sixth day; on the other hand, no numerical interpretation of the miracle can be entirely satisfactory since Jesus does not create a seventh vessel.” (Barrett)

2:12-25

“To attend a marriage feast, and cleanse the temple from profanation were among the first acts of our Lord’s ministry at His first coming. To purify the whole visible Church, and hold a marriage supper will be amongst His first acts, when He comes again....

Twice, it will be remembered, He discovered the same profanation of His Father’s house going on, within three years, once at the beginning of His ministry and once at the end. Twice we see Him expressing His displeasure in the strongest terms. ‘The thing is doubled’ in order to impress a lesson more strongly on our minds...

The presence of oxen, sheep, doves, and money-changers within the temple courts is easily accounted for. The animals were intended to supply the wants of Jesus who came to the Passover and other feasts, from distant places, and required sacrifices. For them the dealers in oxen, sheep, and doves were ready, within a few yards of the altar. The changers of money came naturally enough where buying and selling went on, to meet the convenience of Jews who had nothing but foreign money, which they wished to exchange for the current coin of Jerusalem...

The whole transaction is a remarkable one, as exhibiting our Lord using mere physical exertion and energetic bodily action, than we see Him using at any other period of His ministry. A word, a touch, or the reaching forth of a hand are the ordinary limits of His actions. Here we see Him doing no less than four things: - (1) Making the scourge; - (2) Driving out the animals; - (3) Pouring out on the ground the changers’ money: - (4) Overthrowing the tables. On no occasion do we find Him showing such strong outward marks of indignation, as at the sight of the profanation of the temple. Remembering that the whole transaction is a striking type of what Christ will do to His visible Church at His second coming, we may get some idea of the deep meaning of that remarkable expression, ‘The wrath of the Lamb,’ (Rev. 6:16)...

The distinction between our Lord’s mode of dealing with each of the objects of His displeasure deserves notice. The oxen and sheep He drove out. There was no danger of their being lost by such treatment. The money He threw on the ground. It might be soon picked up and carried away. The doves he simply ordered to be taken away. Had He done more, they might have flown away, and been completely lost to their owners... In the present instance all were rebuked and all instructed. But no one was really injured, and nothing was lost.” (Ryle) Read Mal. 3:1.

Intended as a house of prayer for all nations, the temple had by this time been a ‘court of the Gentiles’ beyond which to pass was punishable by death [cf. Acts 21:28]. Jesus wanted to end

the particularism of sacrifice and replace it with a universalism of spiritual worship. The money-changers also provided the proper currency for paying poll taxes and making contributions to the temple. Marsh does not believe that the temple was twice cleaned, but the very act of scouring the temple had for a time made the temple sacrifices impracticable, φ. 1 Ki. 8:11.

The word “scourge” and “cords” are unique to John. Another difference between him and the synoptists is that Jesus does not here cite Jeremiah 7:11: “Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the Lord.”

Verse 20

“It has taken forty-six years to build this temple.” The sentence grammatically means that from the start to the finish of the building of the temple forty-six years had elapsed. But Herod’s temple was begun in 20/19 B.C. and not finished until about A.D. 63... In spite of the plain grammar of the sentence it must be taken to refer, not to the complete of the building, but to the length of time building so far has taken. The sentence may be held compatible with some intermediate stage being reached, which could account for the phrase implying completeness.” (Marsh) Barrett also thinks that there was a halt in the building, “something which might be called ναός [temple, shrine] (over against ἱερόν) had been completed.” Possibly the sanctuary or holy place (vs. 19-21) was finished, but the ἱερόν of vs. 14-15, the whole complex of temple buildings was still a work in progress.

We can already detect antagonism toward Jesus by the Jews, v. 18. Consider the priests’ and Levites’ questions put to John the Baptist: Who art thou? 1:19 [If not the Christ]. What then? Art thou Elias? Art thou that prophet? 1:20. Who art thou? ... What sayest thou of thyself? 1:21. Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? 1:25. Here are two put to Jesus, 2:18,20.

“The action [of Cleansing the Temple] is not merely that of a Jewish reformer: it is a sign of the advent of the Messiah; it is not merely a protest against the irreverence and corruption of Jewish worship: it is a sign that the end of animal sacrifice is at hand (see v. 21). The prophets of Israel had long ago attached the whole system of animal sacrifice as a profanation of the worship of God (Isa. 1:11-17; Jer. 7:22; Hos. 5:6; 8:13; Amos 4:4,5; φ. Ps. 50:13).” (Hoskyns)

See also 2 Chron. 6:29,30.

The two conversations with Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman show that “the two recipients may be regarded as representing, respectively, official orthodoxy and nonconformity, and on each occasion the teaching given throws light upon the actions of the Lord, i.e. on the nature and meaning of the wine granted at Cana, and on the worship and meaning of the new sanctuary which He will build [φ. 2:19-21]” (Lightfoot)

Says Barrett, “Narrative is in this section reduced to a minimum. Nicodemus appears before Jesus but never even states the purpose of his coming. As the discourse proceeds he is quickly forgotten, and further, the conversation moves out of the singular number into the plural; ‘We speak’, ‘You (pl.) must be born again.’ We are made to hear not a conversation between two persons but the dialogue of Church and Synagogue, in which (according to the Christian view) the former completes and fulfills the latter, which is in consequence superseded. The discourse thus falls into its place (a very important place) in the movement of thought in the gospel.

Judaism cannot simply move forward over a level plain to achieve its goal in the kingdom of God. This goal cannot be reached either by learned discussion between its distinguished teachers (such as Jesus and Nicodemus), or by waiting for an apocalyptic dénouement in which the kingdom should suddenly appear. This is emphasized not merely because human nature needs divine renewal before it can experience the kingdom of God, but primarily because, the kingdom of God, being in part realized already, such a renewal becomes an immediate possibility.”

Verse 1

Nicodemus comes to Jesus by night. Perhaps he had heard the discourses given by day and wanted free time to talk with Jesus to improve on what he had already learned. In private, at leisure, and without disturbance, he may have ventured incognito for fear of the enemies of Christ. Though John may have meant simply that Nicodemus came secretly, “it is more probable that he intended to indicate the darkness out of which Nicodemus came into the presence of the true Light (φ. vs. 19-21)” (Barrett)

Verse 2

The “we” may be the Pharisees, or the chief rulers, but more likely it is the “many (φ. 2:23) [who] believed in his name, when they saw the miracles...”

“To possess the privileges of Judaism, a man only needed to be born of the seed of Abraham after the flesh. To possess the privileges of Christ’s kingdom, a man must be born again of the Holy Ghost. It means that complete change of heart and character which is produced in a man by the Holy Ghost, when he repents, believes on Christ, and becomes a true Christian. It is a change which is frequently spoken of in the Bible. In Ezekiel it is called ‘taking away the stony heart and giving a heart of flesh,’ – ‘giving a new heart, and putting within a new spirit’ (Ezek. 11:19; 36:26)” (Henry). A stony heart is compared with the Mosaic tablets and the engraving upon those stones. A heart of flesh is compared with the body of Christ. One is a cold dead thing; the other corporeal and living. “This mighty inward change of heart which our Lord here calls a ‘new birth’, John the Baptist foretold would specially characterize Messiah’s kingdom. He was to baptize not with water, but with the Holy Ghost.” (Henry). Says Barrett, “The notion of supernatural begetting plays a very important part in this passage (vs. 3-8); it occurs in the Prologue (1:12f). The importance of water and spirit calls to mind the Baptist’s prediction (1:26; 1:33).

Verse 8

Jesus’ discourse with Nicodemus is between rabbi, < רַבִּי ‘ραββί and διδάσκαλος, teacher, yet the reader eavesdrops as Nicodemus’ presence fades, and Jesus’ teaching broadens to include any who cares to listen. The true Light of 1:9 has reference to the Genesis narrative (1:3) and, here, the Spirit to Gen. 1:2. “It breathes into this world from another. Men cannot in themselves fathom the operation of the Spirit, but the Spirit himself is able to bring them within the sphere of his own activity and impart his own properties to them. Through the Spirit men live not in this age but in the age to come, and though active in the world they are not confined to the range of the sense.” (Barrett)

Verse 14

Q. To what is Jesus referring? Read Num. 21:4-9. Many Christian “writers treat the serpent as a type of Christ, but this is not John’s intention. For him the point of comparison is not the serpent but the lifting up. As in the old Jewish interpretation the uplifted serpent drew the

hearts of Israel to God for their salvation, so the uplifted Jesus drew men to himself and so gathered to God those who were his children (φ. 12:32, 11:52).” (Barrett). To see Christ’s crucifixion as a reenactment of Moses’ putting the brazen serpent upon a standard has fascinated theologians as well as empirical scientists. Perhaps the caduceus was invented here. Berkhof says, “The symbol of the brazen serpent is significant. As the brazen serpent was not itself poisonous, but yet represented the embodiment of sin, so Christ, the sinless One was made sin for us, [Gal. 3:13]. As the lifting up of the serpent signified the removal of the plague, so the lifting up of Christ on the cross effected the removal of sin. And as a believing look at the serpent brought healing, so faith in Christ heals to the saving of the soul... The Lord plainly tells us that His sufferings were vicarious.”

The fashioning of the brazen serpent was the last miracle Moses performed before the children of Israel entered Canaan. Jesus’ death reconciled us to God before we go into heaven.

Verse 13

“The expression ‘which is in heaven,’ deserves particular notice. It is one of those many expressions in the N.T. which can be explained in no other way than by the doctrine of Christ’s divinity. It would be utterly absurd and untrue to say of any mere man, that at the very time he was speaking to another on earth he was in heaven! But it can be said of Christ with perfect truth and propriety. He never ceased to be very God, when He became incarnate. He was ‘with God and was God.’ As God, He was in heaven while He was speaking to Nicodemus.” (Ryle). Here is a true mystery indeed: Jesus refers to Himself as the Son of man, and then later in verse 18 as the Son of God. Also, we have in vs. 3,5 the term “kingdom of God” which is given only here in all of John’s Gospel. Still further, the term “eternal life” of verse 15 is first brought to the narrative in association with belief. In a sense “without this new birth no man can see – outwardly apprehend – the kingdom of God, for a new vision is required for the objects of a new order.” J.H. Whitehead, The Gospel of Jesus the Christ according to Saint John, 1893.

Verse 16

“It could be observed that our Lord calls Himself, ‘the only-begotten [τὸν μονογενῆ] Son of God’ in this verse. In the verse but one before this, He called Himself the ‘Son of Man.’ Both the names were used to impress upon the mind of Nicodemus the two natures of Messiah. He

was not only the Son of man but the Son of God. But it is striking to remark that precisely the same words are used in both places about faith in Christ. If we would be saved, we must believe in Him both as the Son of man and the Son of God...

One other thing out to be remarked, in leaving this subject of our Lord's conversation with Nicodemus. That thing is the singular fullness of matter by which the whole of our Lord's address is characterized. Within the space of twenty verses we read of the work of all three Persons in the Trinity, - the Father's love, the Son's death on the cross, and the Spirit's operation in the new birth of man, - the corruption of man's nature, the nature of regeneration, and the efficacy of faith in Christ, - the way to escape perishing in hell, the true cause of man's condemnation if he is lost, and the true marks of sincerity in an inquirer. A fuller sermon was never delivered than that which was here preached to Nicodemus in one evening! There is hardly a single important point in divinity which is left untouched" (Ryle).

Verse 22

In this last discourse of the Baptist's concerning the Lord, it is helpful to remember the Baptist's humility – a spirit of humility so admirable that Jesus praised him more than any other man. John here describes Jesus "as 'the bridegroom' of the Church, - as 'Him that cometh from above,' – as 'Him whom God hath sent,' – as Him 'whom the Father loves' and into 'whose hand all things are given,' – to believe in whom is life everlasting, and to reject whom is eternal ruin... More honourable things are nowhere written concerning Jesus, than these verses recorded as spoken by John the Baptist." (Ryle)

So John's testimony is authentic: he is a faithful witness (μαρτυρία) > martyr. His evidence is both reliable and commensurate with the authority Jesus bears. I find it is necessary to review the discourse with Nicodemus, who was most probably a member of the Sanhedrin, an assembly of chief priests, elders, and scribes. Of those three groups, Nicodemus was either a scribe or Pharisee, but nonetheless a "ruler of the Jews." His response to Jesus' sermon is not given, so the reader's attention is thrust back on Jesus' words as they stand.

Verse eight suggests that "regeneration (lit. life from death) rests upon God's election and not upon man's preparative acts. [It rests] upon special grace and not upon common grace." (Shedd) Verse 13 might be considered a form of revealed religion: "The Son of man was on earth and in heaven at the same instant. Because the Logos was localized and limited by a human

body on the earth, it does not follow that he did not continue to exist and act in heaven... In heaven he was in glory; on earth he was in sorrow and death. Verses fifteen and sixteen contain a sameness which links the specific purpose of Christ's crucifixion to the overarching love of the Father. As onlookers, we are as helpless and bewildered watching the Crucifixion as we would be watching Adam and Eve taste the forbidden fruit. In verse 16, there is no Dutch Reformed idea of limited atonement – Christ died for the world. Further, from verse 17, we read that God didn't come to condemn the world "because it was already condemned." This idea leads perfectly into verse 18. On verse 19, John Owen wrote, "When the law comes at any time to claim its right and rule over the soul, a man under the power of sin looks on it as an enemy that has come to disturb his peace and fortifies his mind against it; and when the gospel comes and tenders the way and means for the soul's delivery, offering its aid and assistance to this end, this also is looked on as an enemy and is rejected, and all its offers, unto that end." Needless to say, these matters are spiritually discerned – men of the present day who sneer at conversions and revivals, as fanaticism and enthusiasm, are no less ignorant than poor Nicodemus who twice appears later in John's gospel narrative. Put another way, in choosing not to choose, a choice has been chosen. Three times Jesus assures Nicodemus of the necessity of a "rebirth."

The Baptist declares, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." (v. 36) "[The believer] is not intended to look forward with a sick heart to a far distant privilege. He 'hath' everlasting life as soon as he believes. Pardon, peace, and a complete title to heaven, are an immediate possession. They become a believer's own, from the very moment he puts faith in Christ. They will not be more completely his own if he lives to the age of Methuselah. The truth before us is one of the most glorious privileges of the Gospel. There are no more works to be done, no conditions to be fulfilled, no price to be paid, no wearing years of probation to be passed, before a sinner can be accepted with God. Let him only believe on Christ, and he is at once forgiven. Salvation is close to the chief of sinners [- a reference to Paul, a Pharisee and a member of the Sanhedrin]. Let him only repent and believe, and this day it is his own. By Christ all that believe are at once justified from all things.

Let us leave the whole passage with one grave and heart-searching thought. If faith in Christ brings with it present and immediate privileges, to remain unbelieving is to be in a state of tremendous peril. If heaven is very near to the believer, hell must be very near to the unbeliever. The greater the mercy that the Lord Jesus offers, the greater will be the guilt of those who

neglect it and reject it. [Verse 36 concludes,] ‘He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.’” (Ryle) This is the only use of the word wrath in this Gospel. On this same verse, Marsh has this to say, “To withhold, not to obey the Son is to perish [“to suffer destruction”, says Barrett]; or as the point is now stated, to have the wrath of God remain on one. The Greek word ‘disbelieve’ [ἀπειθῶν – “is not subject”] has the meaning of ‘disobey’, and gives the evangelist a further opportunity to use a term with some ambiguity in order to express an important idea. Belief for John is not a mere matter of intellectual assent. It involves the setting and direction and persistence of a whole life. So the opposite of ‘believing’ (which is to yield oneself up to God in Christ) is disobedience. [As stated,] The wrath of God is not mentioned again in the Gospel, though the alternatives life and death are to reappear throughout. The term wrath [ὀργή > orgasm] is frequent in Paul, and... wrath in the biblical sense is not ‘temper’ in the modern meaning of that word [φ. Dr. Dodd]. Indeed at this point of the gospel the evangelist is manifestly putting precisely the same point as he made in 3:18. The wrath of God is the obverse side of his love. Man cannot but deal with God, for God has dealt with man. And in offering man eternal life, God has made rejection both possible and calamitous. Love could not offer life on other terms without foreswearing love.”

Some situate the discourse with Nicodemus in the Garden of Gethsemane, since by the last reckoning Jesus has remained in Jerusalem after the Cleansing of the Temple. The problem at verse 22 is in regard to location: either the Greek phrase εἰς τὴν Ἰουδαίαν γῆν means “out of Jerusalem” where the aristocratic Sanhedrin held session, or, in fact, Nicodemus came to Galilee to visit Jesus there. [A dispute arises between the Baptist’s disciples and those who followed Jesus. The standard interpretation is that His disciples baptized and that He was the federal head of their actions] Converts are leaving John to follow Jesus.

Verse 29

Says Barrett, “This verse may be taken simply as a parable [in O.T. writing, a proverb]. At a wedding, the ‘best man’, important though his functions may be [demanding the bride’s hand and preparing everything for bride and groom], naturally and gladly gives place to the bridegroom; similarly John, important as his work in preparing the way has been, must give way to Jesus, and to do so is no pain but joy to him. It is possible however that though this interpretation is true it is not complete. John [the Gospeller] can hardly have been unaware that

in the O.T. Israel is occasionally regarded as the bride of God (e.g. Isa. 62:4f; Jer. 2:2; 3:20, Ezek. 16:8; 23:4; Hos. 2:21); in the N.T. the Church is the bride of Christ (2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25-27; 31f; Rev. 21:2; 23:17). The Baptist is made to indicate that not he but Christ is the head of the New Israel.... If καθαρισμός (purifying) in v. 25 is a cross-reference to the miracle at Cana (2:1-11) the marriage metaphor in this verse may be another.” (Barrett)

Some notes on vocabulary:

Verse 7

Δεῖ - “it is needful” i.e. “Ye must be born again”, φ. 4:4, and elsewhere as “behoved”, Lk. 24:46: “it behoved Christ to suffer.”; and verse 30: “he must increase.”

The verb ἀποστέλλω “to send” has cognates used some 27x in John. The first use is in 1:6: “There was a man sent from God whose name was John.” Here in chapter 3, thrice (vs. 17, 28, 34) it is used.

Verse 14

ὑψόω, to lift or raise up, will be used again in 8:28; 12:32,34. Jesus speaks of himself being “raised up,” but strictly in terms of the Crucifixion. Barrett explains, “The Son of man alone is he who descends from heaven and again ascends thither. Viewed in the conditions of his earthly life he is under necessity of being lifted up (exalted to glory); but his lifting up will be in the manner suggested by the serpent of the Old Testament. He will be lifted up on the cross (φ. espec. 12:32f), and his lifting up will result not only in glory for himself but also in healing for mankind. This result is immediately emphasized in the next verse.”

“To send” and to “lift up” are important words in this Gospel, and their meanings will deepen in accordance with their contextual usage.

Verse 33

“seal” φ. 6:27 is a metaphor taken from a signet used to either authenticate or hide a private matter. A private mark is stamped either in wax or clay to secure or preserve a document.

Verse 35

Here is an exceptional verse (like v. 16). The Baptist assures his followers that his joy is fulfilled (his task complete), because the Father loves the Son. Go back to v. 16. It is the first mention of ἀγάπε in the Gospel, and it refers to the benevolence of God shown to His creation. The love of v. 35 is closer to a self-love, the love a father feels toward an obedient son. But the introduction of God the Father's love, an idea unique to Christianity, is only introduced here. Probably the main idea of John's Gospel is to persuade his reader of the Son's love for His heavenly father.

Barrett explains v. 16 in this way: "While God loves the world (as is stated in this verse) his love only becomes effective among those who believe in Christ. For the rest love turns, as it were, to judgment. Love seems to be, for John, a reciprocal relation. The Father loves the Son (3:35; 10:17; 15:9f; 17:23f,26), and the Son loves the Father (14:31); Jesus loves his own (11:5; 13:1,23,34; 14:21; 15:9(f),12; 21:7,20), and his own love, or should love, one another (13:34f; 15:12f,17; 17:26). Only occasionally do we hear of a love of the Father directly for the disciples (14:21,23; 17:23), and it is made clear that men in general do not, and cannot, love God (3:19; 5:42; 8:42)."

“Burgon remarks, ‘that Jacob and Moses each found his future wife beside a well of water; and here it is seen that One greater than they, their Divine Antitype, the Bridegroom takes to Himself His alien spouse, the Samaritan Church, at a well likewise.’” (Ryle)

Verses 3-4

“[The Holy Land] in our Saviour’s time was divided into three parts: Judea in the south, Galilee in the north, and Samaria lying between them. Now, in this chapter, we have Christ in each of these three parts of that land.” (Henry)

We are led out of an old order represented by Nicodemus (and the Baptist) into a city of Samaria called Sychar, whose whereabouts remain a mystery. As Lia has pointed out, the theme of witness runs throughout the Gospel, as does also the theme of water: “The Baptist baptizes in water (1:26,31,33); both the Lord and the Baptist baptized, the latter where there is much water (3:22-26); the Lord will give living water (4:7-15); and in 5:2-9 the impotent man had been hoping to regain his health in the water of the pool of Bethesda.” (Lightfoot)

Having described Nicodemus as orthodox and the Samaritan woman as non-conformist, some background on Samaria is useful for context.

“The Samaritans signify mixed thoughts, partly worldly and partly religious. They were a mixture of Assyrian and Hebrew. They claimed to be direct descendents of Abraham, and taught the books of Moses, but they were not recognized by the Jews as followers of the Jewish religion. Metaphysically Samaria represents a state of consciousness in which truth and error are mixed.” (Metaphysical Bible Dictionary)

The Samaritans were in fact Gentiles (φ. 2 Ki. 17:24sq), the descendents of the heathen colonists transferred to Samaria by the King of Assyria from five Mesopotamian cities. Here is the brief history: There are two mountains there Ebal and Gerizim, one a place to declare God’s curses (Ebal) and the other His blessings (Gerizim). The locals believed Gerizim to be the scene of the sacrifice of Isaac (Jesus believed that site to be the Temple Mount) and of Abraham’s meeting with Melchizedek (the Jews believed that site to be the Kidron valley near the city of Zion). In the Samaritan Pentateuch, Gerizim was the site of the first Hebrew sacrifice after the people passed over Jordan into Canaan (φ. Deut. 27:4; see also Deut. 11:29; 27:12). To the Jews,

however, the sacred Samaritan mountain was no more than the seat of a sectarian worship. Some time about 885 B.C., king Omri of Israel built Samaria as the capitol of the Northern Kingdom. His son Ahab continued commerce and construction to rival the splendor of Jerusalem, and furthered Phoenician influence by marrying Jezebel, a notoriously wicked woman. At the time of the collapse of Israel (before Judah was conquered by the Babylonians) the people worshipping at the temple in Samaria were carried away captive. To consolidate his hold on the province, the Assyrian king replaced the exiles with some of his vassals from previous foreign conquests – the idea being to disorient everyone both exiles and colonists. God sent terrible Judean lions into the midst of Samaria, and a second-rate priest was deployed to teach the Samaritans “the manner of the God of the land,” 2 Ki. 17:27. Trouble erupted again because the empty houses in the high places had been robbed of their wealth, and the Babylonian settlers introduced their own dunghill deities. Read 2 Ki. 17:30-31. Even when the Jews returned from Babylon and began erecting the Second Temple, the Samaritans were a conspicuous nuisance. The Jews of the old southern kingdom (Judah & Benjamin) hated the Samaritans, even in Jesus’ day, cf. Ezra 4. – the Judean prince and high priest are quoted as saying, “Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God.”

Something of a contrast can be seen in Jesus seeking out a Samaritan woman (she represents the city in that cities are here called by feminine names) at a time when Herod’s Temple was under construction, and in light of His words in Jn. 2:19 which imply that the Jews will ultimately cause the Temple’s destruction.

Jesus is coming into Samaria from Judea (3:22) after He had kept the feast. From verse 35 it is four months before harvest, so the computed time He spent in Judea is 6 months to build upon the foundation that the Baptist had laid there. John’s imprisonment made room for Him to go back to Galilee, but He had to pass through Samaria on His way north. It is a place between Judah and Galilee of the Gentiles. (Henry)

The well is not mentioned in the O.T., but is the usual sort, gathering water by infiltration. It could thus be thought of as filled with ‘running’ or ‘living’ water’ if it were compared with water stored in a hewn cistern that collected nothing by infiltration. Jesus’ thirst now compares with that He endured at the Crucifixion (4:34; 19:28) each prior to finishing the work His Father has given Him to do. Says Lightfoot, “Not least, His conversation with her is at the sixth hour (just before He was crucified). Thus His suffering in ch. 19 is prefigured by His

weariness at this time. He who brings life and living water is wearied, athirst, and alone. Yet her needs are greater than His.”

“Bengel remarks on verse 10 our Lord’s readiness to draw lessons of spiritual instruction from every object near Him. To the Jews desiring bread, He spoke of the bread of life (Jn. 6:33). To the people of Jerusalem at break of day, He speaks of the light of the world, referring probably to the rising sun (Jn. 7:2,12). To the woman coming to draw water, He speaks of living water...” (Ryle)

The water of the Torah (The Torah was often likened to water) provided a law ‘external’ to men, and the water of the Spirit is internal to men, an interior guide. To the Jewish mind water was a precious gift (φ. Jer. 2:13; Zech. 14:8), and Jesus’ thirst quenching water is perhaps a figure which compares the countless rituals of the O.T. system with the one sufficiency of the New Testament sacrifice. (Marsh)

We can detect in this passage each person gradually opening up to the other. Jesus begins this interview with an appeal for service. Give me to drink. William Temple has written, “One has told of the difference for a minister when he left a well-appointed settlement in Bermondsey, where he needed nothing which his neighbours could supply, and went to live in a workman’s flat. The first evening he wanted a hammer to hang pictures, and went to borrow one from the people living in the flat below. At once the relationship was different. There was something they could do for him.

So the Almighty God seeks to win us to fellowship with Himself by putting some part of His purpose into our hands. ‘The kingdom of heaven is as when a man, going into another country, called his own servants, and delivered unto them his good.’ (Mt. 25:14)” Temple goes on to say that Jesus gave His disciples work to do in order to make them saints.

[In ch. 4, at Jacob’s well, he sees a conversation between God and our soul:

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 1. The Lord | Do me a service. |
| The soul | How is it <u>thou</u> askest anything of? |
| 2. The Lord | If thou hadst known what gift of God is offered <u>thee</u> . |
| The soul | Give me this gift. |
| 3. The Lord | a) With whom will you share it. b) Lay bare your sin. |
| The soul | Solve my perplexity. |

- | | |
|-------------|------------------------------------|
| 4. The Lord | Worship in spirit and truth. |
| The soul | Ah! No solution yet. We must wait. |
| 5. The Lord | I AM.] |

The theme of the bridegroom runs through this passage. Rebekah, Rachel, and Jethro's daughter all found their husbands here; Christ is found of the Samaritan woman. Her giving water to Him recalls Rebekah's civility to Abraham's servant (Gen. 24:18) [And Jesus has not yet eaten after the men came to see Him. Henry sees His preference to finish the work which His father gave Him as comparable to "Abraham's servant, that would not eat till he had told his errand (Gen. 24:33), and Samuel, that would not sit down till David was anointed, 1 Sam. 16:11"]

Read 2 Kings 17:30-31. Josephus reckons then as 5 gods – her 5 husbands.

Verse 22

"The saying does not mean that Jews as such are saved, but rather that the election of Israel to a true knowledge of God was in order that (ὅτι) at the time appointed by God, salvation might proceed from Israel to the world, and Israel's own unique privilege be thereby dissolved.

Verse 23

This eschatological salvation is in the person of Jesus in process of realization and the Jews are losing their position to the Church." (Barrett)

Verse 24

"God is a Spirit, for he is an infinite and eternal mind, an intelligent being, incorporeal, immaterial, invisible, and incorruptible. It is easier to say what God is not than what he is; a spirit has not flesh and bones, but who knows the way of a spirit? If God were not a spirit, he could not be perfect, nor infinite, nor eternal, nor independent, nor the Father of spirits." (Henry)

Verse 28

The woman is so surprised by Jesus' interview that she leaves behind her waterpot, and runs into the city of Sychar to proclaim the Christ. This event establishes the truth of Jesus' words to his disciples about the harvest.

Verse 35

In Palestine, a timespan of 4 months is the shortest possible between sowing and reaping. The labours are reapers indeed but they owe their success to the sowers who came before. So it is with the Samaritan woman who brought others to the Lord whom they believed for themselves (φ. 4:39; 17:20). She is the first Gentile He encountered. The cleansing of the temple and conversation with Nicodemus win no converts. The Samaritan woman and the nobleman [βασιλίκος] (and his house) are the seeds of belief in the Savior in unexpected places and before the open hostility of ch. 5.

Verse 36

[“In this verse sower and reaper are identical; Jesus himself has sown the seed in conversation with the woman, and the believing Samaritans (v. 39) are his harvest (though as v. 38 may suggest, the disciples will help him to reap it)...

Verse 37

As ordinarily used the proverb doubtless expresses the sad inequity of life: one sows, and has no reward for his toil, while when in due course the harvest appears another reaps it who has not shared in the labour of sowing (Bultmann). This principle, which expresses the common observation and wisdom of mankind, has been contradicted by v. 36, according to which sower and reaper rejoice together, the interval between sowing and reaping being annihilated in the eschatological circumstances envisaged; yet there is a limited (ἐν τούτῳ) sense in which it remains true.” (Barrett)]

Verse 43ff

“There is no more common or mischievous error, than to suppose that the rich have no cares. The rich are as liable to sickness as the poor; and have a hundred anxieties beside, of which the poor know nothing at all. Silk and satins often cover very heavy hearts. The dwellers

in palaces often sleep more uneasily than the dwellers in cottages. Gold and silver can lift no man beyond the reach of trouble; they may shut out debt and rags, but they cannot shut out care, disease, and death. The higher the tree, the more it is shaken by storms...

We read of a son sick unto death, and a father in trouble about him. We see the natural order of things inverted: the elder is obliged to minister to the younger, and not the younger to the elder. The child draws nigh to the grave before the parent, and not the parent before the child.

The lesson is one which we are slow to learn. We are apt to shut our eyes to plain facts, and to speak and act as if young people, as a matter of course, never died when young. And yet the grave-stones in every churchyard would tell us that few people out of a hundred ever live to be fifty years old, while many never grow up to man's estate at all. The first grave that ever was dug on this earth was that of a young man: the first person who ever died was not a father but a son. Aaron lost two sons at a stroke. David, the man after God's own heart, lived long enough to see three children buried. Job was deprived of all his children in one day. These things were carefully recorded for our learning...

In the first chapter of St. John's Gospel we see fishermen converted; in the third, a self-righteous Pharisee; in the beginning of the fourth, a fallen Samaritan woman; and in the end, a nobleman out of a King's court...

[We should always notice the number and greatness of miracles which our Lord worked at Capernaum, and the dignity of the persons at whose instance they were worked. Here He healed the Centurion's servant. (Mt. 8:15) Here in all probability, He restored to life the daughter of Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue. (Mk. 5:21) And here, in the present instance, He healed the nobleman's son. Three distinct and leading classes had each of them a mighty miracle wrought among them. The Centurion was a Gentile soldier. The ruler of the synagogue was a Jew of high ecclesiastical position. The nobleman was connected with the highest civil authorities. The consequence no doubt was that the name and power of Christ became known to every leading family in Capernaum. No wonder that our Lord says, 'Thou Capernaum that art exalted unto heaven.' (Mt. 11:23) No place was so privileged as this city..." (Ryle)]

Jesus has been received by the Galileans (v. 45) and probably very well received by the residents of Cana in Galilee. Now appears a courtier or ruler from Herod's government beseeching Him to heal his gravely ill son. The Lord's response is "Unless ye see signs and

wonders, ye [plural] will not believe.” (Ἐὰν μὴ σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα ἴδητε οὐ μὴ πιστεύσητε). [In English, there are four principal functions of the “present tense.”

- 1) it is used of future events. e.g. “Alice leaves in a week.”
- 2) it is used of reiterated or habitual events. e.g. Bruce drinks at least 6 cups of coffee a day.
- 3) it is used of a state which has no tense. e.g. It comes with a set of blades.
- 4) it is used with a special class of verbs known as performatives, such as say, declare, promise. e.g. Bruce says that he drinks too much coffee, or I think he is right.

Jesus may be saying, “Unless ye will see signs, ye will not believe.”] It is certain that the “ye” is in the second person.” The nobleman has faith, but not the Galileans among whom Jesus lived as a boy. The Samaritans had believed without such startling evidence, though the woman’s testimony was startling enough. [The Galileans were interested by “all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast,”] signs which he wrought at Jerusalem, but these come short of the signs and portents here referred to.”(Temple) If however the meaning is that Jews require a sign (φ. 1 Cor. 1:22), then there is very good reason to look for them. With some variation among commentators there are seven:

2:1-11 water into wine at marriage in Cana	- difference that Christ makes
4:46-54 healing of nobleman’s son	- faith the only requisite
5:2-9 impotent man healed	- Christ restorer of lost powers
6:4-13 feeding of 5000	- Christ the Food by which we live
6: 16-21 walking on water	- Christ our Guide
9:1-7 man born blind	- Christ our Light
11:1-44 Lazarus	- Christ our Life

(Temple)

As with the water made wine, the miracle is one of willing. The transformation/healing occurs elsewhere: the certainty of the result is attested by all who were witness. Marsh says that within the context of a ‘sign’ book, the marriage at Cana was his first, the nobleman’s son’s healing the second. The nobleman contrasts the woman at Sychar in that he is fully aware of Jesus’ divinity. This Gentile nobleman is the best of the Gentiles, as Nicodemus was of the Jews, and the woman of Samaritans. “There is an interesting progression in the gospel to this point. As the representative Jew comes, he is hardly aware of his need, or of the great gift which Jesus can give: the Samaritan woman begins by being quite unaware of the status of Jesus, and of her own

need, but as her talk with Jesus progresses she becomes increasingly aware of both. Now, as the best representative of the Gentiles comes forward, John shows us a man who, however dimly, already perceives both the depth of his need and the ability of Jesus to satisfy it. The father moves from Jerusalem, the farther he goes from the typical Jew, the more he seems to receive the sort of response he seeks. This fact, disclosed not so much in words as in the actual progression of the gospel story is John's equivalent to the synoptic estimate of the centurion at Capernaum: Jesus said, 'I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith.' (Lk. 7:9, φ. Mt. 8:10)"

We had looked at an anarthrous term in the Prologue: "And the Word was with God and the Word was God," which could closely be translated, "And the Word was with God, and the Word God." The phrase has no joint (no article). In 4:24, we have another example. "The original πνεῦμα ὁ θεός (lit. "Spirit God is.")) and omission of the article implies that God is spirit in the highest sense. He is not a spirit, but spirit itself, absolutely" (Shedd). The use of God here denotes the Trinity – "the true God in distinction from a falsely conceived God "and One who must (δεῖ) be worshipped in spirit and in truth.

Verse 47

"Musculus remarks how much more love descends than ascends. In all the Gospels we never read of any sons or daughters coming to Christ on behalf of their parents. And Dyke observes, 'Some crosses drive men to Christ; especially in our children. This was the cross that subdued Egypt; and to great men, such as this ruler, who have much to leave their children, this cross is the greatest.'" (Ryle).

Verse 52

"It was common belief that the seventh hour was the critical time for any fever" (Marsh). It was the midpoint of the day and the most problematic because of the heat." Three times the phrase "Thy son liveth" is used. "Interlocking factors in the episode – faith, healing, death, life, the power of the word [Jesus healed the nobleman's son by His words], father, son – are when properly understood, signs, parables, or analogies of the truth. And so the Evangelist brackets the Healing of the Nobleman's Son with the Changing of the Water into Wine (2:11, 4:54), since both are signs of the glory of Jesus, and are opportunities for faith as well as illustrations of it." (Marsh)

Citing Hoskyns, Marsh writes, “The Fourth Gospel records not primarily what the crowd of eye-witnesses saw and heard of the Jesus of History, but what the disciples saw of the glory of the Word of God (1:14); what they apprehended, as believers, when Jesus was risen from the dead (2:22). The Fourth Gospel is less an apostolic witness to history than an Apostolic witness to that which is beyond history, but which is, nevertheless, the meaning of the ‘Jesus of History’, and therefore the meaning of all history.”

He explains miracles in this way, “The universe as men know it today is not a perdurable reality linked throughout its history by uninterrupted sequences of causes and effects, governed everywhere by unchangeable and unbreakable laws. It is rather a universe where pattern and probability are the categories to be used in understanding the world. If so, then instead of having to say of a miracle that it ‘breaks the laws of nature’ (a notion equally repugnant to the critical and inquiring mind and to the Christian understanding of God) it is possible to think that it simply goes outside the familiar pattern, which is the whole purpose of God. God, that is to say, has a pattern for his world. The existence of evil, itself a mystery to man, creates distortions of that divine pattern. What God has done in Jesus Christ, and this includes so-called miracles, is to restore the over-all pattern by some departure from its familiar regularities.”

- Seventh day of Feast of Tabernacles is SHEMINI ATZERES
- Eighth day is SIMCHAS TORAH
- Last day is the completion of the yearly reading of Pentateuch which begins again the following Sabbath

“Saith the poor man, ‘It is not for want of a good will, but of a good friend, that I am unhealed. I have done what I could to help myself, but in vain, for no one else will help me.’ (1.) He does not think of any other way of being cured than by these waters, and desires no other friendship than to be helped into them; therefore, when Christ cured him, his imagination or expectation could not contribute to it, for he thought no such thing. (2.) He complains for want of friends to help him in: ‘I have no man, no friend to do me that kindness.’ One would think that some of those who had been themselves healed should have lent him a hand, but it is common for the poor to be destitute of friends; no man careth for their soul. . . . How mildly this man speaks of the unkindness of those about him, without any peevish reflections.” (Henry)

4:43-5:17

Evangelical Acts of Healing – “The earlier synoptic tradition contains the record of many acts of healing. These actions had led to a tumultuous acceptance of Jesus by the crowds (Mt. 4:23-25); but since they were often done on the Sabbath and accompanied by a peculiar claim to authority. They led also to serious and deadly opposition on the part of the Jewish authorities (Mk. 2:6-10; 3:1-6,22).” (Hoskyns) Lightfoot gives an overview: “The more He reveals Himself, the more resolute do [the Jews] become to destroy Him; and conversely, that the more resolute they become, the more fully He reveals His nature and being.”

Let us first treat of the miracle itself. If the feast of the Jews here mentioned (v. 1) is Passover, then John’s Gospel contains four Passovers (2:13, 5:1, 6:4, 12:1). If not, most likely it is Tabernacles, rather than Purim, Trumpets, or the New Year. Nonetheless, the reader is led to remember the first sojourn at Jerusalem and the clash with the powers that be (2:13-3:21). “The Sheep Gate as a locale helps to prepare for the later description of the Good Shepherd.” [Lord was led through sheep-gate after arrest in Gethsemane] The pool is known as Bethesda (βηθεσδα

< בֵּית + חֵסֶד) formed as doubt from a chalybeate (having salts of iron) spring, “which would have beneficial results in cases of weakness. It seems to have been intermittent, so that the bubbling or disturbance would take place at regular intervals.” (Temple) The five porches are not likely symbolic of the Torah.

“The Pool brings to the reader the substance of water once again. It has been introduced as the material of cleansing, and Jesus showed, by turning it into wine, that his own sacrifice would replace Jewish purification as the one purification able to prepare men to meet their God. It has been shown as the means of baptism, and Jesus has been hailed as the one who baptizes with water and the spirit. It has been shown as the means of quenching man’s ever-recurrent thirst, and Jesus had made it plain that he provides a ‘water’ that quenches the deepest thirst once and for all, in establishing such a relation between himself and the believer that the only way of preserving the metaphor of water is to say that the believer himself becomes a source of water, with thirst-quenching springs welling up in him ceaselessly. Now water is introduced as the means of healing, and it will be shown forthwith that the word and deed of Jesus have, even in his lifetime, quite superseded water as a healing medium.” (Marsh)

Question: Bathing among some cultures (such as Muslim and Shinto) has religious significance (i.e. the cleansing of the body symbolizes moral purification). In light of what we have learned of the Evangelist’s treatment of baptism, what can we say about this event? Why is the angel included in this narrative? Why is only one person healed at a time?

Verse 5

Read Deuteronomy 2:14. The man’s incapacity has been with him 38 years. ‘Before they entered the promised land, the Hebrews wandered thirsty-eight years, the long period of the man’s slavery to sin (φ. 9:1) has been taken by ancient (Cramer’s Catena) and modern (Loisy, Holtzmann) commentators as an allegory or symbol of Jewish unbelief.” (Hoskyns)

Of Bethesda, “Augustine saw in the five porches a symbol of the five books of the Mosaic Law. ‘These five porches signified the law which bears the sick but does not heal them, discovers them but does not cure them.’” (Hoskyns) Barrett, the leading modern scholar, has written, “When John employs symbolism he does so less crudely... Just as the thirsty-eight years prove the gravity of the disease, so the carrying of the bed and the walking prove the completeness of the cure.” Perhaps the important symbolism centers around themes such as

“sending”, “lifting up”, “water”, and still more images yet to be introduced by the phrase, ἐγὼ εἶμι. (Saint John uses the verb form “to believe” nearly a hundred times.)

Herschel Hobbs writes, “We must note the place of the Sabbath in the Jewish religious system. Four things occupied a central place in it: the temple, the law, traditions, and the Sabbath. But of all these, only the Sabbath was unique in the Jewish religion. Other religions had their temples, scriptures, and tradition. But Judaism alone had the Sabbath. Therefore the Jews were unusually sensitive at this point. Much of the conflict between Jesus and the Jews centered in these four items. He had already claimed authority over the temple. Later He will do the same with regard to the law (Mt. 5:21ff). He will reject the Jewish traditions (Mt. 15:1-20; Mk. 7:1-23) and He will also declare His Lordship over the Sabbath (Mt. 12:8; Mk. 2:28; Lk. 6:5). This He will do on His way back to Galilee following this visit to Jerusalem (φ. Mk. 2:23-28). Therefore, John’s note that the healing of the crippled man occurred on the Sabbath marks the beginning of this continuing controversy because Jesus dared to challenge the Jews at the point of the unique institution in their religion.”

Verse 6

Shedd says, “When Christ asks, ‘Will you be made whole?’ ‘will’ means desire [θέλεις – “desirest”; “would you like”]. Henry continues, “Our Lord Jesus hereupon cures him with a word speaking, though he neither asked it nor thought of it... Christ did not bid him rise and go into the waters, but rise and walk.... He who this minute was not able to turn himself in his bed, the next minute was able to carry his bed... It was to proclaim the cure, and make it public; for, being the sabbath day, whoever carried a burden through the streets made himself very remarkable, and every one would inquire what was the meaning of it; thereby notice of the miracle would spread, to the honour of God.... Christ would thus witness against the tradition of the elders, which had stretched the law of the Sabbath beyond its intention, and would likewise show that he was Lord of the sabbath, and had power to make alterations he pleased about it, and over-rule the law. Joshua, and the host of Israel, marched about Jericho on the sabbath day, when God commanded them, so did this man carry his bed, in obedience to a command.” Hoskyns observes that “he who had been a burden now carries his own burden.”

[In the Markan narrative (2:1-12) the paralytic is the first of a series of controversy stories (2:1-3:6) of which two others (2:23-8 the cornfields; 3:1-6, the withered hand) deal with

the question of the Sabbath.] “Jesus himself is not here [in John’s Gospel] accused of breaking the Sabbath (contrast v. 18); he has only given a command which has led another man into transgression.” (Barrett)

Verse 9

“He took up his bed on the Sabbath. In their lack of charity, the Jews took exception to it (φ. Jer. 17:19-27; Neh. 13:15-19; Ex. 31:12-17; Nu. 15:32-36), but the outrage us directed towards Jesus. The sabbath healings (φ. 9:14) have already enraged them to the point where they seek to slay him (5:16). Miracles of healing led also to the examination and imprisonment of the apostles (Acts 4:14-18; 5:16-18).”

Lightfoot writes that impotent man at the pool at Bethesda is first confronted by the Jews, then Jesus is confronted by the Jews. His sermon “proceeds to show in 5:19-30 [that] His relationship to the Father, rightly understood, is one of absolute dependence.”

Though the synoptists variously justify sabbath – breaking (see Marsh for specific arguments), the whole questions of keeping it or breaking it is “on another plane, because of the nature of Jesus... [His is a] unique status, that of the Son of man; that is why he can in fact be reckoned ‘lord of the sabbath’, i.e. not just one who may be granted permission by men to infringe otherwise binding regulations, but one who of his own right and authority is able to make his own provisions about the sabbath. [John’s argument] consists in a bold and utterly unmistakable claim that Jesus is wholly at one with the Father, the fount of all authority and law.”

Barrett writes of vs. 19-47; “The occasion of this discourse is the miracle of 5:2-9, the Jewish objection to what Jesus had done and commanded on the Sabbath, and the reply of Jesus, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work,’ which was rightly understood by the Jews as a claim to equality with God. It was imperative that John should handle this claim without further delay. Already (even if the Prologue be excluded) he had made extensive claims on behalf of Jesus. He is greater than John the Baptist; he is the Lamb of God, the Son of God, the Messiah, the Son of man, the saviour of the world. In the following chapters the great ‘I am’ sayings occur: I am the bread of life, the light of the world, the good shepherd, the way, the truth, the life, etc. In what sense are these divine claims made? Is Jesus a man who exalts himself to a position of divine

authority? A demi-god, half human and half divine? Do his assertions imply any rivalry with the Creator, the God of Israel and the Old Testament?

The present discourse makes the position clear. Jesus is what he is only in humble obedience to and complete dependence upon the Father. He has no independent status; he even has no independent will or judgment. He does only what he sees the Father do. This is at once a humble acknowledgment and a lofty claim. Simply because his one aim is to be obedient men may see in him the character and activity of God himself. If he sought his own glory (as men do), this, his supreme glory, would instantly disappear. It is in this light, and not in that of human or demonic arrogance, that all his claims must be understood.”

Verse 17

To the charge of sabbath-breaking in v. 16, is added blasphemy (v. 18). Lightfoot explains v. 17; “Jewish teaching is said to have tended to make an exception in respect of the sabbath rest of God emphasized in Gen. 2:2-3; Ex. 20:11; 31:17; it was said that He ceased indeed from His work of creation, but is still unceasingly active as Upholder and moral Governor or Judge of the world, blessing the righteous, and condemning the wicked. The lesson of 5:17 is that the Sabbath rest of the Father rightly understood, is the unimpeded act of love, so that in deeds of mercy wrought on the sabbath the work of the Father and the Son is one; and in the Lord’s monologue which now follows in 5:19-30, we are to learn that in respect of the judgment, the outcome of which is either life or death, Their work is also one.”

Says Henry of Jesus’ sermon; “The Father judges no man; not that the Father hath resigned the government, but he is pleased to govern by Jesus Christ; so that man is not under the terror of dealing with God immediately, but has the comfort of access to him by a Mediator. Having made us, he may do what he pleases with us, as the potter with the clay; yet he does not take advantage of this, but draws us with the cords of a man.... The Mediator having undertaken to make a vicarious satisfaction, the matter is referred to him, and God is willing to enter upon a new treaty; not under the law of the Creator, but the grace of the Redeemer.” Verse 14 “contains the first reference to sin since 1:29, where the Baptist proclaims that the Lord ‘the Lamb of God, takes away the sin of the world’; and we are thus reminded that He who is Judge (5:22,27) is also Saviour.” (Lightfoot)

“The chapter divides itself into five clear and distinct parts: (1) The story of the miracle at the Pool of Bethzatha [“House of Olive”] (1-9); (2) The controversy about work on the sabbath, and the claims of Jesus in that regard (10-18); (3) A profound exposition of the inter-relationships of the Father and the Son (19-29); (4) A first theological examination of the nature of witness (30-36); and (5) A statement on the failure of the Jews (37-47). In each section the author is taking up a theme already begun in the gospel, and carrying its analysis through to a deeper point.” (Marsh)

Verse 19

The text hangs together here as Jesus explains (v. 19) that His work is that of the Father. Since He desires to heal on a level above the mere physical, His work will astonish His onlookers by “his new gift of life [not] to a living man, but one who has been in the tomb.” (Marsh)

Verse 21

The greater power to raise the dead than to heal the sick was with the exception of Elijah, a matter considered by the Jews to belong to the future age, φ. 11:24. Barrett says, “It appears from the context that three thoughts are in John’s mind. (a) the resurrection of the last day will be through Jesus (φ. 5:28f); (b) Jesus raises men from the spiritual death of sin and corruption (5:25); (c) in this gospel, as a parable of (a) and (b), Jesus raises Lazarus (11:43f).”

Read verse 19. It begins “Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν.” Always in John the indeclinable solemnity is repeated. In the synoptics, amen appears as “truly” or “verily”, and only in Revelation, does St. John use it as closing word of assent (1:18) and as an adjective (3:14). It is always used as an ascription of praise.

Verse 20-22

The themes of Sabbath breaking and blasphemy are replaced by resurrection and judgment. The Son and the Father will the same outcome. Says Marsh, “The two act in complete and transcendental concert.” Shedd adds, “One human person can exist without another; but one divine person cannot.... An eternal essence can be communicated or made common to two divine persons without being created, even as an eternal attribute can be communicated without

being created. Our Lord affirms that ‘as the Father has life in himself, so has he given to the Son to have life in himself’ (John 5:26). The attribute of self-existence is here represented as ‘given’ or communicated, not as created.” Berkhof also writes on verse 26, “It is that eternal and necessary act of the first person of the Trinity, whereby He, within the divine Being, is the ground of a second personal subsistence like His own, and puts the second person in possession of the whole divine essence, without any division, alienation, or change.”

We have been carried forward from forgiveness of sins (“whole” of v. 14) to resurrection and judgment.

Question: Does not the expression that he who believes on the Son “shall not come into condemnation,” John 5:24, prove that believers shall not be judged?

Question: Read verse 28. Does Jesus here refer to His Second Coming when He will raise the dead and finally judge mankind? Is He referring to the resurrection of Lazarus?

Jesus appears to know something of an actual future event – a literal not figurative judgment as Augustine and Aquinas believed.” [Jesus] speaks of two resurrections, the first of which is spiritual, and the second... corporeal. Of such things, we cannot be certain. But Barrett insists, “The theme of this discourse is the coordinate activity of the Father and the Son, and the complete dependence of Jesus upon the Father.”

Verses 31-47

We turn now to witnesses: John Baptist’s earthly witness and the Father’s heavenly witness. Read Deut. 19:15. The third witness, as we will learn, is the Holy Spirit.

Verse 46

A notable example of Johannine irony: “It is Moses himself who accuses them, for they have failed to see in Moses a witness to Christ and have treated him as himself an object of hope. Judaism is rightly understood as a ministry of hope when it is allowed to point to Christ [Read Deut. 18:15,18-19; 34:10], when viewed as a closed and self-sufficient system it is a ministry of condemnation” (Barrett).

Verse 25

ἀκούω – to hear, perceive by hearing, comprehend by hearing > acoustic. This word carries with it the concept of obedience e.g. “Hear me, boy!”

VOCAB:

v. 39: Ἐραυνᾶτε may be either imp. or indic. i.e. “Search!” or “Ye search”

Verse 42

Either 1) You do not love God, or 2) You are not men whom God loves. It depends on whether the genitive is objective or subjective. (Barrett).

Class Question

John 3:13 uses “has gone up”, ἀναβέβηκεν, and verse 14 uses “lifted up”, ὑψώσεν. Lightfoot explains verse 13, “It is often said that the Lord’s ascension is here regarded as event already in the past. It would perhaps be truer to say that St. Jon wishes the reader always to keep in mind two complimentary truths, however difficult it may be to reconcile them: first, that the Lord’s incarnate life and work from a real succession of events in time; and second, that His Person includes in itself, at all times and in all places, incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension; and it is this second truth which is emphasized in this verse.” Therefore “the lifting up of the Son of man” of verse 14 refers to the crucifixion and to His ascension also.

In chapter 5, Jesus’ monologue once again seems to transcend temporality and become contemporaneous with eternity. Barrett writes on vs. 21-22; “The Father is the one true spring of life and of righteous judgment, but he has committed both the bestowal of life and the responsibility of judgment to the Son. These are mentioned partly because they are signs of the manifest power which will lead men either to honour Christ as they honour the Father or to reject him and so condemn themselves, and partly because life and judgment are two of the main themes of the gospel as a whole. Life and judgment are characteristically treated as both present and future in their scope.”

On 5:24, he writes, “The meaning is that of 3:18, ‘not judged’, ‘judgement’ includes the future judgement, and also the judgement that was in process throughout the ministry of Jesus (and that of the Holy Spirit, 16:8,11). The thought is closely akin to the Pauline doctrine of justification, according to which the believer does indeed come into judgement but leaves the court acquitted. The believer has already passed [μεταβέβηκεν] out of the world ruled by death and entered the realm of eternal life; that is, his future reward has been anticipated, and is consequently assured to him.” (Barrett)

John 5: SUPPLEMENTAL QUOTES FROM MARSH

“The claim in regard to miracles is explicit, e.g. in Luke, 11:20: ‘If it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.’ Sabbath breaking is variously justified in the synoptics. Luke provides what Barrett calls the ‘humanitarian’ argument (Lk. 13:10-17; 14:1-6); Matthew gives a reason that, after reference to what Israel’s priests do in the temple, goes on to affirm that ‘something greater than the temple is here’ (Mt. 12:6); Mark offers another theological apology by saying that ‘The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath; so the Son of man is lord even of the sabbath’ (Mk. 2:27-28). But these three apparently different arguments all point in the one direction of which John’s present exposition is the terminus. Luke’s argument concerns in the first place a woman who had been ill for eighteen years, whom Jesus healed in a synagogue on the sabbath. The ruler of the synagogue took sharp exception to this, and stated that there were six days on which work should be done, and that those wanting to be healed should seek healing on some other day. Jesus’ reply is twofold: first, an argument a fortiori which pleaded that if any Jew was ready to lead his animals to water on the sabbath, then, to fill out the argument, ought not someone who had the relationship of master to ox in regard to the stricken woman to be free and willing to heal her on the sabbath? Second, Jesus used an argument relating to the special status of the Jews: Ought not a daughter of Abraham, a member of God’s people according to the flesh, to be loosed from the bond by which Satan had bound her for eighteen years. Again, the claim implicit in the reference to Satan and loosing a woman from his power shows that Luke is offering much more than a humanitarian argument for breaking the sabbath. The point is equally clear about the way in

which Matthew and Mark handle the story of David which Jesus used in answer to the charge of sabbath breaking by his disciples as they plucked and ate the corn on the sabbath, which elsewhere and by other persons would be 'work' on the sabbath; if then, in the person of Jesus and his fellowship with his disciples there is a 'place' greater than the temple, it follows that the whole question of sabbath keeping and breaking is on another place, because of the nature of Jesus. Similarly Mark, who pleads that Jesus and the Twelve form some sort of messianic band, and therefore to be exempted, as David was when he was Israel's anointed king as yet unenthroned, from the laws as they apply to men of ordinary status. Jesus has a quite unique status, that of the Son of man; that is why he can in fact be reckoned 'lord of the sabbath', i.e. not just one who may be granted permission by men to infringe otherwise binding regulations, but one who by his own right and authority is able to make his own provisions about the sabbath. These arguments plainly lead into John's, which consists in a bold and utterly unmistakable claim that Jesus is wholly at one with the Father, the fount of all authority and law."

“Of all the miracles related in the Gospels, this is the only one which all the four Gospel-writers alike record. This fact alone (like the four times repeated account of the crucifixion and resurrection) is enough to show that it is a miracle demanding special attention.” (Henry)

At the outset of this chapter, Jesus ascends to the hill country having passed to the eastern shore of the lake. It is about the time of Passover and one year before His exaltation at Jerusalem. He sits as a second Moses to feed the multitudes and thereby provide for them during the three-day wilderness time when He will not be with them in person. The Jews expected that in the latter days God would again refresh them with manna. Jesus corrects them by reminding them that it was God, not Moses, who gave them the manna – and at this time God’s gift is not manna, but the gift is Himself (a bread which came down from heaven, but which will not cease or rot as the manna did). In short, He is the true bread which is heavenly. (Lightfoot)

Says Barrett, “The Passover is mentioned here not for chronological but for theological reasons... He mentions the Passover primarily because, as will appear, some of the acts and words of this chapter have a eucharistic significance, and the eucharist, like the last supper (φ. 13:1) must be understood in the context of the Jewish Passover.”

Verse 5

There are minor variations in the synoptic accounts: Mark in 6:39 fixes the date of the incident at passover-time (the grass, Jn. 6:10) remains green only for a short time in that climate. “In Mark, the crowd have been with Jesus, and he has taught them. It is not easy to picture this ‘coming’ of the crowd as a whole; perhaps John thinks of ‘coming’ in more than a physical sense, φ. 5:40. In Mark the disciples take the initiative, asking Jesus to dismiss the multitude.” (Richardson, Barrett)

Verse 6

This he said to prove him: “We find the same kind of procedure on other occasions. When our Lord appeared to the two disciples at Emmaus, we read that after His discourse with them, ‘He made as though He would have gone further,’ Luke 24:28. This was ‘to prove [πειράζων, lit. “trying”] whether they really wished for more of His company. – When on

another occasion He came to the disciples walking on the sea, St. Mark says, ‘He would have passed by them,’ (Mk. 6:48). When in this very chapter He would draw forth an expression of faith from His disciples, He says, ‘Will ye also go away?’ (Jn. 6:67). Our Lord knows the sluggishness and coldness of our hearts, and He sees it good to stir our spiritual sense, and draw forth our spiritual desires by such a mode of dealing with us.” (Henry). Barrett adds, “Elsewhere in the gospels πειράζειν has a bad sense: Jesus is tempted by Satan or by wicked men. The word in itself however is neutral, and may mean ‘to try’, ‘to test’ a person. Jesus wishes to test the extent of Philip’s faith.” Question: Curiously this exchange (vs. 5-8) does not appear in the synoptics, nor is Philip singled out for mention. Why?

Verse 9

The youth is mentioned in no other gospel; the word παιδάριον, a double diminutive, occurs nowhere else in the N.T. (Mt. 11:16, variant reading, (v.l.): [παιδαρίοις]). The grammatical form does not require extreme youth; at Gen. 37:30 Joseph at the age of seventeen is described [in LXX] as a παιδάριον... the meaning ‘young slave’ is well attested.” There is a recollection of 2 Kings 4:42-4: “And there came a man from Baal-shalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley, and full ears of corn in the husk thereof. And he said, Give unto the people, that they may eat. / And his servitor said, What should I set this before an hundred men? He said again, Give the people, that they may eat: for thus saith the Lord, They shall eat, and shall leave thereof. / So he set it before them, and they did eat, and left thereof, according to the word of the Lord.”

Says Barrett, “Here Elisha, in miraculously feeding one hundred men, is assisted by a servant. The latter is not here described as παιδάριον but as λειτουργός; but in the preceding narrative (4:38-41) Elisha’s servant is twice described as a παιδάριον (in v. 38 and 41).” In the Synoptics, distribution is made by the disciples. See Mt. 14:19; Mk. 6:41; Lk. 9:16. Richardson believes that Paidarion (boy) here “represents the deacon who at the Eucharist of the Church presents the people’s offering of bread and wine.” Barrett concludes, “John is not, in his gospel, concerned with the ecclesiastical rites (hence his omission of all explicit reference to baptism and of the ‘institution of the eucharist’) but to set forth Jesus as the dispenser of life.”

Verse 10

Verse 10 mentions χόρτος (grass) which denotes that the Passover “feast of the Jews” (v. 4) was nigh, φ. v. 26 ἐχορτάσθητε – “were filled” < χόρτος. It was only a short season for “much grass”, φ. “green grass” in Mk. 6:39. Nonetheless it is a desert place according to the Synoptists (Mt. 14:15; Mk. 6:35; Lk. 9:10).

Verse 11

He distributed to the disciples, etc. “Bishop Hall remarks, ‘He could as well have multiplied the loaves whole; why would He rather do it in the breaking? Was it not to teach us that in the distribution of our goods we should expect His blessing, not in their entireness and reservation? There is that scattereth and yet increaseth’ (Ryle). The “two fishes” have significance: “probably the apostolic Church understood the fishes as the ‘fulfilment’ of Moses’ other feeding miracle, namely, the QUAILS FROM THE SEA (Num. 11:31). Quails, of course, are not fish; but then manna is not bread. The parallel however remains: the new Moses, like the old, has fed the multitude in the wilderness with food from heaven and food from the sea.” (Richardson)

Verse 12

In the Didache “gathered” is in reference to the “gathering” of the Eucharistic bread [φ. Gen. 49:10] “which is a symbol of the gathering of the Church... and later became a technical term for the gathering of the faithful at the eucharist. It seems not impossible that John is here speaking symbolically of the gathering of Christian disciples, with special reference to the eucharist, and of the will of Christ to preserve them from all destruction, φ. 17:12.” (Barrett) Herschel Hobbs explains that taking up the fragments indicates that “Jesus wasted nothing that He had made.”

Verse 14

The comparison with Moses (φ. v. 31f), the enumeration in this verse that Jesus is “that prophet that should come into the world” has a clear reference to Deut. 18:15ff. Says Barrett, “There seems to be no symbolic interest in the mountain (v. 3), though it is not impossible that there is an allusion to Moses and Mount Sinai... Several features of this chapter suggest that Jesus was the prophet ‘like unto Moses’. He had given his people miraculous food, as Moses had

fed his people in the wilderness...” More than in the Synoptics, there is “an atmosphere of intense messianic excitement.” (Barrett)

Verse 15

ἀρτάζειν – “seize”. Here is a strong word meaning “to kidnap”. “At Mt. 11:12 (φ. Lk. 16:16) it is what violent men do to the kingdom of heaven (βιασταὶ ἀρταζουσιν αὐτήν [lit. the violent seize it]); it is possible that John, with his constant insistence that Jesus himself is the Gospel, has transferred the verb from the kingdom to the King. But as the kingdom is God’s gift and men cannot violently possess themselves of it, so Jesus, whom God gives (3:16) and who gives himself to men, cannot be violently constrained.

Βασιλέα: The kingship of Jesus is one of the main themes of the Johannine Passion Narrative (φ. 18:33ff). There Jesus asserts that his kingship is not of this world (18:36); the kingship offered him here is one which he must renounce Φ. his rejection of the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, in the temptation narrative (Mt. 4:8 = Lk. 4:5).” (Barrett)

Verse 16 sqq

The Fourth Gospel omits many details found in the Synoptics. How did Jesus cross the sea to get to Capernaum? Ryle affirms that “when He went on the Sea of Galilee, it was in a borrowed boat [φ. Mt.13:1,2]; when He rode into Jerusalem, it was on borrowed ass; when He was buried, it was in a borrowed tomb.” Thomson in Land and the Book describes the inmiraculous: “To understand the cause of these sudden and violent tempests we must remember the lake lies low – six hundred feet lower than the ocean – that the watercourses have cut out profound ravines and wild gorges, converging to the head of the lake, and that these act like gigantic funnels to draw down the cold winds from the mountains.” The miraculous is that God is present within the storms we experience. “Christ walked upon the water as upon dry land, which was more than Moses’ dividing the water and walking through the water.” (Ryle) Jesus calms their fear by revealing his identity (which at first, it seems, they had not perceived)... Immediately the boat reaches port.” (Barrett). They had rowed 25-30 furlongs which put them pretty much in the middle of the sea. Origen, among others sees in this a “miracle within a miracle,” φ. Ps. 107: 23-30, especially v. 30, So he bringeth them unto their desired haven.

Verses 22-27

Says Ryle, “He tells the crowds who followed him so diligently for the loaves and fishes, ‘not to labour for the meat that perisheth.’ It was a remarkable saying, and demands explanation.

Our Lord, we may be sure, did not mean to encourage idleness. It would be a great mistake to suppose this. Labour was the appointed lot of Adam in Paradise. Labour was ordained to be man’s occupation after the fall. Labour is honourable in all men. No one need be ashamed of belonging to ‘the working classes.’ Our Lord Himself worked in the carpenter’s ship at Nazareth. Saint Paul wrought as a tent-maker with his own hands.

What our Lord did mean to rebuke was that excessive attention to labour for the body, while the soul is neglected, which prevails everywhere in the world. What he reproved was the common habit of laboring only for the things of time, and letting alone the things of eternity, - of minding only the life that now is, and disregarding the life to come. Against this habit He delivers a solemn warning.” Whitehead has given a clue in his comment on 5:17: “Man’s true rest is not a rest from human earthly labour, but a rest for divine heavenly labour.”

Verse 26

ἐχορτάσθητε means filled or gorged – a physical filling and not spiritual leading to the injunction, “Labour not for the meat that perisheth...” The word here meaning “filled” is derived from the root χορτος – “grass.” From this word comes the verb χορτάζω meaning to feed, or fatten, as a farmer gives provender to cattle or a shepherd grass to sheep.

These verses (22-71) concern the Bread of Heaven discourse and close not only this chapter but Jesus’ Galilean ministry. In chapter 7, He sets out for Jerusalem.

To cite Barrett, “Philo declares that one reason why Moses delivered the Law in the midst of the wilderness and not in a city was that he intended to show that it was not his invention but the oracles of God. To this end he led the people into a wilderness where their lack of water and food was miraculously supplied by God; this would convince them of the divine authority of what was said to them. John in a similar way moves from the miraculous satisfaction of hunger (6:5-13) to a discourse upon the Bread of Life, in which Jesus speaks of the true bread from heaven with an authority greater than that of Moses... Men are foolishly concerned not with the truth, but with food for their bodies. They must learn that there is a bread which conveys not

earthly but eternal life, and earn it; yet they will not earn it, for it is the gift of the Son of man, whom God has avouched....

The crowd hear the word ἐργάζεσθαι [“labor” < *F* ἐργον > ergonomics], and mistake it, because their own religion, which they take seriously, consists in ‘working’ works which (it is hoped) will be pleasing to God. In fact there is only one ‘work’ which God requires, and that (as will appear) is not a work in the ordinary sense; it is that men should put faith in Jesus. But why should they do so? The hearers require of him a sign, thereby proving the truth of his own saying in v. 26. The request for a sign, however, serves to recall Moses and the Old Testament story of the manna, the bread from heaven, and from this point Jesus identifies the bread which comes down from heaven with himself, who as Son of man has come down from heaven. He is the bread of life, which delivers men from hunger and thirst; men take this bread by coming to him and believing in him. But this ‘believing’, and this ‘coming’, are not works which, like others, lie within the power and will of man. They do not exist apart from the power and will of God, upon whom they are completely dependent.”

Henry says, “[Christ] was born at Bethlehem, the house of bread, and typified by the show-bread.... The Levitical sacrifices are called the bread of God (Lev. 21:21).... Christ is the great sacrifice.... Christ is himself living bread; and nourishes us by his own power. Manna was a dead thing; if kept but one night, it putrefied and bred worms; but Christ is ever living, everlasting bread, that never moulds, nor waxes old.... The manna was ordained only for the life of the Israelites, but Christ is given for the life of the world; none are excluded from the benefit of this bread, but such as exclude themselves.... [Jesus said,] I came down from heaven, whence we may infer his antiquity, he was in the beginning with God; his ability, for heaven is the firmament of power; and his authority, he came with a divine commission.... the divine original of all that good which flows to us through him. He comes, not only katabas, that came down, v. 51, but katabanōi – that comes down; he is descending, denoting a constant communication of light, life, and love, from God to believers through Christ, as the manna descended daily.”

“Jesus is a man among men, of well-known family and origin; how can he claim to have come down from heaven? Jesus no more denies his human than his heavenly origin, but simply repeats that coming to him, faith in him as the heavenly Man, [is] impossible without divine instruction; no wonder, then, that some should be offended.... Jesus continues to speak of himself as the bread of life, but adds that the bread he will supply is his flesh, and his flesh given

for the life of the world. This is a plain reference to his sacrificial death, and points forward to the reference, which is almost explicit, to the eucharist in the final section.

Once more the Jews, should by the word ‘flesh’, ask the question, How? Once more the question is met, not by explanation, but by reassertion and addition, this time by the addition of blood. This lays further emphasis upon the death of Jesus, and makes allusion to the eucharist. John makes it clear, however, that his main thought is of the mission of Jesus from the Father, and of the reciprocal indwelling of Christ and the believers.” (Barrett)

Barrett further considers verse 26: “A parallel in 4:15 is recalled. The Samaritan woman is willing, and even desires to receive a constant supply of ‘living water’ – in order that she may no longer have to draw water from the well. In the same way the multitude are happy to obtain unexpected supplies of free bread, and willing to accord the highest honours to the supplier as a miracle worker; but they do not perceive the parabolic significance of what he does, that the loaves he distributes are the sign of heavenly food, the bread of eternal life. This distinction casts light on John’s use of the word σημεῖον; a sign is not a mere portent but a symbolic representation of the truth of the Gospel.”

Verse 27

“The food given by Jesus, though supernaturally produced, was nevertheless ‘bread that perishes’.... Though the food, being Christ himself (vs. 53:55 et al), is eternal, the sense here is not that the food lasts to eternity, but that, since it is ‘abiding’ food, the result is to produce eternal life in the believer.” (Barrett)

Verse 32

“This sentence may be taken in several ways:

- 1) It was not Moses who gave you the bread of heaven (but God).
- 2) It was not bread from heaven that Moses gave you (but merely physical food, over against the true bread from heaven which the Father gives you).
- 3) The sentence has been taken as a question: Did not Moses give you bread from heaven? (Yes, indeed... But the Father gives you the true bread from heaven.)

The interpretation of the verse is further complicated by the fact that the Law is referred to figuratively as ‘bread.’ The proof text is Prov. 9:5 (Come, eat ye of my bread). The bread given by Moses was not the true bread, and the Law given by Moses was not the true Law, [φ. Gal. 3:21 (For if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law)], though both were parables of the truth. True bread and true Law, that is, eternal life, are the Son of man whom God gives (vs. 35, 47-51, et al.)

Verses 37-40

[Barrett paraphrases,]

“I have come down to do not my will but the will of God who sent me.

It is God’s will that none whom he has given me should perish, but that they all should receive life and be raised up at the last day,

Therefore I will receive and raise up every one who ‘comes to me’, since he is the Father’s gift to me and it is the Father’s will that I should do so.”

Verse 41

Read Exodus 16:2, 8-15.

ἐγόγγυζον οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, as did the fathers in the wilderness. The manna given by the first prophet must be given by the second prophet. Hoskyns, like Barrett, insists that the working out of man’s salvation is in the flesh of the Son – that is the arena of activity.

Verse 56

μένειν < μένω from which one cognate μονή “abide” is used nine times in the farewell discourse. Another cognate is μονή meaning “mansion” or literally a tiny-one room flat or residence. We get our words “remain” and “immanent” from this Greek word. Barrett properly calls it one of John’s most important words, here translated “dwelleth”. “The Father abides in the Son (14:10), the Spirit abides upon Jesus (1:32f.); believers abide in Christ and he in them (6:56; 15:4). There are variations of the same thought: the word of Christ abides in Christians and they in it (5:38; 8:31, 15:7); Christ abides in the love of God and the disciples must abide in the love of Christ (15:9f.)” (Barrett)

Verses 60-71

“The synagogue discourse comes to its close, and not ‘the Jews’ only, who have already made objection, but also some of the disciples complain of what has been said. It cannot be accepted. Without being told, Jesus knows their thoughts, and at once volunteers the explanation. All that he has said about the bread of life must be viewed in the light of two facts, the ascension and the gift of the Spirit. All crude misunderstandings must be abandoned. The Son of man [here introduced to the discourse at verse 53], whose ‘flesh’ all must eat, is not a ‘fleshly’ but a heavenly Man. Flesh as such is unprofitable: only the Spirit (who, it must be remembered, rested and abides upon Jesus – 1:32) can give life. The substance of Jesus’ discourse is the means by which Spirit, and thereby life, is conveyed. It is not surprising, however, that some should be offended; they lack faith, and only by faith can the truth of what Jesus has said be perceived, since he has not spoken of flesh, as such, which all can see and understand, but of the flesh of the heavenly Man, and of the Spirit, Faith, moreover, is not a human achievement but the gift of God, and for this reason Judas, whatever piety and ability which may have suggested his choice as an apostle, is marked out as the traitor.

Jesus next uses the defection of many disciples as a means of challenging the faith of the Twelve. They, being (with the exception of Judas) men whom God himself has drawn to Jesus, make their confession of faith: there is no other than Jesus to whom such men may go. The reply of Jesus emphasizes, with a trenchancy remarkable even in this gospel, both that he has chosen the Twelve (they have not chosen him – φ. 15:16) and that he well knows the future treachery of Judas. The frailty of man and his complete dependence upon the predestinating grace of God are alike brought out.” (Barrett)

Says Henry, “We may learn that faith in Christ’s atonement is a thing of absolute necessity to salvation. Just as there was no safety for the Israelite in Egypt who did not eat the passover-lamb in the night when the first-born were slain, so there is no life for the sinner who does not eat the flesh of Christ and drink His blood.”

Verse 62

Barrett writes, “The sentence is evidently incomplete; it wants an apodosis [conclusion].... The whole process of the return of Christ to the glory of the Father, including as it did the crucifixion, was both the supreme scandal, and the vindication of Christ as the bread of

life; and, at the same time, the proof that eating his flesh and drinking his blood was neither murderous or magical... For John Son of man means the heavenly Man who descends to the work of salvation and ascends to glory (and finally judgement...)

Verse 63

The essential property of the Spirit is to give life: 3:5f,8 the Spirit effects the new birth; 4:23f the Spirit is brought into connection with the discourse on living water; 7:38f again the Spirit is living water. In the Old Testament also this is a fundamental concept regarding the Spirit, and especially Gen. 1:2; Ezek. 37:1-14. It is important to note the standpoint which is established by this reference to the Spirit. John is writing with the completed work of Christ (7:39) in mind, including his ascension and the gift of the Spirit, and the discourse of this chapter is incomprehensible except from this standpoint; otherwise the words of Jesus could have led only to a crude cannibalism. Moreover it was necessary that Jesus himself should be understood as the bearer of the Holy Spirit (φ. 1:32f); otherwise his flesh and blood would lose all meaning. It is not as the supremely great men but as the obedient Spirit-filled Son of the father that he confronts men.

Verse 64

ἐξ ἀρχῆς: probably from the beginning of the ministry, but in this gospel, where all things are commonly traced back to their origin in the eternal counsels of God, not impossibly from the ἀρχή of 1:1....

Verse 65

Faith in Christ is not merely difficult; apart from God it is impossible (φ. Mk. 10:27). Coming to Jesus is not a matter of free human decision.

Verse 67

That the question was a real one is shown by the presence of Judas among the Twelve; yet on the other hand Jesus knew that none whom the Father had given him could be lost. [φ. 17:20?]

Verse 68

In Mark the confession of Peter at Caesarea Philippi (8:29) takes place soon after the feeding of the Four Thousand; in Luke it is in even closer proximity to the feeding of the Five Thousand. In view of the many synoptic parallels in this chapter it seems probable that John is here reproducing the synoptic incident and order. John shows at this point no knowledge of the special Matthean material (Mt. 16:17-19)" (Barrett). In the Matthean account just after the feeding of the Four Thousand, "thee" and "thou" of verse 19 are probably in the plural. Verse 20 indicates that the disciples were in attendance. The "special" material in Matthew focuses on Jesus' words to Peter in vs. 17 and 18 in which he is commended for his perception. John omits these words and the later rebuke of Mt. 16:23, preferring the "choosing" (ἐκλέγω) of the disciples and the naming of Judas. ἐκλέγω > eclectic, "selecting what is best or true"

Verse 69

Barrett continues, "Here, as often, the sense is 'We are in a state of faith and knowledge; we have recognized the truth and hold it.' ... It cannot be assumed that faith is the beginning of a process of which knowledge is the end since the reverse order is also found (16:30; φ. 1 Jn. 4:16). The one certain distinction [between the verbs πιστεύειν and γινώσκειν] is that while Jesus is said to know God (7:29; 8:55; 10:15; 17:25) he is never said to believe in him. Faith (it may be inferred) includes the dependence of the created being upon the Creator; it is something which man as such can never outgrow (here John parts company with the gnostics)...

The title ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ occurs in Mk. 1:24 (= Lk. 4:34), where it is the confession of the supernatural knowledge of a demon, and should be understood as a messianic title (though more than popular messiahship may be in mind). This meaning is no doubt retained in John, but it is significant that the indirect designation has been substituted for the Markan ὁ χριστός. In 17:11 Jesus addresses God as πάτερ ἅγιε (elsewhere in John ἅγιος is applied exclusively to the Spirit), and the Johannine use of ἀγιάζειν is distinctive and important. Jesus is he ὃς ὁ πατήρ ἡγάσεν (10:36) [whom the Father sanctified], and for the sake of the disciples he sanctifies himself (17:19, ἀγιάζω ἑμαυτόν). Jesus is the emissary of God; in Jewish terms the Messiah, more generally, the Holy One of God."

Verse 70

The use of the word “Satan” in the Markan account (8:33) and the Matthean account is here διάβολος. Barrett says, “Perhaps John is intentionally correcting Mark – the real devil is not Peter but Judas Φ. Lk. 22:3 where Judas’ sin is ascribed to Satan, and 22:31 [of John’s Gospel] where Jesus prays that Peter may be strengthened against Satan’s devices.” (Barrett)

Verse 71

Judas (Barrett sees as “man of Kerioth) is here linked with betrayal as he is twice later, (18:2,5).” (Barrett)

NOTES ON NON-CONFORMIST OPINIONS OF THE EUCHARIST

Some think that the eating and drinking here mean the eating and drinking of heart and soul by faith, not of the body; and that the ‘flesh and blood’ mean Christ’s vicarious sacrifice of His body on the cross. They deny entirely that there is any reference whatever to the Lord’s Supper in the words. They consider that our Lord meant to teach the absolute necessity of feeding by faith on His atonement for sin on the cross. “Except a man’s soul lays hold by faith on Christ’s sacrifice of His body and blood as the only hope of his salvation, he has no title or part in eternal life.”

“The activity of Jesus in Galilee, which had proved a safer place of retreat than Jerusalem, was cut short by the arrival of the feast of Tabernacles. His brothers (whose foolish suggestion showed their unbelief) urged him to seek publicity among the great crowds and who always assembled for this, the most popular of the pilgrim feasts. It was absurd, they said, for him to think that he could be a public figure while he restricted his activity to an obscure corner. To such an agreement Jesus could not yield; it ignored the essential difference between himself and other men. In the first place, unlike others, he could not choose his own time for coming and going; his time was appointed by God. In the second place, his destiny was not popularity, but the hatred of the world, a hatred such as no one else could experience, since he alone brought the world into judgment. Accordingly, he remained in Galilee. Nevertheless, when his independence of human advice had been demonstrated, he did go up to Jerusalem, but secretly, without any attempt to attract attention. His failure to appear, however, provoked a covert discussion about him: Was he a good man or a deceiver?” (Barrett)

“As it is not fitting for the incarnate Word to do his first miracle and inaugurate his Galilean – Judean ministry at the invitation of his mother according to the flesh, so also it is not fitting for him to inaugurate the purely Judean ministry which was to crown the work of salvation at the instigation of his brothers.” (Lagrange as cited by Hoskyns). At the time, Jesus told His mother, “My hour is not come” (ch. 2:4). Jesus tells his brothers the same thing, and adds, “but your time is always ready.” In my case, the reason for Jesus’ delay in attending the feast has nothing to do with fear of the Jews. Theirs was indeed a settled plan from the time when He wrought the miracle at Bethesda (ch. 5:16,18) – “they could neither answer Him, nor silence Him, nor prevent the common people listening to Him. They resolved to kill Him” (Ryle).

Verse 2

“Tabernacles”, originally a seven day feast, was lengthened to eight after the Babylonian captivity (Neh. 8:18). It was the last of the feasts prescribed by the Law. Beginning five days after Yom Kippur, it commemorated the entrance into the Promised Land after the wandering in the wilderness (Lev. 23:34). It is known as hag ha sukkoth. **הַג הַסֻּכּוֹת**

“One of the main and most characteristic Marcan themes reappears in these verses, that of concealment and revelation.... It is natural that men should wish and plan for publicity, but the way of Jesus as rather the way of secrecy until the appointed time should arrive (ὁ καιρός, 7:6,8).... The moment of Jesus’ manifestation to the world (τῷ κόσμῳ) never in fact arrives (14:22); the contrast between revelation and concealment is ultimately not chronological but theological. Jesus becomes manifest to those whom the Father draws to him (6:44), but to them only.... The debate of 7:12 serves to introduce the arguments and discourses of chs. 7-12, in which this fact is made clear.” (Barrett)

Note:

The brothers have been thought to be:

- 1) His cousins, sons of Cleopas and Mary
- 2) Sons of Joseph by a former marriage
- 3) Most probably they were the sons of Joseph and Mary (Whitehead)

Verse 3

οἱ ἀδελφοὶ αὐτοῦ: “The brothers are briefly mentioned at 2:12; here only do they play a definite part in the gospel story (at 20:17 ‘my brothers’ are the disciples).... There is nothing in the fourth gospel itself to suggest any other view than that the brothers were the sons of Joseph and Mary. In this incident they appear as unbelievers (φ. Mk. 3:21, 31-35 and parallels; and perhaps 6:3 and parallels), and there is no indication of their subsequent conversion.” (Barrett) φ. Lk. 2:7: πρῶτότοκον.

“An unescapable condition of the glory of Jesus was that he should first undergo a period of obscurity and humiliation. The same condition is implied here, since the unbelieving advice of the brothers is rejected. Their assumption is that a sufficient display of power will establish Jesus as Messiah, where as his messianic vocation is suffering and death.

Verse 5

φανέρωσον σεαυτὸν τῷ κόσμῳ The brothers since they do not believe, represent the world; and the world naturally looks upon itself as the final bar of judgement. If Jesus is to vindicate his mission and authority he must therefore command himself to the world. But Jesus

does not receive glory from men (5:37; 6:27). He never manifests himself in glory to the world, either during the ministry or after it, since the world as such is incapable of apprehending him... [The brothers'] unbelief evidently did not include scepticism with regard to the power of Jesus to perform mighty works. They believed that Jesus might be able to dazzle Jerusalem with miracles but had not begun to perceive the meaning of what they had already beheld.

Verse 6

Richardson says 'Your time' refers to when the Jewish festivals still had meaning.

Verse 8

[Jesus] refuses in the plainest terms to comply with human – and unbelieving – device, but acts with complete freedom and independence and regard to men, and in complete obedience to his Father.” (Barrett) According to Mosaic law, the eighth day was a solemn assembly, **עֲצֵרָה**.

Verse 20

The words mean little more than “You are mad.” “There is no theological treatment of the charge in John, just as there are no stories of the exorcism of demons.” (Barrett). There are also no parables in this Gospel.

Verse 22

“Moses gave you command of circumcision in order that precedent for breaking the law (of the Sabbath) might exist, but a positive one – Moses gave the command of circumcision to serve as a type of the complete renewal of human nature (ὅλον ἄνθρωπον ὑγιῇ ἐποίησα [I have made a man every whit whole] v. 23) which Jesus effects.

Circumcision was practiced by Abraham (Gen. 17:10), the heir of the promise, and, like the promise itself, was antecedent to the Mosaic law and took precedence of it (Gal. 3:17).

ὅλον	ἄνθρωπον	ὑγιῇ	ἐποίησα
√	√	√	√
holistic	anthropology	hygiene	poetry

The law of circumcision required that a child be circumcised on the eighth day (Lev. 12:3). It followed that if a child was born on the Sabbath its circumcision fell due also on the Sabbath. It was required that in these circumstances, the circumcision should go forward, notwithstanding the law of the sabbath rest.

Verse 23

There might appear to be a contravention of the Law in the practice of circumcising on the Sabbath; in fact the practice has the opposite effect, and fulfils the Law, since it completes man's perfection. [Are ye angry with me, because I made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day?] "The reply might be: We are angry because it was not necessary [the impotent man had waited 38 years, what's another day?] that you should make this whole man well on the Sabbath.... But John carries the whole argument a stage further with the assertion that Jesus' action was not a transgression of the Word of God in the Old Testament, but a fulfilment of it; his action was not permitted, but demanded by the Law for its fulfilment. This gives a striking and important turn to the sabbath controversy which plays so large a part in the synoptic gospels but is never really explained in them. Jesus' attitude is not a sentimental liberalizing of a harsh and unpractical law,.... nor the masterful dealing of an opponent of the Law as such; it is rather the accomplishment of the redemptive purpose of God towards which the Law had pointed.

Verse 26

Jesus, recognized as a man whom the authorities desired to arrest, was at liberty and publicly pursuing his ministry. What could this mean? ... One possible explanation of the fact that Jesus was still at liberty presented itself at once: the authorities had changed their minds and recognized that he was the Christ.

Verse 27

[Here is] the belief that the Messiah before entering upon his office would be hidden... It is also presupposed by common rabbinic statements about the 'appearing' of the Messiah. This however does not amount to much more than saying: 'The Messiah will not be known until he is known.'" (Barrett)

Verse 33

The word for go, ὑπάγειν, is used twelve more times in this book for the departure of Jesus from this world, i.e. the death of Jesus was not merely physical dissolution but a going to the Father. (Barrett) The verb is used in the intransitive and means “to go away slowly, withdraw oneself, or depart.” It is used to proportionate the verb ζητεῖν, to “seek” used 9 times in this chapter.

Verse 35

Says Whitehead of the διασπορά, “These were the Jews who were scattered among the heathen Greek-speaking nations outside Palestine. The three chief colonies of these ‘dispersed’ Jews were in Babylonia, Egypt, and Syria, whence they spread over the whole world.” Barrett adds, “It is by no means impossible that John includes the heathen pure and simple: at least; if he does not ascribe this meaning to the Jews he probably held it himself, for, with characteristic iron, he makes the Jews utter incredulously and uncomprehendingly what is in fact the truth. Jesus, through the Church, will go into the Dispersion, and will teach Gentiles, both heathen and proselytes [see Deut. 28:25; 30:4; Jer. 34:17; Isa. 49:6, Ps. 147:2]. There may further be in his mind the thought of the Christian Dispersion (see 1Pet. 1:1; also Jn. 11:52; 10:16).”

The Jews of Jerusalem cannot piece together Jesus’ ministry with the Messianic prophecies. Verse 27 indicates a belief that Messiah is unknown, himself ignorant of his messiahship, and has no powers until Elijah comes to anoint him and make him known. David did not know himself to be king until Samuel anointed him. Nevertheless, the Jews of Jerusalem might have known exact prophecies in O.T. lit, and facts of Jesus’ ministry, words, and origin. They chose not to believe Him, and as such, a choice was chosen. There were miracles, His own testimony, and that of the multitudes. Says Ryle, “The Jews had condemned our Lord and denounced Him as a sinner against the fourth commandment, because He had done a work on the Sabbath-day. Our Lord refers to this, and says, ‘Judge not the deed I did according to the appearance. I did a work on the Sabbath unquestionably. But what kind of work was it? It was an act of necessity and mercy, and therefore an act as lawful to be done as circumcision, which you yourselves perform on the Sabbath-day. In appearance the Sabbath was broken. In reality it was not broken at all. Judge fair and just and righteous judgment. Do not hastily condemn an action, such as this, without looking below the surface.’” Hoskyns sees at this point more than unbelief,

“The complete failure of the men of Jerusalem to recognize in Him the Messiah involves their complete ignorance of God (Jn. 8:19,54,55), and their ignorance is contrasted with the knowledge of Jesus who is from God and was sent by Him (φ. Mt. 11:27; Lk. 10:22) and, by implication, with the knowledge of the Christian believers (Jn. 4:22; 17:25,26).”

Succoth was the most joyous of the feasts. Each day a golden flagon was filled with water from the pool of Siloam and used for libations in the Temple. The last day was a rest day like a Sabbath, when no water was poured out. Barrett and Hoskyns agree that the notion of Christ as dispenser of the water of life has a far wider O.T. and Johannine background than the feast of the Tabernacles would in itself suggest. Even the scriptural reference of verse 38 cannot be precisely identified; there are many possibilities.

Verse 38

“Christ is himself the fountain of living water, but it is a valid inference that the believer, being joined to him, is also, in a secondary way, a source of living water. The divine life is rooted within him.

Verse 39

Water, especially living water, was sometimes used as a symbol of the Holy Spirit.... John does not mean to deny the earlier existence of the Spirit, nor indeed that [He] was active in the prophets; and he says expressly that the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus himself at the beginning of his ministry (1:32). He means rather that the Holy Spirit was not given in the characteristically Christian manner and measure until the close of his ministry. This corresponds closely with the almost complete silence of the synoptic gospels regarding the Spirit; that John has so much more to say on the subject is due to the fact that he writes from a later standpoint. He himself recognizes clearly the dependence of the gift of the Spirit upon the completed work of Jesus (φ. 20:22; 19:34), and in this recognition he is in close touch with the eschatological roots of the Christian proclamation. The Spirit was the gift of the new age; in John's idiom this is expressed by saying that after Christ's return to the Father, Father and Son send the Holy Spirit (14:16,26; 15:26). Jesus is glorified through his death; φ. 12:23; 17:1.

Verses 40-41

The crowd considered Him to be the prophet before Messiah; still others believed Him to be the Messiah. The claim of Jesus to supply the Spirit naturally gave rise to the belief. A third group could not accord His prophecy with His Galilean origin.... The critics of Jesus ignorantly suppose that because he was brought up in Galilee he was also born there.... But John's irony goes far deeper than this. The birth place of Jesus is a trivial matter in comparison with the question whether he is or is not from God.

[At John 7:28,] though Jesus admits that his hearers know whence he came he emphasizes that human origins are irrelevant. [And at 8:14,] Jesus denies that the Jews (truly) know whence he came – they judge “after the flesh”. [Consider] also 3:8 – no one knows whence comes and whither goes one who has been born of the Spirit. This refers primarily to Christians, but a fortiori to Jesus himself. It follows that all disputes about the birth place of the Messiah, the heavenly Man, are far wide of the point.”

Ryle summarizes, “It is clear as daylight, from our Lord's language about the Spirit in John 14:16,17,26; 15:26; 16:7-15, that believers were meant to receive a far more full and complete outpouring of the Holy Spirit after His ascension than they had received before. It is a simple matter of fact, indeed that after the ascension the Apostles were quite different men from what they had been before. They both saw and spoke, and acted like men grown up, while before the ascension they had been like children.”

A division $\Sigma\chi\acute{\iota}\sigma\mu\alpha$ occurs here and at important places in the gospel (7:43; 9:16; 10:19). It is a summary of the result of Jesus' mission, “since the inevitable effect of his word was to create a division among his hearers: the shining of the light distinguished between those who loved and hated it (3:19-21).” (Barrett)

“Even the constables (vs. 32, 45, 46) are cowed by Jesus' superhuman authority, though they draw no precise conclusions about his person, ϕ . 18:6.” (Barrett). “The Law demands that the judges in Israel should hear the causes (Deut. 1:16sq. ϕ . Ex. 23:1sq.; Deut. 17:4); the Sanhedrin has however hurried to arrest Jesus without first hearing Him or taking pains to discover what, in fact, it is that He is doing.” (Hoskyns)

There appears to have been a division between the Bible commentators over Nicodemus. Was he secretly a convert or as verse 50 suggests, “one of them” (the Pharisees)? Ryle produces another insight, “We are told that Nicodemus stood up in the Council of our Lord's enemies, and

mildly pleaded that he deserved fair dealing. ‘Doth our law judge any man,’ he asked, ‘before it hear him, and know what he doeth?’

This very Nicodemus, we must remember, is the man who eighteen months before, had come to our Lord by night as an ignorant inquirer. He evidently knew little then, and dared not come to Christ in open day. But now after eighteen months, he has got on so far that he dares to say something on our Lord’s side. It was but little that he said, no doubt, but it was better than nothing at all. And a day was yet to come, when he would go further still. He was to help Joseph of Arimathaea in doing honour to our Lord’s dead body, when even His chosen apostle had forsaken him and fled.”

Verse 52

Elijah, Elisha, Amos, Jonah (of Gath-hepher), and perhaps Nahum (an Elkoshite) are all thought by some (commentators) to have been Galilean prophets. Moreover Isaiah distinctly prophesied that in Messiah’s times, Zebulon and Naphtali, and Galilee of the Gentiles should be a region where ‘light should spring up’ (Mt. 4:14-16).

One more word on the Feast of Tabernacles from a lectureship in 1920; “The two great thoughts connected with the festival were light and water; perhaps originating with a Canaanitish autumn festival to invoke the sun and rain during the coming months; it had been taken by the Jews as a harvest thanksgiving for all the fruits of the earth, and associated with the thought of the pillar of fire and the water from the rock during the wanderings in wilderness. These were recalled in each festival by lighting up the candelabra in the Temple courts, and pouring out before the people water drawn and brought thither from the pool of Siloam; and looked forward to a future refreshment and illumination in the future. This explains the Lord’s stress on light (Jn. 8:12) and ‘living water’ (Jn. 7:38).

The word ‘belly’ is ambiguous. It might be quite literal, i.e. the living water will flow from the Messiah, or possibly metaphorical, meaning Jerusalem as for Jews the center or navel of the universe” (Thackeray, Schweich Lectures, as cited in the New Commentary).

Verse 49

Richardson observes the “sneering” (φ. 7:52d) of the officials, “the multitude which knoweth not the law – the large #’s of the population who never went near either Temple or

synagogue” and “made no attempt to observe the Pharasaic code of washings, food-laws, almsgiving, fasting, etc.” “In rabbinic lit., they were “the people of the land” – ‘ammi ha ‘arets.

Verses 1-11

There seems no parallel between this woman and the Samaritan woman in John 4. Many modern commentators see this passage as spurious. For one thing, it pre-supposes that the Lord left Jerusalem after the discourse in the temple to spend the night at Olivet, and thus they put 8:1 as a further verse appended to chapter 7. Possibly Jesus may have left to spend time in prayer (φ. Lk. 22:39), or even to escape a potential tumult of populace. The others had “houses” (ch. 7:53), He had not where to lay His head, Lk. 9:58. He returned to the temple “early in the morning” (v. 1), and sat there, “for,” as Henry says, “He had not yet left it desolate.” “All the people” came to him.

For another thing, we read of the scribes in verse 3, a term nowhere else used in John’s Gospel. Therefore, say the moderns, it must belong within the Gospel. They have synthesized a theorem whereby the pericope was added nearly to caution bishops from too harsh a treatment of penitents, and to square with 8:15f.: I judge no man; yet if I judge, my judgment is true.

Bringing the adulterous woman to Him, the scribes and Pharisees call Him “Master” whom only a day before they had called a “deceiver.” Their charge that she should be stoned is not exactly legitimate; “Moses commanded that [such] should be put to death (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22), but not that [such] should be stoned, unless the adulterous was espoused, not married, or was a priest’s daughter, Deut. 22:21. They tempted Him by a legal conundrum: If He agreed, He would appear inconsistent (He ate with republicans and harlots, Messiah was one to proclaim a year of release) and so they might turn Him over to the Romans as one who “countenanced the Jews in the exercise a judicial power” (Henry). If He disagreed, He would appear as a nullifier of Moses’ law, and a friend of sinners (not a strict and pure profit).

Verse 7

In His reply, “He neither reflected upon the law nor excused the prisoner’s guilt, nor did he on the other hand encourage the prosecution or countenance their heat.... In the net which they spread is their foot taken [Ps. 9:15]. They came with a design to accuse him, but were forced to accuse themselves.

He here refers to that rule which the law of Moses prescribed in the execution of criminals, that the hand of the witnesses must be first upon them (Deut. 17:7 [φ. Deut. 13:9,10]), as in the stoning of Stephen, Acts. 7:58. The scribes and Pharisees were the witnesses against this woman. Now Christ puts it to them whether, according to their own law, they would dare to be the executioners.” (Henry) She is saved by His intercession, a very good example of His ministry in heaven and earth. He will not allow her to become emboldened to sin, and thus warns her to sin no more. His pardon of her is based on her repentance and upon His authority as judge not to condemn if He please, φ. Ps. 85:8; Isa. 55:7; Rom. 6:1,2. William Shedd sees a psychological and doctrinal dynamic, “Men are justified in order that they may be sanctified; not sanctified in order that they may be justified.”

Lightfoot says that Jesus’ actions “may have been only to show that He declined to give the opinion asked of Him; but it also possible that He was unwilling to have dealings with, or to look in the face men who, in their eagerness to put Him in a difficulty (8:6), were prepared to act, with no hesitation or sense of shame, as they had acted towards this woman. (8:3,4)” Strachan says κάτω κύφας “having stooped down” might be properly rendered “hung his head” [<κατά-κύπτω] i.e. “moved by a deep sense of shame that religious leaders should behave too heartlessly.”

Question: Here Jesus “writes” on the ground. Is this a recapitulation of the finger of God at Sinai? φ. Exod. 31:18. Is this like handwriting on the wall?

Comparing this event with the question about tribute money, as many do, raises another interesting possibility. Manson explains the Lord’s action in writing on the ground by a well-known practice in Roman criminal law, in accordance with which the presiding judge first wrote down the sentence and then read it aloud for the written word. Doctor Manson thinks that the Lord by His action says in effect, ‘You are inviting me to usurp the functions of the procurator. Very well, I will do so; and I will do it in the regular Roman way.’ He then stoops down and appears to write down the sentence, after which He reads it out: ‘whoever among you is without sin, let him be the first to cast a stone [βάλλειν <διαβλος (accuser)] at her.’ The Lord defeats His adversaries by adopting the form of pronouncing sentence in the Roman manner, but by act and word He ensures that it cannot be carried out. (Lightfoot) William Temple agrees that Jesus looked down because He has a face “of pure eyes than to be hold iniquity” (Hab. 1:13). Furthermore, Jesus is of such purity that no one ever died in his presence.

- END PERICOPE DE ADULTERA-

It is likely that this dispute with the Pharisees occurred on the same day that the adulterous was brought before Him, because that event began early in the morning and because the Evangelist mentions no change in time.

Verse 12

In Genesis 1:3, light is the first thing created. “The light of the world bestows the ‘light of life (φ. Jn. 1:4,5)’; and in having this light, the disciple, follower, or believer – the words may be used interchangeable – has the Speaker, the Lord Himself. But he has Him, or it, not as an acquisition or a quality which, when once it has acquired or received, is henceforth independent of the Giver; ‘the light which the believer has, is always the light, which Jesus is’; and in this sense the recipient must never regard it as his own. Indeed, he and his fellow disciples can themselves be called ‘the light of world’ (Mt. 5:14), only in so far as they abide in the Lord, and He in them (15:4).” (Lighthfoot) “What the sun is to the whole solar system – the centre of light, and heat, and life, and fertility, - He has come into the world to be to sinners.... As Israel followed the pillar of cloud and fire in all their journeyings – moving whenever it moved, stopping whenever it tarried, asking no questions, marching on in faith, - so must a man deal with Christ. He must ‘follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.’ (Rev. 14:21).... He was the true guide to heaven through the wilderness of this world [Bray calls Him a new fiery pillar.]

Shall not in darkness: the expression ‘darkness’ in the New Testament sometimes denotes sin, as 1 Jn. 1:6, and sometimes ignorance and unbelief, as 1 Thess. 5:4 (Ryle).

Verse 12

Ἐγὼ εἶμι here and in vs. 18, 24, 28, and 58, φ. Exod. 3:14.

Verse 14

Says Henry, “This is the satisfaction of all good Christians, that though the world knows them not, as it knew him not, yet they know whence their spiritual light comes and whither it tends, and go upon sure grounds.... The first coming of Christ was for the purpose of administering, not justice, but medicine.” Yet in 9:39, it is for judgment (not political but

doctrinal) that He came into the world. In 16:8,10, the Spirit is also Judge. Men judge after the “flesh”, not flesh in a similar sense as the use of “flesh” in 6:55.

Verse 15

“Neither Paul nor John repudiates the true humanity (σὰρξ) of Christ, but each insists that a judgement about him on a purely human basis, formed by appearance only, is necessarily a false judgement. John has κατὰ τὴν σάρκα (here only), Paul always (and frequently) κατὰ σάρκα (except possibly 2 Cor. 11:8). No other New Testament writer uses the phrase.” (Barrett) The word is always the same in the N.T.; there is only one word to denote flesh in Greek. One probability is that the word is derived from σαρπώ (broom) to suggest “flesh as stripped from the skin”, that which is “brushed off”. In light of Hellenistic beliefs, as treated by Pelikan and Barrett, flesh is also symbolized what is external, or merely human nature itself. σὰρξ > sarcasm. The ensuing teachings about the law, Abraham, and the devil indicate Jesus’ authority in those matters, as He has shown here about judgment after the flesh. Odeberg has written, “Jesus stands in the same relation to the Torah as His father.”

Jesus meets here violent opposition, φ. v. 59. “He alone knows both His origin and destiny; His hearers do not and therefore are not in a position to form a judgement in the matter.... The Lord is not alone in the witness which He gives; the Father, who sent Him, also bears witness of Him; and thus the requirement of the Jewish law is met.” (Lightfoot)

One commentator (Lightfoot) cites Amos 5:20: “Shall not the day of the LORD be darkness and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it? He writes, “to St. John it had become clear that the Jews, in rejecting their Messiah and bringing Him to the cross had in fact chosen darkness and not light, and further that, so far from the day of the Lord bringing condemnation and judgement to the nations, and deliverance and exultation to the Jews, the reverse was near to the truth.”

Verses 17 and 18 hang together though each is a complete sentence. The Pharisees’ question in verse 19 has often been regarded as faithless, even blasphemous, in that it makes the suggestion that Jesus illegitimate φ. Deut. 23:2: “A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the LORD.” Chrysostom wrote, “We cannot say, ‘He that knows a man knows an angel,’ or, ‘He that knows a creature knows the Creator; but he that knows Christ knows the Father.’”

Verse 22

“Like Samson, will he commit suicide when his enemies are too strong for him?

Verse 24

ἐγὼ εἶμι; says Henry, “It was the Son of God that there said, Ehejeh asher Ehejeh,

אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה - I will be what I will be; for the deliverance of Israel was but a figure of good things to come, but now He saith, ‘I am he’; he that should come, he that you expect Messias to be, that you would have me be to you. I am more than the bare name of the Messiah; I do not only call myself so, but I am he.’”

Verse 25

There are two possible translations here: a) “I am from the beginning what I tell you, and b) I am what I tell you from the beginning.”

Verse 26

“I can say and judge many things about you (but in fact I forbear to speak my own words and pass my own judgements) preferring to speak the things I have heard from him that sent me; and they are true for he is true.” (Barrett)

Verse 28

ὕψοσθε “ye shall have lifted up.” Here the Pharisees should have been convinced: “When you have lifted up the Son of man, lifted him upon the cross, as the brazen serpent upon the pole (Jn. 3:14), as the sacrifices under the law (for Christ is the great sacrifice), which when they were offered, were said to be elevated, or also lifted up. The burnt-offerings, the most ancient and honourable of all were called elevations (gnoloth from Gnolah, asendit – he ascended) and in many other offerings they used the significant ceremony of heaving the sacrifice up, and moving it before the Lord; thus was Christ lifted up.... When the Son of man was crucified, the Son of man was glorified. Christ had called his dying his going away; here he

calls it his being lifted up” (Henry). Wave offerings, **תְּנוּפָה** < **נִוֵּף**, or heave offerings, **תְּרוּמָה** < **רָוַם**, are articulated in Exod. 29:24-28; Lev. 7:14.

Verse 33

Says Barrett, “It is probable that the claim John puts into the mouth of the Jewish objectors is not that they have never been in political subjection (which would have been absurd), but that they have never lost their inward freedom of soul; but this very claim, uttered in human pride over against the representative of god himself, is an instance of the bondage referred to in v. 34. Bauer aptly compares Mk. 2:17 where the Jews are confident that they are well and have no need for a physician. Here they are confident that they are free men and have no need of a liberator, φ. 9:39-41.” Cyril of Alexandria said, “Joseph was sold to be a bond slave, yet he was free, all radiant in the nobility of his soul.” By extension, there were no Hebrew slaves in Egypt either.

Henry summarizes vs. 31-37: “There were Abraham’s seed, but what would this avail them, when we find one in hell that could call Abraham father? φ. Lk. 16:24. [it is common for a sinking decaying family to boast of the glory and dignity of its ancestors, and to borrow honour from that name to which they repay disgrace: so here the Jews did.... It is the common fault and folly of those that have pious parentage and education to trust to their privilege and boast of it, as if it would atone for the want of real holiness.] Were not the seed of Abraham in bondage to the Egyptians? Were they not often in bondage to the neighbouring nations in the time of the Judges? Were they not seventy years captive in Babylon? Nay, were they not at this time tributaries to the Romans, and though not in a personal, yet in a national bondage to them, and groaning to be made free? And yet, to confront Christ, they have the impudence to say, We were never in bondage.

There is no slavery like [that to sin]. Sin is indeed the hardest of all task masters. Misery and disappointment by the way, despair and hell in the end, - these are the only wages sin pays to its servants. To deliver men from this bondage is the grand object of the Gospel. To awaken people to a sense of their degradation, to show them their chains, to make them arise and struggle to be free, - this is the great end for which Christ sent forth His ministers.

In the synagogue at Nazareth He had said that He came ‘to preach deliverance to the captives.’ (Lk. 4:18) This, however, is the first place in the Gospels where He openly declares that His Gospel will give men freedom.”

Verse 35

Says Barrett, “The connection of this verse with its context is not immediately apparent. It must be remembered it verse 33 there began a discussion, which continues to the end of the chapter, of the true descendants of Abraham. This recalls Gen. 21:9; Gal. 4:30. The free son, Isaac, remains in the household, while the slave-born son, Ishmael, is driven out. The Jews now claim to be the free sons of Abraham, but in truth they are not, being slaves (not of Abraham but of sin). Hence their status is lost; φ. Mk. 12:9; Mt. 3:9; 8:11f, and many other passages. Who then is the son, who abides for ever? Not the Christian, it seems, but Christ himself, who in John is regularly υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, while Christians are τέκνα. Jesus is both the σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ (φ. Gal. 3:16) and the Son of God. He abides for ever.”

Verses 37-47

The Jews are here obscurantist, objecting to His teaching, and censuring Him with insult. Says Henry, “Those would approve themselves Abraham’s seed must not only be of Abraham’s faith but do Abraham’s works (Jas. 2:21,22), – must come at God’s call, as he did, – must resign their dearest comforts to him, – must be strangers and sojourners in this world, – must keep up the worship in their families, and always walk before God in their uprightness; for these were the works of Abraham.”

Verse 44

From verse 44, Henry preaches concerning the devil; “He was a murderer from the beginning, not from his own beginning, for he was created an angel of light, and had a first estate which was pure and good, but from the beginning of his apostasy, which was soon after the creation of man. He was ἀνθρωποκτόνος – homicida, a man-slayer. He was a hater of man, and so in affection and disposition a murderer of him. He has his name, Satan, from sitmah – hatred. He maligned God’s image upon man, envied his happiness, and earnestly desired his ruin, was an avowed enemy to the whole race. He was man’s tempter to that sin which brought death into the

world, and so he was effectually the murderer of all mankind.... He was a murderer of souls, deceived them into sin,... poisoned man with the forbidden fruit.

He was liar,... an enemy to truth, and therefore to Christ. First, he is a deserter from the truth; he abode not in the truth, did not continue in the purity and rectitude of his nature wherein he was created, but left his first state; when he degenerated from goodness, he departed from truth, for his apostasy was founded in lie. The angels were the hosts of the Lord; those that fell were not true to their commander and sovereign, they were not to be trusted.... By the truth here we may understand the revealed will of God concerning the salvation of man by Jesus Christ, the truth which Christ was preaching and which the Jews opposed; herein they did like their father the devil, who seeing the honour put upon the human nature in the first Adam, and foreseeing the much greater honour intended in the second Adam, would not be reconciled to that counsel of God, nor stand in the truth concerning it, but, from the spirit of pride and envy, set himself to resist it, and to thwart the designs of it, and so did the Jews here, as his children and agents. Secondly, He is destitute of the truth; there is no truth in him. His interest in the world is supported by lies and falsehoods, and there is no truth, nothing you can confide in, in him, nor in anything he says or does. The notions he propagates concerning good and evil are false and erroneous, his proofs are lying wonders, his temptations are all cheats; he has great knowledge of the truth, but having no affection to it, but on the contrary being a sworn enemy to it, he is said to have no truth in him.

[As for those who heard Jesus' words,] they would not receive him, nor entertain him as a prophet, because he told them some unpleasant truths which they did not care to hear, told them the truth concerning themselves and their own case, showed them their faces in a glass that would not flatter them, therefore they would believe a word he said....

They accused him of some of the worst crimes – gluttony, drunkenness, blasphemy, sabbath-breaking, confederacy with Satan, and whatnot. But their accusations were malicious groundless calumnies, and such as every one that knew him knew to be utterly false.”

Jesus says in verse 37, “I know that ye are Abraham’s seed...” In verse 41, the Jews trace their ancestry not to Abraham but to God. By verse 44, Jesus has countered their oppositional implication of verse 41: “We be not born of fornication.” His knowledge surpasses theirs. “Just

as the Word is what he is in the beginning (1:1) so the devil is what he is from the beginning.”
(Barrett)

J.C. Ryle comments on verse 42, “Our Lord shows the Jews His own divine nature and mission. He had proceeded forth, and come from God – the eternal Son from the eternal Father. He had not come of his own independent will and without commission, but specially sent and appointed by the Father, as His last and dearest Messenger to a lost world. Such was His nature. Such was His position in relation to the Father. If therefore they really were children of God the Father, they would love Him as the Father’s Son, the Father’s Messenger, the Father’s promised Messiah. Not loving Him, they gave the plainest proof that they were not God’s children. A true child of God will love everything belonging to God, and specially he will love God’s own begotten and beloved Son. He can see and find nothing nearer to the Father than the Son, who is the ‘brightness of His glory and the express image of His person’ (Heb. 1:3). If, therefore, he does not love the Son, it is clear that he is no true child of the Father.”

Temple writes, “The supreme revelation of the Cross would do its work, not at once, perhaps, but at last.... And the glory of the Son is that, by appointment of the Father, He is the giver of eternal life (vs. 21-27), which may be so fully received from Him here and now that death becomes an incidental irrelevance.”

Verse 48

“Samaritan” here is intended to mean heretic.

δαίμόνιον ἔχεις: “This charge is brought several times in John - 7:20; 8:48,52; 10:20. φ. Mk. 3:22 and parallels. In John the charge seems to imply little more than madness (see especially v. 52) and is simply dismissed; in the synoptic gospels it is vigorously refuted, and becomes the occasion of important teaching. This corresponds with the absence of exorcism narratives from John” (Barrett).

“He was a Samaritan, [they said,] an enemy to their church and nation.... If he had been a Samaritan, he had been punishable, by the beating of the rebels (as they called it), for coming into the temple. They had often enough called him a Galilean – a mean man, [but here,] a Samaritan – a bad man. Saint Augustine gives the gloss upon his not saying any thing to their calling him a Samaritan – that he was indeed that good Samaritan spoken of in the parable, Lk.

10:33.” (Henry) To have said that He had a devil was tantamount to saying that he was in league with Beelzebub, or that he was a madman caught up in a frenzy.

Verse 51

Says Temple, “So here, the Lord does not promise that anyone who keeps his word shall avoid the physical incident called death; but that if his mind is turned towards that word it will not pay any attention to death; death will be to it irrelevant. It may be truly said that such a man will not ‘experience’ death, because, though it will happen to him, it will matter to him no more than the fall of a leaf from a tree under which he might be reading a book. It happens to him, but he does not in any full sense see or notice it.

R.L. Nettleship [in his philosophical remains] writes in one of his letters, ‘Fear of death, or clinging to life, is fear of or clinging to certain fragments of ourselves. If we could “energise” a great deal more continuously than most of us can, we might experience physical death literally without being aware of it.’ There is no mode of energy possible to man so absorbing and stimulating as to observe the word of Him who is the Word of God.” (Temple)

Barrett states simply, “Those who keep Jesus’ word (14:23f; 17:6) will escape judgement because they have already passed from death to life.”

J.C. Ryle writes, “The expression ‘never see death’ cannot be taken literally. Our Lord did not mean that His disciples would not die and be buried like other children of Adam. We know that they did die. The meaning is probably three-fold, (1.) He shall be completely delivered from that spiritual death of condemnation under which all mankind are born: his soul is alive and can die no more. (2.) He shall be delivered from the sting of bodily death: his flesh and bones may sink under disease and be laid, but the worst part of death shall not be able to touch him, and the grave itself shall give him up one day. (3.) He shall be delivered entirely from the second death, even eternal punishment in hell: over him the second death shall have no power.

The width and greatness of this promise are very remarkable. Ever since the day of Adam’s fall death has been man’s peculiar enemy. Man has found the truth of the sentence, ‘In the day thou eatest thou shall surely die.’ (Gen. 2:17) But our Lord boldly, and openly proclaims that in keeping His saying there is complete deliverance from death. In fact, He proclaims Himself the One greater than death. None could say this but a Redeemer who is very God.” We should not fear to go where God has gone before us.

Verse 52 sqq

Here we are drawn into a non-linear consideration of Abraham. There is a Rabbinic tradition which transliterates “well stricken in age” (Gen. 24:1) to mean that God, in effect, gave to Abraham a vision through “the curtain which separates the present from the future”.

(Hoskyns). Also translated “he was gone into the days” (יָקַן בֶּאֱמִים) means “in an absolute sense into all the days there are.” The “joy” may be in reference to the laughter of Abraham, not as scorn, but joyful recognition, and further to the birth of Isaac “laughter”, a type of Messiah. (Hoskyns)

Matthew Henry is a little easier to understand when he writes of Abraham’s “day” in this way: “He saw in Melchizedek one made like unto the Son of God [Heb. 7:3] and a priest forever; he saw an appearance of Jehovah, attended with two angels, in the plains of Mamre. In the prevalency of his intercession for Sodom he saw a specimen of Christ’s intercession; in the casting out of Ishmael, and the establishment of the Covenant with Isaac, he saw figure of the gospel day, which is Christ’s day; for these things were an allegory. In offering up Isaac, and the ram instead of Isaac, he saw a double type of the great sacrifice; and his calling the place

Jehovah-Jireh [יְהוָה יִרְיָה] – It shall be seen, intimates that he saw something more in it than others did, which time would produce; and in making his servant put his hand under his thigh, when he swore, he had a regard to the Messiah.

We read that He said to the Jews, ‘before Abraham was, I am.’

Without controversy, these remarkable words are a great deep. They contain things which we have no eyes to see through, or mind to fathom. But if language means anything, they teach us that our Lord Jesus Christ existed long before He came into the world. Before the days of Abraham He was. Before man was created, He was. In short, they teach us that the Lord Jesus was no mere man like Moses or David. He was One whose goings forth were from everlasting, – the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, very and eternal God.”

Textual Notes

Verses 52-53

“Do you mean that one who keeps thy ‘word’ is preserved from death, while Abraham who kept God’s Word yet was subject to death?” (Richardson)

Verse 54

The Jews, claiming the promises of the Old Testament (e.g. Gen. 17:7), think of God as theirs, unmindful of the fact that by their own behaviour they have disavowed their relationship (v. 42) φ. 4:22.

Verse 57

The reply of the Jews differs from the statement of Jesus because, assuming the superiority of Abraham (v. 53), they naturally think of Jesus seeing Abraham (if such a thing were possible).” (Barrett)

The Jews believed that the giving of sight to the blind man was a feature of the Messianic [age]; and for one born blind to be given sight was to be regarded in a larger context. The deliverance of the man applies to fallen man in general who is brought out of darkness into full enlightenment. Lightfoot says, "It is particularly noticeable how the passage beggar (9:8) from religious ignorance (9:12) to complete illumination (9:38,39a) is counterbalanced by the progressive darkening of the Pharisees, his judges."

"After Christ's departure out of the temple in the close of the forgoing chapter, and before this happened which is recorded in this chapter, he had been for some time abroad in the country, it is supposed about two or three months.... What is recorded in chapter 7 and 8 was at the feast of tabernacles in September; what is recorded in this and the following chapter was at the feast of dedication in December, ch. 10:22" (Henry).

"When the Pharisees drove Christ from them he went to this poor blind beggar. Some of the ancients makes this a figure of the bringing of the Gospel to the Gentiles who sat in darkness [Isa. 9:2, 60:1-3].

Christ cured many that were blind by disease or accident, but here cured one that was born blind. [The man could not see Christ but Christ saw him. Matthew Henry points out a similar blindness of the disciples in that instead of asking Jesus to heal him, they] started a very odd question concerning him: Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?... They take it for granted that this extraordinary calamity was the punishment of some uncommon wickedness.... [The disciples] knew the Scriptures,... and knew that it was adjudged in Job's case that the greatest sufferers are not therefore to be looked upon as the greatest sinners.... It was unnecessarily curious. Concluding this calamity to be inflicted for some very heinous crime, they ask, who were the criminals, this man or his parents? And what was this to them? Or what good would it do them to know it? We are apt to be more inquisitive concerning other people's sins than concerning our own.... [The Pharisees seem to have had the same opinion of his case, when they said, though wast altogether born in sin (v. 34).]

Christ would cure this blind man, the representative of a blind world, because he came to be the light of the world, not only to give light, but to give sight... when he had thus spoken for the instruction of his disciples, and the opening of their understandings, he had dressed himself

to the opening of the blind man's eyes.” (Henry) The man born blind had never seen. “To become a Christian is not to recover what is lost, but to receive a wholly new illumination” (Hoskyns). “Jesus is not asked to cure the blind man; he acts entirely of his own volition.” (Barrett)

Verse 4

Richardson says, “The Day of the Lord will give place to darkness for a season before the Parousia.”

Verse 6

“Christ's making use of his own spittle intimates that there is healing virtue in every thing that belongs to Christ [φ. Mk. 7:33; 8:23 and not elsewhere in the New Testament]; clay made of Christ's spittle was much more precious than the balm of Gilead.... He daubed the clay upon the eyes of the blind man with the clay, like a tender physician; he did it himself with his own hand, though the patient was a beggar. Now Christ did this,

- (1.) To magnify his power in making a blind man to see by that method which one would think more likely to make seeing man blind. Daubing clay on the eyes would close them up, but never open them. Note, The power of God often works by contraries; and he makes men feel their own blindness before he gives them sight.
- (2.) To give an intimation that it was his mighty hand, the very same that at first made man out of the clay.
- (3.) To represent and typify the healing and opening of the mind by the grace of Jesus Christ [Paul in his conversion was struck blind for three days, and then the scales fell from his eyes, Acts 9:18].” (Henry)

The use of clay has of course been compared to Gen. 2:7 in different ways, and the reference to Siloam can be seen in Gen. 49:10 and Isa. 8:6 where “Shiloh” is used.

“The Pool of Siloam (Isa. 8:6, φ. Neh. 3:15) was situated within the city walls, at the southern extremity of the Tyropoean valley. The Hebrew name is שִׁלּוֹחַ derived from שָׁלַח, to “ascend”.

At Isaiah 8:6 (there is no rendering at Neh. 3:15) the Hebrew name is rendered by the LXX. Σ(ε)ιλοάμ.... John with whom ἀποστέλλειν and πέμπειν are important words, brings out the

derivation of the name of the pool. Jesus is ὁ ἀποσταλμένος, and he gives light to the blind, just as he is himself a spring of living water.” (Barrett)

The Pool of Siloam “was supplied with water from Mount Zion, so that these were the waters of the sanctuary (Ps. 46:4), living waters which were healing, Ezek. 47:9. The waters of Siloam had of old signified the throne and kingdom of the house of David, pointing at the Messiah (Isa. 8:6), and [at] the Jews who refused the waters of Siloa, Christ’s doctrine and law, and rejoiced in the tradition of the elders. Christ would try this man, whether he would cleave to the waters of Siloam or no. The Evangelist takes notice of the signification of the name, it’s being interpreted sent. Christ is often called the sent of God, the Messenger (Mal. 3:1); so that when Christ sent him to the Pool of Siloam he did in effect send him to himself” (Henry). In Isa. 8:6 it is said that the Jews refused the waters of Shiloah, just as in this chapter they refused Jesus; and at Gen. 49:10 the similar but not identical name Shiloh appears, and was, rightly or wrongly, interpreted Messianically by both Jews and Christians.” (Barrett) The water sent or conducted through a shaft or aqueduct has been thought by Strachan and Westcott, not for baptism per se, but as part of “the beginning of the new Society” which influenced the Church’s early pattern of catechumens being admitted to the Church community. Some see in this event a ceremonial washing (~ Naaman’s in 2 Ki. 5:10) akin to baptism – even a self-administered one.

Verse 14

“It was forbidden to perform cures on the Sabbath unless life was in danger; kneading was also forbidden, and making clay would fall under this prohibition” (Barrett). The prohibitions against reaping and threshing are given in the rabbinic treatise Tractate Shabbath.

Verse 15

The examination of the blind man, and through him of Jesus, now begins. At the same time, for the discerning reader, the Pharisees themselves are being judged.

Verse 18

The dilemma of verse 16 was real. A man who was good enough to perform the miracle would not have performed it on the Sabbath. [They thought] there was a mistake somewhere in the man’s story.

Verse 19-21

The circumstances of the cure as well as the gravity of the disease are brought out with the fullest clarity. This is a common feature of miracle stories, but the form the present narrative is dictated primarily by the main theme of the trial of the man, and of Jesus through the man, and of the Jews through Jesus.” (Barrett)

Verse 22

“Jewish excommunication had three stages – (1.) being shut out from the synagogue and household for thirty day, but without a curse; (2.) the being shut out as (1.) accompanied by a curse; (3.) final exclusion. This man would be subjected to no. 1” (Westcott). Says Berkhof, “It was only after Israel lost its national independence, and its character as a religious assembly became more prominent, that the ban (cherem), consisting in exclusion from the assembly, became a measure of ecclesiastical discipline. $\text{חָרַם} < \text{חָרַם}$ (to devote)~ בָּרַךְ to curse, Job 2:9.

Hoskyns observes, “Christ is recognized, first as the man that is called Jesus, of whose whereabouts the blind man is ignorant (vs. 11,12); then, as a prophet, because He has performed a miracle (vs. 17,25), and as sent from God because the miracle is without parallel since the world began (vs. 30,32,33); and finally, as the Son of man (Christ) and the Lord, to whom worship must be given (v. 35,sqq.) The man, as he passes thus from blindness to complete illumination, and consequently to adoration, is contrasted step by step with the Pharisees and with the Jews, who, regarding the Christ as a man and a sinner, and denying the miracle (vs. 16,18,24) are shown to be ignorant (v. 29), and blasphemous (v. 34), and are formally declared blind and in sin (vs. 39-41).”

Verse 24

Hoskyns, along with others, takes notice of Joshua’s similar words to Achan in Josh. 7:19.

Verses 30-32

The man in his defence practically prophesies.

Verse 35

“Burkitt observes, ‘O happy man! Having lost the synagogue, he finds heaven.’

Chrysostom remarks, ‘They who for the sake of truth and confession of Christ suffer anything and are insulted, these are especially honoured. So it was here with the blind man. The Jews cast him out of the temple, and the Lord of the temple found him. He was dishonoured by those who dishonoured Christ, and was honoured by the Lord of angels.’” (Ryle)

“Though the persecutors may exclude good men from their communion yet they cannot exclude them from communion with Christ.” (Henry)

“The blind man comes through to Jesus against every natural obstacle: his own puzzlement, his parents’ cowardly fear of getting involved, his religious leaders’ unfair advantage of him in argument from authority and precedent, and the threat of excommunication. The moral is clear: only those are blind who will not see.” (Massey Shepherd)

“The Jews have cast out the man (and so have rejected Jesus)”; he for his part refuses to deny the light that has come to him in the opening of his eyes. But he has not yet understood what has taken place, or come to faith in Jesus. Jesus therefore, taking the initiative (φ. 5:14), as he must, finds the man.

Verse 38

The word for “worshipped” here is προσεκύνησεν. It comes from προσκυνέω meaning “to crouch as a dog”. κύων means “dog” from which Latin derives canius. It is used of Jesus in Mt. 9:18 and the Syro-phoenician woman in Mt. 15:25. Says Barrett, “In the Johannine context there is no doubt that [the word ‘worshipped’] bears a deeper meaning Φ. the reactions of men to Theophanies in the Old Testament; e.g. Exod. 3:16. The sign and its interpretation are now both complete: the blind man has received physical sight, and has also, through Jesus the light of the world, seen the truth and believed in Jesus as the Son of man.”

The lame man at Bethesda did not prostrate himself the man here, but he did spread abroad the news that it was Jesus who had healed him. However, the two healings may be worth comparison. Says Hoskyns, “The two accounts are closely parallel in structure, the miracle on the sabbath day, investigation by the Jews, meeting of Jesus with the healed man; and in detail, the two pools Bethesda, Siloam; the man lame thirty-eight years, the man born blind; the

proclamation as the Son of God (Son of man); the ignorance concerning who Jesus is; the reference to him as the man.”

ON THE EXISTENCE OF EVIL

This chapter began with the disciples asking Jesus, who did the sin who caused his blindness. The tower of Siloam is mentioned Luke 13:4 with a similar concern. Jesus said, “Or those eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?/ I tell, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”

J.C. Ryle explains that “the man’s blindness was permitted and overruled by God, in order that His works of mercy in healing him might be shown to men. The blindness was allowed and ordained by God, not because he was specially wicked, but in order to furnish a platform for the exhibition of a work of Divine mercy and power.... [Some light is thrown] on that great question – the origin of evil. God has thought fit to allow evil to exist, in order that He may have a platform for showing His mercy, grace, and compassion. If man had never fallen, there would have been no opportunity of showing Divine mercy. But by permitting evil, mysterious as it seems, God’s works of grace, mercy and wisdom in saving sinners, have been wonderfully manifested to all His preachers. [The redeeming of the Church of elect sinners is the means of ‘showing to principalities and powers the manifold of God’ (Eph. 3:10). Without the fall we should have known nothing of the cross and the Gospel.]”

Wordsworth writes, “God loves to effect His greatest works by means tending under ordinary circumstances to produce the very opposite of what is to be done. God walls the sea with sand. God clears the air with storms. God warms the earth with snow. So in the world of grace. He brings water in the desert, not from the soft earth, but the flinty rock. He heals the sting of the serpent of fire by the serpent of brass. He overthrows the walls of Jericho by rams’ horns. He slays a thousand men with the jaw-bone of an ass. He cures salt water with salt [2 Ki. 2:19-22]. He fells the giant with a sling and stone and thus does the Son of God work in the Gospel. He cures the blind man by that which seemed likely to increase his blindness, - by anointing his eyes with clay. He exalts us to heaven by the stumbling-block of the cross.”

Jones of Nayland, an Anglican divine (1726-1800), remarks, “The best way to answer the great question of the origin of evil is to consider the end of it, ‘what good comes out of it?’ This makes the subject plain and useful. Why was the man born blind? That the works of the God might appear and Christ cure him, - Why did man fall? That God might save him. - Why is evil permitted in the world? That God may be glorified in removing it. - Why does the body of man die? That God may raise it up again.”

ON JOHN’S SACRAMENTAL VISION

(Barrett)

“Unlike the synoptic gospels, the fourth contains no specific command of Jesus to baptize and no account of the institution of the Eucharist; neither rite is explicitly mentioned. Yet it is true that there is more sacramental teaching in John than in the other gospels. John uses regular categories of thought which are favourable to the development of sacramental theology. Not only do we find a notable use of symbolism, but also an insistence upon of the significance not of the material as such but of the material circumstances of Jesus. The Word became flesh; flesh became the vehicle of spiritual life and truth, and history became charged with supra-historical meaning. The incarnation was itself sacramental in that it visibly represented truth and at the same time conveyed that what it represented. This thought, fundamental as it is with John, needs only to be compared for a moment with the Messianic categories of the synoptic gospels in order to appear at once as a promising soil for sacramental thought....

It is true that John does not teach a merely mechanical, or magical, view of the sacraments, but it is also true that he does not ‘spiritualize’ them. Rather he is concerned to root their spiritual efficacy in the material, and the material in the real humanity of the Son of God....

The place of origin of the water and blood is highly significant. Sacraments do not spring from religious experience, even from the exalted experience of Jesus himself, but from the historical scene of human obedience, suffering, and death which manifested the humble ministering love of Jesus for his own. It is hardly too much to say that all the reasonably certain allusions to the sacraments in John spring from the context of the real humanity and the real humility of Jesus.”

“We must not suppose that eternal is a thing unknown until Christ came, or that the Old Testament saints were in utter darkness about the world to come. The way of life by faith in a saviour was a way well known to Abraham and Moses and David. A Redeemer and a Sacrifice was the hope of all God’s children from Abel down to John the Baptist: but their vision of these things was necessarily imperfect. They saw them in outline only, and not completely. It was the coming of Christ which made all things plain, and caused the shadows to pass away. Life and immortality were brought into full light by the Gospel. In short, to use our Lord’s own words, even those who had life had it ‘more abundantly’ when Christ came into the world.

The truth[s] contain [in chapter 9 are] of vast importance. They supply an antidote to many crude and unsound motions which are abroad in the world. Christ did not come to be only a teacher of new morality, or an example of holiness and self-denial, or a founder of new ceremonies, as some have vainly asserted. He left heaven, and dwelt for thirty-three years on earth for far higher ends than these. He came to procure eternal life for man, by the price of his vicarious death. He came to be a mighty fountain of spiritual life for all mankind, to which sinners coming by faith might drink; and, drinking, might live forever more. By Moses came law, rules, ordinances, ceremonies. By Christ came grace, truth, and eternal life.” (Henry)

At the feast of dedication, it is Jesus Himself who is dedicated. The religious leaders have rejected Him and shortly will put Him to death inaugurating their own destruction. Says Lightfoot, “It is indeed winter, the season of death, without and within.”

Numbers 27:16-17 reads, “Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, / Which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the LORD be not as sheep which have no shepherd.”

Barrett explains systematically this chapter about Good Shepherd: “A signal instance of the failure of hireling shepherds has been given; instead of properly caring for the blind man the Pharisees have cast him out (9:34). Jesus, on the other hand, as the good shepherd, found him (9:35 εὗρον αὐτόν) and so brought him into the true fold.

Verse 1

‘a thief and a robber’: Judas who pilfered money from the money-box, was a κλέπτης (Jn. 12:6); Barabbas, who was implicated in murder and perhaps armed revolt (Mk. 15:7) was a λήστης (Jn. 18:40)... Messianic pretenders may be in mind; perhaps more probably than many ‘saviours’ of the Hellenistic world.

Verse 3

‘calleteth his own sheep’: Since the shepherd calls his own sheep it is implied that there in the fold other sheep which are not his. Φ. v. 16, where it appears that the shepherd has other sheep which are not of the original fold. This, then, is the fold of Judaism, which contained the first disciples and also the unbelieving Jews, of whom the former were to be joined with Gentile believers.”

Westcott explains the setting for this description of false shepherds; “the sheep folds in the East are large enclosures with only one gate. Into such an enclosure many shepherds drove their flocks, and then left them for the night in the care of an under-shepherd, who would stay with them, securely fastening the door inside. Next morning the shepherds would come, when the porter or under-shepherd inside would open to them, and each shepherd would then call out his own flock.” This procedure prevents a thief from using slyness and cunning and a robber or brigand from using open force and violence. He says, “The fold is the Church, the door is Jesus, the sheep are the faithful, and the shepherds are God’s own appointed ministers. The porter, though exclusively, the Holy Spirit, but more truly the Holy Ghost acting through His appointed ministers.

‘leadeth them out’: Φ. Num. 27:17. Barrett says, “It can hardly be doubted that this passage was given a Messianic interpretation and alluded to in that sense, though such an interpretation does not appear elsewhere; but the fact that the required man is appointed in Num. 27:18 would equally prevent Jews from using the verse as a prophecy and suggest such a use to Christians, since the person appointed is Joshua (Ἰησοῦς). Passages such as Mk. 6:34 may have suggested to John’s mind the use of the Old Testament passage.”

Saint John (as Whitehead and Richardson observe) never uses the Synoptic word παραβολή (similitude) nor do the Synoptists use παραμοία (a cryptic utterance; veiled speech). However, Jn. 16:25,29 contain παραμοία there rendered “proverb.” They agree to the term “allegory” here, the closest John comes to presenting us with a parable.

Hoskyns cites appropriate Old Testament sources, “Israel is God’s flock (Ps. 23:74:1; 78:52,71; 79:13; 80:1; 95:7; Isa. 40:11; Jer. 23:1-4) which though in the hands of false shepherds (Jer. 2:8; 10:21; 12:10; Zech. 11:3-9,15-17), shall assuredly be saved by David, servant of God, the true shepherd of Israel or by a branch of the stem of David (Jer. 32:1-8; Ezek. 34:22sq.), as in time passed they had been led by the great king (Ps. 78:70-2) and by the hand of Moses and Aaron (Ps. 77:20). So shall they be no more a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beast of the earth devour them; but they shall dwell securely, and none shall make them afraid (Ezek. 24:28).”

Verse 11

In calling Himself the Good Shepherd, Jesus shows “the character of a true shepherd of sheep, in four respects: (a.) The porter opens the gate to him, knowing by his step and manner of approach, that he is a friend, and not an enemy. (b.) The sheep recognize his voice, and attend to what he says. (c.) He, knowing all his flock individually, calls each sheep by his own peculiar name. (d.) He leads them out to feed, desiring daily to promote their health and well-being. In all these four points, he is unlike the thief and robber.

Brentius observes here the singular faculty that sheep possess of always knowing and recognizing the voice of their own shepherd. He also notices the extraordinary knowledge that the lamb has of its own knowledge and bleat among a thousand others, as a curious characteristic of an animal in many respects dull and stupid.

It is as if [Jesus] said, ‘I am towards all who believe in Me, what a good shepherd is to his sheep, careful, watchful, and loving.’

[Also upon verse 11,] Tittman says, ‘Those who maintain that Christ died only to confirm the truth of His doctrine, or to confirm the certainty of the promises of pardon and acceptance with God, are under mistake. The death of Christ was not necessary for either of those purposes. The truth of His doctrine and the certainty of His promises must be established by other evidence. Neither does our Lord say, that He laid down life for His doctrines, but for His sheep.’” (Ryle)

“Jesus is contrasted not with temporal human copies of an eternal reality, but with men (thieves, robbers, and hirelings) whose attitude to the sheep was the reverse of his own...

In the Old Testament God is described as the Shepherd of his people: e.g. Ps. 23:1; 80:2; Isa. 40:11; Jer. 31:9; P. Ps. 74:1; 79:13; 95:7; 100:3, where the same description is implied in the description of the people as sheep. David (or the Davidic Messiah) is spoken of as a shepherd in Ps. 78:70-2; Ezek. 37:24; Micah 5:3, and in Jer. 2:8; 10:20; 12:10 we read of unfaithful shepherds who injure God's flock. Unfaithful shepherds and God as the true shepherd are found together in Zech. 11:4-9 and in Ezekiel 34 these two ideas are combined with that of David as God's shepherd. In Isa. 63:11 Moses is 'the shepherd of the sheep.' This description is found also in Rabbinic writings where it is said that Moses was first tested as a shepherd of sheep before being allowed to act as shepherd of God's people. [The same might be said of David the shepherd-king.]

'Giveth his life for the sheep': This feature of the parable is not derived from the Old Testament or any other source, nor does it enter into the synoptic shepherd parables; it is based specifically upon the crucifixion as a known historical event." (Barrett)

Verse 12

'seeth the wolf,' φ. 1 Sam. 17:34-6.

'the wolf catcheth them and scattereth,' φ. Mk. 14:27 quoted from Zech. 13:7....

Probably John was reconstructing a situation familiar to him; φ. Acts 20:29 – grievous wolves will harry the Ephesian flock.

Verse 16

'one shepherd,' φ. Ezek. 34:23.

Verse 18

'This commandment have I received off my father': "The father gives a commandment to Jesus (10:18; 12:49f; 14:31; 15:10) and he gives commandments to his disciples (13:34; 14:15,21; 15:10,12,14,17). The characteristic ('new') commandment of Jesus is that his disciples should one another (13:34; 15:12,17). If they keep his commandments they abide in his love and how their love for him (14:15,21; 15:10,14). Similarly the love of the Father for the Son is bound up with the Son's voluntary acceptance of suffering in the work of salvation. The word ἐντολή ['commandment'] therefore sums up the Christian doctrine of salvation from its origin in the

eternal love of God, manifested in Jesus, to the mutual love of Christians in the Church. Jesus himself found complete freedom of action in obedience (v. 18a); so will the disciples.

[As in 7:37,] the section ends dramatically and appropriately with division (σχίσμα) and suspense, which are resumed in the next.” (Barrett)

The next section (vs. 22-42) takes place at the Dedication of the Temple and recommends the Sanctification of Jesus as the Son of God. The annual event occurs some two months after the Feast of Tabernacles (ch. 7-10:21). Hoskyns says, “The Jews perceive clearly that the conclusion of the application of the parable of the Good Shepherd links the death of Jesus with the emergence of the new people of God, and they see also that this involves the destruction of Judaism as an independent political and religious organism (φ. 11:47-54). To the Evangelists Judaism is fulfilled and superseded, to the Jewish opponents of Jesus it is destroyed, its life taken away – unless indeed He be veritable the Christ of God.”

Verse 22

“The question who Jesus is is raised bluntly (v. 24), and answered not indeed in the terms in which it was asked but with equal plainness.... Jesus draws attention to the witness of his works, [and] explains that the objectors cannot believe because they are not of his sheep. Faith rests upon election, not upon human choice. Those however who are his enjoy the infallible protection of the Father. To be Christ’s is to belong to the Father, since he and the Father are one. This claim provokes another murderous attack, the Jews (rightly) asserting that Jesus is claiming to be divine. Jesus counters by reference to an Old Testament passage in which men to whom the Word of God came are said to be divine; why then should not the incarnate Word of God be so described? The touchstone of his claims lies in his works; if they are the works of God the reciprocal indwelling of God and Christ may be accepted.

At the close of the incident (which is also the great central section of debates, chs. 7-10) Jesus withdraws to the place where John used to baptize. The purpose of this topographical is twofold. First, Jesus is represented as retiring to a place of safety, whence, at the right moment and of his own free will (11:7), he will return to Jerusalem in order to give life to the world by his death. Second, he is once more brought into relation with the Baptist, and an opportunity is thereby given for reconsidering the Baptist’s witness.” (Barrett)

The long debates which began at the Feast of Booths are concluded at the Feast of Dedication (October – December). There is no compelling significance to Hanukkah [חנוכה < חֲנֻכָּה, to narrow, initiate] which can be applied to the Lord's discourse. Likewise, the location of Solomon's porch is presently unknown, but was the scene for Peter's sermon as given in Acts 3:11sq; 5:12.

Verse 25

Only to the Samaritan woman (4:26) has Jesus specifically declared himself to be the Messiah (φ. his avowal to the man born blind [9:37] that he is the son of man). (Barrett)

Verse 29

“Security rests not in the believer's ability to hold onto God in Christ. It is the ability of the Father and the Son to hold onto the believer.” (Hobbs)

Verse 34

“‘your law’: ὑμῶν, if read, impresses a modern reader as unnatural, since it is unlikely that a Jew would speak to Jews of ‘your law’ [John's] purpose in using the word ὑμῶν was not to disavow the Old Testament, but to press home upon the Jews that the truth of the Christian position was substantiated by their own authoritative documents.

‘I said, Ye are gods’: Though this was a difficult passage for convinced monotheists to deal with it was not neglected. [Psalm 82:6] – The most common interpretation seems to have been that the words were addressed to Israel when they received the Law at Sinai. [The next verse, Ps. 82:7, refers to the result of sin (in the Golden Calf).]

Verse 36

‘sanctified’: It is possible that the first verse of the Dedication lesson (Num. 7:1) may have prompted this statement or affected the form of it. As Moses sanctified the Tabernacle and its contents were their holy purpose, so God sanctified (ἡγίασεν) Jesus for his mission.

Verse 41

The final mention of John the Baptist.

The next two chapters introduce the passion, and sum up the ministry as a whole – henceforth we hear no more of the water of life, the bread of life, the light of life; Jesus gives life itself.” (Barrett)

Whitehead cites Alford, “The shepherds themselves into and out of the fold by the same door as the sheep, and Christ is that door, THE DOOR OF THE SHEEP, the ONE door both for sheep and shepherds into the fold, into God’s Church, to the Father.”

Says Ryle, “The raising of Lazarus, described in this chapter, is one of the most wonderful events recorded in the Gospels and demands more than ordinary attention. In no part of our Lord’s history do we see Him so distinctly both man and God at the same time: man in sympathy and God in power.... The raising of Lazarus was manifestly intended to supply the Jews with one more incontrovertible proof that Jesus was the Christ of God, the promised Messiah. In the tenth chapter, at the Feast of Dedication, our Lord had been asked, ‘If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly’ (Jn. 10:24). In reply He had distinctly appealed to His ‘works,’ as the best evidence of His Messiahship. He had deliberately challenged attention to those words as witnesses to His commission. And now, after a short interval, we find Him for the last time, within two miles of Jerusalem, before many eyewitnesses, doing such a stupendous work of Divine power that a man might have thought any sceptic would have been silenced forever. After the raising of Lazarus, the Jews of Jerusalem at any rate could never say that they were left destitute of proof of Christ’s Messiahship.”

John recounts the raising of Lazarus instead of Jairus’ daughter or the son of the widow of Nain. The synoptists do not report it. However, St. Luke had related a parable of Jesus in which it was declared that, even if someone returned from the dead, the unbelieving Jews would not repent (Lk. 16:19-31). Saint John turns the saying into a story in which someone actually does return from the dead – and the Jews do not repent. Significantly the name of the person who has died is in each story of Lazarus. (Richarson, 1959) [Eleazar – “God is my help”]

Verse 1

“Bethany is mentioned in all the synoptic gospels, and is here distinguished, by the reference to Mary and Martha and by the distance given in v. 18, from the Bethany of 1:28 [βηθαβαρᾶ], which was in Paraea. The distinction was the more needful since, according to 10:40, Jesus was in Paraeian Bethany when word was brought to him of the illness of Lazarus.” (Barrett) Whitehead believes that Jesus stayed with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus until the night of His arrest. Commentators agree that the Lord’s movement towards Jerusalem, “and so to his death, was entirely self-determined; no mere human affection led him into a trap he did not

suspect. Φ. 2:3f; 7:3-9 where Jesus refuses to act immediately at the request of his mother and brothers, here he refuses to be directed by his friend.” (Barrett)

Says Whitehead, “Notice the many minute details which mark the personal knowledge of an eye-witness – e.g., the relation of Jesus to the family (v. 5); the delay of two days (v. 6); the exact position of Bethany (v. 18); the presence of Jews (v. 19); the secret message (v. 28); the title, ‘the Master’ (v.28); the pause of Jesus (v. 30); the following of the Jews (v. 31); their weeping (v. 33); the prostration of Mary (v. 32); our Lord’s emotion (vs. 33,35,38); the appearance of Lazarus (v. 44).

Augustine: “A sign is a thing that, besides the sight that it offereth unto the eyes, causeth another thing to come into our mind.”

Question: For whose sake did Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead?

Consider that Jesus has returned to Judea and is once again in peril, and consider also His great courage in facing death. Matthew Henry has written, “If a man walk in the way of his heart, and the sight of his eyes, and according to the course of this world, - if he consult his own carnal reasonings more than the will and glory of God, - he falls into temptations and snares, is liable to great uneasiness and frightful apprehensions, trembles at the shaking of a leaf, and flees when none pursues, while an upright man laughs at the shaking of the spear, and stands undaunted when ten thousand invade.”

We must here consider the humanity of Jesus. W.P. Dubose has said, “While we cannot say that the holiness of Jesus was only on the continuous or unbroken line of all other human holiness, - because in fact it transcended or passed beyond the limits of that, - yet also we must say that it was a human holiness, identical with ours in kind, and identical with it in what we might call its natural history, or the conditions and law of its origin and growth. Now all human or creature holiness comes through the one only law of the submission of nature and self, as deficient and insufficient for holiness, to the one sufficient source and cause of holiness. Consequently, the holier one becomes the more one passes out of all dependence upon mere nature and all conceit of mere self. These are left behind in the growing experience of that which, while it is our ever growing selves, is ever and more consciously not of ourselves. The humility in the holiness of Jesus is the humanness in it; it is the memory and mark of its earthly history.

The human spirit that becomes more selfless and humble as it grows more divine will be most so when it has attained its divine perfection. One of the most beautiful of the many anomalies of Christian character is that the more righteous it becomes the less self-righteous it becomes; the greater it grows, the more modest it grows.” (“The Saviour from Sin”)

Berkhof explains, “It was necessary that Christ should assume human nature, not only with all its essential properties, but also with all the infirmities to which it is liable after the fall, and should thus descend to the depths of degradation to which men had fallen. At the same time he had to be a sinless man, for a man who was himself a sinner and who forfeited his own life, certainly could not atone for others. Only such a truly human Mediator, who had experimental knowledge of the woes of mankind and rose superior to all temptations, could enter sympathetically into all the experiences, the trials and temptations of men, and be a perfect human example for His followers.”

Owen cites Low the Great on the subject of Christ being God and man; “With the purpose of delivering man from eternal death, [Jesus] became man: so bending Himself to take of Him our humility without decrease in His own majesty, that remaining what He was and assuming what He was not, He might unite the true form of a slave to that form in which He is equal to God the Father, and join both natures together by such a compact that the lower should not be swallowed up in its exaltation nor the higher impaired by its new associate, Without detriment therefore to the properties of either substance which then came together in one person, majesty took on humility, strength weakness, eternity mortality; and for the paying off of the debt, belonging to our condition, inviolable nature was united with passable nature.”

Temple cites Bousanquet, “It is not imperfection in the supreme being, but an essential of his completeness, that his nature, summing up that of Reality, should go out into its other to seek the completion, which in this case alone is absolutely found. The ‘other’ in question can only be finite experience; and it is in and because of this, and qualified by it, that the Divine nature maintains its infinity. And, therefore, it may be said that the general form of self-sacrifice – the fundamental logical structure of Reality – is to be found here also, as everywhere. Not, of course, that the infinite being can lose and regain its perfection, but that the burden of the finite is inherently a part or rather an instrument of the self-completion of the infinite.”

Here is a summation of William Temple’s theology, “Because [God] is the all-comprehending Mind, the course which He sustains in Nature is orderly; that it should be in any

way capricious would imply such characteristics in God as are manifest defects or limitations when they appear in men. When there is no sufficient reason for variation, none will appear. And for the vastly greater part of Nature's course there is, so far as we can tell, no reason at all for variation, and much reason for uniformity. All purpose in finite creatures – and therefore all moral purpose – depends on the reliability of nature. We could make no plans if the rising of the sun to-morrow were not reasonably certain, or if there were serious risk of failure in the custom of gravitation....

God in the world acts now this way and now that as He carries to accomplishment His unchanging purpose.... He is no more unchanging than He is changeable; for both of these express persistence through time. But God does not persist through time, for time itself is grounded in Him.... He is creator and therefore transcendent. Because He is, and is creative, He must create; therefore the universe is necessary to Him in the sense that He can only be Himself by creating it. But he is necessary to it, because it only exists by His fiat....

The living God is indeed at work – fully at work – in Nature, in human experience, and in the course of history. But He is at work as a Person, exhibiting the identity of His character in the infinitely delicate variations of adjustment to varying circumstances. He is not at work there as a static principle, always acting in the same way, though reserving in His transcendence a capacity to intrude with variation into the uniformity of His own immanent action; He is at work there as a living Person, expressing His constancy through appropriate variation, which are guaranteed against caprice or incoherence by that transcendent self-identity in which they are grounded....'

Mind arises within the world process as one of its episodes; but it is a peculiar episode in two ways. First, it is peculiar because it is able to take the process in which it occurs within the embrace of its awareness and its comprehension.... Secondly, till Mind appeared as an episode in the world process, all other episodes had value in potentiality only, not in actuality – so far at least as the process itself supplied the condition of its actualisation. In the sight of God, and it may also be of spirits other than those born in the world process, that process and its episodes had value. But with the coming of minds there came also for the first time episodes within the process supplying to other episodes the condition for the actualisation of their value....

Mind when it appears in [the World Process] is finite, and even narrowly restricted in scope, it attaches undue importance to those goods and evils which it apprehends as affecting itself; its perspectives are falsified; what is near at hand looks larger than it is, and, what is far

off, smaller than it is. This initial aberration of (probably) every finite mind is magnified by the activity of imagination and by the reciprocity of social influence till the Apostolic catalogue is no exaggerated account of the state of man: 'foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.' (Titus 3:3).... The problem now is the relation of the finite spirit to the infinite. It is easy to see that only reasonable attitude of the finite is that of worship.

If God exercised compulsion by forcing obedience or by remaking the character of a self against its will, He would have abandoned omnipotence in the act which should assert it, for the will that was overridden would remain outside his control. The only obedience congruous with the nature of either God or man is an obedience willingly, and therefore freely offered – a response which is given because the self finds it good to offer it...

The core of the doctrine is this: Man is not immortal by nature or of right; but he is capable of immortality and there is offered to him resurrection from the dead and life eternal if he will receive it from God and on God's terms. There is nothing arbitrary in that offer or in those terms, for God is perfect Wisdom and perfect Love. But Man, the creature and helpless sinner, cannot attain to eternal life unless he gives himself to God, the Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier, and receives from Him both worthiness for life eternal and with that worthiness eternal life – for indeed that worthiness and that life are not two things, but one."

Verse 11

"He calls the death of a believer a sleep: he sleepeth. It is good to call death by such names and titles as will help to make it more familiar and less formidable to us. The depth of Lazarus was in a peculiar sense of sleep, as that of Jairus' daughter, because he was to be raised again speedily; and since we are sure to rise again at last, why should that make any great difference? And why should not the believing hope of that resurrection to eternal life make it easy to us to put off the body and die as it is to put off our clothes and go to sleep? A good Christian, when he dies, does but sleep: he rests from the labours of the day past, and is refreshing himself for the next morning. Nay, herein death has the advantage of sleep, that sleep is only a parenthesis, but death is the period, of our cares and toils. The soul does not sleep, but becomes more active; but the body sleeps without any toss, without any terror; not distempered nor disturbed. The grave to the wicked is a prison, and its grave – clothes as the shackles of a

criminal reserved for execution; but to the godly it is a bed, and all its bands as the soft and downy fetters of an easy quiet sleep. Though the body corrupt, it will rise in the morning as if it had never seen corruption; it is but putting off our clothes to be mended and trimmed up for the marriage day, the coronation day, to which we must rise.... The Greek called their burying-places dormitories. – κοιμητήριον [cemetery]

He resolves now to go to Bethany, and take his disciples along with him: Let us go unto him. Not, ‘Let us go to his sisters, to comfort them’ (which is the utmost we can do), but, Let us go to him; for Christ can show wonders to the dead [φ. Ps. 88:10]. Death, which will separate us from all our other friends, and cut us off from correspondence with them, cannot separate us from the love of Christ, nor put us out of the reach of his calls.” (Henry) The disciples thought it odd that Jesus would go to one who was merely asleep. “Jesus then plainly tells the disciples that Lazarus is dead, and that his death is the joyful occasion of their faith. The disciples are to see Lazarus raised from the dead, and Jesus rejoices that He was not there, because as Origin comments, ‘If He had been there, Lazarus would not have died (vs. 21,32), for it is impossible for anyone to die in the presence of Jesus.’” (Hoskyns)

Verse 9

“The DAY of the Lord will give place to darkness for a reason before the parousia”, so Richardson. Hoskyns believes that Jesus speaks of the “twelve hours of night that represent the passia in Jerusalem.”

Verse 16

Θωμᾶς and Δίδυμος both mean “twin.” In the Synoptics, Thomas is only listed among the Twelve; in John, “he plays a much more important part; see 14:5; 20:24-29; 21:2.” (Barrett) He is the first to confess the divinity of the Risen Christ.

To return to Judaea would bring an end to Jesus’ ministry, or so the apostles believed (v. 8). They cannot perceive that to do so would bring its intended consummation. Likewise, Thomas “shows courage and devotion to the person of Jesus, [and] shows also a complete failure to grasp the significance of Jesus’ death as it is present in John; it is unthinkable that such a death should be shared.” (Barrett)

Verse 24

“Martha’s statement of her faith in orthodox Pharisaism. It was also the faith of the Christians among whom John wrote; of the dead is Christ it could only be said that they would rise in the general resurrection at the last day. Martha’s belief is in no way discredited but rather confirmed by the extraordinary events that follow. These demonstrate two points, (a.) The presence of Jesus effects an anticipation of eschatological events, and his deeds are therefore signs of the glory of God. Wherever he is, the divine power to judge and to give life is at work Φ. 5:25; the whole passage 5:19-40 is the best commentary on this miracle. (b.) The pattern of the life of all Christians is determined by the movement from death to life experienced by Lazarus. Christians have already risen with Christ (Rom. 6:4f; Col. 2:12; 3:1). This movement, to be completed only at the last day, has already taken place in regard to sin; the resurrection of Lazarus therefore is an acted parable of Christian conversion and life.” (Barrett)

Verse 25

ἐγὼ εἶμι ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ζωή. “Of this resurrection it is said (5:25) that the hour of its happening ‘is coming and now is’; this is true solely in view of the presence of Jesus as the Son of man. This theme is taken up here. Jesus is the resurrection and the life; apart from him there is no resurrection and no life, and where he is, resurrection and life must be. Jesus is always the realization, in this world, of eternal life in the experience of Christians; in order that this truth may be manifested in a sign he accomplishes the resurrection of Lazarus.” (Barrett)

Here is where William Temple’s theology comes into play. Let me attempt a recap: “God is imminent in nature, because He created it. He created it because He could not be fully God without being the Creator. His wisdom and omniscience allow Him to respond to various changes in natural processes, not because He is fickle, but because He is not fickle. A soul can reject Him but cannot go outside of Him, Thus for God to be transcendent, He must be able to “go slummin’”. Worth of being known, even willing to be misunderstood. In His omniscience, He can even limit His infinite Mind. This limitation is not a “typing of hands behind the back”, but an extended demonstration of His omniscience. Thus Jesus’ questions in v. 34 (Where have ye laid him? \ indicates a limit placed upon the Infinite Mind. In short, the question shows that Jesus was human – and that fact is of critical importance to what happens at Bethany,

Did Jesus know where Lazarus' tomb was? Did God know the answer to the question, "Adam, where art thou?"?

Why did Lazarus come forth bound in grave clothes and Jesus did not?

Chrysostom says that when Jesus asked them where the tomb of Lazarus was, He was only feigning ignorance. He knew where the tomb was, but asked anyway to put down the suspicion that the upcoming event was staged. Yet, it is said in the preceding verse that Jesus "groaned". The same word ἐμβριμάομαι is used in v. 38 and means "to snort, to be very angry" < ἐν (in, on, by) + βριμαομαι – (to have indignation on; (intransitively) to sigh with chagrin).

Question: Why does Jesus grumble? Can it really be because He saw Mary and the others weeping? Verse 33 concludes with καὶ ἐτάραξεν ἑαυτόν (lit. "and troubled himself"). John uses this word seven times, which includes its use in 5:4 where it is reported that an angel "troubled" the water at Bethesda. Jesus Himself uses it three times in this Gospel (12:27; 14:1,27). It comes from ταραύστω meaning "to stir" or "to agitate". Perhaps it is emotional grief springing from what Hoskyns calls "the intense Christian sense of the depths of suffering which it was necessary for the Son of God to endure in order to effect human salvation." What has so disturbed Him?

We are brought to verse 34, which is a question paralleling Magdalene's very words in the Garden (φ. 20:2,13,15). We already know that Jesus is touched with our infirmities, but how doesn't He know where Lazarus' body has been laid? The answer may lie with Temple's theology. For God, through the Incarnation, to have entered into a spatio-temporal realm and become man has validity for us if His humanity is identifiable to us. In other words, He must be great enough to limit Himself only for a season. Question: Can it really be said that Jesus' faith in His heavenly Father is sufficient to raise Lazarus?

Marsh makes a compelling observation, "Prayer such as is offered on a public occasion such as this is not a special constraint put upon the Father by the Son, but rather a special admission of others into the area where the Father and Son live together in unbroken communion and dialogue of word and act. The contrast in the mind of the evangelist is evidently that between the prayer of Jesus which is always heard because the will of the Father and the Son are one, and the prayer of ordinary man who, because he cannot be sure that his prayer is according to the will of God, cannot be certain that his prayer will be 'answered' in the way that he expects. Yet it is part of the teaching of the fourth gospel that the Christian disciple can increasingly come to share

the prayer relationship of the Son and the Father.” Barrett adds that the use of the aorist tense in v. 41 “expresses the absolute confidence of Jesus that his prayer will be granted.”

Verse 42

“The spoken word conveys no advantage to either Jesus or to the Father, but only to the multitude. But it is not correct to infer that Jesus uttered the prayer in order to gain glory for himself; in fact its intention is the reverse of this. We have already observed a tendency, familiar in the synoptic gospels, to think of Jesus as a wonder-worker who, in virtue of supernatural knowledge and power, is able to perform extraordinary deeds. The purpose of the prayer is to show that this is not true. Jesus has no authority independent of the Father; it is because the Father has sent him and given him authority that he can quicken the dead. See 5:19-30, a discourse which, with its two themes, that Jesus can do nothing of himself and that he does whatever things he sees the Father doing, is a most important commentary on the present story.... Once the complete dependence on God, and the consequent absolute authority of Jesus have been made clear, the miracle proceeds at once and is described in simple and matter-of-fact language.” (Barrett)

The body of Lazarus after three days would not be recognizable. Putrefaction would have caused the corpse to burst. Henry reminds us that Christ rose the third day because He did not see corruption (cf. Ps. 16:10; Acts 2:31). Jesus prayed to the Father and thanked Him as if He were already celebrating the completion of the miracle. Elijah and Elisha entreated God, here Jesus thanks Him. Moses to prove his commission prayed that the earth would swallow Dathan and Abiram, Elijah called down fire against the false prophets, here Jesus lifts His eyes to heaven in confidence.

“Speaking to Lazarus, it was proper to cry with a loud voice, for the soul of Lazarus, which was to be called back, was at a distance, not hovering about the grave, as the Jews fancied, but removed to Hades, the world of spirits; now it is natural to speak loud when we call to those at a distance. He calls him by name, Lazarus, as we call those by their names whom we would awake out of a fast sleep. Some here observed that though we read of many who were raised from the dead, who no doubt conversed freely with men afterwards, yet the scripture has not recorded one word spoken by any of them, except by our Lord Jesus only.

The stone over the cave had been removed by human agency, and the stink of decay could have no doubt that Lazarus was indeed dead. What Hoskyns calls “a miracle within a miracle” is that bound up as he was, Lazarus, presumably by supernatural ability was able to move at all. From verse 44, we read of the napkin over his face. He would have suffocated if he had only been in a trance. Jesus said, “Loose him, and let him go.” Commentators think that (as with the removing of the stone) those who handled his resurrected body were eyewitnesses to the miracle.

Verse 45f

“The verse describes the effect of the raising of Lazarus. Miracles in John regularly lead to faith, or the reverse of faith, e.g. σχίσμα 7:43. The Pharisees are informed.

Verses 47-53

[In this section,] the Sanhedrin is convoked in order that the situation brought about by Jesus’ popular activity may be discussed. Plans are made for his arrest and death. John writes in his most ironical vein. The unfortunate results which the Jews seek to avoid are results which in fact followed (as John and most Christians believed) from their rejection of Jesus. Caiaphas is made to prophesy against himself and his own people, just as their own law is elsewhere made to bear witness against them (e.g. 5:45).

Verse 47

The ‘chief priests’ were members of the leading priestly families, most of them Sadducees. The deliberative subjunctive ‘What are we to do?’ means ‘What are we now doing?’ and implies the answer ‘Nothing’” (Barrett).

Verse 48

“take away our place and nation.” Hobbs writes, “Notice the Sanhedrin puts ‘place’ before ‘nation’. The Pharisees didn’t want to lose their power among the Jews. The Sadducees could cope with Roman rule as long as the perquisites of power remained. The Pharisees wanted Rome out. The decision to kill Jesus is one of expediency. Barrett sees here even more of the Johannine irony – “a striking example. The Jews did not leave Jesus alone, but crucified him;

and the consequence was precisely that which they desired to avoid. When this gospel was written, throughout the world men were coming to Jesus by faith (12:32 πάντας ἐλκυσω [“all will I draw”]) and the Romans had destroyed the Temple and subjugated the Jews.

Verse 50

It is better that this man be put to death than that the community should be punished on his account. Johannine irony scarcely reaches a higher point. Jesus was put to death, and (politically) the people perished. Yet he died (ὕπὲρ τοῦ λαοῦ [“for the people”]) and those of the nation who believed in him did not perish (καὶ μὲ... ἀπόληται) but received eternal life (3:16).” (Barrett) The Anglican Bishop William Beveridge reckons 110,000 Jews died when Jerusalem was destroyed, but not one Christian. Perhaps they had left for Pella. This is like Lot’s deliverance from Sodom.

Verse 55

“ἀνέβησαν [‘went up’] as at 2:13 is a word of pilgrimage. Passover was one of three ‘pilgrim feasts’” (Barrett).

He had said to those in Bethany, “Take ye away the stone.” Then He said, “Loose him and let him go.” These instructions go a great distance in describing how we might improve our condition: Remove the stony heart, be unloosed, and let go to God.

Lightfoot writes, “Of all the Lord’s signs, there is none in which word and work, event and teaching are so closely interwoven as they are here.... The external event is the sign [or omen (of things to come)] of the internal truth revealed by the Lord in His words to Martha in 11:25. In St. John’s gospel, the contrast in the end is not so much between present and future, as between seen and unseen, external event and internal truth.”

Jesus leaves Ephraim only to return to Bethany. He knew by His Divine power that the Jewish authorities were seeking a way to arrest Him, but in Bethany He was safe for the time being as the Temple priests had no authority outside the Temple. Verse 7 shows His foreknowledge of His impending death in Jerusalem, but for now He has attended a supper given by His friends. “Is not this feast a faint type of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb?” asks Ryle. “Jesus Christ will be there; those believers who died and are raised again at His second advent will be there; and those who never died, but are found alive and believing when He comes will be there. Then the number of guests will be complete.” Behind this reunion is a tension which has begun earlier and will not disappear. “The search for the Lord (as at 7:11), and the questioning in the temple whether He is likely to come to the festival or not, and finally the desire of the chief priests and Pharisees for information of His whereabouts, which might lead to His arrest, all help to remind the reader that, if the Lord had not come to the feast and had not been apprehended at it, there would have been no ‘feast of the passover’ in the sense to which St. John is leading; in the sense, namely, that the Lord Himself is the Passover feast, and the temple is the shrine of His body.” (Lightfoot)

The raising of Lazarus precipitates other events including a death warrant on Lazarus (v. 10) as well as on Jesus (11:53). In this chapter, John gives the stark contrast between Mary who anointed Him and Caiaphas who gave “desperate counsel” concerning Jesus. (Hoskyns)

Richardson writes, “Similar stories of an Anointing are told in the Synoptics (Mt. 26:6-13; Mk. 14:3-9; Lk. 7:37-50). In none of these is the name of the woman given. In the Johannine story the motive is gratitude for the restoration of Mary’s brother from death. In Luke’s story the motive is penitence.” Some, including the modern scholar, Barrett, find confusion because the anointing and the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem are treated differently by John and Mark. The key to sorting out the reversal of order (in John, Jesus is anointed for burial; in Lk., He is anointed king) lies in recognizing that modern form criticism holds that John used Mark’s account to compile his own Gospel later. Source criticism assigns primacy to Mark’s Gospel on the grounds that it is shortest, its Greek the simplest, and it seems to pass over the Temple’s destruction – i.e. the Temple was still standing when Mark penned his Gospel. What’s more, the Scouring of the Temple occurs at the outset of Jesus’ ministry in John; elsewhere it occurs after

the Lord's Triumphal Entry at His ministry's conclusion. These apparent disparities may be explained in other ways and by other means. Structurally, there are varying accounts of the Resurrection morning, of names of disciples, exact times and dates, and here in different vocabulary used to describe the ointment.

Verse 3

οίκία > economic

λίτραν	μύρου	νάρδον	τιστικῆς
a pound	of ointment	of nard	pure

These are two possible derivations for πιστικῆς: either from πίνειν meaning liquid, or from πιστός meaning genuine, possibly leading to the term “pistic nard”. The word may be a transliteration of the Aramaic pistaqua, the pistachio nut. Then the ointment would be known as myrobalanum. The fragrance of the comound filled the house (some think in keeping with Mk. 14:9: ‘Whosoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall spoken of for a memorial of her’). John omits the Lucan details that the woman wet Jesus’ feet with her tears, and kissed them... The woman’s unbound hair, and her anointing the feet (rather than the head) of Jesus, are much more easily explicable in the Lucan context, where the woman is a penitent sinner, than in John, where she is the sister of Lazarus (and apparently joint hostess with Martha, though John does not say who gave the supper). (Barrett) According to Matthew, the house belonged to Simon the leper.

Verse 4

Immediately, objection is made by Judas Iscariot whose dissimulation begins and ends poorly, and whose presence acts as a foil to Mary’s worship of Christ. Hobbs says, “It is likely that Mary and Judas were the first two people who fully realized that Jesus was going to die. And in that realization the true nature of each came to light.” Strachan adds, “To Mary alone there is apparent the costliness of the voluntary sacrifice of Jesus, an act that appeared, like her own, so wasteful, useless, and even wrong.” Judas cites the use of the spikenard as exception in that such a costly expenditure is associated with Jesus’ upcoming death. To do honor to Christ is greater than relieving the poor. The presence of the poor in any age does not necessarily mean that a

country or nation is misruled or that the Church is ineffective in its mission to relieve them. Ryle says, “So long as human nature is what it is, some will always be rich and some poor, because some are diligent and some idle, some are strong and some weak, some are wise and some foolish.... Not a few seem to think all religion consists in giving temporal help to the poor. Yet there are evidently occasions when the relief of the poor must not be well to feed, and clothe, and nurse the poor; but it is never to be forgotten, that to glorify Christ among them is far better. Moreover, it is much easier to give temporal than spiritual help, for we have our reward in thanks, and gratitude, and the praise of man. To honour Christ is far harder, and gets us no praise at all.” (Ryle)

And Mary, “in the light of all she has learned as a result of the Lord’s visit to Bethany in the previous chapter, has realized the inability of the grave to hold Him; and she shows a further proof of her devotion in using, in order to complete her action, not a towel, but the tresses of her hair, described by St. Paul as the glory of a woman (1 Cor. 11:15).” (Lightfoot) “The observation of the last rite by Mary, the sister of Lazarus, is recognition that Jesus be anointed for his own death, burial, and resurrection.

Verse 6

Barrett writes, “We have no other ground for regarding Judas as a thief, though he is said to have received money for his treachery.” Hobbs estimates that the thief is out \$51 so he goes after less than half of it (30 pieces of silver is \$25). The word here for bag is γλωσσοκόμον, a box originally used as a receptacle for the mouthpieces (γλώτται) of fluster, but also wrongly defining a container for books, cloth, money, and so on. Commonly, the word came to mean “money box” and is used again at 13:29, where Judas appears as treasurer. The Greek phrase “bare what was put therein” contains secondary meaning including “to pilfer.” It can even mean “threw in it what he lifted.” Compare his hypocrisy with Mary’s conduct – She ‘has seized the only opportunities that she will ever have while Jesus is still on earth to express her faith in Him, an opportunity which the others have let slip; also the opportunity to do Him just the kindness that He need at the moment, the kindness of being understood.” (Strachan)*

Verse 12

The Triumphal Entry is recorded in all the Gospels. Strachan says, “It is an act of homage proclaiming Jesus as Messiah, the only act of homage prepared for and permitted by Him.” John lays “stress on two theological themes which have special importance for him. (a.) He emphasizes that Jesus is ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῦ Ἰσραήλ (v. 13), the messianic king, who is received in a manner befitting his state. John knows that the charge on which Jesus was in fact executed was his claim, misinterpreted by the Roman governor, to be a king; this point he develops fully in the passion narrative (18:33-40; 19:1-6,12-16,19), and uses the present incident to introduce it. (b.) He notes that, though the disciples later understood the significance of the entry, they did not do so at the time. The glorification of Jesus was the necessary condition of their understanding – another main theme of the gospel.” (Barrett)

Of the King’s entry into the Holy City, the comparison with Jehu in 2 Ki. 19:13 suggests that like the followers of the O.T. king, they were “ready for martial rebellion and conquest.” But citing Zech. 9:9-10, John would have us make a choice “between two possibilities for the perpetuation of the life of Israel as the people of God – by military power, or by the humiliation of peace and the forswearing of war.” (Marsh)

* “The final week of Jesus’ earthly life fulfills the promise of the first week of his ministry. As the first week opened with his baptism and consecration to his mission, this last week opens with his anointing and consecration for his fulfilled mission in death. The first week ended in the joyous wedding feast that manifested his glory to the disciples; the last week ends in another Galilean feast that reveals his resurrection glory and seals his disciples’ faith and obedience.” (Interpreter’s Guide)

“The crowd was a faint resemblance of that glorious company which John saw before the throne, and before the Lamb, Rev. 7:9,10. Though these were not before the feast, was set apart to be sacrificed for us. There it is said of the celestial choir that they had palms in their hands, and so had these branches of palm-trees. Christ was now by his death to conquer principalities and powers, and therefore it was fit that he should have the victor’s palm borne before him. But this was not all; the carrying of palm-branches was part of the ceremony of the feast of tabernacles (Lev. 23:40; Neh. 8:15).... They cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God (Rev. 7:10); so did these here, they shouted before him, as is usual in popular welcomes,

Hosanna, blessed is the king of Israel, that comes in the name of the Lord.” (Henry) The Passover Lamb, coming to claim His kingdom, is the New Passover Lamb “which was to ensure the final ‘exodus’ of God’s people to a new and indestructible [land?] with him.” (Marsh)

“On the next day”: Says Barrett, “This looks back to 12:1; the interval between the day of this verse (five days before Passover) and 13:1 (one day before Passover) is accounted for by v. 36 [‘going away was hid’, (Gk.)].” Josephus estimates that, at the time of the Jewish War, the number of pilgrims coming to Passover was 2.7 million. Says Barrett, “It is difficult to believe that quite so large a number was accommodated within the confines (even though enlarged for the purpose) of the city; but undoubtedly immense multitudes were present.”

Verse 13

Βάιον (branch) is derived from the Coptic ba(i), ‘branch of the date-palm’; but here the palm branch indicates a joyous celebration. Barrett cites a bundle made up of palm, myrtle, and willow (φ. Lev. 23:40), used at Tabernacles and the speculation that a new Dedication was in the process of being realized, since the palms were waved during the recitation of Ps. 118 (Hosanna), spec. v. 25. It is translated ‘Save now, we pray.’ “The Psalm was the last of the Hallel group sung at Passover.” (Barrett)

הללויה

Ps. 118:25

נָא:	הַצְלִיחָה	יְהוָה	אֲנִי	נָה	הוֹשִׁיעָה	יְהוָה	אֲנִי
please		YHWH				YHWH	
	צִלָּה				יִשְׁע		אֲנִי
	push forward				deliver, be safe		“beseech”
	send prosperity						

“Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity.”

The Greek is ὠσαννά < אֲנִי and יִשְׁע

Says Strachan, “The Synoptic story does not mention palm branches. The expression has been taken as proof that the Evangelist did not know his ground, as there are no palm trees in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. Jericho is the ‘city of palms’ (Deut. 34:3). But it is not meant that the branches were cut from trees on the spot. He does not say where they came from. It is true that palm branches were carried at the Feast of Tabernacles, not at Passover time. The Evangelist, however, is interested only in their traditional significance. Palm branches are a symbol of rejoicing and victory after war (1 Macc. 13:51; 2 Macc. 10:7). In Rev. 7:9, those who have palm branches in their hands are not only the martyrs who have laid down their lives for Christ’s sake. They represent all who have triumphed through the risen Christ over the worst life could bring them (Rev. 7:16). In the present narrative, the crowds carry palm branches [as] those who are greeting One who is already Conqueror of death (vv. 9, 17). . . . The crowd is composed of those that were with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb, and raised him from the dead, and of those who had heard that he had done this miracle (vv. 17, 18).”

Verse 14

εὕρεῖν may be translated “to find by the agency of others.” < εὕρισκω < εὔρω and εὕρέω (φ. Jn. 1:45; 2:14; 6:25; 9:35; 11:17; 12:14 and in the present tense twelve more times in the Fourth Gospel). > “eureka”. Archimedes’ cry in 212 B.C. upon discovering a method for determining the purity of gold. > heuristic – (adj.) serving to guide, discover, or reveal; valuable for stimulating or conducting empirical research but unproved or incapable of proof – often used of arguments, methods, or constructs that assume or postulate what remains to be proven or that lead a person to find out for himself.

Here Jesus is described as riding a young ass. “He was now humbling himself, but in his exalted state John sees him in a vision on a white horse, with a bow and a crown (Rev. 6:2).” (Henry) Ryle explains, “The use of an ass, we cannot doubt, was meant to show that our Lord’s kingdom was utterly unlike the kingdom of this world. No Roman soldier in the garrison of Jerusalem, who, standing at his post or sitting in his barrack-window, saw our Lord riding on an ass, could report to his centurion that He looked like one who came to wrest the kingdom of his legions from the tower of Antonia, and achieve independence for the Jews with the sword!” Strachan thinks the suggestion is not one of humility, but that He is a King who comes on an

errand of peace. The ass and the mule were the animals used by great persons when they travelled. The horse was used in war (φ. 2 Sam 19:26).

The verse from Zech. 9:9 is cited. Here it is given in an abbreviated form, and ‘Fear not’ is substituted for ‘Rejoice greatly.’ He says, “The action of Jesus is not the cause of the crowd’s tumultuous welcome as in the Synoptic stories, but is occasioned by it. He comes indeed as a King, but to bring peace through the war of suffering and death, on which He is entering. Imperfect as the acclamation was, Jesus accepts it, inasmuch as what was soon to happen would effectively remove all misunderstanding. The Messiah depicted in vv. 20-36 is in complete contrast with the Messiah whom the crowd imagined they were welcoming. Hence the substitution of ‘Fear not’ for ‘Rejoice greatly’ in Zechariah is more appropriate.

Verse 16

Barrett asks, “If the disciples did not see in the entry of Jesus the entry of the Messiah it is very unlikely that the crowds did so; why should they be quicker to see the Old Testament allusion?” Ryle concludes, “The disciples found, long after the triumphant entry into Jerusalem, that they had been unconscious actors in a mighty accomplishment of Scripture. This is a thought for all of us. We have not the least idea, during the greater part of our lives, how much of God’s great purposes on earth are being carried on through us and by us, without our being conscious of it. The full extent to which they are carried on we shall never know till we wake up in another world. We shall then discern with wonder and amazement the full meaning of many a thing in which we were unconscious agents during our lives.” Poole observes that here St. John “confesseth his own ignorance,” “He was present”, says Ryle, “and saw all that was done, but did not understand it at the time.”

Verse 18

Here is one crowd, perhaps those mentioned in v. 17, meeting another crowd desirous to hear what was proclaimed. The two groups take an interest in the “sign” given at Bethany; the Pharisees and chief priests can only think of their future. “The Lord having shown Himself, in the case of Lazarus, to be the Conqueror of death, the Jews by deciding for this very reason against Him have allied themselves, as the forces of death, not only against Him but against all to whom He grants His gift of life.” φ. 12:10-11. (Lightfoot)

Verse 19

ὁ κόσμος: “The Pharisees need mean no more than ‘Every one is on his side!’ Yet John is writing his own characteristic Greek, and implies ironically in the words he ascribes to the Jews the two truths (a.) that Jesus was sent into the world to save the world (3:17), (b.) that representatives of the Gentile world were at that moment approaching (v. 20), the forerunners of the Gentile church.” (Barrett)

Verses 20-22

The Greeks who desire to see Jesus first approach Philip (of Bethsaida – Galilee of the Gentiles) who in turn tells Andrew (also Bethsaida); these two disciples alone possessed Greek names (Hoskyns). Critics agree that these two are a token of the future world mission of the Christian Church, but not on whether they were Greek-speaking. The possibility remains that Philip and Andrew were Greek-speaking and thus the first approached by these men. It is likely that they were resident abroad and Greeks by birth and religion. Strachan says that “they belong to the same class of religious inquirers as the Roman centurion of the Gospels and Cornelius (Lk. 7:2; Acts 10:2; 13:16,26).” Henry does not overlook the importance of the two disciples; “The bringing of these Greeks to the knowledge of Christ by the means of Philip signified the agency of the apostles, and the use made of their ministry in the conversion of the Gentiles to the faith and the discipling of the nations.”

Stier says, “These men from the West at the end of the life of Jesus set forth the same as the Magic from the East at its beginning, but they come to the cross of the King, as those came to His cradle.” (Lightfoot)

Barrett gives his take on these verses: “It is not the result of accident or of bad writing that the Greeks who desire to see Jesus never appear in his presence, nor is this due to a careful regard for accurate history. They cannot see Jesus yet, but their presence is an indication that the hour of Jesus’ death and glory is at hand, since it is only after the crucifixion that the Gospel compasses both Jew and Gentile. Jesus now has no further place in Judaism, which has rejected for itself its place in the purposes of God.”

Verse 23

“Jesus replies not so much to the particular statement that certain Greeks wished to see him as to the situation thereby created. It is his death about which he speaks. The evangelization of the Gentiles does not belong to the earthly ministry of Jesus (φ. Mt. 10:5f); the way to it lies through the crucifixion and resurrection, and the mission of the Church. The movement of thought is comparable with that of Romans 9-11. Israel as a whole (a small remnant excepted) first rejects the Messiah; then by his death and exaltation those who stood near.” (Barrett) The conversation with the Greeks is not depicted at this time. The ministry of Jesus to the Jews must conclude with this chapter; the conversation with the Gentiles must wait until “the other side of the crucifixion” (Barrett, in loc.).

Jesus said, “The hour is come when the Son of Man shall be glorified,” by the accession of the Gentiles to the church, and in order to that he must be rejected of the Jews.... There was a time, a set time, an hour, a certain hour, for the glorifying of the Son of man, which did come at last, when the days of his humiliation were numbered and finished, and he speaks of the approach of it with exultation and triumph: The hour is come.

Verse 24

Observe the strange way in which this end was to be attained, and that was by the death of Christ.... ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.’... Christ is the corn of wheat, the most valuable and useful grain.

He would never have been the living quickening head and root of the church if he had not descended from heaven to this accused earth and ascended from earth to the accursed tree, and so accomplished our redemption.

He fell to the ground in his incarnation, seemed to be buried alive in this earth, so much was his glory veiled; but this was not all: he died. This immortal and submitted to the laws of mortality, he lay in the grave like seed under the clods; but as the seed comes up again green and fresh, and flourishing, and with a great increase, so one dying Christ gathered to himself thousands of living Christians, and he became their root.” (Henry)

Verse 25

“The reference to a ‘corn of wheat’ in v. 24 is extended in this verse to mean, ‘He that wishes to live (in and for himself) shall die.’ The [other sort of] man will keep his ψυχή not indeed for physical life, which he may well surrender, but for eternal life, of which he can never be robbed.” (Barrett) Henry says plainly, “He that loves his life better than Christ shall lose it; but he that hates his life in this world, and prefers the favour of God and an interest in Christ before it, shall keep it unto life eternal. This doctrine Christ much insisted on, it being the great design of his religion to wean us from this world, by setting before us another world. He that hateth his life shall keep it; he puts it into the hands of one that will keep it to life eternal, and restore it with as great an improvement as the heavenly life can make of the earthly one.”

The words of Jesus have authority. The word of God came to the prophets of the Old Testament; the word of God from Jesus. He has power over life and death. He has power to lay down His life and to take it up again. He called Lazarus out of “sleep”, out of death. When we die, He will call us to the Marriage feast. He will give us new bodies in heaven, bodies like His body. One commentator has compared the risen body to a change of garments before the heavenly banquet. It is a great comfort to us that God sent His Son to die for us thereby blazing the trail into heavenly places. As Ryle says, “not His life, or miracles, or teaching, but His death was to bring forth fruit to the praise of God.”

Verse 27

Bengel (in translation) says, “horror of death and ardour of obedience are fused together.”

Barrett writes of vs. 27-30, “The passage corresponds to the synoptic story of the agony in Gethsemane, to which there is no more exact parallel in John.... The ‘Agony’ is taken at this point not because John feared that such human anxiety would spoil the effect of chapter seventeen but because in the present chapter he was summing up the ministry of Jesus in terms of service and death. No synoptic narrative better illustrates the devotion of one who hates his life in this world, and John’s form of the story illustrates also God’s strength made perfect in weakness; he thus presents the combined humiliation and glory of the earthly life of Jesus, both of which were to be consummated together in the cross.”

Citing Ps. 42:6f,11, Barrett explains, “Even for Jesus obedience unto death is costly; but the cost, being expressed in the language of the Old Testament, does not lie outside God’s calculation.... If crucifixion should be the will of the Father Jesus would not refuse it.”

Ryle says, “We see the Saviour of the world, the eternal Son of God troubled and disturbed in mind: ‘Now is my soul troubled.’ We see Him who could heal diseases with a touch, cast out devils with a word, and command the waves and winds to obey Him, in great agony and conflict of spirit. Now how can this be explained?”

To say, as some do, that the only cause of our Lord’s trouble was the prospect of His own painful death on the cross, is a very unsatisfactory explanation. At this rate it might justly be said that many a martyr has shown more calmness and courage than the Son of God. Such a conclusion is, to say the least, most revolting. Yet this is the conclusion to which men are driven if they adopt the modern notion, that Christ’s death was only a great example of self-sacrifice.

Nothing can ever explain our Lord’s trouble of soul both here and in Gethsemane, except the old doctrine, that he felt the burden of man’s sin pressing Him down. It was the mighty weight of a world’s guilt imputed to Him and meeting on His head, which made Him groan and agonise, and cry, ‘Now is my soul troubled.’

There is a fountain of comfort here for all true servants of Christ, which ought never to be overlooked. Let them learn from their Lord’s example that inward conflict of soul is not necessarily in itself a sinful thing. Too many, we believe, from not understanding this point, go heavily all their days on their way to heaven. They fancy they have no grace, because they find a fight in their hearts. They refuse to take comfort in the Gospel, because they feel a battle between the flesh and the Spirit. Let them mark the experience of their Lord and Master, and lay aside their desponding fears. Let them study the experience of His saints in every age, from St. Paul downwards, and understand that as Christ had inward conflicts so must Christians expect to have them also. To give way to doubts and unbelief is certainly wrong, and robs us of our peace. There is a faithless despondency, unquestionably, which is blameworthy, and must be resisted, repented of, and brought to the fountain for all sin, that it may be pardoned. But the mere presence of fight and strife and conflict in our hearts, is no sin. The believer may be known by his inward warfare as well as by his inward peace.”

Hoskyns writes, “There is no ‘stage drama’ in John’s story; here is an ineluctable destiny making supreme demands upon the supreme person.”

Verse 28

“God is glorified in the complete obedience of his servant, and the servant who does not his own will but the will of him that sent him desires only the glory of God.” (Barrett)

Verse 30

“Jesus needed no reinforcement of his faith, but the crowd needed to be convinced of his unity with the Father. But how could they be convinced of this if they thought they had heard thunder or even the voice of an angel does not appear. Possibly John has in mind a third group (perhaps the disciples) who did recognize the origin and meaning of the voice.”

Verse 31

Says Ryle, “The word we render ‘judgment’ [κρίσις] can only mean condemnation; the meaning of the sentence is this: ‘Now has arrived the reason when a sentence of condemnation shall be passed by my death on the whole order of things which has prevailed in the world since the creation. The world shall no longer be let alone, and left to the devil and the powers of darkness. I am about to spoil them of their dominion by my redeeming work, and to condemn and set aside the dark, godless order of things which has so long prevailed upon earth. It has long been winked at and tolerated by my Father. This very week, by my crucifixion, the religious systems of the world shall receive a sentence of condemnation.’”

Marsh and Barrett concur. I begin with Marsh, “‘Now is the judgment of this world.’ The word ‘now’ fastens the great crisis of the world on the moment of the crucifixion. At this point the old creation is coming to its end, and the new creation begins to be. The passage from the one to the other is not a simple physical process, but a moral and spiritual; hence the need to assert that the moment of crisis is one of judgement. Just, as earlier, Jesus had indicated that the authorities had passed judgement on themselves by their treatment of the man born blind and healed by Jesus, so now he asserts that the world will pass judgement on itself by its killing of him (φ. also 3:18: ‘He who does not believe is condemned already’). Jesus sees the moment of his elevation on the cross as the moment when he ascends his throne, and so dethrones the usurper who now presumptuously claims command of the world.”

Barrett writes, “In these verses [31f] John brings to a head the teaching that has been given about the passion. It signifies (a.) the judgement of the world, (b.) the overflow of evil, (c.) the simultaneous death and glorification of Jesus, and (d.) the drawing together of all men to him

[In verse 31 the word νῦν is repeated giving it great emphasis -] Now, in the all-important crisis of the crucifixion.... John 3:19 makes it clear that while judgement also takes place later (at the ‘last judgement’) it is effected by the coming into the world of Christ as the shining of a light, which men according to their works will either love or hate. It is in this sense that the cross means the passing of judgement; those who are not drawn to it (see v. 32) are repelled by it (φ. for a close parallel 1 Cor. 1:18-31). As in chapter nine the Jews passed judgement on themselves by casting out the man born blind, so the world by crucifying Jesus passed judgement on itself. ὁ κόσμος οὗτος is the whole organized state of human society, secular and religious.

Though Jesus appears to have been cast out this is in fact not so; ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου εκβληθήσεται ἔξω. The devil is meant and is so described again at 14:30; 16:11... The defeat of Satan by Jesus is also an essential element in the older Christian tradition.... The devil will be put out of office, out of authority. He will no longer be ἄρχων; men will be freed from his power. Nothing is said of his subsequent fate.” “Now shall the prince of this world be cast out” – “not out of the world, but out of power” (Strachan).

Verse 32

“ὕψωθῶ is ambiguous and was chosen by John for that reason Jesus was lifted up in execution on the cross and thereby exalted in glory... ἐκ τῆς γῆς underlines the ideas both of the death in the cross and of the ascension. The conviction expressed here is the reason (though John does not stop to point it out) why Jesus engages in no conversation with the Greeks. It is by being lifted up that he draws men to himself.” (Barrett) Keeping in mind ch. 5:19, Barrett construes a further meaning from ἐλκύσω (“will draw”). He says the Father is the subject of this phrase: “No difference in thought is intended. The act us that of both the Father and the Son.”

Matthew Henry summarizes, ‘Christ upon the cross interposed between a righteous God and a guilty world as a sacrifice for sin and a surety for sinners, so that when he was judged, and iniquity laid upon him, and he was wounded for our transgressions, it was as it were the judgment of this world, for an everlasting righteousness was thereby brought in, not for Jews only, but the whole world, 1 Jn. 2:1-2.’ Euthymius (c. 834-917) remarks, that as the first Adam by eating of the tree cast the devil out of his usurped dominion in the world.

Verse 33

ποιῶ θανάτῳ (“what kind of death”): Says Barrett, “The ascension of Jesus was to be accomplished only through suffering and death; but the language used by Jesus would be quite inappropriate if applied to death by stoning, φ. 21:19.

Verse 34

ἐκ τοῦ νόμου (“out of the law”): Says Barrett, “No passage of the Old Testament, however, is specified. Psalm 110:4; Isa. 9:6 may be suggested, but it is doubtful whether John himself was thinking of particular passages so much as the common messianic theologia gloriae which had to be corrected by the theologia crucis.” Other references are made to 2 Sam. 7:13; Ps. 89:36; Isa. 9:7; Dan. 2:44; Mic. 4:7.

“The dilemma may be set out thus:

- a) The Messiah is to abide for ever.
- b) The Son of man is to die (be lifted up).
- c) But the Son of man is the Messiah.

[Thus for St. John,] the work of Jesus, though truly the fulfilment of the Old Testament, was inconsistent with current Jewish messianic presuppositions.” (C.K. Barrett)

Strachan observes, “Of ‘Son of man’ as a popular title of Messiah there is no sign. Such a usage is not supported by the Synoptic Gospels, where the title is found only on the lips of Jesus.”

Verse 35

Says Barrett, “The relevance of Jesus’ reply is not immediately apparent. It must be taken as another summary of the ministry, comparable with vv. 31f., and a reply not so much to v. 34 as to the Jewish opposition as a whole; the whole chapter, as has been remarked, is an extended summary and conclusion.... The command then is to be regarded as a last appeal (v. 36b) to the Jews who had witnessed the ministry.

The attempt to establish one’s own righteousness implies the rejection of God’s.... The unbelief of the Jews is now fully declared, together with its cause, and also with the few partial exceptions to it. Underlying the declaration are two historical facts – the actual outcome of the ministry in rejection and crucifixion, and the apparent rejection and punishment of the Jews (φ. Rom. 9-11); the conviction that this unexpected failure on the part of the people of God was in

fact an element in God's eternal purpose, and as such had been written in the Old Testament; and a perception of the nature of the choice in which the Jews had erred, the choice between man's pursuit of his own glory or of the glory of God."

Verse 36

"The chosen nation that has been blind to Christ's claims and will soon crucify Him, is now 'walking in darkness'. Henceforward Jesus speaks only to His disciples and to Pilate."

(Strachan)

Verse 38

Barrett's commentary closes out the study of this chapter: "John's treatment of the bulk of Israel was historically justified by the events recorded in the synoptic gospels, and sharpened no doubt by the continued antagonism between Church and Synagogue. Theologically it conveys the truth which the gospel teaches; the historic Israel was unable to move forward on its own level and so enter the kingdom of God. It had to be regenerated through the Word of God and the Spirit; and this regeneration it refused. Hence the old Israel came to stand under the judgement of God (φ. 9:41), and henceforth this was its significance.

Verse 40

The importance in the New Testament of the quotation from Isaiah 6 can hardly be exaggerated. It is used or alluded to at Mk. 4:11f (and the parallels) 8:17f; Acts 28:26f. Not once only, in the ministry of Jesus, but again and again throughout its history, Israel had been confronted with the necessity of birth from above, only to reject the prophetic message and the Spirit of God. This recurring pattern, detected by the first Christians in the Old Testament was brought out with unique clearness in the ministry and death of Jesus. There was in the divine Word something which necessarily offended the natural man."

Verse 41

"his glory" which Isaiah saw was to John and the early Church the glory of Jesus. Says Barrett, "To John as to most of the New Testament writers all the Old Testament spoke of Christ."

Verse 43

“ἠγάπησαν γὰρ τὴν δόξαν τῶν ἀνθρώπων. There is doubtless an allusion to the glory of Christ seen by Isaiah.

Verses 44-50

Almost all the thoughts, and indeed almost all the words, which appear in these verses have already been used in the gospel. They include (a.) the mission of Jesus from the Father; (b.) the revelation of the Father; (c.) the light of the world; (d.) judgement; (e.) eternal life.

Verse 44

Faith in Jesus is not faith in a particular man, however holy. It is faith in God directed by a personal revelation. Otherwise it is not faith at all.

Verse 47

‘I judge him not.’: In different passages in John it is said that Jesus acts as judge (5:22,27; 8:16,26), and that he does not judge (3:17; 8:15). It is hardly credible that John should have been aware of this apparent contradiction, or that it should have been undesigned. It appears in Paul (φ. e.g. Rom. 8:33f with 2 Cor. 5:10). The meaning in both Paul and John is that justification and condemnation are opposite sides of the same process; to refuse the love of God in Christ is to incur judgement.

Verse 48

The ῥήματα are the λόγος which Jesus bears as it is split up into particular utterances; λόγος is a kind of collective noun for the ῥήματα.

Verse 49

The word of Jesus will prove to be judge at the last day because it is not the word of Jesus only but equally the word of the Father, φ. 5:22: Jesus will judge because the Father has given all judgement to him.” (Barrett)

Verse 50

“His commandment is everlasting life.” Barrett takes up the Law of Moses, as in Jewish belief, being the source of life in his expository remarks at 5:39. In short, in Judaism, the study of the Law constituted an end in itself. He says, “Paul refers to and comments on the Jewish notion of a life-giving Law at Rom. 7:10 and contradicts it flatly at Gal. 3:21. It is Christ to whom the Father has given to have life in himself and to impact it.” He continues here, “This view is echoed in the teaching of Jesus (Lk. 10:28; Mk. 10:17f). Here however the command of God which Jesus bears, and himself executes, takes the place of the old Law. Jesus himself draws life from his obedience to God’s command (4:34), and this even though the command is that he should lay down his life (10:18).

It is particularly striking that John ends his final summary of the public ministry on this note. Jesus is not a figure of independent greatness; he is the Word of God, or he is nothing at all. Jesus lives in complete obedience to the Father; in the second part he will die in the same obedience.” (C.K. Barrett)

Marsh sees this gospel “as a radical exposition of the fundamental meaning of the synoptic story, when that story is taken in its own unity as a combination of eschatology (e.g. Mk. 13), realized in prophetic history (e.g. Mk. 14:27) and contemporary occurrence (e.g. Mk. 14:53).”

The Covenant Donkey. Gen 49:10-12 contains a prophecy of Messiah that describes both his sufferings and glory (cf. Luke 24:25-27, 45-48; Acts 26:22-23; 1 Pet 1:10-11). (The dual theme of Messiah’s sufferings and glory is also present, for example, in Gen. 3:15). One suggestion of Messiah’s sufferings in Gen. 49:11 is found in the particular terms used to describe the animal that is bound to the vine. The first half of this verse reads as follows:

אֶסְרִי לְגֶפֶן עֵירוֹ

וְלִשְׂרָקָה בְּנִי אֶתְנֶנּוּ

He [Shiloh] ties to the vine his foal

And to the choice vine the son of his female donkey

The general import of this language (and of the surround context) is that in the messianic era the grapevines will be so luxuriant and fruitful that one can simply hitch his donkey to them without concern for their being damaged. The two terms used to describe the donkey here, *עֵיִר* and *בְּנֵי אֶתְנֹו* (the Hireq Yod on *בְּנֵי* here is a genitive ending), are picked up in Zechariah 9 (see further below), the primary Old Testament background for the Gospel accounts of Jesus' triumphal entry on a donkey into Jerusalem (Matt 21:1-9; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:28-38; John 12:12-16).

There is a text from Mari, a city on the upper Euphrates, dating from about the eighteenth century B.C., that describes a situation in which a suzerain has sent his lieutenant to supervise a covenant ratification ceremony between two of the suzerain's vassals. The royal servant has done his duty and is now reporting back to his lord. The lieutenant recounts in particular that in this covenant ceremony he took a certain kind of animal and killed it to seal the covenant and, specifically, to symbolize the curse that would overtake anyone who would break the covenant. The term he uses for this animal is cognate to Hebrew *עֵיִר בֶּן אֶתְנֹו*. Evidently, this special breed of donkey was specifically stipulated for use in covenant ratification ceremonies (cf. *NIDOTTE* 1:575-577). The shedding of the blood of the *עֵיִר בֶּן אֶתְנֹו* would ratify the covenant. It was the covenant donkey.

It is against this background that the significance of the donkey in Gen 49:11 can be appreciated. The covenant donkey also sheds light on Zech 9 and the Gospel accounts of the triumphal entry, which associate Messiah with this particular donkey known for its role in the shedding of blood in order to ratify a covenant. In particular, Messiah's association with the covenant donkey hints that the way to glory will be achieved through the shedding of blood. Jesus is qualified to be grantee and guarantor of the new covenant through the shedding of the blood of the covenant.

Zech 9:9-12 speaks in figurative terms of Messiah, the cross, and the preaching of the gospel, the speaking of peace to the nations. V. 9bc reads as follows:

הִנֵּה מֶלֶכְךָ יָבוֹא לָךְ	Behold, your king will come to you.
צַדִּיק וְנוֹשָׁע הוּא	He is [declared] righteous and vindicated,
עָנִי וְרֹכֵב עַל־חֲמֹר	afflicted and riding on a donkey,
וְעַל־עֵיִר בֶּן־אִתְנָח	and on a foal, son of a female donkey.

The coming king is righteous and victorious in the accomplishment of salvation for his people (this is Messiah's glory), but he is also afflicted and he comes riding on the covenant donkey (this is Messiah's suffering). Here the עֵיִר and בֶּן אִתְנָח of Gen 49:11 come together again. By means of this terminological convergence, Zech 9:9 ties the Gen 49:11 prophecy to the triumphal entry of Jesus. Jesus' riding on a donkey on that occasion signifies, more than his humility, that he comes as the one who sheds the blood of the covenant. This was his primary purpose as he rode into Jerusalem on that day, and this is signaled by his arrival on the covenant donkey.

Much more evidence could be adduced in support of this interpretation. One further support is found in the fact that the context of Zech 9:9 (particularly vv. 10-12) speaks (symbolically) of Christ's work on the cross. By emerging justified from the sufferings of the cross Christ the glorified Messiah wins the right to offer reconciliation to those who are in rebellion against the heavenly suzerain, to speak the peace of the gospel to the nations.

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“He did not lay aside his old friends, to make room for new ones, but stuck to his poor fishermen. They were weak and defective in knowledge in grace, dull and forgetful; and yet though he reproved them often, he never ceased to love them and take care of them.” (Henry)

C.K. Barrett summarizes the entire chapter, “The meal was not the Passover meal, nor any identifiable in the Jewish calendar. During (or after – see the note on v. 2) supper Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, and there followed conversation on washing, and on humility and love.

John places the supper on a different day from that given by the synoptists, omits altogether the synoptic words in explanation of the bread and wine eaten and drunk at supper (the Institution of the Eucharist), and includes the narrative of the feet-washing, which is contained in no other gospel. The feet-washing is probably to be regarded as a Johannine construction based on the synoptic tradition that Jesus was in the midst of his disciples as ὁ διακονῶν (Lk. 22:27).

There strands first a symbolic narrative, the washing of the disciples’ feet, which prefigures the crucifixion itself, and in doing so points the way to the interpretation of the crucifixion. The public act of Jesus on Cavalry, and his private act in the presence of his disciples, are alike in that each is act of humility and service, and that each proceeds from the love of Jesus for his own. The cleansing of the disciples’ feet represents their cleansing from sin the sacrificial blood of Christ (1:29; 19:34). In any case, the act of washing is what the crucifixion is, at once a divine deed by which men are released from sin an example which men must imitate.

Two further points arise, (i.) Through the work of Christ God has cleansed a people for himself; yet the people are not all cleansed. Satan finds in Judas, one of the Twelve, a tool ready to his hand. Sin, even the ultimate apostasy of Judas, remains possible (φ. 1 Jn. 5:12). (ii.) The apostles, the disciples and servants of Jesus who is teacher and lord, must follow his example; they must show the same humility, must, in fact, take up the cross and follow Jesus. So far as they do so, they share his authority. To receive a man sent by Christ is to receive Christ; to receive Christ is to receive God (v. 20). Thus the church is the responsible envoy of Christ, sharing his dignity and obliged to copy his humility and service. Notwithstanding its authority, it enjoys no absolute security, since even one of the Twelve may prove to be a traitor.”

Says Henry, “Christ manifested his love to them by washing their feet, as that good woman (Lk. 7:38) showed her love to Christ by washing his feet and wiping them.... Christ, by humbling himself, has dignified humility, and put an honour upon it, and obliged his followers to think nothing below them but sin.” “His kingdom is not a realm where some are great in authority and others are slavish in lowly service. In his kingdom the greatest is the least – the servant of all.” (Interpreter’s Guide)

Pink in an Exposition of Hebrews writes, “The cross was the masterpiece of Omniscience. It was there that God exhibited solution to a problem which no finite intelligence could never have solved, namely, how justice and mercy might be perfectly harmonized. How was it possibly for righteous to uphold the claims of the law and yet for grace to be extended to its transgressors? It seemed impossible. These were the things which the angels desired to look into, but so profound were the depths they had no line with which to fathom them....

Again and again during O.T. times God manifested His displeasure against sin, but never did the white light of God’s holiness shine forth so vividly as at Calvary, where we see Him smiting His own Beloved because the sins of His people had been transferred to Him.”

H. Martin writes, “Hell’s upmost force and fury gathered against Him; heaven’s sword devouring Him and heaven’s forsaking Him; earth, and hell, and heaven, thus in conspiring action against Him, unto the uttermost of heaven’s extremest justice, and earth and hell’s extremest injustice: - what is the glory of the Cross if it be not this: that with such action conspiring to subdue His action, outlasted and outlived them all, and He did not die subdued and overborne in the dying, He did not die till He gave Himself in death.”

Verse 1

Φ. 12:1. Says Barrett, “That John means in fact the day before Passover is shown by 18:28; 19:4,31,42. By this note he clearly distinguishes between the last supper and the Jewish Passover; in doing so he contradicts the synoptic narrative, according to which the last supper was the Passover meal, and Jesus died a day later than allows.” Why this apparent difference? The recent work of Jaubert points to our Lord (and Mark) following an ancient sacred calendar, while the Fourth Gospel followed the legal Jewish calendar for the Passover: this guess may not be incorrect. Barrett continues, “By this alteration and by the omission of any reference to the bread and wine of the supper, John emphasizes that the Eucharist was not simply a Christian, or

Christianized, Passover. μεταβαίνειν [‘to depart’] is well chosen to express transference from one world to another; it is equally applicable to the thought of death as a departure, and to ascension to heaven....

Jesus loves his own, and the world similarly loves its own (τὸ ἴδιον) [> idiot, lit. ‘one’s own, private, peculiar’] and hates those who belong to Jesus. John emphasizes the contrast between Jesus and the world and thereby prepares the way for the whole of chs. 13-17.” Marsh sees in “he loved them to the end” to meanings – “he loved them to the eschaton’s arrival and he loved them thoroughly and incomparably.”

The upper room, prepared, and occupied by the Son of God provides a clear departing point for the Discourse of 14:1ff.; “The scene in the upper room foreshadows a more secure and permanent refuge possessed of infinitely larger accommodation and far more adequately prepared, for it is the home of God, in which the Son of God Himself will prepare a place for the residence of His faithful disciples.” (Marsh)

Lightfoot observes that “The word ‘Father’ which in ch. 13 only occurs twice will occur more than forty times in the Lord’s words to the disciples in chs. 14-16.”

Verse 2

“δείπνον ‘supper’ undoubtedly means an evening meal. At 1 Cor. 11:20 it is used with reference to the Agape or eucharist. Since the supper was still in progress (v. 26), there is no indication in John’s narrative at what point the events connected with the institution of the eucharist may have taken place. If the genitive of the name Judas is used, the translation given is correct. If not, we may read ‘The devil had already made up his mind that Judas should betray him [Jesus].’” (Barrett) Luke is the only other Evangelist to connect Judas’ treachery directly with Satan.

Whitehead gives a summary of Iscariot [whose name may derive from an epithet šqaryā meaning “false” or “hypocrite” (Torrey). He writes, “The character of motives of Judas may be briefly summarised. He had probably joined the disciples without any deep spiritual convictions, but from a hope of sharing personally in the triumph of a Jewish Messiah. Gradually the nature of Christ’s kingdom unfolded itself – not a triumphant re-establishment of the Davidic rule, but a spiritual rule in the hearts of men. With growing distrust learnt that service, not rule – persecution, not power – was to be his lot. Finally came the undisguised declaration of Christ of

His coming rejection and crucifixion, which must have quenched the last Messianic hopes of Judas. The betrayal would at least force from Jesus a sign from heaven, or would leave Him convicted as an impostor. To put our Lord thus to the proof seems to have been Judas' special object, for the death of our Lord seems to have come upon him as unexpected issue of his act. The mere thirty pieces of silver could scarcely have been a sufficient incentive alone, even to an avaricious man. Again, as treasurer of the common fund, he had drawn upon himself the rebuke of Christ for his objection to the expenditure of the three hundred pence (ch. 12:4,5), and avarice was doubtless his besetting sin. The mention of Judas in the above passage as a thief and a hypocrite points to a long deterioration of character. To these motives must be added possibly jealousy at finding himself undistinguished, and perhaps shunned, among the disciples, coupled with a personal fear at finding the hostility of the authorities."

Verse 3

“ἔτδοκεν ‘had given’ (Gk.) is the aorist, a ‘timeless’ aorist; no particular moment of giving is in mind, φ. 3:35; 5:22,26.

‘Knowing... that he had come from God, and was going to God,’ of v. 1; the hour of departure was at hand, and in fact Jesus was going to his eternal glory with the Father through the humiliation of the cross, on which the humiliation of the feet-washing was an intended prefigurement. This glory and humiliation is one the major themes of chs. 13-17, and the opening acted parable states it very clearly.” (Barrett)

Verse 4-5

Here must be an eye-witness account: - “the rising from among the company, the laying aside the upper robes, the taking of the towel, the girding, the pouring out of the water, the washing, the wiping.” (Whitehead)

Barrett and Marsh agree that the laying aside of his garments and the taking of the towel (after the cleansing) echo the language used of His death and resurrection. For disrobing as a sign of humility, see 1 Sam 18:4; 19:24.

λέντιον, ‘towel’ here (and in v. 5) is used for the only time in the N.T. It is a Latinism, a translation of liteum, but not uncommon in later Greek. The liteum is worn by a slave in Seutonius [> lint]. (Barrett)

Verse 5

Says Barrett, “The washing of the master’s feet was a menial task which was not required of the Jewish slave and (in distinction from slaves of other nationalities). The degrading character of the task should not however be exaggerated. Wives wash the feet of their husbands, and children of their parents. Disciples were expected to perform acts of personal service for their rabbis. See 2 Ki. 3:11: Elisha the son Shaphat is here, which poured water on the hands of Elijah. It does say ‘who learnt,’ but ‘who poured’; that teaches that the service is the greater of the two. The point in the present passage is that the natural relationship is reversed in an act of unnecessary and striking (as Peter’s objection, vv. 6,8 shows) humility. In John’s understanding the act is at once exemplary, revelatory and salutary. The disciples must in turn wash each other’s feet (vv. 14f); the act of loving condescension reveals the love of Jesus for his own (v. 1), just as the mutual love of the disciples will reveal their relationship with Christ (v. 35); and the feet-washing represented a real act of cleansing which did not need to be repeated (vv. 8, 10).”

Verse 6

σὺ μου: the pronouns are placed together in a position of emphasis; Do you wash my feet? (Barrett) Strachan writes, “In Mark 8:32f, Peter is rebuked sternly because he refuses to accept the teaching that the Cross is the way to the Messianic throne. Here we have a similar episode told in a more realistic way, and in the Johannine idiom. Peter by his refusal to accept this lowly act of service from Jesus, is denying the Christian faith.” This event known as the PEDILAVIUM indicates the necessity for washing away earthly soil, but also connotes a lowliness which foreshadows what Hoskyns calls, “the impending humiliation of death.”

In the upper room, Jesus can directly state in v. 7 that Peter will come to understand the significance of the Pedilavium. Jesus already knows that “the betrayer, the emissary of Satan, is at hand, and the sacrifice of the Lamb is imminent. Little more can be said. The death of Christ, which is apparently the victory of the Prince of this world, is in fact its precise opposite. The Crucifixion is the public exposition to the world of the completed love and obedience of the Son to the Father; complete, not only because He did not waver in the presence of death, but because the Devil discovered in Him no sin, and therefore could present no claim against Him which would place Him within his power.” (Hoskyns)

Verse 7

“σύ οὐκ οἶδας ἄρτι, γνώση δὲ μετὰ ταῦτα, φ. 2:22; 12:16, where it is noted by John that only after the death and resurrection did the disciples perceive the full meaning of the cleansing of the Temple and the triumphal entry. This failure to understand is emphasized by John, and its reason is brought out at 7:39; 14:26; 16:13. Only by the Spirit can men understand Jesus at all; and his disciples no less than the Jewish opposition are included here.

Verse 8

Peter's sense of what is fitting for his master is completely outraged; φ. Mk. 8:32 (and parallels). Peter for all his apparent devotion to Jesus is in danger in taking the wrong side. His objection to receiving Jesus' love and service is in Satanic pride, φ. Mk. 8:33 and Jesus response to Peter's rebuke.

If Peter is not washed he will have no share in the benefits of Jesus' passion and no place among his people (Acts 8:21 for similar construction: no 'part' or lot, κληρος > clergy). The practice of Christian baptism, the regular gateway into the Church, is at once suggested; φ. 3:5. Apparently John conceived the feet washing as in some sense equivalent to baptism (so Shweitzer), though this equivalence must not be taken too rigidly, as though John argued: All Christians must be baptized; the apostles were Christians; therefore the apostles must have been baptized, and if not in the ordinary way then by some equivalent. Rather, John has penetrated beneath the surface of baptism as an ecclesiastical rite, seen it in relation to the Lord's death, into which converts were baptized (φ. Rom. 6:3), and this integrated it into the act of humble love in which the Lord's death was set before the passion.

Verse 9

If washing is to be the only to have fellowship with Christ, Peter would be washed entirely, no part of him being left unwashed.

Verse 13

A rabbi (ὁ διδάσκαλος) might expect his feet to be washed but his disciples; a κύριος, a potentate whether divine or human, might expect any service from his inferiors.” (Barrett)

Verse 16

ἀπόστολος “messenger”, Gk; “he that is sent,” KJV. Says Strachan, “He that is sent is one word in the Greek – apostlos, ‘apostle’. This is the only use of the noun in the Gospel or in the First Epistle. Its use indicates that the title given to the delegates of the Christian Church at Jerusalem who undertook missionary journeys and founded churches, is in the Evangelist’s mind.”

Verse 17

εἰταῦτα οἶδατε [lit. “if you do these things”]. Says Barrett, “It is not clear to what ταῦτα [‘these things’] refers. It appears at first to refer to the fact that a servant is not greater than his master, nor a person sent than a sender; but it is impossible to speak of ‘doing’ (ποιῆτε) these things. Probably John means, ‘If you know that, in view of these considerations and of what you have seen, it is a good thing to wash one another’s feet, happy are you if you do it.’ ... John elsewhere (12:47f) emphasizes the necessity of doing as well as hearing the word of Jesus; so indeed does the New Testament as a whole, e.g. Mt. 7:21,24-27.” (Barrett)

Verse 18

Psalm 49:9 reads,

גַּם־אִישׁ שְׁלוֹמִי אֲשֶׁר־אַבְטַחְתִּי בּוֹ אוֹכֵל

he (that) eats? in him? I trusted whom of my peace the man Also

לֶחְמִי הִגְדִּיל עָלַי עֶקֶב:

a he against me lifted up my bread

“Jesus has not blundered in admitting [Judas] to the circle of the Twelve; he has rather acted in faith in such a way as to fulfil Scripture and thus promote rather than weaken faith. ἄρτον ‘bread’ suggests the Eucharistic loaf, of which, it may be presumed, Judas had unworthily partaken. The last four words of the LXX clumsily render an idiom meaning ‘to scorn’; John’s substitute suggests to Hoskyns the sudden kick of a horse; perhaps better the action of one who ‘shakes off the dust of his feet against’.” (Barrett)

Verse 19

ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι “That I am [he]”. Isaiah 43:10 reads, “Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant and I have chosen; that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.”

Verse 20

Barrett writes, “As at 12:45,50, the effect is to give to the mission of Jesus and mission of the Church an absolute theological significance; in both the world is confronted by God himself. The activity of Jesus is coextensive with that of the Father (5:19), and to see him is to see the Father (1:18; 14:19); the disciples will in their turn do greater works than Jesus (14:2) and their mutual love will reveal the unity of the Father and the Son (13:35; 15:19f).

Verse 21

The thought moves back to the presence of unfaithfulness among the Twelve; now however the act of betrayal is specifically mentioned. ἐτεράχθη τῷ πνεύματι [lit. ‘was troubled in spirit’]. The reference is to the Holy Spirit, but to the human spirit, the seat of emotion, within Jesus.

ἐμαρτύρησεν [lit. ‘testified’]. μαρτυρεῖν and its cognates are common and important words in John (e.g. 1:7); here however it seems to be used in the sense of making an important and solemn declaration (φ. 1:32; 4:44) [1:32 – ‘declared’; 4:44 – ‘testified’].” (Barrett)

Verse 22

Φ. Mk. 14:19. “Note the vivid looked one on another: lit. ‘kept looking at one another’, as if incredulously.” (Strachan)

Verse 23

ἐν τῷ κελπῳ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, “in the bosom of Jesus”. Says Barrett, “Persons taking part in a meal reclined on the left side [a practice kept since the captivity and in the manner of the Persians, Greeks, and Romans], the left arm used to support the body and the right arm free for use. The disciple of the right of Jesus would thus find his head immediately in front of Jesus and might accordingly be said to lie in Jesus’ bosom. Evidently he would be in a position to speak

intimately with Jesus, but his was not the place of greatest honour; this was to the left of the host. The place occupied by the beloved disciple was nevertheless the place of a trusted friend. The expression ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ is not however exhausted by this simple observation. At 1:18 the only begotten Son is described as ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρός. Chapter 13:20 emphasizing the relationship between God, Christ, and those whom Christ sends, points forward to the special case in which the specially favoured disciples is represented as standing in the same relation to Christ as Christ to the Father. It is further to be noted that the fact that Jesus and the disciples reclined at table (and did not sit) is an indication that the meal in question was the Passover meal, for which reclining was obligatory. That is, this detail (and φ. vv. 26,29f) contradicts the general Johannine dating of the supper (see v. 1) and it supports the Marcan. The point is however less convincing in John than in the synoptics. The custom of reclining at the Passover meal was probably a borrowing from the Roman world, and John familiar with that world, may simply have described what he thought must have taken place at any meal, independently of any historical tradition about the last supper. Or, again, John may simply be dependent on the synoptic material. In any case, so far as historical value is attached to his statement that Jesus and the disciples reclined and did not sit, so far value must be deducted from his statement (v. 1) that the supper took place before the Passover.

ὁ ἡγάπα ὁ Ἰησοῦς. The ‘beloved disciple’ is here mentioned for the first time. The disciple is present at the last supper, but this is explicitly stated by Mark (14:17), whose account John probably knew and does not contradict. The disciple was therefore probably one of the Twelve.... The disciple occupies a higher place than Peter. It has been pointed out that the place of highest honour was that to the left of the host, but Peter cannot have taken it, for if he had he would not have been able to make signs to the disciple to ask his question for him, nor would he have needed to do so.

Verse 24

νεύει ‘makes a sign’, Gk; ‘beckoned’, KJV. Evidently Peter was not in a position to ask his own question; he could only beckon to the beloved disciple.”

Verse 25

ἀναπεσών. “having leaned back” [ἐπιπесών in Textus Receptus]. Barrett says, “By throwing back his head the disciple would be able actually to touch the chest (στήθος) of Jesus, and then to speak very quietly.” Strachan adds, “The words translated bosom and breast are different. The one is the fold in the garment formed by the girdle. The other (v. 25) indicates that by his change of position, he actually touched the body of Jesus, looking up as he spoke, without altering the recumbent position. The realistic detail suggests the touch of one who was proud.”

Verse 26

ψωμίον; “morsel”; “sop”, KJV. “A diminutive of ψωμός, [it] need not refer to bread; in the synoptic gospels it refers most naturally to the dipping of the bitter herbs of the Passover in the haroseth sauce [a compound of dates, raisins, etc. with vinegar]. John represents the supper as taking place before the Passover, but his use of βάπτειν (‘dipped’) and ψωμίον may be regarded as a trace of the earlier synoptic tradition in which the supper was a Paschal meal. [βαπτίζω < βάπτω]

Ἰούδα Σίμωνος Ἰσκαριώτον. It is plain from the narrative that the beloved disciple must have understood that Judas was the traitor. To say that he failed to grasp the meaning of the sign is to make him an imbecile. His subsequent inactivity is incomprehensible, and casts doubt on John’s narrative.” So says C.K. Barrett.

Verse 27

“The name Satan is not used elsewhere in John; διάβολος at 6:70; 8:44; 13:2. The crucifixion, though within the purpose of God, was yet compassed by Satan; τότε (‘then’) marks the precise moment when, in fulfilment of his plan (v. 2), Satan took control of Judas (this not quite consistent with 6:70). μετά ‘after’ states a temporal but not a causal relation; recurring the morsel did not make Judas Satan’s tool.

τάχ[ε]ιον [may be elative denoting motion towards something and] mean ‘quickly’; it may mean ‘as quickly as possible’; but it is perhaps best to take it as a simple comparative, ‘more quickly (than you are at present doing)’. In 20:4 ταχιον ‘faster’ is a simple comparative. ὁ ποιεῖς ποιησον τάχ[ε]ιον. ποιεῖς, if an inchoative [meaning initial or formative, denoting the beginning of an action, state, or occurrence and used of certain verbs (as begin, set out, get,

awake] present, would read ‘Do what you are about to do’, or means, ‘What you are bent on doing’, ‘cannot leave undone’.” (Barrett)

Origen has written of Jesus’ words to Judas not that he should do quickly the errand of buying provisions. “Jesus did not speak in this sense, but seeing him (i.e. Satan) who was entering in and had challenged Him and all the conspiring against Him, stripped Himself for the contest, and that He might prevail for the salvation of men against the Evil One, he said, ‘That thou doest, do quickly.’” (Strachan) It says, “Origen’s comment fully expresses the Evangelist’s interpretation of the command given to Judas. Judas has become the instrument and emissary of Satan. Yet Judas, like Caiaphas, has finally become the instrument of God. Jesus has voluntarily accepted God’s will that He should die, and can therefore command Judas to carry out his nefarious purpose. After the sop, Satan entered into him. The conception is not that by this ‘unworthy partaking’ of the sop, regarded as a sacramental symbol, Judas was given over to Satan, and incurred judgment to himself (1 Cor. 11:27-29). There is no sacramental idea in the giving of the sop, save that it was a symbol of special friendship, Jesus’ final appeal to Judas to refrain. [The Orientals to this day give a small ball of meat to the guest whom they wish to mark out for a special honour (Whitehead).] The Evangelist means that the devil finally stifled any impression made on Judas by this final appeal, and took sole possession of his heart.” Says F.W. Robertson, “The horrible images and inconsistencies of a spirit which contradicts itself and strives to disobey the God whom yet it feels and acknowledges. To such a state of mind God becomes a contradiction. ‘With the froward’ – O how true – ‘Thou wilt show thyself froward.’ God speaks once, and if that voice be not heard but is wilfully silenced, the second time it utters a terrible permission. Experience will tell us how God has sent us to reap the fruit of our own wilfulness.” (Sermon on Balaam)

Henry observes, “Christ sometimes gives sops to traitors; worldly riches, honours, and pleasures are sops... which Providence sometimes gives into the hands of wicked men.... If thine enemy hunger, feed him; this is to do as Christ does.”

Verse 28

τοῦτο δὲ οὐδεὶς ἔγνω. “But this no one knew.” (Gk.) In the KJV it is “Now no man... knew.” Says Barrett, “τοῦτο is the direct object of εἶπεν (“he spoke”) πρὸς τί is “to what purpose”, “for what end”, or simply “why”. None of the company understood (for γινώσκειν in

this sense φ. v. 7) what Jesus said; this presumably includes the beloved disciple and Peter (though the former at least must have understood the act of Jesus). The weakness in the narrative suggests its secondary value; John is exonerating the Eleven from complicity in Judas's sin."

Verse 29

Marsh asserts, "This verse is in complete consistency with the general Johannine dating of the supper twenty-four hours before the synoptic timing." Barrett agrees. He says, "The Eleven had however heard what Jesus said, and had to account for it. Judas's financial duties supplied most natural explanation.

εἰς τὴν ἑορτήν, "for the feast" (Gk.), "against the feast" (KJV). This is consistent with John's representation of the last supper as taking place twenty-four hours before the Passover, inconsistent with the synoptic tradition. The question whether work (such as this would be) was permitted on the night of which John writes was in dispute. The Mishnah includes, 'The Sages say: In Judaea they used to work until midday on the eves of Passover, but in Galilee they used to do nothing at all. In what concerns the night [between the 13th and 14th of Nisan], the School of Shammai forbid [any work], but the School of Hillel permit it until sunrise.'

[The 'historical setting' is changed, see 18:1 which is illegal according to Exodus 12:22.] The supposed command to give to the poor would be particularly appropriate on Passover night." (Barrett)

Verse 30

"It was night. The Evangelist seems to make a similar use of a statement of time in 18:27, when he says that after Peter's denial, immediately the cock crew. The language in the latter case may also be symbolic. Judas betrayed Jesus, and his betrayal was his departure into the black mysterious night of judgment. Peter denied his Master, but his sin and repentance were for him the dawn of new hope and fruitful Christian service. The Gospel passes severe judgment on the character and motives of Judas (e.g. 12:6-7; 13:2)." (Strachan)

Says Barrett of this verse, "Judas was now simply and entirely a servant of Satan. Even so, and though he no longer holds his place with the Eleven, he is instantly obedient to the word of Jesus and goes out as he is bidden.

When he goes out it is into the outer darkness (Mt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30). It is the hour of the power of darkness (Lk. 22:53). John was of course aware that the hour was evening (φ. 1 Cor. 11:23); but his remark is far from being merely historical. In going out into the darkness (see 1:5 and elsewhere) Judas went to his own place. So far as the remark is historical it suggests that the event took place on Passover night (in agreement with the Marcan tradition). Normally in Palestine the main meal was taken in the later afternoon, not in the evening; ‘but the Passover-offering could be eaten only during that night and only until midnight.’ (Mishnah)”

Says C.H. Dodd, “The sentence ἦν δὲ νύξ (13:30) is not only intensely dramatic; it also recalls the whole symbolism of light and darkness in the Book of Signs (φ. 9:4 ἔρχεται νύξ) [‘the night cometh’]. The agent of death who goes out into the night is one who loves darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil (3:19).

We are reminded therefore of the theme of κρίσις which ran through the Book of Signs; of κρίσις in the sense which it has borne all through: a sifting of men by their varying responses to the words and actions of Christ. The sifting is now complete. With the departure of Judas the faithful remnant is finally selected out of the unbelieving world. Here we have a clue to the relation between the Book of Signs and the Farewell Discourses in the scheme of the gospel. The evangelist himself has characterized the Book of Signs as a story of rejection: the rejection of Christ by ‘the Jews’, and their rejection by God, as declared by Isaiah (Jn. 12:37-42). Thus the statement of the Prologue is made good: εἰς τὰ ἴδια ἦλθεν, καὶ οἱ ἴδιοι αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον. But the Prologue goes on, ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι (1:11-12). Thus the chapters which exhibit the rejection of Christ must be supplemented by chapters which exhibit the blessedness of those who receive Him, and through them become children of God. These are represented by the loyal group who are left with Jesus when the traitor has gone out...”

Verse 31

“It is though He said, ‘The time of my crucifixion is at hand. My work on earth is finished. An event is about to take place to-morrow, which, however painful to you who love Me, is in reality most glorifying both to Me and my Father.

This was a dark and mysterious saying, and we may well believe that the eleven did not understand it. And no wonder! In all the agony of the death on the cross, in all the ignominy and

humiliation which they saw afar off, or heard of next day, in hanging naked for six hours between two thieves – in all this there was no appearance of glory! On the contrary, it was an event calculated to fill the minds of the Apostles with shame, disappointment, and dismay. And yet our Lord's saying was true.

The crucifixion brought glory to the Father. It glorified His wisdom, faithfulness, holiness, and love. It showed Him wise, in providing a plan whereby He could be just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly. – It showed Him faithful in keeping His promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. – It showed Him holy, in requiring His law's demands to be satisfied by our great Substitute. – It showed Him loving, in providing such a Mediator, such a Redeemer, and such a Friend for sinful man as His co-eternal Son.

The crucifixion brought glory to the Son. It glorified His compassion, His patience, and His power. It showed Him most compassionate, in dying for us, suffering in our stead, allowing Himself to be counted sin and a curse for us, and buying our redemption with the price of His own blood [φ. 53:12]. – It showed Him most patient, in not dying the common death of most men, but in willingly submitting to such pains and unknown agonies as no mind can conceive, when with a word He could have summoned His Father's angels, and been set free. – It showed Him most powerful; in bearing the weight of all the transgressions of the world, and vanquishing Satan, and despoiling him of his prey.” (J.C. Ryle)

Jesus's words are in the past tense in the Greek: lit. “Now has the Son of man been glorified, and God has been glorified in him.” Although Barrett sees a revisionist slant to the Evangelist's treatment of Jesus' mission, he admits that “the passion is regarded as already worked out (it has been visibly expressed in the feet-washing), and the glory of Jesus has thereby been revealed. At the same time, God has been glorified in Jesus, by his offering of perfect obedience.

Verse 32

The aorist ἐδοξάσθη of v. 31 changes to future in this verse (δοξάσει). Jesus would be glorified (so common belief had it) in his resurrection, ascension, and parousia.

εὐθύς ‘immediately’[; ‘straightway’, KJV]. It will not be necessary to wait for the parousia before Christ enters the glory of the Father. His glory appears at once in the

resurrection, the gift of the Spirit, and his abiding presence with his own. This fact is worked out in the next three chapters.

Verse 33

‘A little while I am with you.’ The words plainly in their present context look forward to the departure of Christ in death, but they are equally applicable to his departure in the ascension. The disciples cannot yet share either the death or the glory of Jesus.”

“[The passages which refer to the death and resurrection of Christ] contain none of the words usually associated by [the topic]: no words meaning ‘die’, ‘kill’, or ‘crucify’; neither ἐγερθῆναι [‘to arise’, φ. Mt. 27:53 ‘resurrection’] nor ἀναστῆναι [‘resurrection’, φ. Jn. 11:24]...

The evangelist had the intention to interpret the event which he is about to record in chs. 18-20 – the death and resurrection of Christ – as the eschatological Event in the fullest sense, and in doing so, to offer a revision of the eschatological teaching current in the Church and embodied in the other Gospels....

The whole series of discourses, including dialogues, monologues, and the prayer in which it all culminates, is conceived as taking place within the moment of fulfillment [Dodd cites Is. 40:5; Jer. 31:34; Ezek. 37:27 as ‘typical specimens of a large body of prophecy whose terms are more or less echoed here’.] It is true that the dramatic setting is that of ‘the night in which He was betrayed’, with the crucifixion in prospect. Yet in real sense it is the risen and glorified Christ who speaks....

The logical development and coherence of the discourses are not always immediately obvious. There are many repetitions. The argument often seems to return upon itself. The thought appears to move on different levels, sometimes concrete and historical, sometimes abstract and ‘mystical’.” (C.H. Dodd)

In this verse Jesus recalls the words He spoke to the Jews, φ. 7:33-34; 8:21. “The whole dialogue, indeed is dominated by the ideas of going and coming. Verbs expressing these ideas (ὑπάγειν, πορεύεσθαι, ἐρχεσθαι [pres. mid. inf.]) occur at least fourteen times, with Christ as subject; and the largest passage without reference to going and coming is no more than five verses.” (Dodd)

Verse 34

“The command, especially within the nation of Israel or a group of disciples, should love one another, was not ‘new’ in the same that it had never previously promulgated. Φ. Lev. 19:18. It is new, however, in that it corresponds to the command that regulates the relation between Jesus and the Father (10:18; 12:49f (14:31); 15:10); the love of the disciples for one another is not merely edifying, it reveals the Father and the Son. The command of Jesus was new also in that it was delivered in and for the new age which was inaugurated by his life and death.

ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους. It is manifestly not John’s intention to contract the universal love of the Sermon on the Mount, which extends even to enemies, to a narrow sectarian affection. The mutual love of Christian disciples is different from any other; it is modelled upon, and in some measure reveals, the mutual love of the Father and the Son. The Father’s love for the Son, unlike his love for sinful humanity, is not unrelated to the worth of its object, since it is a part of the divine excellence of both Father and Son that each should love the other. Similarly, it is of the essence of the Christian life that all who are Christian should love one another, and in so far as they fail to do so they fail to reproduce the divine life which should inspire them and should be shown to the world through them.

καθὼς ἡγάπητα ὑμᾶς. The immediate reference is to the feet-washing; but since this in turn points to the death of Christ this last may be regarded as the ultimate standard of the love of Christians.” (Barrett)

Strachan sees two different drafts in the Farewell Discourse, and different but “appropriate” endings to discourses in 14:27-31 and 16:31-33. In 13:31 [through to the end of ch. 14], “individual disciples, who are named, ask questions. In chs. 15-16 individual disciples are never named but are represented as asking questions among themselves (e.g. 16:17f). The hypothesis of different drafts is also supported by the fact that Jesus’ words in 16:5 are contradicted by 13:36-38; 14:5.” This theory disregards νῦν δὲ (“But now”) of 16:5.

Dodd considers the structure of the Farewell Discourses in apposition to various episodes of the Book of Signs. The Upper Room discourses “began with a dramatic scene which combines action with dialogue, like so many other passages in the gospel. This is followed by passages of pure dialogue, in which the part assigned to Jesus is progressively increased, and the part assigned to other interlocutors diminishes, until monologue prevails.”

Do not forget that Jesus’ miracles were done to authenticate His words! In chs. 5, 6, 9 and 10, dialogue and monologue intermix after one of the Signs. As a result, the attention is diverted

from the miracle to the words of Jesus. In the Upper Room, the same procession from the Pedilavium and Betrayal to His ethical instruction is made. Strachan calls this fellowship love “the organizing power of various instinctive impulses and emotions directing human relationships.” C.H. Dodd gives more of a contextual meaning;

“It is in the exercise of ἀγάπη that man knows God and shares His life, that God and man are made one, and that the creature returns to the Creator through the eternal Word through which all things were made.... The importance of the conception of ἀγάπη [in chs. 13-17] may be gathered from a study of the vocabulary. In chs. 1-12 the keywords are ζωή and φῶς [cognates of ‘life’ appear 50x; ‘light’ 32x]. In chs. 13-17, these words are notably rarer [‘life’ used 6x]. The new key-word is ἀγάπη [used but 6x in chs. 1-12 and 31x in the Farewell Sermon]... The evangelist does not intend for a moment to abandon the belief that Christ brings life and light, or even to subordinate that belief. His intention is to emphasize the truth that the final reality of life and light is given in ἀγάπη.”

Verse 36ff

From verse 36-38, Marsh deduces, “The picture of Peter in his confident self-knowledge faced by Jesus with the divine and compassionate knowledge of Peter is one that reflects something of the relationship of Christ to everyman. It is an accusing picture, but in its accusation everyman has his only real hope.” Richardson says, “The irony is that it is not Peter who lays down his life for Christ but Christ who lays down his life for Peter. Nevertheless, in the end St. Peter does lay down his life for Christ (21:19).”

“Christ had just told them of the unkindness he should receive from some of them, and this troubled them all. Peter, no doubt, looked very sorrowful upon what Christ said to him, and all the rest were sorry for him and for themselves too, not knowing whose turn it should be told next of some ill thing or other they should do.

He had just told them of his own departure from them, that he should not only go away, but go away in a cloud of sufferings [Perhaps they were disappointed that the deliverance of Israel would not come. They may have felt ashamed and exposed if He left.] Now in reference to all these, Let not your heart be troubled [and again in v. 27 to “clamp” the dialogue (so Dodd)]. Believe in God as the end, and in me as the way, and you do all you should do.” (Henry)

“Jesus speaks of his relation to the Father, of his departure to the Father and of his coming again, of his revelation of the Father, of prayer in his name, of keeping his commands, of the Paraclete, of the peace which he gives, and of the judgement of the prince of this world.

To the discourse (ch. 14-16) as a whole there is no parallel in the synoptic gospels.

By his death Jesus enters at once into his glory with the Father, but subsequently returns, with his Father also, to manifest himself not to the world, as the Son of man upon the clouds of heaven (φ. Mk. 13:26), but to believers; in the first instance, to his waiting disciples.” (Barrett) Bernard remarks that “Jesus came from God, not leaving Him, and went to God, not leaving us.” (Ryle)

Verse 2

Schlatter has remarked, “The ‘house of the Father’ and ‘the Kingdom of God’ are not separate conceptions. The expression ‘house’ corresponds to the name ‘Father’, the expression ‘kingdom’ to the name given to the King.” (Strachan) Marsh says, “In the two references to ‘my Father’s house’ in the gospels it is clearly the Temple in Jerusalem which is meant.”

The Greek word for “mansions” is *μοναὶ* lit. “abodes” > monastery. While the idea is given of a solitary place, the word John Worgul translates “one room flat.” The word is a cognate of “abide” in v. 16 and “dwelleth” in v. 17. William Temple remembers that “the apostle who lay in His bosom recalls that the only-begotten was in the bosom of the Father” φ. 1:18. The imagery

here, and especially in v. 23 is of home *and possibly residence in a priestly apartment adjoining the Temple complex. μένω > manere > remain

“If it were not so, I would have told you.” Whitehead cites an old English divine who remarked, “If it were not so, He could have told them. If it were not so, He should have told them. If it were so, He would have told them.”

Verse 3

“place” is τόπον (in LXX chiefly for מקום) > topiary, topography. Strachan writes, “The words are not to be interpreted exclusively of the death of the disciples, but also of their communion with the risen Lord on earth, through the Holy Spirit. The Evangelist believes in the final advent of Jesus (21:22,23; 5:27-29; 1 Jn. 2:28) as well as in present fellowship with Him (14:18,21,23). The Paraclete becomes the sign of His presence (15:26). ‘Life eternal’ begins here and now for the Christian.”

Verse 4

The disciples ought to know that Jesus is going to the Father, and that the way lies through the shame and glory of the crucifixion and resurrection.

* “Home, as we all know, is the place where we are generally loved for our own sakes, and not for our gifts and possessions; the place where we are loved to the end, never forgotten, and always welcome. This is one idea of heaven. Believers are in a strange land and at school in this life. In the life to come they will be at home.... The plain truth [from vs. 4-11] is, that all believers are apt to undervalue the work of the [Holy] Spirit in their own souls, and to fancy they know nothing because they do not know everything. Many true Christians are thought more of in heaven while they live than they think of themselves, and will find it out to their surprise at the last day. There is One above who takes far more account of heart-knowledge than head-knowledge. Many go mourning all the way to heaven because they know so little, and fancy they will miss the way altogether, and yet have hearts with which God is well pleased. (J.C. Ryle)

Verse 5

Trapp remarks that believers in the frame of Thomas are “like people who hunt for their keys and purses, when they have got them in their pockets.” (Ryle)

Verse 6

Thomas à Kempis has a beautiful paraphrase of this verse (De Imit. 3:56): “‘I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life,’ Without the Way there is no going; without the Truth there is no knowing; without the Life there is no living. I AM the Way which there oughtest to follow; the Truth which thou oughtest to trust; the Life which thou oughtest to hope for.” (Whitehead)

I begin with C.K. Barrett: “The principal thought is of Jesus as the way by which men come to God; that is, the way which he himself is now about to take is the road which his followers must also tread. He himself goes to the Father by way of crucifixion and resurrection; in future he is the means by which Christians die and rise. The expression also calls to mind the description of the Christian faith and life as ἡ ὁδός [lit. “the way”] (Acts 9:2; 22:4; 24:14).... Because Jesus is the means of access to God who is the source of all truth and life he is himself the truth and the life for men (φ. vv. 7,9). Life and truth are characteristic themes of the first and second parts of the gospel respectively (ζωή: chs. 1-12, 32(31) times; chs. 13-21, 4 times; ἀλήθεια: chs. 1-12, 13 times; chs. 13-21, 12 times). οὐδεὶς ἔρχεται πρὸς τὸν πατέρα εἰ μὴ δι’ ἐμοῦ. If John, here and elsewhere, used some of the notions and terminology of the religions of his day, and there are many indications that he was not unfamiliar with them, he was quite sure that those religions were ineffective and that there was no religious or mystical approach to God which could achieve its goal. No one has ascended into heaven but the Son of man who came down from heaven (3:13); he alone is the link between God and man (φ. 1:51), and there is no access to God independent of him.”

Now to J.C. Ryle: “We should make in these verses how expressly the Lord Jesus shuts out all ways of salvation but Himself. ‘No man,’ He declares, ‘No man cometh unto the Father but by me.’

It avails nothing that a man is clever, learned, highly gifted, amiable, charitable, kind-hearted, and zealous about some sort of religion. All this will not save his soul, if he does not draw near to God by Christ’s atonement, and make use of God’s own Son as his Mediator and Saviour. God is so holy that all men are guilty and debtors in His sight. Sin is so sinful that no mortal man can make satisfaction for it. There must be a mediator, a ransom-payer, a redeemer,

between ourselves and God, or else we can never be saved. There is only one door, one bridge, one ladder, between earth and heaven – the crucified Son of God. Whosoever will enter in by that door may be saved; but to him who refuses to use that door, the Bible holds out no hope at all. ‘Without shedding of blood there is no remission.’ (Heb. 9:22)

Let us beware, if we love life, of supposing that mere earnestness will take a man to heaven, though he know nothing of Christ. The idea is a deadly and ruinous error. Sincerity will never wipe away our sins. It is not true that every man will be saved by his religion, no matter what he believes, provided he is diligent and sincere. We must not pretend to be wiser than God. Christ has said, and Christ will stand to it, ‘No man cometh unto the Father but by Me.’” φ. 1 Jn. 5:12. This saying of Christ may seem hard to believe, but it is in strict and demonstrable accord with the authority of Jesus Christ.

Verse 8

“Philip”. Says Barrett, “Only in John are special words and deeds ascribed to Philip. His uncomprehending question here serves simply, according to John’s method, to advance the argument. Philip expresses the universal longing of the religious man, φ. Exod. 33:18. [From the Rabbinic lit. (Barrett) Jewish belief in compartments or dwelling-places (φ. v. 2) is here extended to the activities there.] In the world to come there is neither eating nor drinking, no marital relations, no business affairs, no envy, hatred, or quarrelling; but the righteous sit with their garlands on their heads, enjoying the splendid light of the Shekinah [the presence of God], as it is said, And they beheld God and did eat and drink (Ex. 24:11). [The cross-references include Gen. 31:54; Exod. 18:12; 1 Cor. 10:18). Yet, it may be that these O.T. passages refer to the eating of the sacrifices (albeit the Passover lamb was eaten and the remnants burned, Ex. 12:10). The Passover was both a sacrifice and a feast.] Nothing more can be desired than the vision of the true God; but just as there is no access to, so there is no knowledge of, God apart from Jesus. By this statement John prepares for his exposition of the work of Jesus as revealer.

Verse 9

Philip’s question is otiose and rests upon failure to understand the person and work of Jesus, which are declared as early as the prologue to be directed towards the revelation of God

(1:18). To see Jesus is to see the Father, because the Father is in him and is in fact the agent of his works.

Verse 10

See John 17:21, and other passages in the prayer of ch. 17. The relation between the Father and the Son is not completely reciprocal, yet each can (in slightly different senses) be said to be in the other. The Father abiding in the Son does his works; the Son rests from, and to eternity in the Father's being.... John's exalted Christology never permits him to suggest that the activity of Jesus can be understood without reference to the transcendent God, φ. 5:19; 12:49. John is able to pass readily from the words to the works of Jesus since both alike are revelatory and both are full of power.

Verse 11

Men ought to believe what Jesus says; if they refuse to be convinced on these terms they should consider his works. Throughout this gospel the ἔργα or σημεῖα are presented as events which ought to and sometimes do elicit faith (e.g. 2:11)" (Barrett)

Verse 12sq

As part of the Farewell Discourse, Jesus has spoken of His relationship to the Father. In verse 3, He says, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself..." Most commentators agree that He refers to His Second Coming. Others think that He means that He will meet us at the time of our deaths. Still others think He refers to the time that His disciples gathered around Him after He was resurrected and before He ascended. In any case, the Farewell Discourse concerns the unity of Jesus with this Father. Jesus is not the Father. Now, we come to the completeness of the Godhead through Jesus' instructions about the Holy Spirit. The time of miracles was ending; a time of hope and faith is approaching, and the Spirit is needed to console His followers. He bids them pray in His Name for those things which are needful. He himself will pray to the Father to send the Paraclete. A paraclete is one 'alongside', one who can represent our claim to the court of heaven. In a sense, the Spirit replaces Jesus' physical presence in our midst and acts as the Mediator.

The disciples had no New Testament to refer to; it had yet to be compiled. They sensed that the Lord was leaving them which no doubt agonized them. The Spirit would keep them in unity and truth against the trials they would face, and He would inspire the writers to set down the mighty words and miracles of Jesus. Still more, He would enable them to use God's power to great effect. The Book of Acts records the many accomplishments which the Spirit advanced. In a very real sense, the history of the Church is the legacy of the Holy Spirit in time.

Verse 12

“greater works than these”. Says Richardson, “This is not a crude assertion that believers will be able to work more spectacular miracles than those of Jesus himself. It is a prediction that, after Christ's ascension and because of it (BECAUSE I GO TO THE FATHER), the Church through the power of the Spirit will be enabled to continue Christ's work of opening the blind eyes, healing disease, forgiving sins, bringing life and feeding mankind with the living bread (the Eucharist), on a far greater scale than was possible when Christ's presence was localized in the flesh and subject to all the limitations of time and place.”

Says Barrett, “The power to work miracles was universally credited to the apostles and their contemporaries (φ. for example, 1 Cor. 12:9f), and seems to have continued, especially as the power of exorcism, till a late date. John, however, though he doubtless accepted the miracles of his day, thought of the *ἔργα* primarily as acts in which the power and character of God are made known, φ. Jn. 13:15,35. The greater works therefore are the gathering of many converts into the Church through the activity of the disciples (φ. 17:20; 20:29)

“because I go to the Father.” The death and exaltation of Jesus are the condition of the Church's mission. When Jesus is glorified the Spirit will be given (7:39); when he is in heaven he will hear and answer his disciples' prayers. Further, the ‘greater works’ are directly dependent upon the ‘going’ of Jesus, since before the consummation of the work of Jesus in his ascent to the Father all that he did was necessarily incomplete. The work of the disciples on the other hand lies after the moment of fulfilment.”

Ryle adds, “The full meaning of this promise [from verse 12] is not to be sought in the miracles which the Apostles wrought after Christ left the world. Such a notion seems hardly borne out by facts. We read of no Apostle walking on the water, or raising a person four days dead, like Lazarus. What our Lord has in view seems to be the far greater number of conversions,

the far wider spread of the Gospel, which would take place under the Ministry of the Apostles, than under His own teaching. That this was the case, we know from the Acts of the Apostles. We read of no sermon preached by Christ, under which three thousand were converted in one day, as they were on the day of Pentecost. In short, ‘greater works’ mean more conversions. There is no greater work possible than the conversion of a soul.”

The world cannot receive the Holy Spirit, but our hearts can be the place where He abides. He guides the believer and strengthens the believer by the Truth. The unbeliever, the “natural man”, of course, cannot see Him because He is an invisible Person of the Trinity. The natural man cannot see Him because he has not opened his heart to Him. Read 1 Cor. 2:14.

Verse 13

ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι μου, φ. 15:16; 16:23. “‘In my name’ [> onomatopoeia] means with the invocation of my name. But John’s thought is by no means magical; φ. 1 Jn. 5:14 and Jn. 14:15, where it is presumed that the disciples will love Christ and keep his commandments. ‘this will I do.’ Christ himself will hear and answer prayer... John would not have allowed that any contradiction was involved: the Father acts in and through the Son.

ἵνα δοξασθῇ ὁ πατήρ ἐν τῷ υἱῷ. The Father is glorified in the Son’s activity, both in himself and through his followers, since in all things the Son seeks (and achieves) the Father’s glory; 5:41; 7:18; 8:50,54.” (Barrett)

Verse 14

Omitted in some MSS, because considered redundant after v. 13, Barrett thinks, “The stress on the name of Christ, and on the fact that prayers are to be addressed to him and that he will answer them, is explained by and is to be understood in the light of the context (vs. 10-14) which emphasizes that the works of Christ are the works of God.

Verse 15

‘If you love me.’ The protasis controls the grammar of the next two verses (15-17a), and the thought of the next six (15-21). The relation between Jesus and the disciples which is created by the Holy Spirit depends upon their mutual love.

‘keep my commandments’ φ. vs. 21,23, also 1 Jn. 5:3. John never permits love to devolve into a sentiment or emotion. Its expression is always moral and is revealed in obedience. This is true even of the love of the Son for the Father, φ. 15:10.

Verse 16

One consequence of the disciples’ love for Christ will be their obedience to his commandments; another will be that Christ for his part will obtain for them the gift of the Paraclete. At this point the Paraclete is said to be given by the Father, at the Son’s request; at v. 26 the Father sends him in Christ’s name; at 15:26 Christ sends him from the Father; and he proceeds from the Father; at 16:7 Christ sends him. John intends no significant difference between these expressions.

ἄλλον παράκλητον. Either ἄλλον or παράκλητον may be taken adjectivally, and we may accordingly translate: He will give (a.) another Paraclete, or (b.) another person to be a Paraclete (φ. 1 Jn. 2:1, the only use of παράκλητος ‘advocate’, outside John in the New Testament); this is nowhere else stated in the gospel. But the context (and that of the other uses of παράκλητος) suggests very strongly continuity between the offices of Jesus and the Paraclete, so that translation (a.) [another Paraclete] may be accepted with little hesitation.

The primary meaning of the Greek word is ‘legal assistant, advocate’. This meaning does not however seem to be prominent in John’s usage; there is a prosecuting rather than a defending counsel. The meaning of παράκλητος in John is best arrived at by considering the use παρακαλεῖν and παράκλησις both refer to prophetic Christian preaching (and to the same preaching communicated by apostolic letter); Acts 2:40 ‘exhortation’; 1 Cor. 14:3 ‘encouragement.’ This corresponds to a normal Greek usage in which παρακαλεῖν means ‘to exhort’. Both words are used in another sense independent of the Hebrew Bible; they refer to consolation, and in particular to the consolation to be expected in the messianic age. This usage is common in the Old Testament (e.g. Isa. 40:1 ‘Comfort’ [נַחֵם]), recurs in the New Testament (Mt. 5:4 ‘comforted’; Lk. 2:25 ‘consolation’), and is paralleled in the rabbinic nehamah [> Nahum. Another word in Hebrew is derived from נַחַם which is found in Isa. 66:11 there translated “consolations”: נַחֲמֵם or נַחֲמֵם lit. ‘compassion’; ‘solace’].

The two usages (a.) [another Paraclete] and (b.) [another person to be a Paraclete], though distinct are closely combined: the main burden of the παράκλησις (prophetic exhortation) is that men should enter, or accept the παράκλησις (messianic salvation), which has been brought into being through the work of Jesus; φ. 1 Cor. 14:24 and 31. [In verse 31, παρακαλῶνται is ‘exhorted’ (Gk.); ‘comforted’ (KJV). Barrett appears to be describing a process which he defines as the work of Jesus or the work of God’s Holy Spirit which Paul in 1 Cor. 14:24,31 specifies in terms of prophetic dynamics. Elsewhere, according to Abbott/Smith παράκλητος, esp. in patristic writings, is an ‘advocate, pleader, intercessor, a friend of the accused person, called to speak to his character, or otherwise enlist sympathy in his favour.’ This lexicality more readily applies to Jesus Christ, to Whom the Spirit without measure was given, as one ‘accused’. His familiarity with the indwelling Spirit is utilized by His Church when it is accused, φ. Lk. 12:11-12.] Comparison with the verses in John [chs.] 14-16 which speak of the Paraclete shows that his functions correspond closely with the points that have just been expressed. He witnesses about Christ; he takes ‘the things of Christ’ and declares them (15:26; 16:14; for the meaning of this declaration φ. 2:22; 12:16). He also declares τὰ ἐρχόμενα [‘things to come’] (16:13); he realizes the future eschatological judgement and thus reproves or exposes (ἐλέγχει, 16:8-11) the unbelieving world. He does so by the same means as the Christian preachers: he announces the departure of Christ to the Father (and for John this includes his death, resurrection, and ascension), the judgement of Satan, and the necessity of faith. The Paraclete is the Spirit of Christian paraclesis (φ. the very common rabbinic description of the Holy Spirit as the ‘Spirit of prophecy’).” (Barrett) Groves defines παράκλησις as “exhortation encouragement; comfort, consolation; admonition, warning, counsel, advice; request, entreaty, importunity”.

The patristic writers began with the translation of παράκλητος as “Intercessor”, and after Origen as “Helper” and “Counsellor”. Consider that παρά + καλέω literally means “called around” and that as the prophets (προφήτης: πρό, “fore” + φημί, to “show or make known” (one’s thoughts)) have both a summoning and commission, they are both poetically and actually sent, φ. Isa. 6:8; Ezek. 2:3. They were called by God to show His perfect will. As a matter of fact, God used various methods to communicate His will in both Old and New Testament times: by lots (Lev. 16:8; Acts 1:26); by visions (Gen. 15:1; Acts 9:10); by dreams (Gen. 28:12; Mt. 1:20) and by speaking (Gen. 9:8; Acts 9:4). Nonetheless because of an impudent and obtuse people, He raised up prophets to speak and do miracles in His Name. Barrett has in mind that the

prophetic strain has not been rendered obsolete, but rather expanded under the Christian dispensation. His thesis that the prophetic task is continued by evangelists matches the Old Testament necessity for the longer but more conspicuous calling and sending so familiar to John and Paul of Tarsus.

Verse 17

“The Spirit of truth” as an expression is used three times (14:17; 15:26; 16:13), always in definition of the Paraclete. We return to C.K. Barrett, “John means ‘the Spirit which communicates truth’ – a meaning closely parallel to that which has been ascribed to παράκλητος, especially when it is borne in mind that in Jewish and early Christian literature ἀλήθεια often means the truth proclaimed by a missionary preacher and accepted by his converts (e.g. 2 Cor. 4:2).

ὁ ὁ κόσμος οὐ δύναται λαβεῖν. The world means mankind over against God, and by definition the Spirit is alien to it. The contrast between the disciples and the world, a frequent theme in these chapters, is strongly brought out.”

Verses 18-27

Reverend Matthew Henry writes on verse 18, “‘I will come to you’ [lit. ‘I do come’, ἔρχομαι] 1) I will come speedily to you at my resurrection, I will not be long away, but will be with you again in a little time.’ He had often said, ‘The third day I will rise again. 2) ‘I will be coming daily to you in my Spirit;’ in the tokens of his love, and visits of his grace, he is still coming. 3) ‘I will come certainly at the end of time, surely I will come quickly to introduce you into the joy of your Lord.

When Christ was about to leave the world he made his will. His soul he committed to his Father; his body he bequeathed to Joseph, to be decently interred; his clothes fell to the soldiers; his mother he left to the care of John, but what should he leave to his poor disciples, that had left all for him? Silver and gold he had none; but he left them that which infinitely better, his peace. ‘I leave you, but I leave my peace with you. I not only give you a title to it, but put you in possession of it.’ He did not part in anger, but in love.”

Verse 18

ὁρφανούς literally, orphans, children left without a father; but the word was used also of disciples left without a master. ἔρχομαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς. In verse 3 the πάλιν ἔρχομαι of Jesus seemed to refer most naturally to his parousia, but it must not be inferred that the ἔρχομαι of this verse necessarily refers to the same coming. The alternatives are the coming of Jesus in the resurrection appearances, and the coming of Jesus in the Holy Spirit. Of these, the latter is improbable, since we ought not suppose that John simply confounds Jesus with the Holy Spirit, and the former is supported by the following verses. It is however by no means impossible that John consciously and deliberately used languages applicable to both the resurrection and the parousia, thereby emphasizing the eschatological character of the resurrection.” (Barrett) The Greek translation is “I am coming”, which easily might suggest a response to a future invitation.

Verse 19

“When Jesus is dead and buried the world will see him no more; but the disciples, to whom he will appear in his risen body, will see him. Nevertheless, the words are applicable, and John, it seems, intended them to be applicable, to the whole of Christian history, throughout which the Church is united to Jesus while the world does not know him.

Verse 20

Here, as frequently in the last discourses, it is significant that eschatological language is borrowed to describe these events which fall within the time-sequence: they are events of eternal quality and significance.... The resurrection of Jesus and his presence with his own points unmistakably to the continuity of the divine life which flows from the Father, through the Son, and in the Church.

Verse 21

‘shall be loved of my Father’. John does not mean, though his language is such as might be taken to imply, that God’s love is conditioned upon man’s obedience... His thought is at this point (and frequently in the last discourses) concentrated upon the mutuality of the relation between Father, Son, and believers. Because the disciples love one another they will appear to men as members of the divine family; their love for Christ, and union with him, means that the Father loves them in him. They enjoy the Father’s love merely as his creatures (φ. 1 Jn. 4:10);

but as Christians they represent even more than an extension of the incarnation; they are an extension of the social personality of the Godhead.

‘and I will love him and manifest myself to him’. The love of Christ for his disciples is declared in self-manifestation. ἐφανερίξειν is used again in the next verse; nowhere else in John, and nowhere else in the New Testament in this sense. It is an appropriate word since it is used of theophanies: e.g. Exod. 33:13,18.... The manner of the manifestation is not made clear in this verse. ἐφανερίξειν might refer to a resurrection appearance, or to a spiritual revelation of Christ; and it would not be inappropriate to the appearance of Christ in glory at the last day.

Verse 22

The synoptic gospels mention a Judas among the brothers of Jesus (Mk. 6:3; Mt. 13:55; φ. Jude 1). Only Luke 6:16 – Acts 1:13 mentions an apostle of this name; see Luke 6:16 (Ἰούδαν Ἰακώβου, mentioned between Simon called Zelotes and Judas Iscariot, at the end of the list), and Acts 1:13 (Ἰούδας Ἰακώβου, mentioned last after Simon Zelotes). But traditionally identified with Thaddem, φ. Mk. 3:18; Mt. 10:3. There is no sufficient ground for identifying him with Thaddaeus in the Marcan list, or Lebbaeus in the Matthean. [Various MSS have Judas Cananites, Thomas, and Judas Thomas.] It seems not impossible that the original text read simply Judas. This however cannot be concluded with certainty.” (Barrett)

“How is it that it is to us thou wilt manifest thyself, and not to the world? φ. Acts 10:41. In Acts the reference is undoubtedly to the resurrection appearances; only believers had seen the risen Christ. This meaning is suggested for John also by vv. 18f. But John’s thought was neither simple nor static, and at this point a further stage has been reached. It was contrary to the earliest expectations of the Church that a long interval should intervene between the death of Jesus and his appearance in glory before the eyes of the whole world (Mk. 13:26; Rev. 1:7). This glorious appearance on the clouds of heaven had not taken place, and the question attributed to Judas is one which was doubtless asked by many perplexed Christians (φ. 2 Pet. 3:4). John here gives a solution of the problem. Part of the truth lies in his coming, as expected, at the last day; but between these comings there is a different kind of parousia and manifestation.” (Barrett)

Verse 23

Says Strachan, “Judas evidently feels that it would be more effective if Jesus would manifest Himself so that all men might see Him. The answer is that the whole power of the Godhead is present in the life and witness of a faithful believer (φ. 17:21f); we will come unto him and make our abode with him. Such witness conquers the world (1 Jn. 5:4-10).”

Says Barrett, “John has in mind neither the resurrection appearances nor the parousia of the last day. To the man who becomes a Christian both the Father and the Son (their equality is implied) will come. This is the parousia upon which John’s interest is concentrated, and it is the interval, unforeseen by apocalyptic Christianity, between the resurrection and the consummation that he proposes to explain. The explanation is in terms of the ‘mystical’ abiding of God with the believer.

The Father and the Son will make their permanent dwelling with the Christian. The Old Testament is primarily concerned with the dwelling of God with man (Zech. 2:10); John having stated the basic solution at 1:14, comes here to its personal outcome. Intimate mystical union with God was the goal of many religious in antiquity, not least the mystery cults and gnostic theosophies. John’s thought is distinguished from that of his contemporaries by (a.) his insistence upon the historical framework of Christianity, (b.) his insistence upon moral obedience and love as a prerequisite of the indwelling of God.

Verse 25

‘These things have I spoken’. The reference is to the words of consolation which Jesus has spoken; but they will only have their effect through the future ministry of the Paraclete (v. 26).

Verse 26

‘whom the Father will send in my name.’ ‘In my name’ can hardly mean ‘because you ask in my name’; perhaps ‘because I ask’ or ‘to act in relation to me, in my place, with my authority’ φ. Mk. 13:6 where those who claim to be Christ (ἐγώ εἰμι) are said to come ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματί μου.

[“the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name”: The full title THE HOLY SPIRIT occurs only here in the Fourth Gospel (at 20:22 there is no definite article) (Richardson)]

‘he shall teach you all things’ φ. 15:16 (witness) 16:13 (guide, speak, glorify). One of the primary functions of the Paraclete is to teach. φ. Ps. 25:5,9; 1 Jn. 2:20,27.

In John the Paraclete reminds the believer not of anything within himself but the spoken, though not fully understood, words of Jesus. There is no independent revelation through the Paraclete, but only an application of the revelation in Jesus.

Verse 27

Jesus is taking leave of his disciples and uses the conventional word of farewell, Peace (shalom) εἰρήνη is used in John only here and at 16:33 (in a similar sense); and as a greeting at 20:19,21,26. But the word had already acquired much more than conventional depth; thus in the Old Testament, Num. 6:26; Ps. 29:11; Isa. 54:13; 57:19; Ezek. 37:26; and in the New Testament, Rom. 1:7; 5:1; 14:17 and many other passages. The rest of this verse shows that peace means the absence of fear and perturbation of heart; and that is the gift of Christ alone. [The words recall those given to Joshua (Josh. 1:9) on the eve of conquest. (Temple)]

‘Peace I leave with you’. For ἀφιέναι with the meaning ‘to bequeath’, see Ps. 17:14; Eccl. 2:18; Mk. 12:22. The peace of Christ (ρῆν ἐμήν) is not the world’s peace (since he has it at the moment of supreme peril and distress), and accordingly he gives it in a novel way. φ. the synoptic promise of assistance in time of persecution (Mk. 13:11, μὴ προμεριμᾶτε [‘be not careful beforehand’, Gk; ‘take no thought beforehand’, KJV]).

μὴ ταρασξέσθω, ‘be troubled’ φ. Jn. 14:1 μὴδὲ δειλιάτω ‘neither afraid’ – Let it not play the coward.

Verse 28

ἠκούσατε [‘ye have heard’] φ. 14:2-4,12,18f,21,23. The discourse is recapitulated in the repetition of the key words ὑπάγειν [to go], ἔρχεσθαι [to come]. Jesus will return to the glory of the Father through death; yet he will come to the disciples and be closer to them than ever. [Says Marsh, “His departure and return were to be fulfilled in the one act which would be both crucifixion and glorification, both defeat and victory, both death and everlasting life, both parting from his disciples and his return to them for ever.”] The fact that the discourse is recapitulated in

this way lends some weight to the view that ch. 14 is a discourse complete in itself. This cannot however be pressed in view of John's generally repetitive style.

True love for Jesus, which they did not yet possess, would have made the disciples rejoice in his exaltation just as true understanding would have enabled them to see that his departure was for their advantage.

'my Father is greater than I'. John is not thinking of the essential relations of the Father and the Son, but of the humiliation of the Son in his earthly life, a humiliation which now, in his death, reached both its climax and its end.

John emphasizes both the humanity of Jesus and his inferiority to the Father (5:19; 7:16; 10:29; 14:28). The latter passages are not to be simply explained away as having reference only to the humanity or incarnate life of our Lord. The eternal Son (not the incarnate Jesus merely) was sent by the Father (3:17 and often), to speak the Father's words (14:10; 17:8) and to perform the Father's works (14:10). That is to say, Jesus reveals the Father; the object of his mission is to bring men to the supreme God. John's thought is paradoxical, as perhaps all Christological thought must be. Since Jesus Christ reveals (not himself but) the Father, the Father is greater than he. Yet since to see Jesus is to see the Father (14:9), he is one with the Father (10:30) and equal to him (5:18); the Word shares the divine nature (Θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος, 1:1). The incarnation, further, meant a real abating of the power and authority of the Logos. This is not to say that John authorizes any particular modern form of kenotic theory; it means simply (and this is much more significant) that John takes seriously the sacrificial love of Christ, which, though it was most clearly demonstrated in the cross, informed the whole earthly mission of the Son of God.

It may be that some of John's language is unguarded; the Arians found 14:28 very useful; but more than any other New Testament writer he lays the foundation for a doctrine of a co-equal Trinity." (Barrett *in loc.*, and Introduction, pp. 77-78)

Westcott wrote, "So far then as it was fit that the Son should be incarnate and suffer, and not the Father, it is possible for us to understand that the Father is greater than the Son in Person but not in exercise."

Whitehead says, "The Son is only inferior to the Father as touching His manhood. He was equal to the Father as touching his Godhead."

Jesus is nearing the end of His earthly ministry. As He approaches the Crucifixion, He certainly comforts His disciples with a reminder that His work will indeed be completed. He will preach concerning good and evil.

Verse 29

φ. 13:19

Verse 30

Barrett says, “Since Jesus is not of this world (8:23, φ. 18:36) the ruler of this world can make no claim against him. It is not implied (as in some later theories of the atonement) that the devil was deceived.”

Denney in a commentary of 2 Corinthians wrote, “What sleepy conscience, what moral mediocrity, itself purblind, only dimly conscious of the height of the Christian calling, and vexed by no aspirations towards it, has any right to say that it is too much to call Satan ‘the god of this world’? Such sleep consciences have no idea of the omnipresence, the steady persistent pressure, the sleepless malignity, of the evil forces which beset man’s life. Call such powers Satan, or what you please, but do not imagine that they are inconsiderable. During this age, they reign; they have virtually taken what should be God’s place in the world.”

“Hath nothing in me” means “hath no more power over me”, or “has no claim on me, as One who never yielded to temptation.” (Strachan)

Lightfoot says, “Since the Lord is not of this world (8:23; 17:14,16), and is Himself without sin (Heb. 4:15), this power has no part in or hold on Him. None the less, He is on His way to face this power, which will to all appearance wreak its will on Him.

C.H. DODD on John 14:6 - SUPPLEMENTAL -

“In 13:33-14:3 the distinction of Christ’s approaching journey is elaborately kept secret. What Jesus is saying is, ‘You know the way: you do not need to know where it leads.’ Thomas objects, ‘If we do not know the destination, how can we know the way?’ which is the voice common sense. But Jesus replies, ‘I am the way.’ This is the whole purport of the mystification

of 13:33-36. No revelation of the ultimate goal is necessary before Christians can do what it is their business to do – follow Christ at whatever cost and obey His commandment of charity (21:22). When they know the way, then the goal will reveal itself, for the way Christ goes must be the way to the Father. It is in this order that the revelation is given: first the way, then the goal; not vice versa. At 16:5, on the other hand, the disciples are in full possession of Christ's disclosure of His (and their) goal (14:2 πρὸς τὸν πατέρα πορευομαι, idem 14:28). Consequently, they are no longer puzzling themselves about the destination, and that is as it should be; but that being so, it is quite unreasonable to be sad about it. Jesus is reproaching them, not because they are not enquiring about His destination, but because in spite of knowing that He is going to the Father they are dismayed about the future.” (Dodd)

(Read Is. 5:1-7)

Barrett and Lightfoot both emphasize the obedience of the Son to the Father's will and His dependence on Him. Before these events in Jerusalem, Jesus did miracles and afterwards taught how they related to Him. Now words precede events, and they have an ominous prophetic tone to them.

"As the Father gives the faithful disciples the true Bread from heaven which is His Son whom He hath sealed as His own (6:27,32), so the Father is the Husbandman to whom the true Vine belongs.

The Son was sent by the Father for the salvation of the world (3:17), and the words which He spake and the works which He accomplished are the words and works of the Father (5:36,37; 14:10,11). Hatred of the Son is therefore hatred of the Father. The rejection of Jesus is sin, distinguished from all other sins. It is inexcusable, for the World is held responsible to discern the truth when the truth is thus presented to it (9:41, cf. Deut. 18:18,19)." (Hoskyns)

The vine had been a symbol of the community of Israel; here it is used individually by Jesus. (Marsh) See Isaiah 5:7. Temple states, "The vine lives to give its life-blood."

Barrett is the most comprehensive of commentators I have read, and writes, "Symbolic speech based upon vines and vineyards is found in the synoptic gospels; Mk. 12:1-9; Mt. 21:33-41; Lk. 20:9-16; Mt. 20:1-16; 21:28-32; cf. Lk. 13:6-9. All these parables have in common the fact that the vineyard, or persons connected with it, represent Israel, or a section of Israel. A contrast is drawn between the fruit which Israel, as God's vineyard, or the labourers in his vineyard, ought to bear, or to produce by labour, and the scanty results which in fact appear. In pointing this contrast the New Testament follows in the steps of the Old Testament (e.g. Isaiah 5:1-7). What must be noticed here is the twofold transformation of the traditional material which John has effected, and which is visible in both the form and substance of the parable. (a.) John withdraws the point of the parable from the eschatological crisis of the ministry of Jesus and applies it to the continuous life of the Church. (b.) The vine in his handling of the material ceases to represent Israel and becomes a Christological definition applied to Jesus himself. The change in the form of the parabolic material appears in the facts 1) that no clear story is told; we do not hear the fate of a particular vine or vineyard, but rather certain general observations on

viticulture; 2) that the whole symbolism is governed by the opening words ἐγώ εἰμι: Jesus is all that the vine truly symbolizes.

Verse 1

The vine is one of the most prized of plants and in allegorical usage naturally represents the most privileged among nations and men. This usage appears in the Old Testament where Israel is described as a vine, See e.g. Jer. 2:21; Ezek. 15:1-8; 19:10-14; Ps. 80:8-16. In these passages the pure and favoured origin, but also the degeneration and anger, of Israel are described.... In the Marcan account one of the central features is the blessing of a cup of wine which is afterwards given to the disciples with the words, 'This is my blood of the covenant which is shed for many' (Mk. 14:24; φ. Mt. 26:28; also Lk. 22:20. In Mt. 26:29 the wine is described as τὸ γένημα τῆς ἀμπέλου in the eschatological saying 'I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God (φ. Lk. 22:18 '... until the kingdom of God come'). This recalls the usual Jewish benediction over wine, 'Blessed art thou, O Lord... who created the fruit of the vine.' In the synoptic narratives the fruit of the vine is thus at once the means by which the disciples are made sharers in the sacrificial death of Christ and an anticipation of the life of the age to come. Union with Christ (and contact thereby with the other world) forms the basis and theme of the whole of ch. 15. There is a mutual indwelling of Father, Son, and disciple.... Here as often the adjective ['true'] draws a contrast with some other object less real than that described by John. Thus Israel is called a vine; but the true vine is not the apostate people but Jesus, and those who are, as branches, incorporated in him."

Whitehead says that the discourse on the True Vine (vs. 1-10) "may have been suggested by the vineyards on the way to Gethsemane, the carved vine on the great doors of the Temple, the fruit of the vine which they had just left, or the vine which was frequently trained about the window of the guest-chamber. [See Gen. 49:11] The vine was also the national emblem under the Maccabees, and it appears on their coins."

The husbandman is not only the tiller of the land, but the vine-planter and dresser. So the Father originated the relation between the vine and branches, by planting the Vine in this earth (the nature of man), and who looks for and ensures the beginning forth of fruit. (Whitehead) Barrett cites 1 Cor. 3:6-9 ('ye are God's husbandry'). "There is a different picture in the parable

of Mk. 12:1-12, where the owner of the vineyard lets it out to γεωργοί (husbandmen). [> Georgics, Vergil's poem about agriculture].”

Verse 2

“in me” Says Barrett, “The Interpretation of the unfruitful branches may be twofold. The original branches in God’s vines were the Jews; these, being unfruitful (unbelieving) God removed φ. Mt. 21:41; Rom. 11:17, and also Mt. 15:13. This seems to have been the earliest Christian interpretation of the vine-symbolism, and it may well have been at the back of John’s mind; but ἐν ἐμοί shows that his primary thought was of apostate Christians.”

αἶρει “takes away... purges: Here καθαίρει “cleansing” is of worthless parts of the vine (κλῆμα – branch > clematis). The rank growth is lopped off so that the vine may enlarge and ripen its fruit better. Says Whitehead, “One who will not abide in Christ becomes separate from Him – (1.) is cast out (out of the vineyard), like a branch in such a case; (2.) becomes dried up, having lost the supply of live-giving sap (quenched the spirit, 1 Thess. 5:19); (3.) is gathered up with other such by angels at the great day; (4.) is cast into the fire as the result of that judgment; and (5.) finally burneth.”

Verse 3

“Ye are clean already”. “The adjective καθαροί, like the cognate verb, is used in agriculture (such as clearing weeds from the ground before sowing). The disciples as the initial members of the new people of God have already undergone the process of purification, φ. 13:10 ‘through the word which I have spoken unto you.’ There is no inconsistency with 13:10, nor in John’s mind any wish to contrast a cleansing activated by physical means (baptism) with a cleansing wrought by the spoken word only. In both ch. 13 and ch. 15 he is thinking of the total effect of what Jesus was and did for his own. In the former the process of washing represents the whole loving service of Jesus to men, culminating in his death; in the latter his ‘word’ is the message of salvation which he brings, and in himself is. φ. 6:63, where John passes from the eating of flesh and the drinking of blood to the ῥήματα [‘words’] of Jesus as spirit and life.” (Barrett)

Henry has this insight, “Perhaps here is allusion to the law concerning vineyards in Canaan; the fruit of them was as unclean, and uncircumcised, the first three years after it was

planted, and the fourth year it was to be holiness of praise unto the Lord; and then it was clean, Lev. 19:23,24. The disciples had now been three years under Christ's instruction; and now you are clean."

Verse 4

"Abide in me, and I in you" "This is the basic thought of the chapter. The Christian life is unthinkable except in union with Christ." (Barrett)

Verse 5

"The thought of the previous verse is repeated in different words. Such repetitions are characteristic of John, e.g. 1:2." Barrett. "Apart from me. Ye can do nothing," correlates to when the disciples went fishing and caught nothing until later when they were brought under His supervision." (Hoskyns)

Verse 6

"Judas forfeited his mission and became a withered branch. He is 'cast out' in the same act as when he went out and it was night' (13:30)" (So Strachan). Barrett concludes, "An unfaithful Christian suffers the fate of an unfruitful branch." Marsh sees no implication of eternal fires of judgment. Rather a branch is just a stick if it is separated from the vinestock.

Barrett and Abbott/Smith cite Moulton for the use of timeless aorists: ἐβλήθη, "he is cast" and ἐξηράνθη, lit. "is dried up". φ. Isa. 40:7: ἐξηράνθη ὁ χόρτος καὶ τὸ ἄνθος ἐξέπεσεν. "the grass withereth and the flower fadeth."

One of several Old Testament passages which describe Israel as a choice vine planted by God is found in Psalm 80:8-16. Says Dodd, "The idea of God as the γεωργός [husbandman], who plants and cultivates the world, mankind, and the individual soul, would be familiar enough to Hellenistic readers." This familiarity Dodd traces to Platonism and revived Pythagoreanism, but for our purposes, we will remain ensconced in the Upper Room as Jesus tells His allegory. Dodd explains, "In Psalm 80:9-15 the history of Israel from the Exodus is told in terms of the clearing of a vineyard, the import of a vine from abroad, its successful transplanting, and its prosperous growth; and then, with increasing neglect, the damage it suffers from trespassers and marauding animals. The figure of the vine dominates [Jesus'] discourse done to verse 8. The thought is at

first that of God's care for his vine. But soon we reach the second stage of the allegory, in which it is no longer the relation of cultivator and vine, but the relation of the vine and its own branches that is in view. Here we must start from the frequent use of the vine-figure in the Old Testament for the people of Israel, especially, perhaps in Ps. 80, where the poet tells how God brought a vine from Egypt, and planted it, so that it grew and put forth great branches, but the vineyard fence was broken down, and the vine robbed and ravaged by men and beasts. The poet then appeals to God to look upon His vine –

[“Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself.” (v. 17)]

[It is clear] in the Hebrew that the Vine and the Son of Man are equivalent concepts (φ. verse 18), both standing for the people of God, exposed to death and destruction but saved by the hand of God, who raises them to life [‘quicken us’]” φ. Lk. 24:44.

Verse 7

Back to Barrett; “Here ῥήματα are probably the specific sayings and precepts of Jesus (φ. v. 10); these must remain in the Christian's mind and heart.... The prayer of a truly obedient Christian cannot fail, since he can ask nothing contrary to the will of God.

Verse 8

‘Herein is my Father glorified.’ In John it is usually the Son who is glorified, but φ. 12:28; 13:31; 14:13; 17:4. The Father is gloried in the Son – in his obedience and perfect accomplishment of his work. It is therefore but a short step to see the glorification of the Father in the obedience and fruitfulness of those who are united to the Son.... To bear fruit is a proof of the reality of discipleship. Φ. 13:35, where mutual love is the sign of discipleship, and 14:12 where the same thought is resumed.

Verse 9

The notion of a correspondence between the relation of Father and Son and that of the Son and disciples is especially frequent in chs. 13-17. The aorist ἠγάπησα [‘have loved’, KJV] denotes the whole act of love lavished by Jesus upon his disciples and consummated in his death. The love of the Father for the Son is expressed by continuous tenses at 3:35; 5:20; 10:17; here,

and at 17:24,26, the aorist is used for the love of Jesus for the disciples, and also perhaps with reference to the pretemporal relations of Father and Son.

“Abide” The aorist imperative may be used for emphasis; perhaps rather it is a summon to the disciples to enter into and so to abide in the love of Jesus.

“in my love”; “my love for you”. What it is to abide in the love of Jesus is shown in the next verse.

Verse 10

The parallel shows that love and obedience are mutually dependent. Love arises out of obedience, obedience out of love.

Verse 11

The joy of Jesus springs out of his obedience to the Father and his unity with him in love. The seal upon his obedience and love is his ascent to the Father, and this should make his disciples rejoice (14:28; 16:20-24; 17:13). But in addition they too may experience the joy of mutual love and obedience. πληρωσῇ [means] ‘may be complete’. The expression is Johannine; 3:29; 16:24; 17:13; 1 Jn. 1:4, 2 Jn. 12.

Verse 12

“This is my commandment”. The commandment (now become singular, summarizing all commandments, v. 10) which will keep in the love of Christ those who observe it is itself the commandment of love. Love is, as it were, the bond of existence within the unity of Father, Son and believers (the Holy Spirit is not here in mind)... The whole ministry of Jesus, including his glorification in death (φ. Mk. 10:45), is summed up as the service of love to those who by it are redeemed; every Christian owes the same service of love to every other. [In Jn. 21:19, Jesus signifies by what death Peter should “glorify God.”]

Verse 13

Once more, John is not narrowing the scope of Christian love, or of the love of God. He does not deny God’s universal love for the κόσμος, but views love from a different standpoint. God’s love for the κόσμος resulted in the separation from it of a small group of φίλοι (not in the

conversion of the whole world, φ. v. 25, ἐμίσηζάμ με δωρεάν [“They hated me without a cause”]). In a special sense the love of Jesus was lavished upon these “friends” to the end that among them and in them love might grow. Their mutual love was a reflection of Jesus’ love for them, more, of the mutual love which exists eternally between the Father and the Son. The eternal divine love reached its complete and unsurpassable expression in the death of Christ, which was at the same time the death of a man for his friends.

“for his friends” John seems to draw no distinction between ἀγαπᾶν and φιλεῖν; accordingly we may render here, ‘... for those whom he loves’.” (Barrett)

Verse 14

“It is clear that the status of friend is not one which precludes obedient service; this is rather demanded. There is no essential difference between being Christ’s φίλος and abiding in his ἀγάπη.” (Barrett) “The true believer receives the title which is characteristic of Abraham ‘the father of the faithful,’ ‘the friend of God’ (Jas. 2:23).” (Whitehead)

Verse 15

“The difference between a ‘servant’ and a ‘friend’ lies not in doing or not doing the will of God, but in understanding or not understanding it. The disciples are φίλοι because Jesus has declared to them the whole counsel of God (φ. 16:12). Φ. the contrasts between servants and sons at Gal. 4:1-7; Heb. 3:5f. It is characteristic of John that that which (according to him) distinguishes the friend from the slave is knowledge, and that knowledge should be very closely related to love.... It must always be remembered that for John the distinguishing marks for these who become φίλοι are the obedience and humility shown by Jesus himself. φίλοι probably became a technical term for Christian, φ. 3 Jn. 14; Lk. 12:4; Acts 27:3.” (Barrett)

Verse 16

Strachan says that here is “a word of both command and encouragement. The enterprise of spreading the Christian faith, the belief that Christianity is ‘the absolute and final religion, are not humanly conceived. The whole conception of a witnessing and missionary church is Christ’s, and not the mere stubborn human conviction of men seeking to propagate their own views.” The word for “ordained” is here ἔθηκα; Gal. 3:19 was διαταγείς.

*ἔθηκε > τίθημι “made” aor. of “put”

* “ethics” < ἥθος custom, usage.

Says Barrett, “In the gospel narrative (and this is true of the synoptics as of John), Jesus chooses, calls, and appoints his disciples. The initiative is entirely his; the ἐγώ is emphatic. This emphasis governs the interpretation of the whole passage. Man are not Jesus’ friends because they have a natural affinity with him, but because he has named them (ἔθηκε) his friends. If they lay down their lives in love, it is because he first laid down his life for them.

“ye should go and bring forth fruit.” The metaphor looks back to the metaphor of the vine with which the chapter opened. “Should go” refers to the mission of the apostles to the world. φ. Jn. 4:36. The fruits of the apostolic mission will be gathered in, and not lost.

Bearing fruit, and prayer which is sure of its answer, are the twin privileges which flow from the appointment [“ordain” of 16c] of Jesus.

Verse 17

This verse forms a transition to the next paragraph; it repeats the thoughts of vs. 10,12, and other passages. The sense is, “The Commandments I give you are to the effect that you should love one another.”

“In the previous section (vs. 1-17) the thought was concentrated upon the small group of friends of Jesus, their union in love with each other and with him, their obedience, their prayers. John now looks forward to consider their surroundings. They live in the midst of the κόσμος. To the love which flourishes within the circle of believers corresponds the hatred of the world, which first hated Jesus and naturally continues to hate those who are his, since the world can only love its own. It is as truly the nature of the world to hate as it is the nature of Christians to love. Because the Christians are in Christ, hatred of them is hatred of Christ, and hatred of Christ is hatred of the Father who sent him. The unpopularity of Christians in the world is due ultimately to the attitude of the world to God. See also Mt. 10:17-39 and parallels.” (Barrett)

“The word ‘hate’ is used in Lk. 14:26 of giving up family ties for Christ’s sake, φ. Jn. 12:25. Clearly the word there means relinquishing what is of great value for that which of infinitely greater worth. Here the word is used in its full strength.” (Hoskyns) Says Henry, “Here Christ discourses concerning hatred which is the character and genius of the devil’s kingdom, as

love is the kingdom of Christ. Observe here, who they are in whom this hatred is found – the world, the children of this world, as distinguished from the children of God; those who are in the interests of the god of this world, whose image they bear, and whose power they are subject to... wholly devoted to this world and the things of it, and never thinking of another world. φ. Mt. 5:11,12; 2 Tim. 3:12; Lk. 6:26. Observe here who are they against whom this hatred is levelled – against the disciples of Christ, against Christ himself, and against the Father.

Whom Christ blesseth the world curseth. The favourites and heirs of heaven have never been the darlings of this world, since the old enmity was put between the seed of the woman and of the serpent. Why did Cain hate Abel, but because his works were righteous? Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing; Joseph's brothers hated him because his father loved him; Saul hated David because the Lord was with him; Ahab hated Micaiah because of his prophecies; such are the causeless causes of the world's hatred."

Verse 20

"John means, If there are some who persecute you, there will also be others who will keep your word. The mission of the Church will result in the same twofold response as the work of Jesus himself (φ. esp. Jn. 12:44-50). Φ. the work of the Old Testament prophets: the rejection of their message by the people as a whole and the formation of a remnant.

Verse 21

The disciples will be neither hated nor believed on their own account but on account of Christ who sends them. To know God, that is, to recognize him in Jesus, is to transfer oneself from the world to the friends of Jesus, the Church. ὁ πέμψας με ["he who sent me" φ. 8:26] is a very common Johannine description of the Father." (Barrett)

Verse 22

This verse is an apodosis (after an unfulfilled condition in past time) [Seems like a double syllogism.] The cross-reference is to ch. 9:41 which is also a complex construction. See also 8:39 and 19:11. Says Barrett, "The coming of Jesus makes possible the ultimate and unmistakable manifestation of sin, which is disbelief in him (16:9); accordingly it passes judgement on the world. It is clear that by sin John means conscious and deliberate rejection of the light."

πρόφασιν; “cloak”, KJV; “pretext” Gk is not used elsewhere in John. Barrett thinks “excuse” is the best rendering – it appears marginally.

Verse 23

φ. 13:20 where the corresponding positive statement is made. John always insists that the work of Jesus is unthinkable apart from the constant activity of God. What Jesus does is done by God, and every attitude of men to him is an attitude to God.

Verse 24

In the works of Jesus divine activity was plainly visibly, they therefore leave men without excuse for their unbelief.

Verse 25

ἀλλ’ ἵνα πληρωθῇ. Either the expression is elliptic (‘These things are so happening in order that they word may be fulfilled’) or ἵνα with the subjunctive is used imperatively (‘But let the word be fulfilled’ – φ. Mk. 14:49). The ellipse is perhaps more probable; φ. 9:3; 13:18. For πληροῦν with a reference to Scripture, φ. 12:38; 13:18; 17:12; 19:24; 36. Explicit references to the verbal fulfilment of Scripture are comparatively rare in John and when they do occur are generally of special significance. Here the point is that the Jews, who hate Jesus, are convicted out of their own law.

“in their law”. For νόμος as including more than the Pentateuch, [consider that] the ‘Law’ is used to cover the Psalter at 12:34; 15:25; 1 Cor. 14:21 [which cites Isaiah 28:11]. [See also Jn. 10:34.] Torah sometimes covers the whole of the Old Testament. Jesus distinguishes himself and his disciples from the Jews by speaking of ‘their Law.’ The Jews’ hatred of Jesus is referred to and described as causeless in their own Law; they are self-condemned and without excuse. φ. Ps. 35:19 or Ps. 69:4. Bernard plausibly suggests that John had in mind the latter Psalm because it was regarded as messianic.

Verse 26

The mission of the Spirit is closely parallel to that of the Son. φ. 8:42; 13:3; 16:27,28,30; 17:8.

ἐκεῖνος – “He”. The greater changes; the Spirit is thought of in personal terms.

μαρτυρήσει περὶ ἐμοῦ - “will bear witness”, Gk.; “will testify”, KJV. Witnessing is one of the primary themes of the gospel φ. 1:7. Here only is the Spirit said to bear witness; his work in this respect is more fully expounded (though without the use of μαρτυρεῖν) in ch. 16. The connection with the context is important. Jesus testifies against the Jews, who hate him, and crowns his testimony with a reference to the Jews’ own Bible. The Paraclete will continue to testify to Jesus. The disciples also bear witness (v. 27) and this introduces (16:1f) the subject of persecution; and at 16:8 John returns to the convicting work of the Paraclete. The whole paragraph bears such strong marks of unity that it seems very improbable that the verses about the Paraclete have been inserted into already prepared material.

Verse 27

καὶ ὑμεῖς μαρτυρεῖτε “and ye also shall bear witness” φ. Acts 5:32. The Spirit and the disciples both continue the work of Jesus. ὅτι ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς μετ’ ἐμοῦ ἐστέ. Their qualification is their long association with Jesus. For this use of ἀρχή φ. 16:4; elsewhere in John ἀρχή refers not to the beginning of the ministry but the beginning of creation, or time. ἐστέ suggests continuity; the disciples have been and still at the moment of speaking are with Jesus; indeed their unity with him (as the last discourses constantly repeat) can never be permanently broken.” (Barrett)

Ryle concludes, “In leaving this chapter, let us not fail to note how systematically our blessed Master gave His disciples instruction on three most important points. The first was their relation to Himself. There were to abide in close union with Him, like branches in a vine. The second was their relation to one another. They were love one another with a deep, self-sacrificing love, like their Master’s. The third was their relation to the world. They were to expect its hatred, not be surprised at it; to bear it patiently, and not be afraid of it.”

“The disciples of Christ are apt to be offended at the cross; and the offence of the cross is a dangerous temptation, even to good men, to turn back from the ways of God, or turn aside out of them, or drive on heavily in them; to quit either their integrity or their comfort. It is not for nothing that a suffering time is called an hour of temptation. . . . [His followers will face] the sword of ecclesiastical censure [and] the sword of civil power.” (Matthew Henry)

Calvin said that with regard to excommunication, the disciples need have no honour of “becoming strangers from the congregation out of which Christ is banished.”

With a few exceptions this chapter is drawn from C.K. Barrett. “The separation of the Church from the world is of ultimate significance; it means, since the world’s attitude to the Church discloses its attitude to God, the judgement of the world. The synoptic apocalypses, already alluded to move and culminate in the theme of judgement; and so do the Johannine discourses. Once more however the theme is transposed. The judgement is no longer primarily future (see however v. 13), but proceeds continuously through the operation of the Paraclete in the Church. The Paraclete brings to bear, both upon the Church and the world, the truth, the truth of God which was manifested in Jesus (1:18). Through him the ministry of Jesus is prolonged. The process of conviction in respect of sin, righteousness, and judgement serves as an analysis both of the ministry of Jesus and also of the mission of the Church. The sin of the world, the righteousness of God, and the judgement which takes place when the two meet, are laid bare. But the seal is set upon the whole process by the departure of Jesus to be with the Father, and the gift, subsequent to his glorification, of the Spirit. This is why the departure of Jesus, painful though it may be, is nevertheless for the advantage of his disciples. This thought is developed in the next section.

Verse 1

‘these things’ here refers to the hatred of the world (15:18-27), which is mentioned again in greater detail in the next verse, while the judgement of the world by the Paraclete follows.

‘that ye should not be offended.’ The only use of *σκανδαλίζειν* in John (the word is especially characteristic of Matthew) is at 6:61. In both places it has considerable force, and means ‘to cause to give up the Christian faith’. John was undoubtedly thinking of the possibility

that Christians might give up their faith under persecution; perhaps he had reason to know that the possibility was real. Such lapses took place; φ. Rev. 21:8.... The disciples are forewarned so that no surprise of persecution (φ. 1 Pet. 4:12, μὴ ξενιζέσθε: ‘think it not strange’ [*< xenophobia*]) may shake their faith.”

Verse 2

Marsh says that excommunication was for seven days, thirty days, or indefinitely. The reference given for ‘they shall put you out of the synagogues’ is 9:22, where the parents of the man born blind feared the Jews who excommunicated any man who claimed to be the Christ. Barrett continues;

[αλλ’]. For this pregnant use of ἀλλά (‘and not only so, but further...’) φ. 1 Cor. 3:2: ‘but’; 2 Cor. 7:11; Phil. 1:18: ‘yea’]

‘the time cometh’ refers to a real future; from the viewpoint of the last night of Jesus’ life the time of persecution lies ahead.

‘whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.’ John may be given credit for perceiving the sincerity of motive which prompted the Jewish opposition to Christianity.... John writes ironically here, as at 11:50-52. The death of Christians in persecution truly is an offering to God. λατρεία occurs nowhere else in John, and in only four other places in the New Testament. In these (Rom. 9:4; Heb. 9:1,6) it refers to the worship of the Temple [The fourth usage is at Rom. 12:1].

“The persecution and slaughter of Christians, as guilty of blasphemy, would be looked upon by zealots as an act of devotion pleasing to God.” (Whitehead)

Verse 3

‘because they knew not’ φ. 15:21,23. The aorist ἔγνωσαν if given its full force means that the Jews will persecute the Christians because they failed to recognize God in the person and work of Jesus.

Verse 4

φ. v. 1. When the time of persecution comes the disciples will remember that Jesus had foretold it, because they will see in it the fulfilment of his word and the confirmation of his

supernatural knowledge. [Barrett prefers the MSS of Lachmann, Tragelless, and Alford which add αὐτῶν (read their hour) thus: ἡ ὥρα αὐτῶν, φ. Lk. 22:53, αὕτη ἐστὶν ὑμῶν ἡ ὥρα; ‘this is your hour’] Translate ‘their hour’ (of your persecutors), not ‘the hour of these things’ (which I have foretold). The ‘hour’ of Jesus appears to mean his failure but is in fact exaltation and glory; that of his enemies appears to mean their victory but is in fact their defeat.

‘from the beginning’, as at 6:64. φ. ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς, 15:27.

‘because I was with you’. There was no need to warn the disciples of danger while Jesus was with them for they were under his immediate protection; 18: 8-9.

Verse 5

οὐδεὶς ἐξ ὑμῶν ἐρωτᾷ με τοῦ ὑπάγεις. ‘none of you asketh me whether goest thou’; It seems both necessary and justifiable to emphasize the present tense ἐρωτᾷ; John does not write ἠρώτησε [‘asked’] which would involve a flagrant contradiction with 13:36; 14:5. Here he is dealing dimply with the disciples’ immediate reaction to the words of Jesus. The thought of his departure fills them with grief; but if only they had asked where he was going, and grasped that it was to the Father, they would not have grieved but recognized that his departure was for their advantage (v. 7 συμφέπει ὑμῖν: ‘it is profitable for you’, Gk.; ‘it is expedient for you’, KJV). Their preoccupation with their own affairs is the cause of their sorrow (there is an interesting parallel in 2 Kings 6:15). (Barrett) Strachan observes sardonically, “Exclusive interest to-day in the historic Jesus, as distinct from the risen and ascended Jesus, still exemplifies this refused to ask the question He desired His disciples to ask, Whither goest thou?”

Verse 6

Barrett says, “λύπη ‘sorrow’ is characteristic of this chapter, see vs. 20,21,22.

πεπλήρωκεν – ‘hath filled’; It is unusual for πληροῦν (active and transitive) to have as its subject that with which the object is filled. The effect is to give an almost personal force to λύπη: Grief has pervaded, taken possession of, your heart.”

Verse 7

Jesus said, “If I go not away, the Comforter will not come.”

[Matthew Henry explains, “that Christ’s going was in order to the Comforter’s coming. This is expressed negatively: If I go not away, the Comforter will not come. And why not? First, So it was settled in the divine counsels concerning this affair, and the measure must not be altered; shall the earth be forsaken for thee? (Job 18:4). He that gives freely may recall one gift before he bestows another, while he would fondly hold all. Secondly, It is congruous enough that the ambassador extraordinary should be recalled, before the envoy come, that is constantly to reside. Thirdly, The sending of the Spirit was to be the fruit of Christ’s purchase, and that purchase was to be made by his death, which was his going away. Fourthly, It was to be an answer to his intercession within the veil. See ch. 14:16. Thus must this gift be both paid for, and prayed for, by our Lord Jesus, that we might learn to put the greater value upon it. Fifthly, The great argument the Spirit was to use in concerning the world must be Christ’s ascension into heaven, and his welcome there. See v. 10 and 7:39. Lastly, The disciples must be weaned from his bodily presence, which they were too apt to dote upon, before they were duly prepared to receive the spiritual aids and comforts of a new dispensation.”]

Hoskyns cites Bp. Andrewes, “My stay will deprive you of Him. My absence will procure you Him” (quoted by Swete).

Barrett continues, “‘I tell you the truth.’ It is quite possible that *ἀλήθεια* means no more than truth as opposed to falsehood. ‘It is no lie I am telling you; it is really true that my departure will be to your advantage.’ It is by no means impossible that the fuller meaning may have been intended. The Gospel itself consists in the fact that Jesus departs, for his departure means his death, his exaltation to heaven, and the coming of the Holy Spirit.

‘expedient’ used twice elsewhere in John at 11:50; 18:14 denoting Caiaphas’ prophecy. Thus, both refer to the departure of Jesus in death and the consequent benefits, and though spoken by Caiaphas are regarded by John as unwittingly and ironically true. *συμφέρει* is usually followed by an infinitive (with or without article); John in accordance with his style substitutes an explanatory *ἵνα* clause.

‘The Comforter in no wise should come’ (Tragelless); the thought is identical with 7:39: the coming of the Spirit waits upon the glorifying of Jesus. The Spirit is the agent of the creation of the Church and the salvation of the world; in this sense the coming of the Spirit depends upon the completion of the work of Christ.”

Verse 8

Ryle says of the Holy Spirit, “It is He who convinces people that they are sinners, and not their own; and convinces them that there is a judgment to come. If our Lord had simply said, ‘the Spirit shall convince your hearers of their own sins, of my imputed righteousness, and of a day of judgment, ‘it would have been plain enough. But unfortunately there are several things added which really do not chime in with this mode of interpretation. I repeat, that no intelligent Christian, of course, will think of denying that conviction of sin is a special and saving work of the Holy Ghost on the hearts of believers. But it does not therefore follow that it is the thing taught in this passage. It is truth, but not the truth of the text.

I believe the meaning to be something of this kind – ‘After the day of Pentecost the Holy Ghost, the great Advocate of Me and my people, shall come into this world with such mighty power that He shall silence, convince, and stop the mouths of your enemies, and oblige them, however unwillingly, to think of Me and my cause very differently from what they think now.’” Ryle goes on to cite the Book of Acts as a proof of this power in the lives of the Apostles. He says, “There was a peculiar, restraining, irresistible power accompanying the work of the Apostles, which the unbelieving Jews, in spite of all their numbers and influence were unable to withstand. Nor was the work of the Holy Ghost confined to the Jews. Wherever the Apostles and their fellow-labourers went, the same convincing power accompanied them, and obliged even the heathen to acknowledge Christianity as a great fact, even when they did not believe.

Our Lord is encouraging the disciples against the world by the presence of the Comforter. And one special part of the encouragement is, that the Comforter shall do for them the work of an advocate, by silence, crushing, refuting, and convincing their enemies.”

Again Barrett, “‘he will reprove the world’. ἐλέγχειν means ‘to expose’, for example, of sin, or error; hence ‘to convict’. It is accordingly natural in the present passage to see in the work of the Paraclete an operation upon the conscience of the world, though John does not say in what way this operation will be effected. He has already said, however at 14:17, that the world cannot receive the Paraclete, and we must therefore think of his work as mediated through the Church, which alone can receive him, and in particular of the Spirit – inspired utterances of Christian preachers which convict the world. There may be a reminiscence here (and also in the word παράκλητος) of the synoptic sayings (Mk. 13:11 and parallels) in which the assistance of the Spirit is promised to disciples when on trial. If so John has characteristically (φ. chs. 9,18f)

pressed home the idea so that the Spirit, not content with defending the believers, takes the offensive against the world.”

Verse 9

As for verses 9-11, the Holy Ghost convinces the unbelievers that in not accepting Christ, they make an enormous mistake – a sin. Also He will convince men that Jesus was no deceiver but a blameless and righteous man who was unjustly crucified. Finally, the Comforter will show Jesus’ complete overthrow of the prince of this world.

Barrett’s commentary is lengthy; “The structure of the sentence depends upon the way in which περί and ὅτι are taken. The main possibilities are three. (a.) περί means ‘in regard to’. The sentence may then be paraphrased ‘He will convict the world (of its error) in regard to sin, showing that sin consists in not believing in me.’ If περί be translated in this way, ὅτι can hardly have any meaning other than that assigned to it in the paraphrase. (b.) ἐλέγχειν περί means ‘to convict of’. In this case two meanings of ὅτι are possible. One is ‘because’. ‘He will convict the world of its sin because that sin reached its complete demonstration in man’s failure to believe in me’. (c.) It is also possible to accept the rendering of ἐλέγχειν περί given (b.), and to give ὅτι the meaning ‘that’, ‘in that’. We may then paraphrase, ‘He will convict the world of its sin, in that men do not believe in me (or, namely that they do not believe in me)’. None of these interpretations can be dismissed as impossible. (a.) is particularly attractive because it is easily adaptable to the three words, sin, righteousness, and judgement. The world has wrong notions of all three. It believes that Jesus was a sinner, justly punished by crucifixion; it believes on the other hand that its own righteousness is all that can be required, and it believes that in these opinions it has rightly judged Jesus and itself, and that its judgement will receive divine confirmation. It is however the work of the Spirit to rectify these wrong notions, and to show that sin consists in the rejection of Jesus, that the only acceptable righteousness is that of Jesus, since he alone has been exalted to the Father’s right hand, and that it is not Jesus but the prince of this world who has been judged. That this interpretation is sufficiently ‘Johannine’ cannot be disputed, but it is a grave objection to it that it requires us to give ἐλέγχειν περί a sense different from that which it has at 8:46, where it must mean, ‘Which of you convicts me of having wrong views of sin?’ It will be necessary then to accept (b.) and (c.). As has been noted, these do not give as neat a connection with the next two notes on 10f. The sense is, He will convict the world

of the fact of sin (in men), of the fact of righteousness (in me), and of the fact of judgement. (b.) seems preferable to (c.). John seems to be giving the fundamental ground of conviction of sin (and righteousness and judgement). The present verse, then, will have the following meaning. The Spirit operating upon the conscience of men through the witness of the Church (which is not confined to preaching, though preaching is its plainest expression), will convince them of their sin (this is confirmed by the interpretive reading of the Sinaitic-Syriac-its sins). This the Spirit can do, because the sin of the world is concentrated in its rejection of Jesus. The light shone in the darkness, but men preferred the darkness (3:19-21). The rejection of Jesus is not the only sin, but it is the type of crown of all sin, and ultimately the sin of the world amounts to the crucifixion of Christ.

Verse 10

‘because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more’ refers to the departure and disappearance of Jesus in an event which was at once truly death and truly a glorious exaltation. This event is throughout the New Testament regarded as setting the seal upon the righteousness of Jesus, and the righteousness of God; see especially Rom. 3:21-31. John does not separate the two elements in the compound event, but it may be said that Jesus’ death proved his complete obedience to the will of God, and his exaltation proved that his righteousness was approved by more than human acclamation. The word *διακαισούνῃ* occurs only in this context in John.

Verse 11

ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου κέκριται. φ. 12:3; 14:30. The death of Jesus involved the downfall of Satan (the perfect κέκριται is written from the standpoint of the Church [i.e. ‘has been judged’, Gk.]). It is on the basis of this historical event that men may be convinced by the Spirit of the fact of judgement, and thus of their own judgement by God.

Verse 12

Φ. v. 4b. There were things Jesus had not said during the course of his ministry; some he could not say even at the end.”

Verse 13

The Holy Spirit will guide us into all spiritual truth about God and Christ, and show us glimpses of the kingdom of heaven. He safeguards and gives context for the Church. He confirms old hopes.

Hoskyns has cited the Johannine epistolary passages that reveal John's familiarity with 'fancy religion' opposed to the Spirit of truth: 1 Jn. 2:18ff; 4:1ff; φ. 2 Jn. 7ff; 3 Jn. 9-11.

(Returning to Barrett;) "'into all truth'. There are some variants in the MSS but (a.) either under the Spirit's guidance the disciples will come to know all truth, or (b.) there is guidance in the whole sphere of truth, or (c.) the disciples will be kept in the truth of God (φ. 1:14) which is guaranteed by the mission of Jesus.

'he shall not speak of himself'; 'he shall not speak for himself' as Jesus had not spoken of himself (7:17; 12:49; 14:10). John never tires of emphasizing that the words and deeds of Jesus were not those of a wise and good man, or of a demi-god; they came from the only true God. Similarly the teaching of the Spirit is not merely inspiration in the ordinary sense; it is the teaching of God.

'he will shew you things to come'. The difficulty lies in the identification of 'things to come'. Two interpretations may be suggested. (a.) From the standpoint of the night 'in which Jesus was betrayed' τὰ ἐρχόμενα are the events of the passion which was about to take place, and include perhaps both the crucifixion and the resurrection. (b.) From the standpoint of the evangelist τὰ ἐρχόμενα must be events still future, that is properly eschatological events. There can be little doubt that, if we view the last discourses as a whole, their standpoint appears to be that of the author. Accordingly τὰ ἐρχόμενα are real future events. It does not follow from this that the work of the Spirit described here is simply that of inspiring predictive prophecy, though, no doubt John (like Paul) would have accepted this as a genuine χάρισμα. The final eschatological event is the unveiling of sin and righteousness, and hence of judgement; and it is precisely this function that John has attributed to the Spirit. When the Spirit declares the thing, that are to come he declares them as already operative; the final-judgement is anticipated in the conviction of the world by the Paraclete. It is probable that John had both trains of thought in mind since (as the language of going and coming, seeing and not seeing shows) he thought of the death and resurrection of Jesus as themselves eschatological events. The meaning of the last discourse, and especially of the Paraclete sayings, is that the interval between the last night of Jesus' life and the evangelist's own day is annihilated by faith. The whole Church enters the

supper room and participates in the glory of Christ, which was manifested in his death and resurrection and will be manifested eschatologically, as present reality.

Verse 14

[Says Hobbs, “Any theology which exalts the Holy Spirit above Jesus is not of the Holy Spirit. For ‘he shall glorify me,’ said Jesus.”]

‘He shall glorify me’. Glory is the natural accompaniment of the Messiah in his coming at the last day; Mk. 13:26, and many other passages in Jewish and Christian literature. The Spirit, by realizing the eschatological functions of Jesus, gives him this glory by anticipation. Φ. 7:39 ἐδοξάσθη in that verse refers to a simple fact, the exaltation of Christ before the coming of the Spirit, δοξάσει in this verse to the Spirit’s work in bringing home the glory of Christ to the world. How this will be done is explained in the rest of the verse, viz ‘he shall take of mine and shew it unto you.’ It is the truth not simply of the teaching but of the mission and being of Christ which the Spirit declares to the world, as he puts into effect Christ’s judgement of the world. The revelation apprehended by men is not however the whole sum of divine truth; hence the partitive ‘of mine’, and the reminder in the next verse of the plurality of things which the Son shares with the Father.”

Verse 16

Marsh says the language of this verse is fitting not only for the period of time between the burial and resurrection but also between ascension and the parousia. Barrett agrees; “This paragraph (v. 16-33) gathers together the striking language of the last discourses – of going and coming, grief and joy, tribulation and peace, asking and receiving, seeing and not seeing, parable and open speech, unbelief and faith, the world and God. Most of this language is marked by a studied ambiguity. For example, the sayings about going and coming can be interpreted throughout of the departure and return of Jesus in his death and resurrection; but they can equally well be interpreted of his departure to the Father at the ascension and his return at the parousia. By this ambiguity John means to convey that the death and resurrection were themselves eschatological events which both prefigured and anticipated the final events. The Church of John’s own day was living in the ἐρχόμενα (16:13) which it was the Spirit’s work to declare. The connection with 16:8-15 is close and appropriate. φ. 14:19-24.

Verses 25-33 bring the discourse back to the situation in the room of the supper in the hours immediately preceding the arrest and crucifixion. Two synoptic themes are again brought out – that of parables (φ. Mk. 4:10-12) and that of desertion of Jesus by the disciples (see the notes on vs. 29,32). The two are closely related for they both signify that not even the Twelve were able to grasp the meaning of the life and teaching of Jesus and to adhere firmly to him, apart from the divine aid which was conditioned upon the complete working out of God's purpose regarding Jesus – the glorification of the Son of man in death.

μικρόν φ. 14:19. See also Isa. 26:20: 'hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be over-past' (and see the whole passage, Isa. 26:16-21, of which further parts are quoted at v. 21).

'ye shall not see me': 'no longer do ye behold'. φ. 14:19; 16:10; 17:11. Clearly it is possible to take this disappearance of Jesus as that of his burial or that of his ascension." Ryle thinks that in v. 16, Jesus refers to the Second Coming because of the inclusion of, "I go to the Father." "The first 'see' (θεωρεῖτε [> theory] refers to physical, the second 'see' to spiritual right." (Whitehead) ἔπτομαι (> optics)

Verse 19

"'Jesus knew'. Perhaps the use of a cognate ἔγνων < γινώσκειν rather than ἀκούειν suggests that John thought of supernatural discernment on the part of Jesus; though since the disciples were speaking to one another there is no reason why Jesus should not have heard them." (Ryle)

Verse 20

Ryle paraphrases this verse as follows; "During my absence from the world after my ascension, you, my beloved disciples, and all believers after you, shall have many reasons to lament and mourn, like a bride separate from her husband, while the wicked world around you shall rejoice in my absence, and not wish Me to return. During this long weary interval, you and all believers after you shall often have sorrow and tribulation, but at last, when I come again, your sorrow shall be turned into joy."

Matthew Henry gives another insight into "the common case of Christians. Their condition and disposition are both mournful; sorrows are their lot, and seriousness is their

temper: those that acquainted with Christ must, as he was, be acquainted with grief; they weep and lament for that which others make light of, their own sins, and the sins of those about them; they mourn with sufferers that mourn, and mourn for sinners that mourn not for themselves.”

Says Barrett, “‘ye shall weep and lament.’ θρηνεῖν (‘to lament’) [> threnody] is found here only in John; κλαίειν (‘to weep’) is used only in connection with death (11:31,33; 20:11,13,15). For the conjunction of the two verbs, φ. Lk. 7:32. The pronoun ὑμεῖς (‘you’) is emphatic, and brings out the contrast between the disciples and the world. ‘but the world shall rejoice’. Here κόσμος stands over against the believing Christians, and over against Christ himself, as rejoicing in his death.

ὕμεῖς (emphatic again – you, in contrast with the world).

Verse 21

The parallel is in itself a simple one: the short travail pains give place to satisfaction at the birth of a child – the short sorrow of Good Friday and the following day give place to the joy of Easter. But the analogy has a deeper meaning. It belongs to the Old Testament; see especially Isa. 26:16-19. In these passages the messianic salvation which relieves the affliction of the people is compared to the relief and joy of childbirth, and from them (and like passages) was drawn the later Jewish doctrine of the ‘travail pains of the Messiah’, a period of trouble which must intervene before the final consummation [the term for travail pains of the Messiah is hebre ha-mashiah < מְשִׁיחַ and מְשִׁיחָה]. The significance of these facts is that the death and resurrection of Jesus were described in language which is properly eschatological; that is, John treats them as types and anticipations of eschatological events. The resurrection means, in an anticipatory way, the realization of the messianic salvation.

The frequent references in John to the ‘hour’ of Jesus (e.g. 17:1) may attempt a more general reference to the ‘day of the Lord’.

Verse 22

καὶ ὑμεῖς, ‘you in the same way’. The mere prediction of Jesus’ departure was sufficient to grieve the disciples. νῦν (‘now’), however, refers primarily to the time of Jesus’ departure, and also to the interval of waiting, between the resurrection and the parousia. ‘but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice’ φ. Isa. 66:14. John’s allusion to the Old Testament seems

beyond question, but the change from ‘You shall see’ to ‘I shall see’ can hardly be accidental. Φ. Gal. 4:9; 1 Cor. 13:12. John’s grasp of the eschatological situation of the Church allows him to speak of ‘seeing Christ’ and so of ‘seeing God in Christ’ (see v. 16:14:9; 1:18); yet he holds so surely the fundamental biblical faith in the invisibility of God (his self-disclosure in Christ excepted) that here he insists upon the prior truth: I shall see you (φ. 15:6, I chose you).”

Verse 23

Strachan translates: “‘ye shall me no such questions as you are now putting.’ ... [Christians] will find themselves in possession of inexhaustible resources.” Barrett continues, “ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ. In the New Testament ‘that day’ or ‘those days’ often refers to the last days, the end of the age; so, e.g. Mk. 13:11,17,19,24,32; 14:25; Acts 2:18; 2 Tim. 1:12,18; 4:8; Heb. 8:10; 10:16; Rev. 9:6. John must have been aware of this Christian usage ‘ye shall ask me nothing’. John is drawing out a contrast between the present (the time of the ministry) and the future (‘in that day’). The disciples have not asked Jesus for anything, but in chs. 13-16 they have asked many questions. John’s meaning seems to be that in the time when the Holy Spirit is given and guides the believers in all the truth they will no longer ask such questions as, What is the meaning of the ‘little while’ of which Jesus speaks? φ. 1 Jn. 2:20. The Christians are the true gnostics.

ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν. The formula usually introduces a fresh thought rather than a contrast.

Verse 24

[Barrett translates,] ‘You have made no petition’. It would not be true to say that they had asked no questions. The completion of joey is now more closely defined; it consists in the access to God which is described as asking and receiving.

Verse 25

‘These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs’. It is unlikely that the reference is simply to the analogy of the woman in childbirth in v. 21. It is rather to such discourses as that of the shepherd (ch. 10) or the vine (ch. 15), or perhaps to the teaching of Jesus as a whole, which John certainly represents as not having been understood (e.g. 14:9). ‘the time cometh’. The

‘hour’ is not that of the immediate following sentences, but of the period after the resurrection, when the Spirit is given. ‘no more speak unto in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly.’ The closes parallels to the present passage are 10:24; 11:14. This contrast recalls that of Mk. 4:11. In mark a contrast is drawn between the two groups; one is mystified by the teaching of Jesus, the other seizes upon the true meaning of the parables, because to it has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, which ultimately is the secret of the person of Jesus. John is well aware of this radical division brought about by the teaching and work of Jesus; but he is perhaps truer to the facts than Mark when he suggests that even the Twelve remained in the end mystified. For him the contrast is not between the multitudes on the one hand the immediate circle of Jesus on the other, but between multitudes and disciples alike during the ministry, and the disciples after the resurrection (φ. 2:22; 12:16; 13:7; and see in the next verses the horrifying emphasis laid by Jesus on the approaching desertion and denial). Only with the Spirit to teach them (when the ‘hour’ comes) will the disciples know and believe the truth.

Verse 26

‘I shall shew you plainly of the Father.’ All Jesus’ incarnate life had been a revelation of the Father (1:18; 14:9); in the age of his glory there will be no new theme.

‘I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you’. There is no division between the Persons of the Godhead. Any thought of a merciful Son over against a wrathful Father is excluded; indeed οὐ λέγω (‘I do not say’) may suggest the combating of some such view as this. It would not however be true to say that John contradicts Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25, which speak of the heavenly intercession (ἐντυγχάνειν) of the Son, since these deal not with petitionary prayer but with the status of the Christian before God, a status which rests entirely upon the eternal consequences of the priestly work of Christ φ. 1 Jn. 2:1.

Verse 27

‘The Father, himself of his own accord, loves you, and needs no prompting from me.’ It must be admitted that in this verse, taken alone, John’s language is open to serious misunderstanding, but it must not be supposed that he means to represent the love of God as contingent upon the love and faith of men. Rather he is elaborating the language and thought of 15:13-15, where the disciples are called the φίλοι of Jesus since with him they form a unique

circle of love. In the present passage the point is that the Father himself stands within this circle (as is indeed implied by 15:9f).”

Verse 28

Says Henry, “We are told that he came from the Father, who sanctified and sealed him; and he came into this world, this lower world, this world of mankind, among whom by his incarnation he was pleased to incorporate himself. Here his business lay, and hither he came to attend it. He left his home for this strange country; his palace for this cottage; wonderful condescension! When he had done his work on earth, he left the world, and went back to his Father at his ascension. He was not forced away, but made it his own act and deed to leave the world, to return it to it no more till he comes to put an end to it; yet still he is spiritually present with his church, and will be to the end.”

Ryle writes of v. 25: “Our Lord says to His disciples, ‘The time cometh when I shall show you plainly of the Father.’ He does not say, we should mark, ‘I will show you plainly about myself.’ It is the Father whom He promises to show.

The wisdom of this remarkable saying is very deep. There are few subjects of which men know so little in reality as the character and attributes of God the Father. It is not for nothing that it is written, ‘No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son shall reveal Him.’ (Mt. 11:27). ‘The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.’ (Jn. 1:18). Thousands fancy they know the Father because they think of Him as great, and almighty, and all-hearing, and wise, and eternal, but they think no further. To think of Him as just and yet the justifier of the sinner who believes in Jesus, - as the God who sent His Son to suffer and die, - as God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself - as God specially well-pleased with the atoning sacrifice of His Son, whereby His law is honoured; - to think of God the Father in this way is not given to most men. No wonder that our Master says, ‘I will show plainly of the Father.’”

Barrett says verse 28 “is a complete summary in John’s manner of the Christian faith. It expresses God’s movement to the world in Christ; the moment of humiliation and revelation (‘and am come into the world’); the return of Christ to the Father, which is both the consummation of his glory and the redemption of the world, since, as the discourse of chs. 13-16

have been designed to show; it was the condition and signal for the coming of the Spirit and the inauguration of a new dispensation of knowledge and life.

Verse 29

The chapter, and with it the last discourses, closes with a striking example of Johannine irony. In spite of Jesus' warning that the hour for plain speech was coming (and had not come, v. 25) the disciples leapt to the conclusion that, because they had acquired an orthodox faith (vv. 28f), they full understood his meaning. They were answered by an unsparing disclosure of the truth about themselves.

Verse 30

vōv is repeated emphatically from v. 29; the disciples are confident that now already, before the death and exaltation of Jesus, before the coming of the Spirit, they have reached the moment of knowledge. Their exposure (vv. 31f) can therefore serve as the exposure of gnostic claims founded outside the Christian revelation 'thou knowest all things'. This might be taken general ('You have all knowledge') but the next clause, 'and needest not that any man should ask thee', seems to necessitate a special reference to v. 19; Jesus had answered their question before they asked it. Jesus knows the thoughts of men's hearts."

Verse 31

Dodd writes, "The damping down of an enthusiastic confession of faith might seem surprising, if we did not remember that it corresponds to a constant pattern, not only in the Fourth Gospel but elsewhere: φ. Jn. 6:68-70; 13:38; Mk. 8:29-33 (an parallels), 10:28-31,38-40; 14:29-31. It is part of the character and genius of the Church that its foundation members were discredited men; it owed its existence not to their faith, courage, or virtue, but to what Christ had done with them; and this they could never forget."

Verse 32

Again Barrett; "The time of knowledge is future; the present is a time of offence and disaster.

‘You will be scattered each to his own.’ Φ. Mk. 14:27, quoting Zech. 13:7. The prediction finds a prompt fulfilment in Mk. 14:50, which however has no parallel in John, where on the contrary the evangelist is at pains to represent as present at the crucifixion the beloved disciple (19:26f) and a witness (perhaps identical with the beloved disciple (19:35). John 21:2 however seems to presuppose a return of the disciples, including the beloved disciple, to their homes in Galilee. A formal contradiction is avoided by the use of ‘his own home’ at 19:27 – the beloved disciple also went to his home; but it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that John is trying to represent two things at the same time: on the one hand the isolation of Jesus and the complete failure even of the Twelve to understand and believe in him before the coming of the Spirit, and on the other the continuity between Jesus and the Church which in the person of the ideal apostle was present at the supreme moment of the death and exaltation of the Lord. The former theme is almost certainly better history, and perhaps better theology too; the resurrection and the gift of the Spirit are the theological as well as the historical foundation of the Church. At the time of the crucifixion Jesus was all the ‘Church’ there was. καὶ - ‘And yet’

‘The Father is with me’. Φ. 8:16,29. It is possible that John is here combating a misunderstanding of Mk. 15:34. All Jesus’ works including the greatest, were wrought in harmony and communion with the Father; his isolation was apparent only.”

Verse 33

Henry says, “Observe the encouragement Christ gives them with reference here to: Be of good cheer θαρσεῖτε. [‘courage’ > Thersites – ‘The Audacious’]

‘Not only be of good comfort, but be of good courage; have a good heart on it, all shall be well.’ Note, in the midst of the tribulations of this world it is the duty and interest of Christ’s disciples to be of good cheer, to keep up their delight in God whatever is pressing, and their hope in God whatever is threatening; as sorrowful indeed, in compliance with the temper of the climate, and yet always rejoicing, always cheerful (2 Cor. 6:10), even in tribulation Rom. 5:3.

Observe the ground of that encouragement: I have overcome the world. Christ’s victory is a Christian triumph. Christ overcame the prince of this world, disarmed him, and cast him out; and still heads Satan under our feet. He overcame the children of this world, by the conversion of many to the faith, and obedience of his gospel, making them the children of his kingdom. When he sends his disciples to preach the gospel to all the world. ‘Be of good cheer,’ says he, ‘I have

overcome the world as far as I have gone, and so shall you; though you have tribulation in the world, yet you shall gain your point, and captivate the world, ‘Rev. 6:2. He overcame the wicked of the world, for many a time he put his enemies to silence, to shame; ‘And be you of good cheer, for the Spirit will enable you to do so too.’ He overcame the evil things of the world by submitting to them; he endured the cross, despising it and the shame of it; and he overcame the good things of it by being wholly dead to them; its honours had no beauty in his eye; its pleasures no charms. Never was there such a conqueror as Christ was, and we ought to be encouraged by it. (1.) Because Christ has overcome the world before us, so that we may look upon it as a conquered enemy, that has many a time been baffled. Nay, (2.) He has conquered it for us, as the captain of our salvation. We are interested in his victory; by his cross the world is crucified to us, which bespeaks it completely conquered and put into our possession; all is yours, even the world. Christ having over the world, believers have nothing to do but to pursue their victory, and divide the spoil; and this we do by faith, 1 Jn. 5:4. We are more than conquerors through him that loved us.”

Barrett comments; ‘These things I have spoken to you,’ φ. 14:25. ταῦτα may refer simply to the preceding verse: I have foretold your desertion that you may know it was not unforeseen, and may therefore not be tormented by remorse but have peace. More probably it refers to the whole of the discourse (especially from 16:1) which sets in its true context the θλίψις the disciples will have to endure, and so ensure their peace.

‘tribulation’. φ. v. 21. In the New Testament θλίψις is used in two main senses: (a.) of eschatological woes (e.g. Mk. 13:19,24; Rom. 2:9), (b.) of the afflictions, and especially the persecution of the Church (e.g. Mk. 4:17; Acts 11:19; Eph. 3:13). These two senses are not to be sharply distinguished, for it seems certain that the primitive Church regarded its sufferings as having eschatological significance (Rev. 7:14 is a particularly clear instance of the use of θλίψις in both senses simultaneously). This is John’s thought here, as v. 21 shows. Through the Church, and especially through its love, its joy in the Spirit, and its persecution, and the eschatological salvation anticipated in the crucifixion and resurrection and hoped for at the last day, is continually presented to the world.

‘I have overcome the world’ νικᾶν occurs here only in John, but it is characteristic of 1 John (2:13f; 4:4; 5:4f). In 1 Jn. 5:4f we read of ‘overcoming the world’; φ. 4:4 ‘overcoming antichrists’. The humiliation of Jesus seen in the crucifixion is more truly seen as his departure in

glory to the Father and the overthrow of the world, which, with a special clarity in chs. 13-17, is set forth as the opponent of Jesus and the Church, as humanity organized apart from God.

Usually it is the 'prince of this world' who stands out as the adversary of Jesus. There are traces in the synoptic gospels also of the view that the death of Jesus was a struggle between him and evil powers, but the thought becomes explicit in John. The present passage differs however from others in that it is not the 'prince' but the world itself that is defeated. What this means is not clear. Superficially, John appears to distinguish the believers and the world so rigidly that (as in certain gnostic and similar systems) the final result can be only the complete destruction of the world by the victorious god. Yet clearly John thought that there would be (and doubtless was himself familiar with) conversions from the world to the Church (17:20; 20:29). Nevertheless there remains within the world a principle of evil (17:15) which can only be defeated and destroyed. In fact the defeat and destruction have already taken place. Evil can no longer harm those who belong to Christ; it is exposed by the Paraclete; and in the end all the children of God will safely be gathered in one."

Says Temple, "The Cross is not for Christians a stumbling-block which the Resurrection has removed; it is not a defeat of which the effect has been cancelled by a subsequent victory. It is itself the triumph. What was the devil's worst is become God's best. He has 'led captivity captive' (Eph. 4:8 quoting Ps. 58:18)."

- SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES ON JOHN 16 taken from Whitehead's commentary -

On Jn. 16:8, Lücke has written, "The testimony of the Holy Ghost in behalf of Christ, as opposed to the unbelieving world (15:26) is essentially a refutation, ἔλεγχος, a demonstration of its wrong and error. In ἔλεγχεν is always implied the refutation, the overcoming of an error, a wrong, by the truth and the right. And when by means of the ἔλεγχος the truth detects the error, and the right the wrong, so that a man becomes conscious of them, - then arises the feeling of guilt, which is ever painful. Thus every ἔλεγχος is a chastening, a punishment.

Of sin, righteousness, and judgment, Westcott has written, "The three subjects are placed in a natural and significant order. The position of man is determined first: he is shown to have fallen, and then the position of the two spiritual powers which strive for the mastery over him is

made known. Christ has risen to the throne of glory the prince of this world has been judged.” The subject (says Whitehead) may also be regarded from another point of sight. When the conviction “concerning sin is complete, there remains for man a choice of two alternatives: on the one side there is a righteousness to be obtained from without, and on the other a judgment to be borne.”

The believer depends on Christ; in fact he lives because of Christ. As Jesus enjoys the mutual relationship with His Father, so the believer abides in Christ as the way, path, or door to the Father. So there is a mutual indwelling of God and the believer. The KOSMOS rejects Christ; therefore it rejects the believer. This separation was not always so. Before the Fall, there was no barrier between God and creation. Colossians 1:20 says that Christ has made peace through the blood of his cross. The Godhead has reconciled all things “unto himself... whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.” Thus, the reconciliation ἀποκατάστασις (“restitution” of Acts 3:21) is all Christ’s successful performance of the Father’s perfect will. In truth, Christ has reinstated God’s delight in His creation.

The good news is that the believer can begin life in Christ. The world still can’t receive Him. Nor can the world receive the Spirit, but the believer can! The believer has the Paraclete to maintain the relationship with Christ Who has completed man’s salvation. Thus the believer has a full relation with the Trinity.

See. Jn. 14:17; 17:10.

“Many a solemn prayer Christ made in the days of his flesh (sometimes he continued all night in prayer), but none of his prayers are recorded so fully as this.” (Matthew Henry)

The prayer is not the same as the Lord’s prayer in that there is no mention of sin, yet it is instructive because it comes after a sermon (the Farewell Discourse), it comes after the sacrament of the Eucharist, and it is a family prayer – a prayer for the Lord to bless the household at the time of Jesus’ departure to the Father. Henry says that the prayer is also a prayer before a sacrifice and a prayer which is a specimen of Christ’s intercession. Says Ryle, “It seems more likely that it was prayed in some quiet place outside the walls, before our Lord ‘crossed the brook Cedron’. One thing at least is almost certain. It is a totally different prayer from that which our Lord prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane.” He adds, “One thing only may be remarked, and that is, the singular frequency with which ‘the world’ is mentioned. The phrase occurs no less than nineteen times. Our Lord prays about Himself, prays about the disciples, and prays about those who were afterwards to be disciples. Let us note that this is the only place in the New Testament where our Lord calls Himself ‘Jesus Christ’.

Marsh, however, sees the prayer as proximate to the Paternoster; “‘Our Father’, with which the synoptic prayer starts, is echoed in various forms in John, and is the basic relationship out of which the whole grows (vv. 1, 5, 11, 21, 24, 25). ‘Thy kingdom come’ is probably the synoptic form of the Johannine ‘glorify the Son’ in vv. 1, 5, 11, 23; ‘Give us this day our daily bread’ finds an echo in the Johannine teaching of the necessity of feeding on Jesus Christ as the bread of life; ‘lead us not into temptation’ finds some form of expression in v.12; and ‘that thou shouldst keep them from the evil one’ almost reproduces the synoptic petition, ‘Deliver us from evil [or, the evil one]’.”

Commentators are always looking for structures in narratives and speeches; perhaps they merely want an overview so that each literary fragment can be picked up and examined in relation to a context, or even to fully comprehend a sequence of words or events and its development. Barrett regards the chapter as falling into four divisions: “In the first (vv. 1-5), Jesus addresses the Father, recalls his obedient completion of the work entrusted to him in the incarnation, and prays that the approaching hour (of his passion) may prove to be the decisive means by which he glorifies the Father and the Father glorifies him, the act at once of divine

grace and of human obedience whereby he ascends to that state of glory which was in the beginning with the Father.” We shall take up the other divisions as they arise.

“The synoptic gospels speak frequently of the prayers of Jesus, but only on rare occasions are we informed of the content of his prayers. The most notable exceptions are the prayers in the Gethsemane and those uttered from the cross... The present prayer is a summary of Johannine theology relative to the work of Christ... The effect of putting this summary into the form of a prayer is to consummate the movement of Christ to God which is the theme of the last discourses, and anticipates his lifting up on the cross.” (So Barrett)

“The common description of it as the ‘High-priestly prayer’, or the ‘prayer of consecration’ does not do justice to the full range of material contained in it. It is a setting forth of the eternal unity of the Father and the Son in its relation to the incarnation and the temporary (and apparent) separation which the incarnation involved... While the Son of God remains truly and visibly man it is in prayer that his union with God can be most clearly shown.

It will be observed that there is in this chapter no reference to the Holy Spirit (contrast chs. 14-16). It seems that for John the Holy Spirit remained a fundamentally eschatological concept, and was not yet expressed in terms of an eternal relationship within the Godhead.” (Barrett)

Verse 1

ταῦτα ἐλάλησεν Ἰησοῦς. ταῦτα refers to the discourses chs. 13-16. John emphasizes that the address of Jesus to the disciples is over, and clearly distinguishes it from his address to the Father.

[Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven in 11:41, and in the synoptics at Mt. 14:19; Mk. 6:41; 7:34; Lk. 9:16.]

The hour which has been so longed for and has now arrived is the hour of the Son’s glory. Equally, it is the hour of his death. The gospel as a whole moves towards this point, and from this point John sees the possibility of the Christian faith and the Christian Church emerge. ‘that the Son may also glorify thee’. If the Father glorifies the Son by accepting his obedient suffering and through it exalting him to heaven, this is in order that the Son may by his obedience, thus ratified, glorify the Father.... Jesus prays to be glorified in order that he may glorify the Father.” (Barrett)

Verse 2

“‘since thou hast give him power over all flesh’: The word translated power (ἐξουσίαν) denotes ‘authority’, ‘right’ rather than crude power. The same word is used at 1:12; 5:27; 10:18, and the same idea of place is the redemptive link between the Father and the whole of his creation, not just the saviour of the human race or the Jewish people. What is about to take place will therefore affect the life of the whole creation, and will not simply be an incident in Jewish history.” (Marsh)

Says Barrett, “καθώς: ‘as’. Corresponding to (καθώς) the glorification for which Jesus prays, is the position he occupied and the authority given him, before the incarnation. “[See also Prov. 8:22-35 and Wisdom’s role before Creation.] In this phrase ἔδωκας αὐτῷ ἐξουσίαν πάσης σαρκός, the aorist tense is used. Barrett thinks it refers either to a “special empowering for the earthy ministry of the incarnate Son, to a pre-temporal act proper to the constitution of the Godhead; the Son receives authority from the Father as fons divinitatis.” In another sense, “the aorist would be in the strictest sense timeless.” Barrett opts for the former reading and cites 1:32f: “the Son receives the Spirit that he may baptize with the Spirit.”

πάν ὃ δέδωκας αὐτῷ - “all which thou hast given him,” Gk. Says Barrett, “The αὐτοῖς which follows shows that πάν, although neuter singular, refers to the disciples. Their unity is thus represented in the strongest possible way (not πάντες, ‘all’, but ‘the whole’. Φ. v. 24). The theme of unity is constantly repeated in this chapter (vv. 11f, 20ff, 24, 26); here however the unity is assumed as a fact, whereas elsewhere it is the subject of prayer. It is also stated here and repeated later (vv. 6, 9, 24) that the disciples are men whom God has given to Christ; and in this way prominence is given in this chapter to the idea of predestination, which appears elsewhere in the gospel (e.g. 12:37-41; 15:16). The small group of disciples previously selected by and known to God, stands over against the world. Two points distinguish John’s conception from those of many gnostic systems in which a small circle of gnostics is foreordained to knowledge and life: in John the status of believers rests entirely upon the act and gift of God, and upon the historic work and call of Jesus.

‘eternal life’. The completed work of Jesus thus means (a.) the glorifying of the Father, and (b.) the gift of eternal life to men. For ζῶν αἰώνοις, see on 1:4; 3:15. The phrase is very common in chs. 1-13; in chs. 14-17, only here and in the next verse (φ. 14:6, ζῶν). The reason

for this change is that in the earlier part of the gospel John represents the Gospel message to the world, the offer of eternal life to all who believe; in the final discourses he concentrates upon the group of believers who have been chosen out of the world and emphasizes the necessity of Christian love.”

[In his notes for 3:15, Barrett has written, “The adjective αἰώνιος is in John used only in the expression ζῶντι αἰώνιον. ζῶντι αἰώνιος derives from the phrase **הַיְי עוֹלָם** (literally, life of ‘eternity’) in Dan. 12:2, which is rendered both in the LXX and Theodotion, ζῶντι αἰώνιος. Its meaning is brought out in the perhaps more common rabbinic formula **הַיְי עוֹלָם הַבָּא**, literally, life of the age to come. In this sense the phrase appears in the synoptic gospels (e.g. Mk. 10:30). It is noteworthy that in John eternal life is first mentioned after the only references in the gospel to the kingdom of God (3:3,5). It is clear that the concept retains something of its original eschatological connection, but also that it may equally be thought of as a present gift of God; in this ζῶντι αἰώνιος in John resembles ‘kingdom of God’ in the synoptic gospels. That which is properly a future blessing becomes a present fact in virtue of the realization of the future in Christ. This observation is, however, complicated by the fact that John writes within and for, and from the standpoint of, the post-resurrection Church. In this verse [Jn. 3:15] the argument is that the Son of man has been, by his death, exalted to heaven: those therefore who are in him (ἐν αὐτῷ) enjoy by anticipation the life of the age to come.”]

Verse 3

The notion that knowledge of God is essential to life (salvation) is common to Hebrew and Hellenistic thought. See e.g. the prophecy of the good age in Heb. 2:14, The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord,

כִּי	תִמְלֵא	הָאָרֶץ	לְדַעַת	אֶת־כְּבוֹד	יְהוָה
For	shall be covered	the earth	with the knowledge	the glory of	the LORD
	מָלֵא		[lit. ‘by knowing’]		
			יָדַעַת		

כַּמַּיִם	יִכְסּוּ	עַל־יָם:
as the waters	cover	the sea
	כָּסָה	

and the significant statement of Hos. 4:6, My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

נִדְמוּ	עַמִּי	מִבְּלִי	הַדַּעַת	כִּי־אִתָּהּ	הַדַּעַת	מָאֲסָתָּ
are destroyed	My people	for lack of	knowledge	because thou	knowledge	thou has rejected
		בְּלִי	דַּעַת			מָאֲסָתָּ
וְאֶמְאָסָאךָ	מִכֹּהֵן	לִי	וְתִשְׁכַּח	תּוֹרַת	אֱלֹהֶיךָ	
I will also reject thee	a priest	to me	seeing thou hast forgotten	the law of	thy God	
	כֹּהֵן		שָׁכַח			
אֶשְׁכַּח	בְּנֵיךָ	גַּם־אֲנִי:				
I will (also) forget	thy children	(yea I)				

In Judaism, knowledge of God comes primarily through the Law, and the Law is life, φ. 5:39. The following points suggested by this verse may be noted here. (a.) Knowledge of God and Christ gives life; but the same result follows from believing (20:31). Knowing and believing are not set over against one another but correlated. This suggest that John's concept of knowledge is close to that of the Old Testament. (b.) Knowledge has also an objective, factual, side. Men must know the only true God (φ. 8:32). This objectivity is partly Greek but owes something to the native Jewish conception that God reveals himself, and is known, in concrete historical events. (c.) Knowledge of God cannot be severed from knowledge of his incarnate Son; φ. 14:7; 20:31 and many other passages. This fact makes possible a unique fusion of the Greek and Hebrew conceptions of knowledge. Saving knowledge is rooted in knowledge of a historical person; it is therefore objective and at the same time a personal relation. 'The only true God'. The God whom to know is to have eternal life is the only being who may properly be so described; he and, it must follow, he alone is truly θεός." (Barrett)

Verse 4

On verses 4 and 5, Hoskyns cites another writer, "Loisy has summed up the distinction between the work of the Christ on earth and in heaven admirably: 'The glory of the Father, which is the salvation of all the children of God, could not be fully realized by the Son under the conditions of his earthly activity, because that was an external existence subject to all the

limitations of human action. When, however, the action of Christ, wholly spiritualized in the divine glory, should become spiritual and universal, instead of being limited to a useless preaching to the Jews, then the Son would be able to exercise the full powers given him for the benefit of humanity.’”

Barrett says, “ἐγὼ σε ἐδόξασα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς; ‘I have glorified thee upon the earth.’ The past tense contrasts with the forward-looking subjunctive of v.1 (ἵνα... δοξάσῃ). A different kind of glorification is here in view. In v. 1 (φ. v. 2) the Son will glorify the Father by giving life to men; here the meaning of glorification is brought out by the next clause –

‘I have finished the work.’ The participle should be translated ‘by finishing the work...’ The Son glorifies the Father by his complete obedience and faithful fulfilment of his task. Τελειώσας looks back upon the completed life of Jesus, and probably upon his death too (φ. 19:30, τετέλεστας; ‘It is finished’).”

“accomplished” of verse 4 is used at 4:34; 5:36, and at 19:30. Here it is ἐτελείωσα (‘I completed’). Says Wesley (in adaptation), ‘It cannot but be baffling to the human mind when the immortal prepares to die.’” (Marsh)

Verse 5

“In his obedient ministry Jesus has glorified the Father; now, in response to the death which sets the seal upon his obedience and his ministry, let the Father glorify him.

παρὰ σεαυτῷ, ‘with thyself’, that is, by causing me to return to the position I enjoyed before the incarnation. The glory, that is, is the heavenly glory of Christ; the prayer is a prayer for exaltation and ascension. After the crucifixion, the Son of man will ascend where he was before (6:62).

Verse 6

[In Barrett’s second of four divisions are found verses 6-19.] Jesus prays for the disciples who are gathered about him. They have been drawn together out of the world and they will be exposed to its attacks. Hitherto Jesus has himself preserved and enlightened them; he prays that in his absence they may be kept in the truth of God. They are to be kept in unity, with each other, in himself and in God, and there is committed to them a mission to the world in which they continue to live.” (Barrett)

The Church is formed by God not by men; its glory is the glory of God. Jesus is leaving to draw nearer to the Father so that the Church may be empowered from on high. The disciples are to be sent into the world as the Son was sent into the world. But the Church needs still the completeness of the Holy Ghost to vitalize and authenticate its work. Part of the High Priestly Prayer is to guarantee the safety of the disciples when Jesus will be separated from them. Michael Kerouac has seen the same provision during a wilderness experience in the feeding of the multitudes: Jesus fed them through that 3 day period as the Father will safeguard them in His absence.

Says Barrett, "The thought now turns to the disciples, the first-fruits of the completed work of Christ.

'I have manifested thy name' φ. v. 26 (ἐγνώρισα). Revealing the name of God is a notion peculiar to John in this chapter. The aorist ἐφανερώσα sums up the work of the ministry. Φ. Ps. 22:22; Ex. 3:15; Isa. 52:6. 'thine they were, and thou gavest them me.' The disciples belonged to God from the beginning, because from the beginning he had predestinated them as his children. He gave them to Jesus to be his disciples as part of his gift of all authority (v. 2), and as contributory to his act of revelation. The love of Jesus for his own, shown in the fact that he laid down his life for them, and the mutual love of his disciples, are the true revelation of God in his essential activity of love.

'they have kept thy word'. Nowhere else in John do we hear of men keeping the word of God. Jesus keeps it (8:55; φ. 15:10 ἐντολάς), and he bids his disciples keep his word (8:51f; 14:23; φ. 14:24 λόγου; 14:15,21; 15:10, ἐντολάς). It is shown at 14:3f that a distinction should be drawn between word (singular) and words (plural). The former means the divine message brought by Jesus taken as a whole, the latter is nearer in meaning to ἐντολαί, precepts. That the disciples have kept the word of God means that they have loyally accepted, and faithfully proclaimed, the truth of God in Jesus... This can hardly refer to the period of the ministry (especially in view of 16:31 and similar passages). John is looking back (perhaps from the end of the first century) upon the work of the apostles.

Verse 7

vñv. The meaning seems to be different from that of vv. 5,13; not 'now, in the moment of glory', but 'now, at the end of the ministry' φ. 16:30. Jesus is still speaking of the disciples. The

disciples have recognized that ‘all things’ have come to Jesus from God; ‘all things’ include ῥήματα, words, receiving the words of Jesus means keeping the word of God. John as ever emphasizes the dependence of Jesus, in his incarnate missions, upon the Father.

Verse 8

By receiving knowledge the disciples have received life.

‘thou didst send me’. As at 20:21, so in this prayer, the thought of the mission of the Son leads to the complementary thought of the mission of the disciples to the world.” (Barrett)

Verse 9

Strachan says, “It is not meant that the world is ‘past praying for,’ but that to the Church is entrusted the spread of the message that will save the world.” Says Barrett, “John, having stated (3:16) the love of God for the κόσμος, does not withdraw from that position in favour of a narrow affection for the pious.

Ryle concludes, “The Lord Jesus does things for His believing people which He does not do for the wicked and unbelieving. He helps their souls by special intercession. He says, ‘I pray for them: not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me.’

The doctrine before us is one which is specially hated by the world. Nothing gives such offence, and stirs up such bitter feeling among the wicked, as the idea of God making any distinction between man and man, and loving one person more than another. Yet the world’s objections to the doctrine are, as usual, weak and unreasonable. Surely a little reflection might show us that a God who regarded good and bad, holy and unholy, righteous and unrighteous, with equal complacency and favour, would be a very strange kind of God! The special intercession of Christ for His saints is agreeable to reason and to common sense.

Of course, like every other Gospel truth, the doctrine before us needs careful statement and Scriptural guarding. On the one hand, we must not narrow the love of Christ to sinners, and on the other we must not make it too broad. It is true that Christ loves all sinners, and invites all to be saved; but it is also true that He specially loves ‘the blessed company of all faithful people,’ whom He sanctifies and glorifies. It is true that He has wrought out a redemption sufficient for all mankind, and offers it freely to all; but it is also true that His redemption is effectual only to them who believe. Just so is it true that He is the Mediator between God and man; but it is also

true that He intercedes actively for none but those that come unto God by him. Hence it is written, ‘I pray for them; I pray not for the world.’

The special intercession of the Lord Jesus is one grand secret of the believer’s safety. He is daily watched, and thought for, and provided for with unfailing care, by one whose eye never slumbers and never sleeps. Jesus is able to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by Him, because He ever liveth to make intercession for them.’ (Heb. 7:25) they never perish, because He never ceases to pray for them, and His prayer must prevail. They stand and preserve to the end, not because of their own strength and goodness, but because Jesus intercedes for them. When Judas fell never to rise again, while Peter fell, but repented, and was restored, the reason of the difference lay under those words of Christ to Peter, ‘I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.’ (Lk. 22:32)...

Jesus loves all mankind, came into the world for all, died for all, provided redemption sufficient for all, calls on all, invites all, commands all to repent and believe; and ought to be offered to all-freely, fully, unreservedly, directly, unconditionally – without money and without price.

But while I hold all this, I maintain firmly that Jesus does special work for those who believe, which He does not do for others. He quickens them by His Spirit, calls them by His grace, washes them in His blood – justifies them, sanctifies them, keeps them, leads them and continually intercedes for them – that they may not fall. I take the meaning to be simply, ‘I pray for them, as my peculiar people, that they may be kept, sanctified, united, and glorified; but I do not pray for the world.’”

Barrett explains, “It is clear (see especially v. 18) that in this chapter also there is in mind a mission of the apostolic Church to the world in which men will be converted and attached to the community of Jesus. But to pray for the κόσμος would be almost an absurdity, since the only hope for the κόσμος is precisely that it should cease to be the κόσμος. The world cannot be prayed for because, as the κόσμος, it has set itself outside the purpose of God. The disciples on the other hand belong to God as they do to Christ.

Verse 10

Not only are the disciples at once the Father’s and the Son’s; there is a complete mutuality of interest and possession between the Father and the Son. The Father and the Son are

thus equal; yet their equality springs, as it were, from the Father's gift. Here the disciples are the place where Christ is glorified, and, as the next verse shows, he will be glorified by their faithful fulfilment of their mission." (Barrett)

Verse 11

"Moffat points out that Jesus uses the term 'holy' in relation to God only once in the four gospels" Kirk, The Vision of God (citing H.G. Wood). Barrett continues, "Jesus once more, as very frequently in the last discourses, explains his approaching passion as going to the Father ('I come to thee', rather than 'I go to thee', is used here because Jesus is speaking to the Father in prayer). The disciples are left in the world, in, that is, the position he himself occupied. They now, with the Holy Spirit, must bear witness to the world, and endure its hostility.

'Holy Father'. The prayer for the disciples is that as Christ has sanctified himself, so they may be sanctified in unity with one another, in Christ, and for God. It is the original holiness of the Father which makes intelligible and possible the consecration of Jesus and the Church. This is John's equivalent of the Old Testament 'Ye shall be holy for I am holy' (Lev. 11:44), which elsewhere is reproduced in a predominately ethical sense (1 Pet. 1:16, φ. Mt. 5:48). John, though no one could stress more strongly the ethical result of holiness in love, is careful to bring out the root of holiness in a relationship.... 'preserve them as what they are, a group of men separated from the world as God's own possession'... 'keep them as thine, as thy property.'"

Barrett sees "whom thou hast given me" as referring to "that which thou hast given me" viz. the name of God, rather than the unity of disciples. Yet, he continues, "The disciples are to be kept by God, not as units but as a unity.

'as we are one'. It is such a demonstration because it is no merely human unanimity but is modelled upon, and springs from, the unity of the Father and the Son. This thought is developed through the rest of the prayer.

Verse 12

The 'son of perdition' is literally 'lost man'. It may be, as has been suggested, that the description of Judas as the 'loss' or 'lost' man, derives from the incident reported in Mk. 14:4 when some complained of the 'waste' or 'loss' or 'lostness' of the ointment.

ἀπωλείας – Jn. 'of perdition'

ἀπώλεια – Mk. ‘waste’

During the ministry Jesus himself watched over his own in the person of God.

‘none of them is lost’. φ. 18:9 for the fulfilment of Jesus’ claim. ‘but the son of perdition’, Judas Iscariot ‘Perdition’ (N.T.) means eschatological perdition, damnation (Mt. 17:13; Acts 8:20; Rom. 9:22; Phil. 1:28; 3:19; 1 Tim. 6:9; Heb. 10:39; 2 Pet. 2:1; 3:7,16; Rev. 17:8,11), and the same Semitic expression occurs in 2 Thess. 2:3, in an apocalypse in which it is foretold that the parousia of Christ will not take place ‘except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.’ It seems probable that John saw in Judas this eschatological character who must appear before the manifestation of the glory of Christ (just as in 1 Jn. 2:18,22; 4:3 heretical teachers are represented as Antichrist). Φ. Ps. 41:9.

Verse 13

Once more the movement of Jesus to the Father is underlined, here in order to bring out the contrast between the time when he was able in his earthy life to guard his own, and the time of his withdrawal. He himself, as the eternal Son in perpetual communion with the Father, has no need of the formal practice of prayer; but this human practice is the only means by which the communion he enjoys can be demonstrated to human observation, and forms the pattern of the communion which his disciples will subsequently enjoy. Hence it helps to convey to them his joy, which springs, as will theirs, from unsparing obedience to and unbroken communion with the Father.

Verse 14

‘I have given them thy word’. Jesus committed to them the truth of his relation to God, which they truly received, v. 8. To know this truth is to have eternal life (17:3; 20:31).

‘the world has hated them.’ φ. 15:18f for the inevitable hatred of the world for that which is intrinsically other than itself. [“I have given them thy word” seems to be an echo from the Father.]

The disciples share this ‘otherness’ of Jesus because he has chosen them out of the world (15:19), and because they have been born of the Spirit (3:3-8), not in any human way (1:13).

Verse 15

‘that thou shouldest take them out of the world.’ The disciples, though not of the world, are in it (v. 11). It is their vocation to stay in it. It is possible that John intended to correct the apocalyptic view that the Christians would very shortly, at the parousia, be caught up from the earth (ἀρπαγισόμεθα, 1 Thess. 4:17; φ. ἀρπαγέντα, ἡρπάγη, 2 Cor. 12:2,4).

‘but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.’ The use in 1 John (2:13f; 3:12; 5:18f) suggests strongly that John is thinking of the Evil One, not of evil. The death of Jesus means the judgement of the prince of this world (12:31; 14:30; 16:11), the judgement of the prince of this world (12:31; 14:30; 16:11), but he is not derived of the power to harm the disciples, if they are left without divine aid.” (Barrett)

Verse 16

“The word ‘sanctify’ is not the same as ‘purify’; the disciples have already been declared ‘clean’ (13:10; 15:3). To be sanctified is to be made ready for a specific task, and the prayer seeks the endowment of the disciples for their apostolic mission.” (Marsh)

Hoskyns says of Christ’s priestly consecration of Himself; “The Death of Jesus was much more than a mere event carrying with it a mysterious redemptive significance for the world and capable of theological interpretation. It is an effective sacrifice because Jesus by His word made it to be so, and it is an effective sacrifice for His disciples only, because the consecrating word was spoken in their presence only and on their behalf only. The Death of Jesus is effective for the world only in so far as it believes in Him, and receives and accepts His consecrating word, since it is this consecrating word, not the murderous activity of the Jews, that makes His death an effective and redemptive act.”

William Temple gives the main point; “‘I consecrate myself’: Wonderful words! For their sakes He had come into the world and spoken as never man spake (7:46): now for their sakes – for our sakes – He consecrates Himself.... There remains the glory which is attained in that departure from earth which is called death. To this He now commits Himself. But this death, which to ordinary observers will seem an execution, is in true reality a sacrifice. The priest consecrates the victim; I consecrate myself.”

Verse 17

“Sanctify them”: “The word rendered ‘sanctify [ἀγιάσων] basically means to dedicate or to set apart for God’s service. A sanctified person should endeavor to live apart from sin. But sanctification does not mean sinless perfection. A sanctified person is a ‘saint’. And in the New Testament all Christians are called ‘saints’ (φ. 2 Cor. 1:1). Verse 19 shows that ‘sanctify’ does not mean to get rid of sin.” (Hobbs)

Barrett compares this word with Jeremiah’s sanctification (Jer. 1:5) and Aaron and his sons for priesthood (Ex. 28:41): “The disciples in their turn are to be set apart by God for a mission to the world. ‘by the truth’ means the saving truth revealed in the teaching and activity of Jesus. It is this truth which designates and separates the apostles for their mission.”

“The wide difference between justification and sanctification [Ryle defines in this way;] Justification is a perfect and complete work obtained for us by Christ, imputed to us, and external to us, as perfect and complete the moment we believe, as it can ever be, and admitting of no degrees. – Sanctification is an inward work wrought in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, and never quite perfect so long as we live in this body of sin. The disciples needed no prayer for justification: they were completely justified already. They did need prayer for their sanctification; for they were not completely sanctified.”

Verse 18

“Here the mission of the apostles is taken up into the supreme moment of the mission of the Son in which the task appointed him by the Father is completed. The aorist ἀπέστειλα (‘sent’) is used of the sending of the disciples, although they are not sent till 20:21 (πέμπω, present). John writes from the standpoint of his own age, but also regards the mission of the Son as virtually completed, and the mission of the Church as virtually begun, at the last supper, in which the love, obedience, and glory of Jesus are fully represented.

εἰς τῶν κόσμων. Both Jesus and the apostles have a mission to the world. This fact must be set aside the limitation of Jesus’ prayer to the disciples (v. 9) and to those who believe through their word (v. 20), the emphasis upon his love for his own (13:1 et al), and the command that the disciples should love one another (13:34; 15:12f). The world is to be invited, through the witness of the Holy Spirit and of the disciples, to enter this circle of prayer and love.” (Barrett)

Verse 19

“The animal offered in sacrifice to God was ‘sanctified’ in the sense that it was given to God, acknowledged as His possession (Deut. 15:19). So with the first-born (Exod. 13:2). Similarly the priest was ‘sanctified’ (Exod. 28:41), as one whose life was devoted to the service of God on behalf of the people. Jesus is both priest and victim. He is therefore a voluntary sacrifice. In thus ‘sanctifying Himself’, Jesus consecrates Himself in death to God.” (Hoskyns)

“‘and for their sakes, I sanctify myself.’ To consecrate oneself is the act of a servant of God, who makes himself ready for his divinely appointed task, and the task immediately ahead of Jesus was that of dying for his friends. The language is equally appropriate to the preparation of a priest and the preparation of a sacrifice; it is therefore doubly appropriate to Christ.... The Son who has prayed to be glorified now asks again in other terms that he may re-enter the divine life, in order that he may take his disciples with him and so, as it were, incorporate them into God.

Verse 20

As the disciples’ faith was the result of Jesus’ mission to the world, so their mission will invoke faith. John now deliberately turns to view this process, the history of the Church. For him there is no problem in the continued existence of an earthly society after the Lord’s resurrection; Jesus himself willed it and prayed for those who should join it (20:29). ‘on me’. ‘believe on’ is a common Johannine idiom, φ. 1:12.” (Barrett)

Barrett: “In the third section (vv. 20-4), the scope of the prayer is extended, not indeed to the world but to later generations of believers, who are dependent upon the word of the apostles. They too must be one: and their unity will be the means of convincing and persuading the world. The final destiny of all believers is to live with Christ in the eternal world and to behold his glory.”

Verse 21

“This unity is comparable to the unity that exists between the Father and the Son, and is of the same character – a unity of purpose.... It is a unity that is to be perfected into one. Its value is in proportion as the presence, and influence of the one Spirit takes possession of men’s hearts.” So writes Strachan. Barrett says, “Jesus prays that the whole Church may be one, as he has already prayed that his disciples may be one (v. 11). Its unity however is not merely a matter

of unanimity, nor does it mean that the members severally lose their identity. The unity of the Church is strictly analogous to the unity of the Father and the Son; the Father is active in the Son – it is the Father who does his works (14:10) – and apart from the Father the deeds of the Son are meaningless, and indeed would be impossible; the Son again is in the Father, eternally with him in the unity of the Godhead, active alike in creation and redemption. The Father and the Son are one and yet remain distinct. The believers are to be, and are to be one, in the Father and the Son, distinct from God, yet abiding in God, and themselves the sphere of God's activity (14:12).

‘that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.’ The unity of the Church in God is the supreme testimony to the truth of the claim that Jesus is God's authorized emissary. The existence of such a community is a supernatural cause. Moreover, it reveals the pattern of the divine activity which constitutes the Gospel; the Father sends the Son, and in his works the love of the Father for mankind is manifest, because the Son lives always in the unity of love with the Father, the Son sends the Church, and in the mutual charity and humility which exist within the unity of the Church the life of the Son and of the Father is manifest. It seems to be implied here that the κόσμος as a whole will believe, and therefore be saved. With this apparent universalism contrast 16:33. John retains the customary New Testament tension between universalism and the predestination of an elect remnant. In fact, the inevitable human imperfection of the Church means inevitably an imperfect faith on the part of the world, and Church and world alike must ever remain under the judgement and mercy of God.

Verse 22

Christ has been glorified, and he has communicated his glory to the Church, which, being in God, could not fail to share in the glory of God. This does not however teach a crude theologia gloriae. The glory is the glory of Christ, and the glory of Christ is acquired through, and is most completely expressed in the crucifixion. The Church receives glory on precisely the same terms, by unity in faith with the death and resurrection of Jesus, and expresses it in obedience, and pre-eminently in humiliation, poverty, and suffering. This is certainly not a promise of visible prosperity, φ. 16:33.” (Barrett)

Verse 23

“I in them and those in me. The basis of this unity is religious. Even [in] what is called ‘occumenical’ union, the world-wide Church remains imperfect without a unity in our doctrine of God and of salvation, and a unity of purpose in our mission.” (Strachan)

“‘that they may be made perfect in one’. In John τελειοῦν is used at 4:34; 5:36; 17:4 of carrying out, or completing, a task; at 19:28 of the fulfilment of Scripture. No other word of τέλειος group is used in John. The idea of completeness is all that is involved here. Final completeness and unity can of course be achieved only when the number of elect is accomplished at the time of the end, but these words do not exclude the notion that the Church may be complete at every stage of its growth.

Verse 24

‘I will’, KJV; ‘I desire’, Gk. The ordinary language of prayer breaks down because Jesus is speaking, as it were, within the Godhead. He expresses his will, but his will is identical with the Father’s (4:34; 5:30; 6:38). ‘be with me where I am’. Contrast 13:33,36, where Jesus says that even the disciples cannot follow him, to be where he is, ‘now’. To Peter he gives the promise, Thou shalt follow me afterwards. This prayer contemplates the time when such following becomes possible; that is, the thought of the last discourses comes finally to the eschatological hope that in the end the Church will be with Christ in God. The way to this glory is through suffering, for if Peter is to follow Jesus it will be in suffering before it is in triumph (φ. 21:18f). Jesus is going to the Father’s glory, through death; the disciples cannot follow him now because they are to be left in the world (v. 11); but they will follow.

‘that they may behold my glory.’ This means the glory of Christ within the Godhead, his glory as God. In 2 Cor. 3:18 the Christians in this life behold the heavenly glory of Christ as in a mirror, and are themselves transformed by the vision from glory to glory. But this does not seem to be John’s view; he thinks of the future consummation.

‘thou lovedst me’. The ultimate root of the final hope of men lies in the love of the Father for the Son, that is in the eternal relationship of love which is thus to be of the essence of the Holy Trinity. The beginning and end of time are here brought together to find their meaning in the historical mission of Jesus and its results.

Verse 25

It is by God's righteous judgement that the world is shown to be wrong, and Jesus and the disciples right, in their knowledge of God.

This verse and the next summarize the Gospel. The world does not know God. There exists however a unique reciprocal knowledge between the Father and the Son. The Son alone, who from eternity has been in the bosom of the Father, knows him as God knows all men. The disciples do not step into the place of Christ and know God as Christ knows him; but they know that God has sent Christ, and that accordingly Christ is the authorized agent and revealer of God. Their knowledge of God is mediated through Christ; and this, so far as John knows, is the only saving knowledge of God accessible to men.

[Barrett: "Lastly (vv. 25ff), Jesus reviews the result of his ministry. The world did not recognize God; but the believers have recognized the mission of Jesus from the Father, and therein have found, and will eternally find, knowledge and love."]

Verse 26

Jesus conveyed the revealed character of God to his disciples not only in his teaching but in his deeds and in his own person (14:9; 1:18). 'in them' may be rendered either 'within them', that is, 'within each one of them', or 'among them'.

That God would dwell in the midst of his people was a regular feature of the messianic hope. The only proper object of the love with which the Father loves the Son is the Son, and it is because he is in the disciples, and in their midst, that they can be said to enjoy this love.... Jesus is leaving the world and going to the Father not that his disciples may be left solitary but in order that he may abide in them and among them." (Barrett)

- SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES ON JOHN 17 derived from Dodd's commentary -

"The relation between Christ and His followers is always, in this gospel, grounded in the archetypal relation in which He stands to the Father. If therefore the washing of the feet, with the intimate converse of Christ with His friends which flows out of it, in some sort represents dramatically the union of men with the eternal Son, we still need something which will represent the archetypal union of the Son with the Father; and this is supplied in the only way in which

such union can be truthfully represented in human terms. The prayer in some sort is the ascent of the Son to the Father. Let us recall its key-phrases:

πάτερ, δόξασόν σου τὸν υἱόν...

δόξασόν με σύ, πάτερ, παρὰ σεαυτῷ...

πρὸς σὲ ἔρχομαι...

ἀγιάζω ἑμαυτόν...

σύ, πάτερ, ἐν ἐμοὶ καὶ ἐν σοί...

and finally the emphatic and pregnant

ἐγὼ σε ἔγνω.

In such words we apprehend the spiritual and ethical reality of that ἀνάβασις or ὕψωσις of the Son of Man which is hereafter to be enacted in historical actuality on the cross. This is what is ultimately meant by the words, ‘I am going to the Father... that where I am you may be also.’ Christ’s ‘journeying’ to the Father is neither a physical movement in space, such as a bodily ascension to heaven, nor is it the physical acts of dying. It is that spiritual ascent to God which is the inward reality of all true prayer. And this ascent in prayer carries with it all those who are included in the intercession which is, again, inseparable from all true prayer. In thus praying, Christ both accomplishes the self-oblation of which His death is the historical expression, and ‘draws’ all men after Him into the sphere of eternal life which is union with God: first, the faithful group of His personal disciples, and then all who are to believe in Him to the end of time. Consider again these key-phrases:

περὶ αὐτῶν ἐρωτῶ...

ὕπὲρ αὐτῶν ἀγιάζω ἑμαυτόν...

ἵνα καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐν ἡμῖν ᾤσιν...

ἵνα ᾤσιν τετελειωμένοι εἰς ἔν

ἵνα ἡ ἀγάπη ἣν ἠγάπησάς με ἐν αὐτοῖς ἢ καὶ ἐν αὐτοῖς.

This is the climax towards which everything has been moving from the moment when Christ, in full consciousness of His unique relation to the Father, washed His disciples' feet that they might have part in him. It is also the climax of the thought of the whole gospel.

In the Fourth Gospel the whole process of initiation [into eternal life] takes place within a body of 'friends' of Jesus. The corporate character of the transaction is essential. It is only within the body that the individual finds eternal life; he is one branch of the true vine, and without the other branches he cannot live and bear fruit.

That knowledge of God, or union with God, which is eternal life is here interpreted in personal and ethical terms as ἀγάπη. God's knowledge of man, in Christ, is His love for man. Man's knowledge of God is his response to the love of God in Christ, by love, trust and obedience in Him and charity towards his fellows.

Finally, the knowledge of God which is life eternal is mediated by an historical transaction. Only through the 'departure' and 'return' of Christ, that is, through His actual death upon the cross and His actual resurrection, is the life He brings liberated for the life of the world. If the goal is the unity of mankind with God, it is only by dying that Christ can 'gather the scattered children of God'; it is only being 'lifted up' on the cross that He can 'draw all men to Him'. The prayer, 'that they may all be one, I in them and them in me', finds fulfilment only because He who offers it has laid down His life for His friends. The reader is thus placed at the right point to begin the reading of the Passion-narrative."

- END C.H. DODD -

“It was inevitable that the passion narrative should contain an account of the arrest of Jesus, especially because the arrest was bound up with the betrayal.

There is throughout the narrative an emphasis upon the authority of Jesus. He, not Judas or the tribune, is in command. He goes out (v. 1) to his arrest; he interrogates his captors, and fells them to the ground with a word; he rebukes and also preserves his own disciples.” (Barrett)

Verse 1

In the account in Genesis, the brook Cedron (“of the cedars”) is a place of refreshment and honor after a lengthy campaign against Abram’s enemies.

John uses “garden” (φ. 19:41); Matthew and Mark use “place” and name it Gethsemane. Luke specifies the Mount of Olives which agrees well enough with John’s κήπος meaning “orchard” or “plantation”. The garden was walled and the location along with the garden in which he rose remind the reader of Eden. The three locations “belong inseparably together, historically as well as theologically, theologically as well as historically.” (Marsh) into the which he entered: “The shape of this sentence means that in all probability the garden was walled round.” (Marsh) The “going forth” of v. 4 also suggests a walled enclosure. “It is not profitable to guess at its owner.... John omits the agony of Jesus (φ. 18:11; 12:27) and consequently does not distinguish between the whole body of disciples and the three mentioned in Mk. 14:33 and parallels.” (Barrett) [Hobbs remarks, “The two swords mentioned in Lk. 22:36-38 and the dividing of the disciples into two groups in the garden are suggestive of protection, but they are superfluous now that Jesus was ready to be taken.”]

Verse 2

It is suggested that Judas betrayed to the Jewish authorities the place where Jesus might be found and arrested. (Barrett)

Verse 3

Matthew and Mark use a “great multitude”, Luke “a multitude.” Here John uses “band” – normally a cohort of 600 men, but can mean a maniple of 200. “Cohort” agrees with the

“captain” [chiliast] of v. 12 – a tribune. The use of these terms [σπεῖρα, χιλίαρχος] instead of multitude suggests Roman soldiers were present and their inclusion an indication that the whole κόσμος was against Jesus. This is not true. Says Barrett, “The participation of Roman forces at this stage of the proceeding against Jesus seems improbable, since the first step was apparently for the Jews to frame a charge that might be brought before Governor, and Roman soldiers would have taken Jesus at once to Pilate, not to the high priest.”

In Exodus 31:27-28, the Levites are told to kill about 3000 idolaters within the camp at Sinai. In later times, they were charged with patrolling the area outside the Temple complex and guarding the vast treasures within it. The chief priests and Pharisees dispatched the band. “By ἀρχιερεῖς John evidently means the priestly aristocracy. The Pharisees do not appear again after this point. Clearly John regards the ἀρχιερεῖς as the official loaders of the Jews who put Jesus to death; but it cannot be said that he wished to exonerate the Pharisees, or they would not have been mentioned at this point. The Sadducees are not referred to in John. ὑπερέται [‘officers’], in John, are always a sort of military police (7:32,45f; 18:3,12,18,22; 19:6; φ. 18:36, the ὑπερέται of Jesus); doubtless the Temple guard, acting under orders of the Temple officer (Acts 4:1), whose usual function was to watch the Temple at night.” (Barrett)

The word for band [σπεῖρω] is literally cohort (φ. Abbot and Smith Lexicon) consisting from 500-1000 men.” It is impossible that such a number was used. The meaning is the same as when we say ‘The police were called in’ (φ. Mt. 22:27)” (Strachan) A band was 600 men. Security was tight because large numbers of pilgrims were “available for incitement” (Marsh).

“Lanterns and torches are mentioned only by John. They need not be thought out of place on the night of the Paschal full moon; they may have been intended for use in case of an attempt at concealment, or the night may have been cloudy. It is not impossible however that John may have intended by means of these feeble lights to stress the darkness of the night in which the light of the world was for the moment quenched.” (Barrett) Hoskyns also sees the contrast.

Verse 4

“went forth”: lit. “having gone forth”, ἐξελθὼν, acc. to Marsh is “come out”. “If he had to ‘go unto’ the garden and also ‘come out’ of it, the suggestion that it was a walled area is much strengthened.” The word “paradise” is an Oriental word, first used by Xenophon of the parks of Persian kings and nobles [in LXX chiefly for גֶּן, Gen. 2:8f, al.; also for עֵדֶן, Isa. 51:3; פֶּרַדִּיז,]

Ne. 2:8; Ec. 2:5]. παράδεισος < Avestan pairi-daēza which is “garden” (surrounded by a wall) > παρα + τεῖχος. By Grassman’s Law concerning dissimilation of aspirates, the first aspirate becomes a plain stop, and in Gk. there is a category or two where the second aspirated stop loses its aspiration instead. [i.e. τ > δ and τεῖχος retains the dental stop and fricative becomes a sibilant. Paradise – surrounded; alongside a wall; enclosure.

The supernatural quality of the setting is deepened by the fact that Jesus knew “all things that should come upon him.” ἐρχόμενα “were coming” is used elsewhere in the Gospel at 16:13 in the sense of things to come when Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit who will “shew you things to come”.

Jesus went forth out of the grove or plantation, giving Himself up to death of His own free will, φ. 10:18.

Verse 5

Says Barrett of “Jesus the Nazaraean”, “Apart from this context John uses the adjective Nazarene once only (19:19, in the titulus on the cross). At 1:45 the construction is ‘from Nazareth’ ἐγώ εἰμι. I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you seek. φ. 9:9 ἐγώ εἰμι, I am the man who was born blind. The predicate of ἐγώ εἰμι is thus to be supplied from the context; but it is possible that there is a remembrance of words spoken (13:19) before the departure of Judas. ἵνα πιστεύητε ὅταν γένηται ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι [‘ye may believe that I am he’]. “And was standing also Judas”, Gk. In John the traitor does not identify Jesus by a kiss (φ. Mk. 14:44f); Jesus identifies himself, and gives himself up. Judas moreover remains standing with his followers. The ancient interpretation that he was blind [an idea from Gen. 19:11; 2 Ki. 6:18 perhaps] or paralyzed and unable to move, goes perhaps too far, but it rightly conveys the thought, which John means to suggest, of the complete importance of all but Jesus.

Verse 6

“they went backward and fell to the ground.” The thought [of His solitary] power is stressed further. The mere speech of Jesus (perhaps because expressed in language proper to God himself – see Barrett’s notes on 8:24) is sufficient to repel his adversaries [“I (am) he” occurs especially in the words of God himself, φ. Isa. 41:4; 43:10,13; 46:4; 48:12. In the Isaiah passages the meaning of the Hebrew is apparently ‘I am (for ever) the same’ with perhaps an allusion to

the name (YHWH) given in Ex. 3:14-16. The context demands a similar meaning for the Greek, though ἐγώ εἰμι is itself (as Greek) a meaningless expression The Lord, the first and with the last, is the eternal one. The εἰμι, that is to say is a properly continuous tense, implying neither beginning nor end of existence.... We may say then that ἐγώ εἰμι, thus understood, (i.) indicates the eternal being of Jesus; (ii.) thereby, and in itself, places Jesus on a level with God (ἐγώ εἰμι usually is found in the LXX on the lips of God himself; at Isa. 47:8; Zeph. 2:15 it is arrogantly used by men who put themselves in the place of God.) The language [of ‘going backward and falling to the ground’] may have been modelled upon Ps. 27:2; 56:9. φ. Jn. 6:66 which Barrett thinks has no ‘violent meaning’. Χαμαί, ‘ground’, is peculiar to John (9:6; 18:6); properly it means ‘on the ground’, but it is often used in place of χαμαῖζε, ‘to the ground’.” (Barrett) Not necessarily an Allmachtswunder acc. to Dodd.

Verse 7

Question and answer are repeated, and the independence and authority of Jesus underlined.

Verse 8

The disciples do not desert Jesus as in Mk. 14:50, but own their escape to His intercession. Barrett agrees that Jesus purchases the safety of the disciples at the cost of his own life: “It is by no means impossible that an apologetic motive may be detected in this ascription of the disciples’ flight to the intention of Jesus himself, but, especially in view of the clause which follows, it seems to be John’s primary intention to show, in an acted parable, that the ‘Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep’ (10:10) φ. Mk. 10:45.”

Verse 9

Barrett’s thinking here is a bit circular, but he points to the fulfilment of Jesus’ own prophetic statements in this verse and elsewhere in N.T. lit. with an eye to Mk. 13:31: “... my words shall not pass away.”

Verse 10

“The incident here described is found in the synoptic gospels (Mk. 14:47 and parallels), but none of them names the aggressive follower of Jesus. It is characteristic of the later tradition to add names and make identifications which are given in the earlier sources (φ. 12:4). Lagrange and Dr. V. Taylor suggest from Mk. 14:47 that εἷς τις means ‘a certain person known to me.’ Mark knew (it is suggested) that the man who struck the blow was Peter, but for reasons of security or respect did not mention his name. ‘sword’: The word μάχαιραν means knife, or dagger, rather than sword, and the anarthrous participle means no more than ‘he happened at that moment to have with him a sword.’ It is often said that to carry such a weapon on Passover night was forbidden. In any case regulation would be dispensed with by men who foresaw real and imminent danger.” (Barrett)

In some literary sense, a duality begins which isolates Jesus’ trial from that of Peter who will deny Him. The sequence begins with Malchus, the high priest’s servant being struck with a knife by Peter, Jesus’ number two man. John does not mention the healing of Malchus (perhaps from מלך), because the focus is upon Peter and the beginning of his own trial that very night.

Barrett thinks that the omission of the detail of Malchus’ healing was because John thought it inappropriate: “The gulf between Jesus and his adversaries, between light and darkness, was now unbridgeable.”

Verse 11

“John’s attention is focused on the Christological significance of his material. Peter must sheathe his sword not because if he fails to do so another sword will smite him but because nothing may hinder the destiny appointed by the Father for the Son.

In John, the word ‘cup’ is used nowhere else, either literally or metaphorically. In Mark (followed in the main by Matthew and Luke) it is used (a.) of the cup of suffering which Jesus must drink, and the sons of Zebedee may share (Mk. 10:38f); (b.) of the sufferings of Jesus contemplated by him in his agony (MK. 14:36); (c.) of the cup at the last supper, which is clearly connected with his death. John, who omits the prayer in Gethsemane before the arrest, shows his knowledge of it, but emphasizes two further points (a.) He uses the expression not in a prayer that the cup may pass but in a calm determined acceptance of it (φ. 12:27). (b). The cup is the Father’s gift; Jesus’ suffering is not the arbitrary and unfortunate result of circumstances but the work appointed him by the Father.” (Barrett)

Verse 12

“After his arrest Jesus is immediately handed over to Annas, the father-in-law of the high priest Caiaphas. In examination Jesus is questioned regarding his disciples and teaching, and refers to answer, alleging that evidence should be brought in proper form. The proceedings descend from the illegal to the abusive, and Jesus is sent in custody from Annas to Caiaphas. Interwoven with this narrative is another which deals with two disciples who follow Jesus. One, who has the entrée at least to the courtyard of the high priest’s house, brings in with him Peter, who is thus exposed to the scrutiny and challenge of the high priest’s household. Under this challenge he thrice denies Christ before cockcrow.” (Barrett)

Barrett finds the greatest difficulty in v. 19 which mentions that the high priest questioned Jesus. “Why,” he asks, “should Jesus be sent to Caiaphas (v. 24) when the high priest (who John tells us (v. 13) was Caiaphas) has already questioned him (v. 19)?” Says Westcott, “It would appear that Annas, as ex-high-priest, and possibly retaining in the eye of Jews the legitimate high-priesthood [Re: Schürer], was counted still as having the office: he certainly exercised the power, and had influence enough to procure the actual high-priesthood for five of his sons, after his own deposition.” Considering Luke 3:2, there remains the possibility that because of the apostasy of the time, there were in fact two high priests. Doctor Lightfoot thinks that Annas was not present having gone to the Temple to examine the sacrifices and certify that they were without blemish. Henry makes much of the wicked character of Annas and Caiaphas and of the relation between the two. After all, why should Jesus be brought before Annas for any reason? Did the band of temple police merely want to stop and refresh themselves at Annas’ house before conducting Jesus to Caiaphas’ house? See also Acts. 4:6.

Barrett’s thesis is that John moves quickly through the trial to avoid its apocalyptic tone, which Mark emphasizes. The confrontation with the Jews and its apocalyptic character is fully developed in chs. 7-10. The eschatological significance of Mk. 14:62 is situated for the purpose of that evangelist’s own account. Likewise, the omission of these words in John’s Gospel (having already dealt with the eschaton) resemble his treatment of Holy Communion. Says Dodd, “John does not give a eucharistic character to the Last Supper. But the eucharistic idea has already been embodied in the narrative of the Feeding of the Multitude with its accompanying discourse.”

There are simply too many variations (i.e. inclusions and omissions) to be distinguished between John and the Synoptists – at least too many to take up here. Doctor Henry S. Holland has written in The Fourth Gospel, “Many details in the other Gospels, which are now perplexing explain themselves. We understand at once how it was that the High Priest sent out the guard to take our Lord in such haste – in order that all might be done before the Feast- ‘for they feared the people.’ They had especially said, ‘Not on the Feast Day.’ It would be strange if, after all, it was exactly on the Feast Day that it happened. We understand again how the Court of the Sanhedrin could meet for the trial, which would certainly be illicit on the Feast Day. We see how the women could go and buy spices [on the Sabbath], and, perhaps, how it was that Simon of Cyrene could be coming out of the country. It becomes, also, more intelligible why not the faintest allusion is made to the Paschal Lamb at the Supper.”

Verse 15

All the evangelists narrate Peter’s denial. Barrett asks, “How could the other disciple, a Galilean fisherman have been friend to or known [γνωστὸς] Caiaphas?” Polycrates suggests that John wore the πέταλον, and was himself a priest, (though this is only conjecture).

“her that kept the door” suggests that the private scene was an atrium at Annas’ house (not in the Temple) where women were so employed, cf. Acts 12:13. However, Barrett cites Mk. 14:66 as an example of a “maid of the high priest” [παιδισκῶν τοῦ ἀρχιερέως]. “The reference to ἡ θυρωρός [‘doorkeeper’] may be based on nothing more than Mark’s παιδίσκη. This word in later Greek ‘female slave’.

Verse 17

μαθητῶν – disciples > mathematics. Brentius remarks how the impulsive, unstable character of the apostle Peter comes out here. One hour he draws his sword against a whole multitude of armed men. Another hour he is frightened out of his Christian profession, and driven into lying by one woman. (Henry)

Verse 18

“a fire of coals” [ἀνθρακία > anthracite] is only used here and at John 21:9, in the marvelous account of Jesus appearing to the disciples at the sea of Galilee. Some, as the later

Henry Melville, have thought that the ‘fire of coals’ on that latter occasion was purposely intended by our Lord to remind Peter of his fall. (Ryle)

Verse 19

John completely omits the two points on which the synoptic trial turns: the question regarding the messiahship of Jesus, and the accusation of blasphemy. (Barrett). Strachan agrees, “All the time, [the ecclesiastical authorities] had made up their minds to have Jesus condemned on a political charge. The Evangelist makes no mention of the religious accusations made against Jesus in the trial before Caiaphas, which provoked the great reply recorded in Mk. 14:62.

[Peter’s Denial] has a certain dramatic appropriateness, in view of the fact that, while Peter is denying Jesus, Annas is asking Him at the same moment about his disciples, and Jesus is also appealing to their testimony (vs. 19, 20).

Verse 22

An officer strikes Jesus: “It is worth nothing that such an action by an officer could hardly have taken place at a regular session of a Jewish court.” (Marsh) φ. Acts 23:2.

Verse 27

“Probably the cock’s crow was not the cry of a bird but the trumpet sounding the ‘cock-crow’ which marked the transition from the third watch of the night, called ‘Cock-crowing’, to the fourth, called ‘Early’; the four night watches were Late, Midnight, Cock-crowing, and Early.” (Temple) αλεκτοροφωνία (before 6 A.M.) & πρῶι.

Verse 28

“the hall of judgment”. “The praetorium was the official residence of a governor of a province; here, Pilate’s residence. The procurator of Judaea normally lived at Caesarea (where there was another praetorium, Acts. 23:35), but came to Jerusalem for the great feasts, to quell disturbances.

The dwelling places of Gentiles are unclean. The rules about the dwelling-places of Gentiles do not apply to colonnades. In ordinary circumstances a Jew would enter a Gentile’s house, but he would become unclean – technically unclean. On the day before the Passover

therefore the Jews remained outside. The irony of their intention is characteristically Johannine: those who plot the murder of the Son of God mind to the last detail their formal religious punctilio.” (Barrett) Further citing Rabbinic lit., Barrett adds, “But it is not certain that [John’s narrative] is rightly based on facts. The uncleanness that Jews would have incurred by entering the Praetorium would last only till the end of the day when it could be removed by a bath; in the immediately ensuing evening (the beginning of the next day) the Passover could be eaten. Moreover, only a small number of priests was concerned, and ‘if the congregation or the greater part thereof contracted uncleanness, or if the priests were unclean but the congregation clean, the Passover may be kept in uncleanness’ (Mishnah).” Says Barrett, “The whole incident is probably unhistorical.”

Though His appearance before Herod is not included in John’s Gospel, His standing before him and Pilate confirms Ps. 2:2: “The kings of the earth stand up, and the rulers take counsel together: against the Lord and against his anointed.” (cp. Acts 4:26; Mk. 13:9) (Hoskyns) Lightfoot observes, “Since the Prisoner is in truth the unchanging and unswerving Judge, Pilate will inevitably pass on himself a sentence of acquittal or of condemnation, which the Prisoner, the Lord, will ratify.

Owing to the Jews’ religious scruples which, it should be noticed, are respected by the occupying power, the scene in 18:28-19:16 alternates between the interior of the Praetorium, where Pilate is in the presence of Him who bears witness to the truth (18:37), and the exterior, where Pilate is exposed to the pressure and relentless determination of the Jews, with the chief priests and their officials at their head (19:6). Outwardly and inwardly, therefore, Pilate is in a straight betwixt the two, and sooner or later he must decide between them; and the successive stages by which he is led to his fatal decision are clearly marked.”

“[Consider] the royalty of Jesus: Jesus admits His kingship and declares its true character; a Kingdom of the Truth; He is crowned, if only in mockery, by the Jews; declared King by Pilate, and proclaimed as such – a proclamation which he refuses to withdraw – in the three well-known languages of the empire. He acts with royal majesty, as master of the situation throughout: going freely to death (18:2,4,8), securing the safety of His followers, controlling Peter’s violence, reminding Pilate of the limits of his authority, bearing His cross for Himself, handing over His spirit freely to the Father. In contrast to Him are seen (a.) the Jews – loud, violent, unjust; breaking the requirements of their own judicial rules, openly proclaiming that

Caesar is their king. (b.) Pilate – with whom there is great sympathy, as we watch ‘the contest in him between the Roman sense of justice and the official’s desire to carry on the king’s government at the least possible cost of friction’ (C.H. Turner) – and yet he condemns the innocent; he yields to a crowd of turbulent provincials whom he had been sent to control. [The prophetic fulfillments already marked in “Notes & Quotes” are only some which can be considered. Consider also] the fulfilment of prophecy (18:9,32; 19:24,28,36,37)” (New Commentary).

Verses 28-40

Henry says, “We have here an account of Christ’s arraignment before Pilate in the Praetorium (a Latin word made Greek): thither they hurried him to get him condemned in the Roman court, and executed by the Roman power. Being resolved on his death, they took this course, 1. That he might be put to death the more legally and regularly, according to the present constitution of their government, since they became a province of the empire; not stoned in a popular tumult, as Stephen, but put to death with the present formalities of justice. Thus he was treated as malefactor, being made sin for us. 2. That he might be put to death the more safely. If they could engage the Roman government in the matter, which the people stood in awe of, there would be little danger of an uproar. 3. That he might be put to death with more reproach to himself. The death of the cross, which the Romans commonly used, being of all deaths the most ignominious, they were desirous by it to put an indelible mark of infamy upon him, and so to sink his reputation for ever. This therefore they harped upon, Crucify him. 4. That he might be put to death with less reproach to them. It was an invidious thing to put one to death that had done so much good in the world, and therefore they were willing to throw the odium upon the Roman government, to make that the less acceptable to the people, and save themselves from the reproach. Thus many are more afraid of the scandal of a bad action than the sin of it. See Acts 5:28.

It was early; some think; some think about two or three in the morning, others about five or six, when most people were in their beds; and so there would be the less danger of opposition from the people that were for Christ [Yet, see Lk. 22:66]. See how much their heart was upon it, and how violent they were in the prosecution. Now that they had him in their hands, they would

lose no time till they had him upon the cross, but denied themselves their natural rest, to push on this matter. See Mic. 2:1.

Two sayings of Christ concerning his death were fulfilled, by the Jews declining to judge him according to their law. First, He had said that he should be delivered to the Gentiles, and that they should put him to death (Mt. 20:19; Mk. 10:33; Lk. 18:32,33), and hereby that saying was fulfilled. Secondly, He had said that he should be crucified (Mt. 20:19; 26:2), lifted up, Jn. 3:14; 12:32. Now if they had judged him by their law, he had been stoned; burning, strangling, and beheading were in some cases used among the Jews, but never crucifying. It was necessary that Christ should be put to death by the Romans, that, being hanged upon a tree, he might be made a curse for us (Gal. 3:13) and his hands and feet might be pierced.

[Pilate's weakness lay in not being] as inquisitive as he ought to have been in this matter. He would have found that the true reason why the chief priests were outrageous against Jesus was because he did not set up a temporal kingdom in opposition to the Roman power; if he would have done this, and would have wrought miracles to bring the Jews out of the Roman bondage, as Moses did to bring them out of Egyptian; they would have been so far from siding with the Romans against him that they would have made him their king." Strachan agrees that "The Evangelist's purpose is to show that the responsibility for what happened must be placed on 'the Jews'."

Verse 31

It has been stated that the Jews were deprived of the authority to try capital crimes for forty years prior to the temple's destruction. Equally, the Jews may have turned Jesus over to the Romans because the Sanhedrin had no authority to stone Him. Says Barrett, "In the New Testament there is the death of Stephen (Acts 6:7; parts of the narrative read like the story of a lynching rather than a judicial act, but a session of the Sanhedrin is described); Paul's refusal to be tried by a Jewish court should also be noted (Acts 25:9ff).

Verse 33

poss. translated, 'You, a prisoner, deserted even by your friends, are a king, are you?' The reader has not been prepared for the introduction of this title, but it plays a large part in the ensuing narrative and dialogue (18:33-37,39; 19:3,12,15,19-22).

Verse 34

It is impossible for Jesus to answer the question until he knows what it means. It is conceivable that Pilate is inquiring because he has himself apprehended the true and unique royalty of Jesus; but if, as is much more probable, he is merely testing a political charge brought by the Jews further explanation is necessary.

Verse 35

‘Am I a Jew?’: ‘Such questions are nothing to me. Your own national authorities have brought the charge; what is its basis?’ ‘What hast thou done?’: ‘Of what seditious activities are you guilty?’

Verse 36

Jesus admits that he is a king, but proceeds at once with such a definition of his kingship as removes it from the sphere of sedition and rebellion. Kings of this world naturally fight for supremacy; that Jesus and his followers do not do so shows that his kingdom is of a different order. See supplemental note, p. 242.

Verse 37

Jesus himself will neither affirm or deny his kingship. If it is to be spoken of it must be on the lips of others. Pilate is clearly pressing (not necessarily in a hostile manner) for an answer in terms of kingship in ‘this world’; such an answer Jesus refuses to give (he cannot give an outright ‘No’ since though his kingdom is not ‘of this world’ he has been sent ‘into this world’ (3:16; 17:18), but proceeds to define his mission in fresh and more suitable language.

The birth of Jesus is nowhere else explicitly mentioned; it is synonymous with his entry into the world. The description of birth as an entry into the world is not in this context accidental. Jesus himself, like his kingdom, is not of this world. Nevertheless he has entered this world for the purpose of witnessing to the truth, that is, to the eternal reality which is beyond and above the phenomena of the world, and, in particular, to the true and eternal kingdom of God which is the fount and pattern of all human authority, φ. 19:11.

‘Every one that is of the truth’: This sentence prepares the way for Pilate’s uncomprehending inquiry, What is truth? The witness of Jesus to the truth can be grasped only by those who are themselves related to the truth, φ. 3:3,21.

Verse 38

As in the synoptic gospels, Pilate is represented as not unfriendly to Jesus; he does not wish to put him to death, and he sees that he is a victim of a Jewish plot. Yet sympathy is, in John’s mind, a quite inadequate attitude to Jesus; like Nicodemus (7:50f), Pilate for all his fair play and open-mindedness is not of the truth; he is of this world.

‘I find in him no fault at all’. Like the earlier evangelists John does not lose the opportunity of emphasizing the political innocence of Christianity.

Verse 39

Φ. Mk. 15:6 and parallels. There is no extra-biblical evidence for this custom, and the parallels that have been adduced are of little value. The custom mentioned by John is not however impossible, though if official it would have required a special imperial dispensation.

Pilate, who wishes to release Jesus, determines to take advantage of the custom, perhaps the Jews will accept Jesus as the prisoner to be released under its terms. It is not clear however why Pilate describes him as the “King of the Jews”. (a.) He has apparently himself decided that Jesus is not a king in the ordinary sense of the world. (b.) Since the Jews were using the charge that Jesus was or desired to be king of the Jews as a means of getting rid of him it was hardly a title likely to command him to them. John has probably taken the title straight out of the earlier tradition [viz. Mark]; though it also suits his purpose, which is to portray Jesus in his humility as in fact the true king of Israel.

Verse 40

The unexplained introduction of Barabbas presupposes knowledge of an earlier narrative, probably the Marcan (bar’-abba’, son of a father or bar-rabban, so of the master). The former, a common name, is much more probable. ληστής (‘robber’) is a very brief description of Barabbas in comparison with Mk. 15:7 and parallels.” φ. Mk. 14:48; Jn. 10:1.

Supplemental note on John 18:36

“It is of great interest to compare this ‘confession’ before Pilate with the corresponding ‘confession’ before the high-priest, Mt. 26:64. The one addressed to Jews is framed in the language of prophecy, the other, addressed to a Roman, appeals to the universal testimony of conscience. The one speaks of a future manifestation of glory, the other speaks of a present manifestation of truth. The one looks forward to the Return, the other looks backward to the Incarnation. It is obvious how completely they answer severally to the circumstances of the two occasions” (Westcott [as cited by Whitehead]).

“To examine him, they hurry him from one judge to another five several times. In all which places he is egregiously abused; and kept waking all night, and the next day to his death. 1) He is brought to Annas, Jn. 18:13. There they smote him with a staff or wand. 2) From Annas to Caiaphas, Jn. 18:28; There they spit in his face and buffet him. 3) From Caiaphas they send him to Pilate, Lk. 23:1. 4) From Pilate to Herod, Lk. 23:7. There he was ill-treated by Herod and his guard. 5) From Herod to Pilate again, Lk. 23:11. There they scourged him and platted a crown of thorns on his head, Jn. 19:1,2, and smote him with their staves on the head so crowned, Mt. 27:30.”

Wm. Gouge. Epistle to the Hebrews p. 929.

The Johannine recapitulation of New Testament Christology is well exemplified in 18:1-14. Here the second Adam ‘in a garden’ (verse 1) accepts the cup of sacrifice from His father...The traitor, twice mentioned in this scene, is first connected with ‘the place’...As in 13:18, the traitor’s presence indicates the fulfillment of prophecy, thus supporting the divine claim, which is now made in the threefold assertion of the ‘I am’ (vs. 4-8). The claim solemnly prefaced (v. 4 φ. Jn. 13:1-3), fixes attention upon the person of Jesus (contrast ‘WHOM seek ye?’ in vs. 4, 7 with Jn. 1:38). The second mention of the traitor places him with the enemies of the divine claimant, and on the second pronouncement of the ‘I am’ the offending members are cast to the ground from which they came, and to which they will return (Gen. 2:7,3:19) before the bodily presence of divine Head (φ. Mt. 18:8-9 and contrast Jn. 13:4ff). The third utterance of the ‘I am’ secures the safety of the predestined members (Jn. 18:8-9; φ. 17:12, 10:28-30). Thus

Peter's sword is superfluous (v. 10); for the second Adam is expelled from 'the garden' of His victorious conflict, not by human agency, but by the sword of the Cherubim (Gen. 3:24) in accordance with the divine decree (Jn. 18:11). So in the next scene we hear once more the voice of the apostate 'head' acknowledging that the one man (Rom. 5:15) must die for the people (Jn. 18:14; φ. 11:49-52).

But further, the conjunction of the 'the garden' (Jn. 18:1) and the 'high priest' (vs. 10, 13-14?, 24) suggests the scene in Heb. 5:5-10. The background here, as there, may be Ps. 110. For 'cheimaron' in Jn. 18:1 would recall the last verse of the Psalm in LXX; and with this clue all the details agree.

Jesus drank the cup of agony by the 'the brook' in the way which he must tread. Therefore he, 'the head,' was 'lifted up,' whereas His enemies were 'put under his feet.' Finally, however, the situation in Psalm 110 is founded upon the story of David in 2 Sam. 15:21ff. There Ittai (in contrast to Judas) takes his stand in 'the place' where David is, not for treachery but for loyal service unto death. Then all present follow the king as members of his company (φ. Gen. 32:10); 'and the king passed over the brook Kedron' (Cheimarros again) to win the victory over his enemies with the cooperation of the high priest! In 2 Sam. 15:22 Ittai's following includes 'all the little ones' which LXX renders 'paidēs'. Thus, in view of Part One of this essay, it appears that the Johannine thought lies very near to the synoptic treatment of the Body of Christ. From The Apostolic Ministry A.M. Farrer auth. K.E. Kirk, Gen Ed.

Henry writes on 2 Sam. 18:22; "When [Ittai] and his attendants passed over the brook Kidron (the very same brook that Christ passed over when he entered upon his sufferings, Jn. 18:1), towards the way of the wilderness, which lay between Jerusalem and Jericho, all the country wept with a loud voice, v. 23. Cause enough there was for weeping 1. To see a prince thus reduced, one that had lived so great, forced from his palace and in fear of his life, with a small retinue seeking shelter in a desert, to see the city of David which he himself won, built and fortified, made an unsafe abode for David himself. It would move the compassion even of strangers to see a man fallen thus low from such a height, and this by the wickedness of his own son; a piteous case it was. Parents that are abused and ruined by their own children merit the

tender sympathy of their friends as much as any of the sons or daughters of affliction. Especially, 2. To see their own prince thus wronged, who had been so great a blessing to their land, and had not done anything to forfeit the affections of his people; to see him in this distress, and themselves unable to help him, might well draw floods of tears from their eyes.”

The background of this narrative concerns King David and his son, Absalom. Absalom’s sister was named Tamar. She was raped by her half-brother, Amnon. Absalom avenged his sister by killing Amnon, David’s first born son. Eventually the family’s strife worsened when Absalom made a bid for power and sought to usurp his father David’s throne. It is before Absalom’s rebellion was put down that this narrative begins. At Kidron, David divided his army into three parts, as Jacob had divided his army into two parts, (Gen. 32:10).

The Cedron here mentioned, is the same as the Kidron, a brook named more than once in the Old Testament. The word ‘brook’ means literally, a ‘winter torrent,’ and this, according to all travelers, is precisely what the Kidron is. Excepting in winter, or after rains, it is merely the dry bed of a watercourse. It lies in the east side of Jerusalem, between the city and the Mount of Olives. It is the same Kidron which David passed over weeping, when obliged to flee from Jerusalem by the rebellion of Absalom (2 Sam. 15:23). It is the same Kidron by the side of which Asa burnt the idol of his mother Maachah (2 Chron. 15:16), and into which Josiah cast the dust of the idolatrous altars which he destroyed (2 Kn. 12:12).

Lampe says that the way by which our Lord left the city, was the way by which the scape-goat, Azazel, was annually sent out into the wilderness on the great day of atonement...

Lightfoot mentions a curious fact which he draws from a Jewish writer, that the blood from the sacrifices in the temple ran down a drain into the brook Kidron, and was then sold to the gardeners for the purpose of dressing their gardens. The blood having been consecrated, could not be put to common uses without sin, and therefore the gardeners paid for it as much as would buy a trespass offering. This is curious, if true.” RYLE

Ittai willing and loyal vs. Iscariot unwilling and treacherous.

Matthew Henry writes about Psalm 110 (king & priest); “We have here the Redeemer saving and comforting them (v. 7) for their benefit. 1. He shall be humbled: He shall drink of the brook in the way, that bitter cup which the Father put into his hand. He shall be so abased and impoverished, and withal so intent upon his work, that he shall drink puddle-water out of the lakes in the highway; so some, the wrath of God, running in the channel of the curse of the law, was the brook in the way, in the way of his undertaking which must go through, or which ran in the way of our salvation and obstructed it, which lay between us and heaven. Christ drank of this brook when he was made a curse for us, and therefore, when he entered upon his suffering, he went over the brook Kidron, Jn. 18:1. He drank deeply of this black brook (so Kidron signifies), this bloody brook, so drank of the brook in the way as to take it out of the way of our redemption and salvation. 2. He shall be exalted: Therefore shall he lift up the head. When he died he bowed the head (John 19:30) but he soon lifted up the head by his own power in his resurrection. He lifted up the head as a conqueror, yea, more than a conqueror. This denotes not only his exaltation, but his exultation; not only his elevation, but his triumph in it, Col. 2:15. Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them [David spoke as a type of him in this (Ps. 27:6)]. Now shall my head be lifted up above my enemies: His exaltation was the reward of his humiliation; because he humbled himself, therefore God also highly exalted him. Phil. 2:9. Because he drank of the brook in the way therefore he lifted up his own head, and so lifted up the heads of all his faithful followers, who, if they suffer with him, shall also reign with him.”

“The New Testament word for ‘priest’ is related to a word meaning ‘holy’ [Hiereus Archiereus priest; high (chief) priest] and indicates one who is consecrated to and engaged in holy matters. The Hebrew word for priest is of uncertain origin, but seems originally to have meant a ‘seer,’ as well as one who has to do with divine things. A priest is a minister of any religion, whether heathen (Gen. 41:45; Acts 14:13) or Biblical (Mt. 8:4; 1 Pet. 2:5-9). Originally, the individuals were priests (Gen. 4:3,4); later father of families (Gen. 12:7; 13:18); at Sinai God through Moses designated Aaron, his sons and his descendants of priests (Exod. 28:1). The Aaronic priests had to meet very rigid standards (Lev. 21:16-24); in the sanctuary they ministered in special garments, and adhered to a definite ritual. They were divided into 24 courses, each serving a week at a time (1 Chron. 24:1-19). They represented the people before

God, offering sacrifices and praying in their behalf. The chief, or high priest supervised the priests, offered a sin offering (Lev. 4) and sacrificed on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16), and ascertained the will of God by the Urim and Thummim (Num. 27:21; Neh. 7:65). The Levites served as assistants to the Aaronic priests (Num. 3). In the New Testament Jesus Christ is described as a high priest after the order of Melchizedek [king and priest] (Heb. 6:10; 20-7:17). The Aaronic priesthood is abolished in Him (Jn. 14:6; 1 Tim. 2:5-6; Heb. 5:7-10). The sacrifice He offered was Himself, and it never needed to be repeated. By His death He made atonement for the sins of men once for all. The New Testament teaches the priesthood of all believers; they share in Christ's priestly activity, bringing the word to men and bringing men to Christ (Eph. 2:18; Heb. 10:19-25; 3:15; 1 Pet. 2:5-9; Rev. 1:5-6).

Kidron is a brook running south from Jerusalem into the vale of Achor into the wilderness of Judah and finally into Lake Asphaltitis (Gk. For Dead Sea). The valley of Kidron is a steep slope between the Mt. of Olives (and the Garden of Gethsemane) and Jerusalem. This valley is also known as the King's Valley (φ. 2 Sam. 18:18). The King's Valley is also mentioned in Genesis 14:17 as the king's dale or Shaveh. There Melchizedek, king of Salem met Abram after his slaughter of Chedorlaomer. Verses 17-24 are in the same paragraph which suggests that Abram's treatment of both the King of Sodom and the King of Salem (Jerusalem) are in contrast to each other, yet depict the wholesomeness of Abram's response to both. Verse 18 reads:

“And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine; and he was the priest of the most high God.”

This priestly function of offering bread and wine was mnemonically authorized by Jesus at the Last Supper, and offered at the Cross as the Body and Blood of God. Melchizedek as priest and king typifies the priesthood and kingship of Jesus. Read Hebrews 5:5-10.

Henry writes: “Many Christian writers have thought that this [appearance of Melchizedek] was an appearance of the Son of God himself, our Lord Jesus, known to Abram, at this time, by this name, as afterwards Hagar called him by another name, Gen. 16:13. He appeared to him as a righteous king, owning a righteous cause, and giving peace. It is difficult to imagine that any mere man should be said to be without father, without mother, and without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, Heb. 7:3.”

At this very place, David crossed Kidron to take up a position so as to save his kingdom. Here he prepared for suffering. For Jesus on Maundy Thursday, the place was a garden of agony where He would undergo suffering to save the world. (John 18:1-12)

Almost all commentators notice the curious fact that the fall of Adam and Eve took place in a garden and Christ's passion also began in a garden, and the sepulcher where Christ was laid was in a garden, and the place where He was crucified was in a garden (Jn. 19:41)....

Gualter remarks that the first Adam had everything that was pleasant in the Garden of Eden, and yet fell. The second Adam had everything that was painful and trying in the Garden of Gethsemane, but was a glorious conqueror" (Ryle)

From verse 4, Ryle adds a quote from Ford who has in turn quoted Pinart, "[W]hat rendered Christ's sufferings most terrible was the perfect foreknowledge He had of the torments He should endure. From the first moment of His life He had present to the mind the scourge, the thorns, the cross and the agonizing death which awaited Him. Saw He a lamb in the meadow or a victim in the temple, the sight reminded Him that He was the Lamb of God, and that He was offered up in sacrifice."

The Passover was celebrated at the time of a full moon, yet they have come with lanterns, and torches and weapons. Jews and Gentiles are both conspirators in His arrest. Henry says, "the second Adam was not driven, as the first was, to hide himself, either for fear or shame, among the trees of the garden...he did not run away from them, but went out to meet them, and reached forth his hand to take the bitter cup. When the people would have forced him to a crown, and offered to make him a king in Galilee, he withdrew and hid himself (Jn. 6:15); but when they came to force him to a cross, he offered himself; for he came to this world to suffer and went to the other world to reign."

From verse 6, we read, they went backward, and like men thunder-struck, fell to the ground. Henry says, "It should seem they did not fall forward, as humbling themselves before him, and yielding to him, but backward, as standing it out to the utmost." Ryle adds, "the only reasonable account of the event is that it was a miracle. It was an exercise for the last time of that

same Divine person by which our Lord calmed the waves, stilled the winds, cast out devils, healed the sick, and raised the dead. And it was a miracle purposely wrought at this juncture, in order to show the disciples and their enemies that our Lord was not taken because He could not help it, or crucified because he could not prevent it; but because he was willing to suffer and die for sinners. Augustine remarks, “What shall He do when He comes to judge, who did this when about to be judged? What shall be His might when He comes to reign, who had this might when He was at the point to die?”

Jesus says in verse 8c “if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way.” Ryle and Henry both comment on this passage. First Ryle: “The tender sympathy and consideration of our great High Priest for His people comes out very beautifully in this place, and would doubtless be remembered by the eleven long afterwards. They would recollect that the very last thought of their Master before He was made a prisoner, was for them and their safety.” And Henry: “He intended to give a specimen of his undertaking as Mediator. When he offered himself to suffer and die, it was that we might escape. He was out antipsychos—a sufferer in our stead; when he said, Lo, I come, he said also, Let these go their way; like the ram offered instead of Isaac.”

From our study of The Apostolic Ministry, we read that “Peter’s sword is superfluous (v. 10); for the second Adam is expelled from ‘the garden’ of His victorious conflict, not by human agency, but by the sword of the Cherubim (Gen. 3:24) in accordance with the divine decree (Jn. 18:11).” All four Gospels record Peter’s drawing the sword in the garden.

Old Testament depictions of Cherubim are terrifying indeed. The angel at Eden after the expulsion of Adam and Eve, the angel who appeared to Baalam’s ass in Numbers 22:23, as well as Ezekiel’s description of them all point to their terrible majesty. Cherubim were said to hover over the Ark of the Covenant. But here in John 18, Peter’s sword is comparatively puny. What the theologian intends is that Jesus was driven out of the Garden by the necessity of drinking the cup which His Father proffered Him. The appointed task of His Passion lay before Him and in complete obedience to God, Jesus faced His imminent suffering.

In Ryle's words; "The absolute voluntariness of Jesus Christ's suffering for us is nowhere perhaps more remarkably brought out than in this passage. He resents and rebukes the effort of a zealous disciples to repel force by force. He speaks of His sufferings as a 'cup' given to Him by His Father, and appointed in the everlasting councils of the Trinity and as one which He cheerfully and willingly drinks. 'Shall I not drink it? Would you have me refuse it? Would you prevent my dying for sinners?' It is more marvelous when we reflect that He who thus willingly suffered was God Almighty as well as man. Nothing can account for the whole conduct of our Lord at this crisis but the doctrine of atonement and substitution."

Finally Jesus was taken and bound, treated as a common slave or criminal. Matthew Henry explains the event in this way; "This shows the spite of his persecutors. They bound him, [1] That they might torment him and put him in pain, as they bound Samson to afflict him. [2] That they might disgrace him, and put him to shame; slaves were bound, so was Christ, though free-born. [3] That they might prevent his escape...See their folly, that they should think to fetter that power which had but just now proved itself omnipotent. [4] They bound him as one already condemned to death, for they were resolved to prosecute him to the death, and that he should die as a fool dieth, that is, as a malefactor, with his hands bound. 2 Sam. 3:33,34.

The types and prophecies of the Old Testament were herein accomplished. Isaac was bound, that he might be sacrificed; Joseph was bound, and the irons entered into his soul, in order to his being brought from prison to reign, Ps. 105:18, etc. Samson was bound in order to his slaying more of the Philistines at his death than he had done in his life. And the Messiah was prophesied of as a prisoner, Isa. 53:8."

F.J. Hall in his The Passion and Exaltation of Christ wrote, "The further fact that no beginning or end of days is ascribed to Melchizedek—he simply appears—is treated symbolically as signifying the endlessness of the priesthood of Christ, who 'because he abideth forever hath an unchangeable priesthood'."

Citing the phrase "Righteousness and peace have kissed each other," in his Christmas sermon (1616), Lancelot Andrewes says that the Nativity is prefigured by Melchizedek (King of

Salem, King of Righteousness). The passage from Hebrews 7:2 describing the extraordinary priest also describes the joy of Christmas, φ. 85:10.

Melchizedek appears to Abram (Gen. 14:17-20) whose seed has blessed, and will bless, all families of earth. As Henry Law explains, “A personage who is all wonder, stands on the stage of Scripture. His name bids us mark him well. It is a full Gospel note. He is high in earthly dignity, for he is Salem’s king. He is high in holy function, for he is the priest of the most high God. Do we ask his lineage? It is shrouded in a veil, which we may not pierce. Do we seek the morning of his days? His sun never rises. Do we seek the evening of his life? His sun never sets. He only appears in full-blown stature, and in meridian blaze. So obscure is he in sublimity, so sublime in obscurity, that it is no surprise to hear the question, Can this be merely man? He comes forward with neither empty hand nor silent lip. He strengthens the patriarch with refreshment for the way. He adds too, the greater strength of blessing in the name of God. Abraham (sic) owns the claim in reverence and to homage. He presents a tenth of all...

[Scripture] tells us in distinct phase, he is ‘made like unto the Son of God...’

Behold Melchizedek! In wise purpose his descent is hid far beyond our sight. So, too, clouds and darkness mantle the first rise of Jesus. He is, by eternal generation, the co-eternal Son of the co-eternal Father. But who can grasp such mystery? He, who begets, precedes not the begotten. He, who is begotten, is not second to the parent-cause. This truth is a boundless ocean...To know God’s essence, we must have God’s mind...To span the lengths of His nature, we must have His infinitudes. To survey His amplitudes, we must sit as compeers on His throne.

We read and are assured that Jesus, by eternal birth is God of God, and very God of very God. But while we cannot dive into the depths, we bathe our souls in the refreshment of the surface. For hence it follows, that He is sufficient to deal with God and to satisfy God, and thus to save His people to the uttermost. We see not Melchizedek’s cradle. But we distinctly see him on earth. Eye-witnesses, who heard Jesus and handled Him, give testimony, that He, too, has tabernacle in our clay, and thus was qualified to shed His life-blood as our ransom.

In Melchizedek we find neither first nor latest hours. No search can tell when He began or ceased to be. Here is Jesus. His age is one everlasting day. From eternity past to eternity come, His being rolls in one unbroken stream. Before time was, His name is, 'I am that I am.' When time shall have run its course, His name is still, 'I am that I am...'

His kingdom is first righteousness, then peace Rom. 14:17...Melchizedek was a local monarch. His city was graced with the name Salem, which is Peace. The war, which stalked through the land, troubled not these tranquil citizens. Here again, we have the sweet emblem of Jesus' blissful reign. His kingdom is one atmosphere of peace—one haven of unruffled calm.

Melchizedek is called to the most hallowed functions. He is consecrated priest of the most high God. As king, he sat above men. As priest, he stands before God. This holy office exhibits Jesus. He spurns no office, which can serve the church. The entrance of sin calls for expiation. No sinner can approach a sin-hating God without a sin-removing plea. This expiation can only be by the death of an appeasing victim. The victim can only die by a sacrificing hand. Hence we need a priest to celebrate the blood-stained rite. And all which is needed, we have in Jesus.

But mark it well, the Lamb had died once and for ever. The Priest's work on earth is finished once and forever. The shadows are passed away. The one Priest has entered with His own blood into the holy of holies, having obtained eternal redemption. Will any now speak of priests and altars, and sacrifices on earth? Let them beware, let them consider. It is no light matter to trifle with the Spirit's language, and the names of Jesus."

- END HENRY LAW -

From Hebrews – A Commentary by Luke Timothy Johnson, we read of some 41 explicit citations from the Septuagint. Of the six references to Genesis, the one to Melchizedek here under review is considered by Gordon as having further Christological meanings. He writes, "The Genesis passage is itself exceptionally strange, both in the way it sits in the narrative flow and in the provocative things it says about the two figures. First, the story of the abduction of Lot with his family and possessions, the pursuit and conquest of the five kings by Abraham (sic), and

the encounter with the king of Salem all seem from another world—a larger, Gentile political world—than the tightly focused story of Abraham and his pursuit of the promised heir. The author pays tribute to this narrative anomaly by saying that Melchizedek literally interrupts the narrative flow, without any apparent cause of consequence. He must therefore be important in himself. Technically, Melchizedek is *agenealogētos* because he is not introduced with the tables of ancestors (Heb. *tôlēdôt*) that other prominent characters of Genesis have been to this point (Gen. 5:1-32; 6:9-10; 9:8-27; 10:1-32; 11:1-32). But in contemporary terms he also lacks any narrative connections. Only God's later oaths in Ps. 109:4 summons him back from his narrative obscurity, and in connection with the Messiah himself.

Hebrews' excerpt from the LXX focuses on two elements in the story: the identity of Melchizedek, and the exchange between him and Abram. The scriptural text provides his name and his dual office: he is king of Salem and—more fascinating—a 'priest of the Most High God.' Immediately we see how provocative a figure he might be: here he is the first high priest in all of Torah, and a priest of the 'Most High God' at that—The same God who also called Abraham (for 'el – 'elyon as [*theos*] *hypsistos*, see Num. 24:16; Deut. 32:8; Ps. 56:2; 78:56). And he is simultaneously a king. Melchizedek holds both offices and is not descended from Abraham. He is a Gentile – as, in the strictest sense, so is Abraham at this point preceding his own circumcision (see Gen. 17:22-27)...

The qualities of righteousness and peace classically represent the prophetic hopes of Israel (see Isa. 9:6-9; 32:17; Mic. 5:5; Zech. 9:10).

Thus if Scripture does not report on his ancestors, Melchizedek had none. The reader may conclude that he is without human antecedent. But Hebrews goes further. Neither does Scripture report him as having a 'beginning of days of end of life' (once more, using the terms *archē* and *telos*). The reader can therefore conclude further that Melchizedek had no natural birth (beginning of days) and did not die (end of life). Melchizedek is somehow, by Scripture's own implicit testimony, eternal."

As for the tenth of spoils given to him, Gordon says that it is remarkable; “Why remarkable? For one thing, the gesture seemed to have been a spontaneous sharing, not a demanded offering. For another, Jewish readers could not but be aware, and if they were not, our author [Paul, acc. to St. Stephen’s pew Bibles] quickly reminds them, that the Levites were commanded under the Law to tax their fellow Israelites a tenth of their goods as that tribe’s “inheritance” in place of land...

The tithe was in exchange for all the services they rendered which could be summarized by the term “blessing.” Thus when Aaron came down from offering sacrifices for the people, he ‘lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them...and Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting; and when they came out they blessed the people, and the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people’ (Lev. 9:22-23). In short, tithes are in exchange for a blessing. But in the case of Melchizedek, one not from the people of Israel receives a tithe from Abraham, and he blesses the one who has the blessing. Is his not the true priesthood, recognized by the patriarch himself?

Commentating on this exchange, Hebrews states as an incontestable principle (lit. ‘apart from all denial’) that ‘the lesser is blessed by the greater.’ If he is thinking of the relationship of Moses and Aaron to the people of Israel, then the principle holds in general, at least with respect to their social positions. But Scripture itself shows that there are contrary cases, in which the lesser blesses the greater (see 2 Sam. 14:22; 1 Ki. 1:47; Job 31:20). The case here is less that Hebrews can cite a standard principle than that Hebrews sees in this specific instance that the greater blesses the lesser, which is shown, parenthetically, by the tribute paid by Abraham. The author, indeed, move quickly to the aspect that truly distinguishes the lesser and greater, and as he does so, we can observe how he collapses the horizons between the scriptural story and the actual contrast he is interested in making.

The Levites died but Melchizedek goes on living. Gordon says, “But we should observe that Scripture does not actually say that Melchizedek goes on living. That was a deduction drawn by the author from hints in the text or rather not in the text since it provided for Melchizedek ‘neither beginning of days nor an end of life’ so, ‘he remains a priest forever’ (7:3). But the one

who truly 'lives forever' is Jesus, and he is the one whom Hebrews really has in mind when it says that 'he is attested as being alive.' The real difference between the Levitical priesthood and that of Jesus, then, is that they are mortal and his is the living one. This is precisely the difference that establishes the priesthood of Jesus as 'the greater' as the synkrisis continues in subsequent sections of the text...

Hebrews is prepared to move on to the more critical parts of its exposition, which relies on the promise that Jesus lives forever, whereas the Levitical priests are merely mortal."

- END L.T. JOHNSON -

In our Friday Bible study we have examined the various theological themes which John develops for the purpose of explaining the pre-eminence of the Christ. Taking up the various teachings John records of Jesus concerning ritual and actual cleansing, we have discussed the waters of baptism at Jordan, the stone water pots used for purifying, the living water described at Sychar, and again at Tabernacles; the themes of cleansing at Bethesda and Siloam and eventually of the foot-washing the night He was betrayed. All have enormous significance for comprehending the truth of the blood of Christ shed at Calvary. There the water which issued from His side demonstrates the importance of baptism (BAPTIZO) in a public way what he told Nicodemus in private or what was meant by dipping (BAPTO) the morsel He gave to Judas.

These quotations hopefully will help us to understand the Passion and its relevance in light of Malchus and the Sanhedrin. The clash of authority and the new Israel that Jesus brought to life in His body are necessarily of importance to the people of God. His perfection as priest in His prayer, His agony in the garden which reflected David's own trouble, and His thorough-going prophetic descriptions in public, as well as in private, indicated that as prophet, priest and king, He is rightfully described as the Son of man.

- END BROCK JOHNSON -

“Our Lord was clothed with a robe of shame and contempt, that we might be clothed with a spotless garment of righteousness, and stand in white robes before the throne of God...

It is very noteworthy that the expression, ‘I find no fault in Him,’ is used three times by Pilate, in the same Greek words, in St. John’s account of the passion (Jn. 18:38; 19:4-6). It was meet and right that he who had the chief hand in slaying the Lamb of God, the Sacrifice for our sins, should three times publicly declare that he found no spot or fault, after a searching examination by him that slew Him.” (Ryle)

Verse 1

“Scourging normally preceded crucifixion. If, as appears, the scourging preceded the verdict, it was of course irregular [Marsh uses the same term ‘irregular’]; but John does not make clear when the formal sentence was passed. In Mark (15:15) the scourging takes place after the sentence [which makes it part of the crucifixion (Marsh)].” (Barrett).

Verse 2

Henry has written that only two Gospellers wrote of Jesus’ birth, but all four wrote of His death. He says of this event, “Thorns came in with sin, and were part of the curse that was the product of sin, Gen. 3:18. Therefore Christ, being made a curse for us [Gal. 3:13], and dying to remove the curse from us, left the pain and smart of thorns, nay, and binds them as a crown to him (Job 31:36); for his sufferings for us were for his glory. Now he answered to the type of Abraham’s ram that was caught in the thicket, and so offered up instead of Isaac, Gen. 22:13 [φ. Mt. 27:29.]

It was the custom of some heathen nations, to bring their sacrifices to the altar crowned with garlands [e.g. Acts 14:13]; these thorns were garlands with which this great Sacrifice was crowned. [In Matthew’s narrative, mentions is made that they took off the purple robe but not the crown of thorns.] It is commonly supposed (though there is no certainty of it) that he was crucified with that on his head; for as he is a Priest upon his throne [See Barrett’s notes on Jn. 19:13], so he was a King upon his cross. See also Mt. 27:19.

These thorns, it is likely, fetched blood from his blessed head, which trickled down his face, like the ointment [φ. Mt. 26:7] (typifying the blood of Christ with which he consecrated himself) upon the head, which ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, Ps. 133:2. Thus, when he came to espouse to himself his love, his dove, his undefiled church, his head was filled with dew, and his locks with the drops of the night, Cant. 5:2.

He wore the crown of thorns which we had deserved, that we might wear the crown of glory which he merited.” (Henry) φ. Judg. 9, **תִּשָּׂא**.

Verse 3

Barrett follows the MSS that include “they came to him”. “The words might well seem superfluous, but in fact they contribute to a vivid picture of the mocking approach of the soldiers pretending to do reverence to the king.

The details of this mockery are clear in themselves, and so are their theme and motive: Jesus is mocked as the king of the Jews. The probable inference is that the charge brought from the Sanhedrin and preferred before Pilate was that of claiming to be king of the Jews, that is, the Messiah. It is thus with excellent historical justification that John brings out the theme of kingship in his passion narrative.” (Barrett)

Verse 4

The verse suggests that Pilate wanted merely to make Jesus appear unfit to any who might declare him king. (Marsh) “Behold I bring him to you”: “This act is introduced in preparation for the dramatic pronouncement of v. 5. The situation is highly dramatic but equally improbable. A Roman judge would have released or executed his prisoner.” So says Barrett, but there is the possibility that Pilate was very reluctant to put an innocent man to death. After all, any complications which might ensue after a public execution at a high holiday time were equally feared by the Sanhedrin as well as by Pilate, φ. 11:48; Mt. 21:46. Barrett doesn't see the extraordinary circumstances of the trial.

Verse 5

Behold the man “A series of striking contrasts is involved (i.) Jesus is dressed as a king, and is announced as the man. (ii.) In v. 7 his claim to be the Son of God is mentioned; the

claimant to divine honours is announced as the man. (iii.) The man announced by Pilate with mingled pity and contempt was to the readers of the gospel their Lord and their God. By ‘the man’ John may however have meant something much more precise. ‘The man’ calls to mind those Jewish and Hellenistic myths of the heavenly or primal Man which lie behind John’s use of the phrase ‘the Son of man’. ‘The Son of man’ is however a gross Semitism which would be quite out of place on Pilate’s lips (it is never used by Paul though he moves in the same sphere of ideas); besides, ‘the Son of man’ would lack the ambiguity which marks Pilate’s words. He hits the truth accidentally (as Caiaphas did, 10:50-52). Jesus, in his complete humiliation, is set forth as the heavenly Man (and this is the essence of John’s teaching about the Son of man).

Verse 6

Crucify, crucify: The demand for this kind of punishment implies the recognition that the case had passed into Roman hands.

Take ye him: The pronoun is emphatic: Take him yourselves. This of course the Jews could not do; according to 18:31 they were not allowed to inflict capital punishment; and even if they had done so they would have inflicted death by stoning, not by crucifixion; moreover a Roman official could not have transferred his own responsibility to any local court. If the words were spoken by Pilate they must have been a taunt; probably they were intended to fasten responsibility for the death of Jesus on the Jews rather than the Romans.

Verse 7

We have a law. Νόμος is here used in the sense of a particular statute, not in the general sense of Torah. The law of blasphemy is meant, cf. Lev. 24:16. The question of blasphemy is not raised in the very short account of the Jewish ‘trials’ in ch. 18, but it is central in Mark 14:55-64, and in earlier chapters in John (e.g. 5:18; 10:33,36).

he made himself the Son of God; cf. 5:18; 10:33 ποιῆν here means ‘make out to be’; 1 Jn. 1:10 [viz. “make”]. It is far from clear in Mark on what the charge of blasphemy is founded; in John there is no difficulty; Jesus blasphemes in claiming for himself essential equality with God.

Verse 8

he was the more afraid. Pilate's fear is aroused by Jesus' reported claim to supernatural dignity. The translation 'he was the more afraid' may be justified if 18:38 is held to imply fear (the word φοβεῖσθαι is not used before the present verse); but it is better to suppose that μᾶλλον (the comparative of μάλα ["more"]) is here elative [the absolute superlative]: 'he was very much afraid'." (Barrett)

Verse 9

The answer is an imperial silence. Jesus does more than assert His divine origin and power. He assumes it. In striking contrast, Pilate asserts his power. (Strachan). The divine character can neither lie nor deny Himself. For this verse Henry cites Isa. 53:7: "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."

The judgment hall "Presumably he brought Jesus in with him, since at verse 5 Jesus had been brought out.

Whence art thou? The form of the question recalls Lk. 23:6. The meaning [may have been] transformed in Johannine style, or rather, a characteristic double meaning has been attached. John does not think primarily of the province of Jesus' birth but of the fact that, being Son of God, he is 'from above'. His origin is both known and not known; see 3:8; 8:14; 9:29. It is for this reason that But Jesus gave him no answer. The question (like the question 'Art thou a king?') is not capable of a simple answer. In Mark, the silence of Jesus is mentioned at 14:60f; 15:5. In Luke Jesus does not answer Herod (23:9). The silence of Jesus is much less prominent in John than in the other gospels because [in John] much more conversation is introduced into the story.

Verse 10

Speakest thou not unto me? The silence of Jesus disturbs Pilate who desires to release him. By provoking the next question the silence continues the conversation as effectively as a reply.

Verse 11

Thou couldest have no power at all against me. Several times (e.g. 3:3-8) a theological word used by Jesus is misunderstood when the hearers take it in a literal sense; here Pilate uses the word authority [ἐξουσίαν of verse 10] in an un-theological sense; Jesus takes the word out of his mouth and uses it absolutely, speaking of the authority [“liberty”, “right”] not of Rome but of God. except it were given thee from above. All human authority is derived from God’s (φ. Rom. 13:1). It is implied primarily that in condemning and crucifying Jesus Pilate acts with divine consent – the crucifixion does not contravene the authority of God but lies within his purpose; perhaps also that the Roman authority in general is of divine appointment and consent. Φ. 8:20; authority to arrest Jesus was not given until the moment appointed by God had come.

therefore – because your authority is not your own.” (Barrett) John alone has cited this exchange between Jesus and Pilate concerning authority, and so the natural conclusion which follows is not that Judas is identified as the person who delivered Jesus to Pilate, but rather Caiaphas, the personal representative of the Jews. So say Barrett, Marsh, and Whitehead. Who is he who delivered Jesus to Pilate? “Not presumably, Judas, for he gave Jesus into the hands of the Jews. The high priest? Or the Jewish authorities as a single whole.” (Marsh) Strachan agrees, “God had given Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin no judicial authority over Jesus. They are unauthorized shepherds, who enter the fold by some other way (10:1).” Barrett is open-minded; “The singular number of the participle suggests Judas; but Judas did not deliver Jesus to Pilate, and παραδιδόναι is also used of the act of the Jewish authorities (18:30,35). Nevertheless, Judas, the devil (6:70), the tool of Satan (13:2,27), is probably intended.

hath the greater sin ‘hath sin’ is a Johannine phrase (9:41; 15:22,24; 1 Jn. 1:8; nowhere else in the New Testament). Here ἁμαρτία plainly means ‘guilt.’

Verse 12

And from thenceforth, ‘for this reason’ or ‘from this time’ φ. 6:66. If the causal sense be adopted the present verse is parallel to v. 8.

friend of Caesar φίλος need mean no more than ‘loyal supporter.’

speaketh against Caesar In allowing the theme of kingship to govern the decisive stages of the narrative up to v. 16 John is probably true to history. These arguments rather than any others would compel Pilate to act.

Verse 13

γαββαθά Chaldean. “the knoll” – a vernacular term for the Roman tribunal in Jerusalem. Gabbatha < גב “back” < גב “to hollow”, “to curve”; the back (as rounded [comp. גב and גב]); by analogy the top or rim, a boss, a vault, arch of eye, bulwarks, etc. – back, body, boss, eminent (higher) place, [eye] brows, nave, ring.

The mention of Hebrew and Greek names at 19:13 and 19:17 “indicates that Pilate’s verdict has significance for all the world, φ. 19:20” (Strachan) βήματος; “judgment seat”. Φ. Mt. 27:19. “The word is used in Hellenistic Greek for the tribunal of a magistrate, and in the New Testament for the judgment-seat of God (or Christ); φ. Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10.... It is not easy to determine who sat upon the βήμα. ἐκάθισεν [‘sat down’] may be intransitive – Pilate sat upon the tribunal. In favour of the latter rendering the following points may be urged, (i.) It gives great dramatic force to Pilate’s words in v. 14, ‘Behold your King.’ (ii.) In doing so it provides a parallel to vv. 2,3,5. (iii.) If Pilate sat on the judgement-seat it must have been to pronounce a sentence; but no sentence is recorded (iv.) There are traces elsewhere of a similar tradition [Justin, spurious gospels, etc.]. Against the transitive rendering the following arguments may be brought. (i.) In the only other place in John in which καθίζεν occurs (12:14; φ. 8:2) it is intransitive; and so it commonly is in the rest of the New Testament. This is a strong argument. (ii.) Such an act as is suggested would not have been becoming to a Roman governor. It will however be recalled that (according to Luke 13:1) Pilate had committed the grim jest of mingling the blood of the worshippers with their sacrifices – and it may be that the deed is not historical, (iii.) The Johannine narrative suggests that Pilate was afraid (v. 8), and more anxious to release Jesus than to mock him (v. 12). This is also a good argument. It seems impossible to decide between these alternatives; both are supported by good arguments. Probably John was conscious of both meanings of ἐκάθισεν. We may compare his habit of playing on words of double meaning (see on 3:3) and also his subtle presentation of the investigation in ch. 9, where ostensibly the blind man is examined while through him Jesus himself is being tried, only to turn the tables on his accusers by judging them. We may suppose then that John meant that Pilate did in fact sit upon the βήμα, but for those with eyes to see behind this human scene appeared the Son of man, to whom all judgement has been committed (5:22), seated upon his throne.” (Barrett) “Pavement”; Λιθόστρωτον. “As an adjective the word means ‘paved with stones’; it

may mean a tessellated or mosaic pavement. In the absence of further evidence greater precision cannot be attained.” (Barrett)

“Gabbatha” variously, a hill, pit, high forehead, dish, an enclosed place open to the sky, hill of the house. The locality of Gabbatha is not known; presumably it was adjacent to the Praetorium. (Barrett)

Verse 14

“And it was the preparation of the Passover.” “The meaning of this phrase in Jewish literature is quite clear. It does not mean Friday in Passover week, but ‘eve of Passover,’ Nisan 14.”

Temple asks, “Does this mean 6 A.M. or noon? Westcott gives sufficient reason for thinking that St. John is following the use of Asia Minor, where he was writing, in reckoning the hours from midnight, not (as was the Jewish custom) from 6 A.M. If so, the formal trial and sentence took place at 6 A.M. and it was possible for the crucifixion itself to begin, as St. Mark tells us (15:25) at 9 A.M. (‘the third hour’).”

“and [it was] about the sixth hour”. [Here is an apparent] conflict with the synoptic gospels; contrast Mk. 15:25 “and it was the third hour.” [φ. also Mt. 27:45: “Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour.”] Mark’s ‘third’ may have arisen because he was anxious at 15:33 to depict darkness ‘at noonday’; John’s ‘sixth’ may have arisen because he wished to represent the death of Jesus as that of the true Paschal lamb (the passover sacrifices were killed in the course of the afternoon). This is in fact probably John’s motive for inserting the note of time; or he may have wished to show in the simplest terms that the ‘hour’ of Jesus (φ. 2:4) had now come.

“Behold your King!” In the dramatic narrative the clever argument of the Jews is thrust back on them with bitter irony; the helpless prisoner of Rome is the only king they are likely to have. But throughout the passion story John works so frequently with the theme of kingship (see on 18:33) that it seems likely that here he has intentionally put into the mouth of Pilate an unintended truth. Just as Pilate inscribes on the cross (vv. 19,27) the royal title of Jesus, so here, in spite of all appearances, he truly proclaims Jesus as the king of Israel. The title recalls the messianic claim, and the charge on which Jesus was no doubt prosecuted in the Roman court. Φ. v. 5; the representative Man is also the true king of the human race.” (Barrett)

The Jews have become apostate in their proclamation, “We have no king but Caesar.” Hoskyns notes “that both Pilate and the Jews are unconscious witnesses to Christ truth. Pilate proclaims the sinlessness of Jesus, and the Jews declare His death to be the fulfilment of the Law (φ. 11:50,52).”

“They would have no king but Caesar, and never have they had any other to this day, ‘but have been many days without a king, and without a prince’ (Hos. 3:4), that is, without any of their own, and the kings of the nations have ruled over them. Since they will have no king but Caesar, so shall their doom be: themselves have decided it.” (Matthew Henry)

Ryle adds, “They, who at one time used to say, ‘The Lord God is our King,’ renounced the faith of their forefathers and publicly declared that Caesar was their king, and not God. They stultified themselves, and gave the lie to their own boasted declaration of independence of foreign powers. Had they not said themselves, ‘We be Abraham’s seed, and were never in bondage to any men’? (Jn. 7:33) Had they not tried to entrap our Lord into saying something in favour of Caesar, that they might damage his reputation? ‘Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar?’ (Mt. 20:17) And now, forsooth, they shout out, ‘We have no king but Caesar!’ Above all they madly proclaimed to the world, though they know it not, that Jacob’s ancient prophecy was fulfilled, that ‘the sceptre had departed from Judah,’ and that the Messiah must have come, (Gen. 49:10) Truly the sceptre had departed, when chief priests could say, ‘We have no king but Caesar.’”

There are difficult knots to untie in this narrative when compared with the Synoptics, not the least of which is the time of the trial and crucifixion that very day. Another tangle concerns John’s presence near the Praetorium. “How St. John became acquainted with all the details of our Lord’s trial, and the private conversations between Him and Pilate, is a question which none can answer satisfactorily who do not hold the doctrine of plenary inspiration. That John was in and about the palace of the high priest, and not far from our Lord all the time, from the seizure in Gethsemane up to His death, we may well believe; but that he could have over-heard the private conversations between Jesus and Pilate, seems simply impossible. How then could he know anything about them, and write them down? There is but one answer. He wrote them by inspiration of the Holy Ghost.” (Ryle)

Verse 15

ἄρον – “Away (with him)!”

“Shall I crucify your king?” “Pilate resumes his irony, and leads up to the Jews’ blasphemy.

“We have no king but Caesar.” Φ. Judg. 8:23; 1 Sam 8:7, and many other passage of the Old Testament [The two references above concern a kinsman – redeemer (Gideon) and a priest-prophet (Samuel)]. It is insisted that the only true king of Israel is God himself, and that even a Jewish king can be tolerated only on condition of his obedience to God and fidelity to the national religion. In denying all claim to kingship save that of the Roman Emperor Israel abdicated its own unique position under the immediate sovereignty of God.

Verse 16

“delivered”. This is the nearest approach to a sentence of death that John gives. It is far from clear how it can be intended. Pilate could not hand Jesus over to the Jews for crucifixion which was a Roman punishment and must have been carried by Roman troops. Either John uses παρέδωκεν [“delivered”] loosely – Pilate gave Jesus up to the fate the Jews demanded; or (and this is almost required by αὐτοῖς [“him”] he inaccurately supposed that the Jews did crucify Jesus (but see vv. 23,32,34, οἱ στρατιῶται)” (Barrett)

They took Jesus: the word used here is the same as the evangelist used in the Prologue to state that when the Word came to his own, his own did not receive him [παρέλαβον]. There is dramatic irony that at this point of the story, his own people so receive the incarnate word – but to crucify him!” (Marsh)

“Jesus now delivered to death, carries his own cross to Golgotha and is there crucified between two others, his cross bearing the legend, Jesus of Nazareth king of the Jews, a legend to which the Jews object in vain. His clothing is, in fulfilment of Scripture, shared among the soldiers, who cast lots for his tunic. In the presence of certain women Jesus presents his mother and the beloved disciple to each other as mother and son. In fulfilment of another Scripture Jesus is given vinegar to drink; then with the declaration that the work of God is completed, he dies.”

John makes additions and omissions [to Mark’s Gospel]. Simon of Cyrene (Mk. 15:21) disappears, and Jesus carries the cross for himself. The fulfilment of prophecy is stressed on both the division of the clothes and the drink offered to Jesus. The committing of the mother and the beloved disciple to each other is peculiar to John, as is the objection of the Jews to Pilate’s notice

of condemnation. There is no mockery (φ. Mk. 15:29-32). Jesus dies not as in Mark 15:34 with a cry of dereliction, but with an affirmation of fulfilment, and the words ('gave up the ghost') by which his death is described recall the words of commendation of Lk. 23:46.

Once more John brings out the theme of the royalty of Jesus (see 18:33), and the fact that the crucifixion was the fulfilment of prophecy, and the perfect performance by Jesus of the Father's will. He does not allow himself even to suggest that Jesus was deserted by God. The men crucified with Jesus are forgotten as soon as mentioned. They are not introduced by John for their own sake, but in order to make possible the narrative of 19:31-37 [other prophetic fulfilments]. The incident regarding the mother and the beloved disciple is a crux in the Johannine problem. It is most naturally explained as simple historical reminiscence due to the beloved disciple himself." (Barrett)

Verse 17

"Though omitted in John, Simon of Cyrene who carried the cross after Jesus fulfils Lk. 9:23 and 14:27 concerning the taking up of the cross and following Him. The place of the skull recalls the shameful death of Abimelech in Judges 9:53,54 and of Jezebel in 2 Ki. 9:35.

"And he bearing his cross." Barrett admits the possibility that, combining Mark and John, Jesus began the task of carrying the cross beam, and upon fainting, could carry it no further. Simon of Cyrene was compelled to carry it, but to dismiss Docetist claims that Simon was crucified in Jesus' place, John omits this detail. It was held that Jesus needed no help in his salvific task. The reference to Genesis 22:6 seems plausible enough for Barrett.

"the place of a skull". Probably called "Skull-place" from its appearance. Barrett mentions the tradition that it was the place where Adam's skull was buried, but realistically observes that the site has not been identified.

Verse 18

"and two other with him." "they are mentioned only in order that it may later (vv. 31-37) be emphasized that no bone of Jesus was broken, and that from his side there flowed blood and water." (Barrett)

"on either side one." Barrett thinks this is a Semitic construction (φ. Numb. 22:24; Dan. 12:5).

μέσον δὲ τὸν Ἰησοῦν, “and Jesus as the middle one” (Barrett)

Verse 19

ἔγραδεν δὲ καὶ τίτλον ὁ Πειλᾶτος.

“Here γράφειν clearly means ‘cause to be written’ φ. 21:24. τίτλος is a transliteration of the Latin titulus.

“JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS” It has already been pointed out that the charge claiming to be king (Messiah) must almost certainly have been that which compelled the Roman governor to act, and that kingship is a fundamental theme of John’s theological treatment of the passion narrative.” (Barrett)

Verse 20

“In the Hebrew the oracles of God were recorded; in Greek the learning of the philosophers; and in Latin the laws of the empire. In each of these Christ is proclaimed king, in whom are hid all the treasures of revelation, wisdom, and power. God so ordering it that this should be written in the three then most known tongues, it was intimated thereby that Jesus Christ should be a Saviour to all nations, and not to the Jews only.” (Henry)

The inscription recalls Ps. 96:10; “Thus did Pilate tell it out among the heathen that the Lord is King.” (Hoskyns)

Of Nazareth φ. Lk. 23:6.

Verse 21

“The Jews’ objection to the titulus was natural. In the first place, they had just declared that they had no king but Caesar, and that the titulus, if they accepted it, was tantamount to an admission of sedition; and in the second place, to suggest that a powerless condemned and dying outcast was the king of their nation was claimed a studied insult. To state only that the crazy fellow had claimed to be king would be harmless.

Aramaic [Hebrew] “religion rejected Him, Greek culture ignored Him. Roman law crucified him.” (Hobbs)

Verse 22

Pilate, no doubt anxious to avenge himself upon the Jews who had forced him to act against his will, refused to alter what he had written. Accordingly Jesus went to his death under a title unintentionally but profoundly true.” (Barrett)

Verse 23

“Cyprian extracts from the seamless robe the idea of the unity of the Church. Josephus calls attention to the fact that the full-dress garment of the high priest was seamless.” (Strachan) φ. Ps. 22. The tunic was an undergarment like that of the high priest (φ. Lev. 16:4). “The symbolism of the one piece was quickly noticed by both Jews and Christians and it may well be that at this point John is trying to show that the death of Jesus will not destroy the unity of the people whom he has gathered together.” (Marsh) “Both ancient and modern (φ. Hoskyns and Davey, The Fourth Gospel) interpreters have suggested that in John’s allusion to the seamless robe, which immediately covered the Lord’s body, we may see a picture of the indivisible unity (1 Cor. 1:13) of believers who form His body, the Church – this unity being contrasted with the division, or rent, mentioned three times in the central section of this gospel (7:43; 9:16; 10:19) as existing among the Jews, in consequence of the Lord’s presence and teaching.” (Lightfoot) Here is a high-priest and king of the Jews proclaimed in three languages upon the titulus (universal) and from Nazareth (particular).

“It is worth remembering that when the first Adam fell by sin and was cast out of Eden, God mercifully clothed him and covered his nakedness. When the second Adam died as our substitute, and was counted a ‘curse’ for use on the cross, He was stripped naked and his clothes sold.” (J.C. Ryle)

Says Barrett, “τό ἱμάτιον (singular) means always the outer garment; but the plural when used generally (as here) is equivalent to our ‘clothes’.

“four parts”. There were therefore four soldiers. Probably they formed a military unit; φ. the τατράδια [“quaternions”] of Acts 12:4. “The coat”; “tunic”, Gk. The χιτών was an undergarment, corresponding both etymologically and in usage with the Hebrew כְּתֹנֶת. At Leviticus 16:4 [“linen coat”] both Hebrew and Greek words are used of the high priest’s tunic.

“without seam” ἄραφος is from ῥάπτειν, “to sew together”. Josephus describes the high priest’s tunic in similar language. Philo treats the tunic as the symbol of the Word. It seems probable that the make-up of the tunic was a matter of common knowledge and, in Hellenistic

Judaism, of allegory. Once John's thought was set in motion in the manner to be noted in the next verse, he would probably think, not of the Word, as the unifying element of the universe, but of the death of Christ as bringing into one flock the scattered children of God (φ. 11:52). It seems very unlikely that there is an allusion to Joseph, with his coat, his brothers (prefiguring the disciples) and his two fellow-prisoners.

“from the top” φ. 8:23.

Verse 24

The question is from Ps. 22:18 [one of the Messianic psalms]. It need not to be supposed that this Old Testament passage gave rise to the whole incident as recorded by all the evangelists; it was an incident that might very well happen at any execution. [The terms “garments” and “tunic” are more distinct in the Greek than in the Hebrew where **לְבוּשִׁי** and **כְּנִדִּי** are to be regarded as synonyms, and not to be distinguished.]

“soldiers”. The soldiers are mentioned again in order to bring out yet another of John's dramatic contrasts. Over against the soldiers stand the faithful disciples.” Four each, it would seem.

Verse 25

The indication is of 2-4 women present. “If two be the number intended, then Mary the wife of Clopas must be translated, as it certainly can, ‘Mary the daughter, or sister, of Clopas’. The text would then be saying that Jesus' mother, the daughter or sister of Clopas, was at the cross along with her sister Mary Magdalene. Three could equally well be intended, and if so they would be Mary, the mother of Jesus, and her sister the daughter, sister or wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. Or again, four women may be intended, Mary the mother of Jesus, and her sister, and Mary the daughter or sister or wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.” (Marsh) Hoskyns writes, “The three Marys here do not stand afar off (φ. Lk. 23:49), but echo Ps. 38:11; 88:8. There are four women at the scene.” Lightfoot says they form the believing counterpart of the four unbelieving soldiers. “Women, in short, were the last at the cross and the first at the tomb.” (Ryle)

Says Barrett, “Just as the division of the clothes of Jesus is in itself a probable event, so the presence near the cross of friends of Jesus is improbable, though it is recorded in the synoptic

gospels as well as in John (Mark 15:40f, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome... and many other women; though it is here stated with much greater plausibility, that they were ἀπὸ μακρόθεν θεωροῦσαι [“looking on afar off”]).

It is possible that only two women are referred to (Jesus’ mother = Mary the daughter (or sister) of Clopes, and Mary Magdalene) or three (Jesus’ mother, her sister – Mary the daughter (or sister or wife) of Clopes, and Mary Magdalene); but more probable that John intended his readers to think of four. Identifications are easy to conjecture but impossible to ascertain. John never mentions the name of the mother of Jesus.

ἡ τοῦ κλωπᾶ. It is possible that this Clopas should be identified with the κλεόπας of Lk. 24:18.

Μαρία ἡ Μαγδαληνή. This Mary has not previously been mentioned in John; she reappears as the first witness of the risen Christ (20:1-18). In Matthew and Mark also she is mentioned only as a witness of the crucifixion and resurrection, and is so mentioned at Luke 24:10; but at Luke 8:2 she is named with other women who ministered to Jesus, and it is said that seven demons had gone out of her. It is to be noted that this is all we knew of her; there are no serious grounds for identifying her with Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus, the woman who anoints Jesus at Mark 14:3, or the sinner of Luke 7:37.”

Verse 26

Lightfoot connects the appearance of Mary with ch. 16. v. 21 where the Lord reminds the disciples that a woman in travail is bound to have sorrow, because her hour is come; but that her memory of the physical distress is overcome in the joy of delivery, because a man has been born into the world. He says, “The joy of the Lord’s mother at her Son’s birth had assuredly been great and pure indeed; but after her present sorrow (φ. Lk. 2:35) a still greater and purer joy awaits her, in the new and permanent relationship to be formed between her Son and herself, as a result of His death and resurrection.”

Barrett states, “It is not certain that John the son of Zebedee was intended; if it was it remains beyond proof that he was related to the mother of Jesus.

Verse 27

‘Behold thy mother.’ Henceforward, the mother of Jesus and the beloved disciple are to stand in the relation of mother and son; that is, the beloved disciple moves into the place of Jesus himself. It is not inconceivable that Jesus, as the head of the family (supposing his brothers to have been younger than he, not sons of Joseph by a former wife), should have made the provision for the care of his mother after his death. It is however surprising that the brothers should be overlook, for their lack of faith in Jesus (7:5) could not annul their legal claim, and indeed Mark suggest (3:20-25) that their unbelief was shared by the mother also.”

I don’t know why Barrett can’t believe that women would not be allowed at the cross especially at a time when the authorities were nervous about a revolt and might permit His family to gather there if only to diffuse the tension. As for Mary’s possible unbelief, she referred to God as her savior in the Magnificat, which indicates she needed a savior. As for Jesus’ having brothers, He is called her firstborn, Lk. 2:17.

In talking of the custody of Mary to John (son of Zebedee: her nephew?). Marsh explains that the “old and new Israel are dependent upon each other. Neither is fully complete without the other. The mother is the Old, the Son is the new.” Barrett disagrees, “If we are justified in seeing in John’s reference to the indivisible $\chi\iota\tau\acute{o}\nu$ of Jesus a symbol of the unity of the Church gathered together by his death, we may see an illustration of this unity. The Christian receives in the present age houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands (Mk. 10:30). There seems to be no sufficient ground for the view that the mother of Jesus represents allegorically the faithful remnant of Israel from which the Messiah sprang, now absorbed into the New Israel.”

Verse 28

“Jesus knowing.” “From first to last in this passion narrative Jesus is in control of all that takes place. The whole train of events is set in motion by him, and at the appropriate moment he will terminate it ‘that all things were accomplished.’ ϕ . Acts 13:29; Lk. 22:37. Jesus had completed all the work he had been sent into the world to do; the revelation and the dead of love were complete. There is perhaps a special reference to the complete fulfilment of Scripture, with the note that one prophecy remains to be enacted.

$\delta\upsilon\psi\tilde{\omega}$. See Ps. 69:21. In no other gospel does Jesus declare his own thirst – in John as usual he takes the initiative. In Mk. 15:36 a sponge of vinegar is offered (ϕ . Mt. 27:48; Lk.

23:36). As in the mention of the casting of lots for the clothes of Jesus John makes the Old Testament allusion more explicit than do the other evangelists.” (Barrett)

I remember Judge. 11:40 and the lamentations and the “burnt” offering. Says Henry, “It was not at all strange that he was thirsty; we find him thirsty in a journey (Jn. 4:6,7), and now thirst when he was just at his journey’s end. Well might he thirst after all the toil and hurry which he had undergone, and being now in the agonies of death, ready to expire purely by the loss of blood and extremity of pain. The torments of hell are represented by a violent thirst in the complaint of the rich man that begged for a drop of water to cool his tongue. To that everlasting thirst we had been condemned, had not Christ suffered for us.”

“This word I thirst is the only one of the seven which refers to the physical pain, and this is mentioned only to prepare for the great cry that follows.... Nor can we doubt that the very words I thirst carried with them for the Lord a recollection of the Cup that He had once prayed might pass from Him... Now He is eager to drink it to the dregs that all may be finished – I thirst.” (Temple)

Verse 29

ὕσοςπῶ. Hyssop. “This has been frequently identified with the caper plant, which has stalks two or three feet long. Alford says that hyssop is an aromatic plant.... Having stalks about one and a half feet long, which would in this case be long enough, the feet of the crucified person not being ordinarily raised above that distance from the ground.” (Whitehead)

Scriptural Herbal has the entry: “Solomon’s Hyssop was *Thymbia spicata*, formed by Hassilquist growing on rocks, and among the ruins about Jerusalem. And this certainly suits with Solomon’s discoursing of plants, from the cedar of Lebanon to the Hyssop on the wall, as it is said in the book of Kings.

But there is good reason for believing that the larger and common Hyssop is the Hyssop of Exodus, and indeed, of all the other texts. A bunch of Hyssop was used to sprinkle the blood of the first paschal lamb on the door-posts and lintels of the Hebrews, when the angel of the Lord smote the first-born of Egypt; and a bunch of Hyssop was used for sprinkling the altar and the people at the time of sacrifice, after the ceremonial of the law had been established.

I do not know”, says Callcott, “at what precise period of the Hyssop of aspersion began, in the Temple, to be tied with a thread or cord of scarlet to a handle of cedar wood; thus uniting

the Hyssop, cedar, and scarlet, as ordered in the nineteenth chapter of Numbers to be cast into the burning of the heifer, whose ashes, mingled with water, were to form the water of purification, which was to be sprinkled over such as had become unclean, as a sign of readmission to the congregation. It was, however, a very ancient practice.”

In Numbers 19:6, the ceremonial commandment for the putting together of the water of purification may have some relevance to the Crucifixion. For one thing, the red heifer must never have been yoked, it must be willingly led to the place of execution outside the camp. The entire body of the beast is burned with the cedar wood, hyssop, and scarlet. “....A man that is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay them up without the camp in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for a water of separation: it is a purification for sin.” (Num. 19:9)

Callcott asks humbly, “If the Hyssop upon which John says the sponge steeped in vinegar was put, to be held to the lips of Christ upon the cross, might not be the Hyssop attached to its staff of cedar wood, for the purposes of sprinkling the people, lest they should contract defilement on the eve of the Sabbath, which was a high day, by being in the field of execution.” She adds that hyssop is an asperient given for the relief of flatulence. “Hence, probably, the expression of the Psalmist, ‘Purge me with Hyssop, and I shall be clean.’” In any case, the ceremonial importance of hyssop cannot be far from John’s thinking.

Barrett, characteristically disagrees, “It is ill adapted for presenting a wet sponge to the lips of a crucified man; a bunch of hyssop would lack the necessary stiffness (contrast the καλάμω [“reed”]). In view of this it has been suggested that through a primitive error ὕσσωπῳ has taken the place of ὕσσῳ (ὕσσός – ‘a javelin’, Latin pilum). This conjecture reading (it occurs, probably by accident, in one late minuscule) would undoubtedly ease the sense of the passage; but it is not therefore justified. It seems to have been John’s purpose to set forth Jesus as the true Paschal lamb, slaughtered for the deliverance of his people (see 1:29,36; 19:14,36), and it will be recalled that hyssop played an important part in Passover observance; see Exod. 12:22 [see also Lev. 14:4 – the cleansing of lepers].

Verse 30

Pink points out that the Scripture pertaining to the posea is from Ps. 69:21 – “they gave me vinegar to drink”. In the Synoptics He refuses it. Lightfoot also concedes much the same

point, “The abstinence at the Supper when Jesus said, ‘I will no more drink wine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God’ is now ended by the taking of the sour wine on the hyssos.” He also sees a reference to His thirst slaked by the believing Samaritans (4:1-42) and the believers who waited at the cross.

τετέλεσται – “It is finished and stands finished.” Says Hobbs, “A kindred verb of the same family (τελειόω) was used of the act of completing a deed by dating and signing it. So for all who believe in Him Jesus dated and signed (in His blood) the deed of eternal life. This very word (τελέω) in the form used by Jesus was used in marking a note as ‘paid’. The promissory note of redemption had been paid. One of the richest meanings for us is seen where a father sent his son on a mission. He was not to return until he had finished the mission, or ‘until you accomplish this for me.’ The Father sent the Son on the mission of redemption. Now the Son says, ‘It is finished,’ or accomplished.

And having said this Jesus ‘bowed his head, and gave up the ghost’ or spirit. He delivered it alongside the Father. Matthew says literally. ‘He dismissed his spirit’ (27:50). In essence He said, ‘The work is finished. You can go now.’ He laid down His life of His own accord.”

Barrett says, “‘It is finished.’ Now that the last prophecy had been fulfilled it could be spoken by Jesus himself. His work was done. The cry is to be thought of in this positive sense, not as the mere announcement of the imminence of death, see 19:28, φ. 4:34; 17:4.

‘he bowed his head’ in the moment of death; yet even here Jesus remains the subject of an active verb.”

“gave up the ghost” φ. Mk. 15:37; Lk. 23:46; Mt. 27:50. [Each evangelist’s account adds detail rather than contradicts John.] Says Barrett, “The words are not, however, the same, and it is possible that in John’s mind πνεῦμα was not the human spirit of Jesus, given up when his body died, but the Holy Spirit, which, when he died, he was able to hand over (παραδιδόναι) to the few representative believers who stood by the cross. This suggestion is attractive because it corresponds to the undoubted fact that it was precisely at this moment, according to John, that the gift of the Spirit became possible (7:39). But it must reckon with these objections: (a.) The expression may be based upon, and explained by, Luke 23:46, πάτερ εἰς χεῖράς σου παρατίθεμαι τὸ πνεῦμά μου. (b.) John describes circumstantially and impressively the occasion on which Jesus imparted the Holy Spirit to the Church: 20:23, λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον. There is no room for an earlier giving of the Spirit.” (Barrett)

Verse 31

Hobbs says, “To the Jews any part of a day was regarded as a whole day.”

Placed in tomb on Friday – 1st day

Remained in tomb on Saturday – 2nd day

Came forth from tomb on Sunday – 3rd day

“‘Preparation’, here unlike at v. 14, has no genitive. It must mean ‘the day before the Sabbath’, that is the twenty-four hours between 6 P.M. on Thursday and 6 P.M. on Friday.... The prohibition of Deut. 21:22f is that bodies should not remain beyond nightfall.... What was objectionable on any day was doubly so on so important a day.” (Barrett) Strack and Billerbeck posit, “If this Sabbath, as the fourth gospel supposes was Nisan 15, it could be called ‘great’ since it was at the same time the first Passover festival day. If it fell on Nisan 16, as the synoptics suppose, the title ‘great’ is still suitable, since on it according to Pharasaic tradition the Omer sheaf was presented (Lev. 23:11).” Barrett mentions this wave offering though it appears to apply to the harvest holiday and not to Passover.

Matthew Henry, the theologian, thought it was the Passover in the year of jubile, φ. Lev. 25. One connection is Lk. 4:19, “the acceptable year of the Lord” which Jesus preached, φ. Isa. 49:8, and which Paul cites, 2 Cor. 6:2. Of the eleven N.T. references made in Lev. 25, two (Gal. 5:1; 1 Cor. 7:23) speak of “liberty” and that we are “bought” with a price. It is entirely possible that now is the day of salvation, Christ’s body will “rest” (φ. Lev. 25:5), because in the fullness of time God chose the jubile year for the full final sacrifice.

Of Luke 4:19, he writes, “He came to let the world know that the God whom they had offended was willing to be reconciled to them, and to accept of them upon new terms; that there was yet a way of making their service acceptable to him; that there is now a time of good will toward men. It alludes to the year of release, or that of jubilee, which was an acceptable year to servants, who were then set at liberty; to debtors, against whom all actions dropped; and to those who had mortgaged their lands, for then they returned to them again. Christ came to sound the jubilee trumpet; and blessed were they that heard the joyful sound, Ps. 89:15. It was an acceptable time, for it was a day of salvation.”

CRURIFRAGIUM – “sometimes an independent form of punishment, sometimes, as here, an accompaniment of crucifixion.” (Barrett). Ainsworth lists cruor as “blood from a

wound” and fragilis as “brittle, frail, soon broken.” Sihler says, “crūdus ‘raw’ is perhaps from krūros (cruor. φ. Vedic krūrā – ‘slaughter, atrocity’) by lag dissimulation. An example of an unshifted stop is: PIE *krew H₂ > Ved. kravís ‘gore’, G. κρεάζ, L. cruor, Mid. Irish crú ‘blood’ Lith. Kraūjas.” Ainsworth says Fragor is a noise, a crash, and a crack as when a thing breaks, and Cruralis is of the leg < Crus, leg (L. crus, leg + Fragor, ‘crack’).

Verse 33

“So speedy a death was unusual. Victims of crucifixion sometimes lingered for days.” (Barrett) He refers to Lk. 15:44 where Pilate “marvelled if he were already dead.” John brings out the significance of the fact that Jesus’ bones were not broken in verse 36 – and event which is not recorded by the synoptists.

Verse 34

THE EFFUSION (φ. Ex. 12:46; Zech. 12:10) Hobbs et al. make the stipulation, “Of further interest is the medical opinion that blood mingled with water indicated a rupture in the walls of Jesus’ heart. So He died of a broken heart.” Marsh et al. think blood [is] representative of atonement, and water of the gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church. Hoskyns citing Jn. 7:38,39 says, “The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews reminds his readers that the first covenant was inaugurated with blood and water and hyssop (Heb. 9:19).” Together with fact that not a bone of His body was broken, we have a picture of the Lamb of God whose blood was applied to the doorposts and lintels with hyssop at Passover. Thus two Johns in this Gospel look on the Lamb of God – this led medieval illuminators to depict John the Baptist as well as John the Evangelist standing by the Cross.

Henry explains, “Some make [the Effusion] an allusion to the opening of Adam’s side in innocency [thereby God fashioned a bride for His son]. The blood and water that flowed out of it were significant. They signified the two great benefits which all believers partake of through Christ – justification and sanctification, blood for remission, water for regeneration; blood for atonement, water for purification.... They signified the two great ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s supper, by which those benefits are represented, sealed, and applied to believers; they both owe their institution and efficacy to Christ. It is not the water in the font that will be to us

the washing of regeneration, but the water out of the side of Christ; not the blood of the grape that will pacify the conscience and refresh the soul, but the blood out of the side of Christ.”

His legs were not broken (Ps. 34:20; φ. Exod. 12:46; Nu. 9:12 which describe the Passover lamb).

His side was pierced (Zech. 12:10; φ. Rev. 1:7).

In both actions, scripture was fulfilled, “both the honour of the Old Testament preserved and the truth of the New Testament confirmed.” (Henry)

Ryle cites Augustine who “sees a type of this wound in our Lord’s side, from which flowed blood and water, in the door in the side of Noah’s ark, by which the living creatures entered in and were preserved from drowning.” The City of God says, “... if you measure a man as he lies on his back or on his face, he is six times as long as he is high from the ground, And therefore the ark was made 300 cubits in length, 50 in breadth, and 30 in height. And its having a door made in the side of it certainly signified the wound which was made when the side of the Crucified was pierced with the spear...”

Ryle considers the many scriptural fulfilments in John. He says, “It is almost needless to say that the passage, like many others, does not mean that these things were done in order that Scripture might be fulfilled, but that by these things being done the Scripture was fulfilled, and God’s perfect foreknowledge about the least details of Christ’s death was proved.”

“Burkitt’s interpretation is at once the simplest and the most convincing. ‘According to 1 Jn. 5:6-8, the living personality has in it three elements, viz, spirit, water, blood. From the water we are begotten, by the blood we are sustained, and the spirit or breath is the immaterial element that enters at birth and leaves at death. The spirit quitted Jesus when He died (19:30), leaving behind the water and blood of a human body, the existence of which was demonstrated to the onlookers by the spear-thrust of the soldier.’” (Strachan)

Barrett cites the use of λόγχη (“lance, spear, javelin”) as an indication that ὕσσως (“hyssop”) at v. 29 is not John’s writing. Why there can’t be a “spear” among a group of soldiers seems odd. Besides that, if prophecies such as those of vs. 36,37 are fulfilled after Jesus’ death (and after the historical prophecies were given at Exod. 12:26; Ps. 22:16; etc.) why can’t there be some hidden meaning in a spear thrust into Jesus’ side? Would Romans hope to either kill the Body of Christ, or pierce His side to see if He was still alive? Consider the persecutions by Nero and Domitian as examples of violent and merciless actions.

The synoptists record other events surrounding the Crucifixion, such as “the veil of the temple being rent”, the bodies of saints rising, an earthquake before that, darkness, etc. The mocking by the crowd and by the religious leaders is also excluded in John. Jesus’ thirst is because He is a burnt offering. He is the evening sacrifice that Daniel foretold (Dan. 8:11-13; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11 by which the “daily sacrifice” is “taken away”). The effusion of blood (and water) is part of the priestly duty to drain and thereby prepare the roasted lamb for eating. This duty is in keeping with the commandment given to Noah, Gen. 9:4. The Law at Sinai required the draining of blood (Deut. 12:24) which was kept by Saul (1 Sam. 14:34) and later by the early Christians, Acts 15:20,29.

John the Evangelist has a very steady eye for marking out the sacramental value of blood, φ. 1 Jn. 5:6,8; and although he does not describe the Eucharist at the Last Supper, his theology of Jesus’ own sacramental knowledge has been carefully constructed throughout his Gospel.

William Gouge in his commentary on Hebrews says flatly of Heb. 9:13, “There are two particular instances of legal purging, which are blood and water,” φ. Lev. 16:14,15; Num. 19:2-9 (“purification” and “running water”, Nu. 19:17).

“forthwith came their out blood and water.” Says Barrett, “This obscure statement was evidently regarded by John as a matter of great importance (see the next verse). John certainly intended to describe a real, not merely a symbolic, event. This is emphasized by the stress laid on the eye-witness in v. 35. And it must be conceded that the event as described is physiologically possible. Blood might flow from a corpse if only a short time had elapsed since death; and a fluid resembling water might issue from the region described as πλευρά [“side”]. It may be asked, however, whether John thought he was describing a normal event – one which might have been observed in any corpse, or an abnormal event – one which could have happened only in the body of Jesus, which was not to see corruption. The former alternative is more probable, in view of the anti-docetist interest of the Johannine literature generally; John intended to provoke evidence that Jesus was a real man, and that he really died.

But John’s intention is not to be confused with fact. We have already seen (on v. 25) that it is improbable that any disciples should have been in the vicinity of the cross. We may not further that there is no room for the whole incident in the synoptic narrative (the centurion himself observes the death of Jesus and informs Pilate – Mark 15:39,45), and that if Jesus was

already dead, as John manifestly says he was, there was no motive for the lance thrust, unless we are to suppose that the soldier struck Jesus out of mere spite and casual cruelty.

It is not inconsistent with John's intention to narrate a historical event that he should intend also to communicate a theological truth. There can be little doubt that he did so intend, in view of the significance of αἵμα and ὕδρον elsewhere in the gospel (and in 1 Jn. 5:6,8, a passage which is probably in some way dependent upon or related to this verse, but unfortunately does little to explain it). There is 'living water' which springs up within the believer (4:14), and a water which is identified with the Holy Spirit (7:38f – this passage is especially important if the words 'out of his belly' refer to Christ). It is of water and the Spirit that men are begotten from above (3:5), and water is the means by which men are cleansed (13:5). Again, the blood of Christ is the true drink of men (6:53ff). Through it alone, with the flesh of Christ, which equally is given for the life of the world, may men have life in themselves. It is highly probable then that in the effusion of blood and water from the pierced side of Christ John saw a symbol of the fact that from the Crucified there proceed those living streams by which men are quickened and the Church lives. Nor can it be accidental that water signifies baptism and regeneration, and blood the eucharistic cup. The Fathers sought in many ways to make more precise identifications – e.g. the blood and water signified the mixed chalice; but it is doubtful whether any of these refinements was intended by John. He was not concerned to support this or that detail of sacramental practice or terminology, but to emphasize, perhaps against those who controverted it, that the real death of Jesus was the real life of men."

Verse 35

"and he knoweth that he saith true." Barrett permits that "he" here can also mean Christ and God ἐκεῖνος ["he"] is used of Christ in 3:28,30; 7:11; 9:28, and of God in 1:33; 5:19,37; 6:29; 8:42. In addition, Strachan cites 1 Jn. 2:6; 3:3,5,7,16.

"that ye might believe." "indicates the general aim of the veracious testimony of the witness. 'You' (the readers of the gospel) 'are not merely to believe that blood and water did in fact issue from the side of the Crucified, but to believe in the full Christian sense' (φ. 20:31 for the aim of the gospel as a whole). [This verse also has a clearer identification at 21:24.]" (Barrett)

Verse 36

“a bone of him shall not be broken” Says Barrett, “It is difficult to give the source of this quotation. Three of four Old Testament passages come under consideration: Ex. 12:10 (φ. verse 46); Numb. 9:12; Ps. 34:20. The Pentateuchal passages refer to the Passover sacrifice, of which no bone may be broken; that in the Psalter refers to God’s care of the faithful. It is probable that the reference is primarily to the Passover (since Jesus died at the time of the sacrifice); hyssop has already been mentioned at v. 29; and Jesus had not been preserved from death, even though his bones had not been broken); yet we cannot exclude the influence of the Psalm since here only is the verbal form συντριβήσεται [“shall be broken”] used.”

Verse 37

“They shall look on him whom they pierced.” The reference is to Zech. 12:10 which contains the term *dâgar* [דָּגַר] “pierced” or “reviled” – thus it may be read, “They shall look in him whom they mocked.” John does not record mockery at Calvary. Barrett cites Rev. 1:7 and Mk. 13:26 for a different treatment of the testimonium.

Verse 38

For Joseph of Arimathaea, Nicodemus, and John?, who took away His body for burial, it was ceremonially unclean to touch a dead body before the Passover. Ryle adds, “It is a curious coincidence, though perhaps only a coincidence that it was a ‘Joseph,’ who probably touched and received our Lord’s body when He was born into the world at Bethlehem, and again a ‘Joseph,’ who was last to hold, and lift, and handle the dead body of the same Lord, when He was buried.” Joseph of Arimathaea (Ramathaim in Ephraim) is not previously mentioned in John’s Gospel. As for “secret disciples of rank”, see 12:42.

“Bodies of criminals condemned and executed by the Romans were commonly left to the vultures. Victims of Jewish executions were buried in places provided by the court (Mishnah)” (Barrett).

Verse 39

“Nicodemus” “John himself supplies the cross-reference to 3:1f. It is implied here that Nicodemus too was a secret disciple; but in spite of 7:50f, this has not been said earlier in the gospel.” (Barrett)

He brought myrrh and aloes (myrrh gum and pounded aloes-wood) “about an hundred pound weight.” Ryle says, “The mixture here mentioned was probably in the shape of powder.” Whitehead says that a more probable reading gives ἔλιγμα (a roll) instead of μίγμα (a mixture). Ryle explains, “The two ingredients were strongly aromatic and antiseptic. The large quantity brought shows the wealth and the liberal mind of Nicodemus. It also shows his wise forethought. A dead body so torn and lacerated as that of our blessed Lord, would need an unusually large quantity of antiseptics or preservatives, to check the tendency to corruption which such a climate would cause, even at Easter. Considering also that everything must have been done with some haste, the large quantity of spices used was probably meant to compensate for the want of time to do the work slowly and carefully.

Besser says, ‘Twice was Jesus Christ rich in the days of His poverty. Once, immediately after His birth, when the wise men from the East offered Him gold, and frankincense, and myrrh; and now, after His ignominious death, when a rich man buries Him, and a distinguished man provides spices to anoint Him. Yea, a rich Joseph has taken the place of that poor Joseph who stood at the manger.’”

“myrrh and aloes”. σμύρνα is myrrh, used for embalming the dead, φ. Mt. 2:11. The only other New Testament use of the word is in Rev. 1:11 which names one of the Churches in Asia Minor. In the Old Testament aloes are referred to as providing perfume for the bed (Prov. 7:17) or for the clothes (Ps. 45:8), but not for burial. For the ‘pound’ φ. 12:3. The total weight here is about 25 lbs. where λίτρα = Roman libra ~ 12 oz. φ. the immense quantity of wine produced in 2:1-11.

Henry observes, “Christ’s death should comfort us against the fear of death. The grave could not long keep Christ, and it shall long keep us. It was a loathsome prison before, it is a perfumed bed now. He whose Head is in heaven, need not fear to put his feet into the grave.” See also 2 Chron. 16:14 for an account of Asa’s burial.

Verse 40

ὀθονίοις; “linen clothes”, φ. κειρία [“grave clothes”] in 11:14. ὀθονίοις is in the New Testament peculiar to John (also in 20:5,6,7 and ὀθόνια of Lk. 24:12). “It means a linen bandage, such as might be used for wrapping a corpse. The body is wrapped in the bandage, the spices being sprinkled between the folds.

“as the manner of the Jews is to bury.” φ. 11:44 for the burial of Lazarus. Apparently this means of entombment is contrasted with the Egyptian method of embalming; perhaps also with the Roman method of cremation. Other sources suggest that among the Jews it was customary to use oil, not spices, for this purpose.

Verse 41

κηπος. Among the canonical evangelists only John remarks that the crucifixion and burial took place in a garden. If John had intended an allusion to the Garden of Eden it is probable that he would have used the LXX word παράδεισος.

“new sepulcher”. Φ. Mt. 27:60. If John saw some special meaning in the fact that the tomb was new he does not point it out. That the tomb was unused is in keeping with the luxurious preparation of v. 39.

Verse 42

It would be permissible on the Sabbath, if necessary, to wash and anoint [the body].”
(Barrett)

“[Mary Magdalene] found the stone taken away, which she had seen rolled to the door of the sepulchre. . . . Christ crucified is the fountain of life. His grave is one of the wells of salvation; if we come to it in faith; though to a carnal heart it be a spring shut up, we shall find the stone rolled away (as Gen. 29:10) and free access to the comforts of it. . . . Mary Magdalene, who followed Christ to the last in his humiliation, met him with the first in his exaltation.” (Henry)

It is well worth concentrating on the person of Mary Magdalene. Says Ryle, “The history of this faithful woman, no doubt, is hidden in obscurity. A vast amount of needless obloquy has been heaped upon her memory, as if she was an habitual sinner against the seventh commandment. Yet there is literally no evidence whatever that she was anything of the kind! But we are distinctly told that she was one out of whom the Lord had cast ‘seven devils’ (Mk. 26:9; Lk. 8:2), - one who had been subjected in a peculiar way to Satan’s possession, - and one whose gratitude to our Lord for deliverance was a gratitude that knew no bounds. In short, of all our Lord’s followers on earth, none seems to have loved Him as much as Mary Magdalene. None felt they owed so much to Christ. None felt so strongly that there was nothing too great to do for Christ. Hence, as Bishop Andrewes beautifully puts it, - ‘She was last at His cross, and first at His grave. She staid longest there, and was soonest here. She could not rest till she was up to seek Him. She sought Him while it was yet dark, even before she had light to seek Him by’. In a word, having received much, she loved much; and loving much, she did much, in order to prove the reality of her love. . . . Let us note Mary’s courage, and zeal to honour here buried Lord. Not every woman would have dared to go outside the city while it was yet dark, to a grave, and specially during the Passover feast, when thousands of strangers were probably sleeping under any slight shelter near the walls of Jerusalem.”

Verse 2

The “we” of 2g certifies that Magdalene did not go alone (so Marsh and Hoskyns). Barrett says, “The early traditions of the resurrection of Jesus took two forms, traditions of resurrection appearances to various disciples (as in 1 Cor. 15:5-8), and the traditions of the discovery that the tomb in which the body of Jesus had been placed was empty (as in Mk. 16:1-8). In this paragraph (20:1-18), which John intends as his main statement of the grounds of the

Church's Easter faith (v. 8; vv. 19-23 contains the apostolic commission), the two traditions are skillfully combined. Mary, visiting the tomb early on Sunday morning, finds it open. She supposes that either enemies or tomb robbers have been at work, and informs Peter and the beloved disciple." "She suggested, They have taken away the Lord; either the chief priests have taken him away, to put him in a worse place, or Joseph and Nicodemus have upon second thoughts, taken him away, to avoid the ill-will of the Jews." (Henry)

Peter and the beloved disciple "run to the tomb, find it empty, and see the clothes in which the body of Jesus had been wrapped. The beloved disciple, who was the first to reach the tomb, followed Peter into it, and when he saw, believed that Jesus had risen from the dead. Mary had followed the two men, and when they left she remained outside the tomb. Looking in she saw two angels. She tells them the reason of her distress; but from that point the angels play no part in the story, for Mary turning round sees Jesus himself, though it is only when he addresses her by name that she recognizes him. He then sends her to the disciples with the message of his coming ascension, which she duly conveys.

The narrative is permeated with theological themes of a Johannine kind: seeing and believing, and the ascent of Jesus to the Father. A central place is given to the beloved disciple; this will affect the historical estimate of the story according as it is thought that the beloved disciple represents a serious historical source or not. "The older tradition," writes Barrett, "says nothing of the empty tomb" φ. Mt. 27:56; Mk. 16:1; Lk. 24:10. Modern expositors like to gloss over other gospel passages like Mt. 28:9; Mk. 16:9 (appearances to Magdalene) and Lk. 24:3 (the empty tomb).

The beloved disciple appears once more in the company of Peter, and though Peter is the first to enter the tomb, the former is the first to believe in the resurrection; he holds in this sense a primacy of faith. Φ. Peter's confession, Mk. 8:29, and esp. the Matthean supplement, Mt. 16:17-19"

Curiously Barrett seems to have difficulty with the presence of Mary Magdalene at the tomb. Though all the Synoptists mention her, Barrett is puzzled by the number of women mentioned: Mk. – 3; Mt. – 2; Lk – an indefinite number.

Verse 5

From this verse and the next, we conclude that both Peter and John saw Jesus' graveclothes. Says Henry, "Christ had left his graveclothes behind him there; what clothes he appeared in to his disciples we are not told, but he never appeared in his graveclothes, as ghosts are supposed to, no, he laid them aside. Because he arose to die no more; death was to have no more dominion over him (Rom. 6:9). Lazarus came out with his graveclothes on, for he was to use them again; but Christ, rising to an immortal life, came out free from those encumbrances. Secondly, because he was going to be clothed with the robes of glory, therefore he lays aside these rags, in the heavenly paradise these will be more occasion for clothes than there was in the earthly. The ascending prophet dropped his mantle [2 Kings 2:13a]. Thirdly, when we arise from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, we leave our graveclothes behind us, must put off all our corruptions. Fourthly, Christ left those in the grave, as it were, for our use if the grave be a bed to the saint, thus he hath sheeted that bed.

The graveclothes were found in a very good order, which serves for an evidence that his body was not stolen away while men slept. Robbers of tombs have been known to take away the clothes and leave the body; but none ever took away the body and left the clothes, especially when it was fine linen and new, Mk. 15:46. Any one would rather choose to carry a dead body in its clothes than naked. Or if those that were supposed to have stolen it would have left the graveclothes behind, yet it cannot be supposed that they should find leisure to fold up the linen."

βλέτει infers only a cursory glance on John's part.

Verse 6

θεωπεῖ infers an exhaustive survey on Peter's part.

Verse 9

Barrett says, "By the time John wrote the Church's faith in the resurrection was supported by the conviction that it had been foretold in the Old Testament, but none is quoted here, and it may be that the reference (like that of 1 Cor. 15:4) is to the Old Testament generally."

The cross-reference at 1 Cor. 15:4 are to Ps. 2:7; Isa. 53:10; Hos. 6:2. Here at Jn. 20:9 the cross-references are to Ps. 16:10; Isa. 26:19; Mt. 16:21; Acts. 2:25-30. In light of the two references to Isaiah and the one to Hosea, perhaps Barrett doesn't think that John the Evangelist

was an eye-witness to these events. Perhaps then Jn. 1:14 and 21:24 are also spurious. Matthew 16:21 would therefore have to be a later insertion as would the innumerable “errors” in the rest of the New Testament which attest that God raised Jesus from the dead.

Verse 12

The two angels are similar to the cherubim on the mercy-seat of the Ark, and to the cherubim with the flaming swords. Here, the angelic purpose is not to keep us out, but to show how we too can peer into the empty tomb.

Thus the place of His death between two thieves gives over to the place of His burial between two angels (the mercy seat of Rom. 3:25, cf. Lev. 16:15).

Bernard thinks she is “identified with Mary of Bethany who had brought Jesus a gift of ointment which he asked that she might keep for the day of his burial (12:17).”

As for John, he believes not when he sees Jesus but when he sees the empty tomb.

Verses 11-12

The angels there are in keeping with His words to Nathanael (1:51). They have descended to take their places at either end of the propitiation.

Verse 14

“In the Resurrection stories, Jesus does not merely appear to His disciples. He knows where to find them, and what to say or do so that they recognize Him.” (Strachan) “The seeking after the dead prevents us from seeing the living” (Whitehead).

Verse 15

“In this verse John uses once more his literary formula of enlightenment through initial misunderstanding; indeed this is the supreme example of the device, for it is not a metaphor but Jesus himself who is mistaken.” (Barrett) Jesus, because He knows her, repeats the angelic question, Woman why weepest thou?

Verse 16

The good shepherd calls his own sheep by name and they recognize his voice (10:3).

Verse 17

Says Barrett of Touch me not, “the present imperative signifies the breaking off of an action already in progress, or sometimes of the attempt to perform an action. Accordingly we may suppose either that Mary had seized Jesus’ feet (in which case we may cf. Mt. 28:9) or that she was on the point of doing so when Jesus prevented her. The verse may be paraphrased, ‘Stop touching me (or attempting to do so); it is true that I have not ascended to the Father but I am about to do so; this is what you must tell my brothers.’ This is perfectly intelligible. The resurrection has made possible a new and more intimate spiritual union between Jesus and his disciples; the old physical contacts are no longer appropriate, though touch may yet (v. 27) be appealed to in proof that the glorified Lord is none other than he who was crucified.

The ascension is not referred to again in John, and is not described in the realistic manner of Acts 1:9. It is a matter of common belief that after his crucifixion Jesus took his place in glory at the Father’s right hand, but only the author of Luke-Acts makes of this belief an observable incident.”

Strachan adds, “She is adjured not to cling to Him as though the abiding relationship with Him were to be one depended on sense-perception. Paul speaks of a spiritual body for believers, modelled on Christ’s resurrection body, but says it is not the same body that was laid in the grave (1 Cor. 15:16,20,37-38,44,50,54).” No doubt a new relationship has begun. Jesus calls her Mary. “Then, as a sheep that knows her shepherd’s voice, Mary recognizes the Lord and she exclaims to him ‘Rabboni!’ The word as John remarks means ‘teacher’; but, as John does not tell his readers, it was the form of the word ‘Rabbi’ which was used almost exclusively in address to God. Mary is thus doing more than recognize some quasi-physical identity between the earthly Jesus and the risen Lord; she is giving expression to a new attitude in which Jesus is worshipped as God.” (Marsh) “The delay is for the purpose of revealing Himself as the risen Lord, One with whom the Church may not be able to cling to physically, but One who is risen for evermore.” (Marsh)

Question: Why was Mary Magdalene instructed not to touch Him and a week later Thomas told to do so? Has His Ascension been a process throughout His earthly ministry?

J.C. Ryle cites Burgon’s remarks about what a strange thing it is that “both the old world and the new should have begun with the same prohibition, Touch not.” There is a reason given

that Magdalene after speaking to the angels turned to the Lord. Perhaps they rose to their feet upon seeing Him and she turned to see Who has behind her. In any case, Brentius remarks what honour this passage puts on women. Sin came into the world by Eve, a woman. Yet God, in mercy, ordered things so that of a woman Christ was born, to a woman Christ first appeared after He rose from the dead, and a woman was the first to carry the news of His resurrection. He quaintly says, “Jesus made Mary Magdalene an Apostle to the Apostles.”

The only problem with Brentius’ summation is relatively common. God never said not to touch, only not to eat. Eve deduced this idea, which opens up the distant possibility that she was mistaken before she ate of the fruit. [There is no mention of an apple; there was no whale in the book of Jonah (only a fish); and there is no “p” in Samson.] φ. Ps. 105:15.

Temple explains, “The weakness to which such love as Mary’s is liable is that it clings too closely to the physical form, of which the whole purpose is to express and serve the spiritual self. She must learn to love and trust and serve, even though she can no longer caress his feet or hear His voice pronounce her name. Not to the Lord as He tabernacled in the flesh, subject to all limitations of the body, is she to cling; but to the Lord in His perfect union with the Father.

So He taught her the meaning of that last Appearance, the final withdrawal of His physical presence, which we call the Ascension. It was separation in one sense, for it closed the period of the first form of intercourse. But in a profounder sense it was the inauguration of a fuller union. In the days of His earthly ministry, only those could speak to Him who came where He was. If He was in Galilee, men could not find Him in Jerusalem; if He was in Jerusalem, men could not find Him in Galilee. But His Ascension means that He is perfectly united with God; we are with Him wherever we are present to God; and that is everywhere and always. Because He is ‘in Heaven’ He is everywhere on earth; because He is ascended, He is here now.” The “ascending” is in keeping with His “growing up” to Jerusalem, being “lifted up” on the cross, and yet He has not yet ascended to the Father. “brethren” – He is not ashamed to call them so, φ. Heb. 2:11b. “to my Father and your Father; and to my God, and your God” φ. 1:12.

πατέρα ὑμῶν – “your Father.” “This is the only instance of the phrase in the Gospel. The disciples cannot say ‘Our Father’ until Jesus has ascended.” (Strachan). See also “brethren” in 7:10; 21:23.

Verses 19-31

Barrett gives his preliminary summation; “In the first incident, which takes place on the first Easter Day, the on which Peter and the beloved disciple had found the tomb empty and Mary had seen the Lord, the disciples meet behind closed doors. Jesus, evidently able in his resurrection body to pass through solid matter, appears among them, showing them his hands and side to prove that, though his body is transformed, he is nevertheless the same. He sends them out upon their mission, and bestows upon them the Holy Spirit and the authority to remit and retain sins.

At this appearance, Thomas was absent. Accordingly a week later Jesus returns in similar circumstances to satisfy the doubts of this disciples. The sight of Jesus, whose wounds are still visible, leads Thomas to the culminating confession of the gospel, My Lord and My God. The last words of Jesus are a blessing upon those who, unlike Thomas, have not seen him, but like Thomas, have believed.

The evangelist ends his work by recalling that he has given only a small selection of the significant acts of Jesus, and that his selection has been made to the end that his readers may have faith in Christ, and by faith, life.” However, as noted, the words faith, forgive, and forgiveness do not occur in the Fourth Gospel.

Verse 19

“Then the same day at evening.” “Only Luke supplies a true parallel to this further appearance on the first resurrection day; φ. Lk. 24:31 (the two going to Emmaus), 24:34 (a reported appearance to Simon), 24:36ff (to the assembled disciples). Φ. also the ‘longer ending’ of Mk. 16:9-20.

‘the doors were shut’. The doors were shut to suggest the mysterious power of the risen Jesus, who was at once sufficiently corporeal to show his wounds and sufficiently immaterial to pass through closed doors. It is legitimate to compare Paul’s doctrine of the spiritual body (1 Cor. 15:44)” (Barrett) Jesus enters through a locked door. Though in a human body, He could do this as He had walked on water. His scars were to show His intercession; in heaven, they will indicate his heavenly intercession – φ. Zech. 13:1; Rev. 1:7.

“the disciples.” “It is important to consider whether ‘the disciples’ were the Ten only (the Twelve, without Judas and Thomas), or included others also. The Lucan parallel (24:33 – ‘the eleven and them that were with them’) suggests the larger group; but it might be urged that the

description of Thomas as ‘one of the twelve’ (v. 24) suggests the smaller.” (Barrett) Hort believes that the Twelve or Eleven constituted the full Apostolic ἐκκλησία of the future. Thus, “the commission of v. 21, the gift of the Spirit of v. 22, the authority of v. 23 are given to the apostolic Church.” (Barrett)

“Peace.” “The normal meaning is no more than ‘May all be well with you’, but εἰρήνη had acquired so full a sense of Christian usage (φ. 14:27; 16:33) that much more is intended here. The expression is repeated in vv. 21,26.” (Barrett) Marsh says that the greeting given to His disciples was “more than conventional. It was as if he had come to a group of English disciples on such a day, and said ‘Good evening’, and the Englishmen would at once have known that the words could never have the same merely conventional meaning again. So the greeting ‘Peace’ came to be part of Christian social life, as well as a permanent part of its liturgical practice.”

Verse 20

“Christ’s wounds were to speak on earth that it was he himself, and therefore he arose with them; they were to speak in heaven, in the intercession he must ever live to make, and therefore he ascended with them, and appeared in the midst of the throne, a Lamb as it had been slain, Rev. 5:6. Nay, it should seem, he will come again with his scars, that they may look on him whom they pierced.” (Henry)

C.K. Barrett plunges headlong into every modern controversy – no less here: “In the earlier tradition there is no reference to the nailing of Jesus to the cross, and it seems not impossible that (as often happened) he was not nailed but tied to it with ropes. Belief that wounds were inflicted by nails might have arisen out of the theological significance attributed to the blood of Christ (his death being thought of as a sacrifice) and because they provided a valuable piece of evidence that no substitution had taken place – the risen Jesus was the very person who was crucified.”

However theologians have looked back to Ps. 22:16; Zech. 12:10 and found in those passages fulfilment in Jn. 19:34,37; Rev. 1:7. The meaning of “nail” in Ezra 9:8 and Isa. 22:23 seems to be something else. Φ. Mt. 20:19; 26:2.

“Now that the word of Christ was fulfilled (ch. 16:22), I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice. This wiped all tears from their eyes. Note, A sight of Christ will gladden the

heart of a disciples at any time; the more we see of Christ, the more we shall rejoice in him; and our joy will never be perfect till we come where we shall see him as he is.”(Henry)

Verse 21

Unlike Bernard, Marsh believes, “All that Jesus said to the disciples on the first Easter evening, according to John’s narrative, presupposes that he has returned to the Father, to share his pristine glory.”

The word “peace” is repeated. Whitehead observes, “His last word to them in their grief before the Passion was, ‘Peace.’ His first word to them in their alarm at His return is, ‘Peace.’”

Henry comments on Jn. 20:21c,d: “He had a power to send them equal to that which the Father had to send him. This proves the Godhead of Christ; the commissions he gave were of equal authority with those which the Father gave, and as valid and effectual to all intents and purposes, equal with those he gave to the Old Testament prophets in visions.”

Verse 22

“He breathed on them, not only show them, by this breath of life, that he himself was really alive, but to signify to them the spiritual life and power which they should receive from him for all the services that lay before them. Christ here seems to refer to the creation of man at first, by the breathing of the breath of life into him (Gen. 2:7), and to intimate that he himself was the author of that work, and that spiritual life and strength of ministers and Christians are derived from him, and depend upon him, as much as the natural life of Adam and his seed. As the breath of the Almighty gave life to man and began the old world, so the breath of the mighty Saviour gave life to his ministers, and began a new world, Job 33:4. Now this intimates to us, First, That the Spirit is the breath of Christ, proceeding from the Son. The Spirit in the Old Testament is compared to breath (Ezek. 37:9), Come, O breath; but the New Testament tells us it is Christ’s breath. The breath of God is put for the power of his wrath (Isa. 11:4; 30:33); but the breath of Christ signifies the power of his grace; the breathing of threatenings is changed into the breathings of love by the mediation of Christ. Our words are uttered by our breath, so the word of Christ is spirit and life. The word comes from the Spirit, and the Spirit comes along with the word. Secondly, That the Spirit is the gift of Christ. The apostles communicated the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, those hands being first lifted up in prayer, for they could only beg this

blessing, and carry it as messengers; but Christ conferred the Holy Ghost by breathing, for he is the author of the gift, and from him it comes originally. Moses could not give his Spirit, God did it (Num. 11:17); but Christ did it himself.”

Thus, “Jesus does more than simply announce that the Spirit is given, he actually dispenses it by breathing on the disciples, as God breathed upon the first man. So the new creation has begun.” (Marsh) Barrett agrees and further specifies, “It does not seem possible to harmonize this account of a special bestowing of the Spirit with that contained in Acts 2; after this event there could be no more ‘waiting’ (Lk. 24:48f; Acts 1:4f); the Church could not be more fully equipped for its mission. To the first Christians the resurrection of Jesus and his appearances to them, his exaltation, and the gift of the Spirit, appeared as one experience, which only later came to be described in separate elements and incidents.”

Verse 23

Forgiveness of sins was thought to be only God’s provenance (φ. Mk. 2:7; Lk. 5:21). Archdeacon Hawtin has observed that Jesus now confers this endowed virtue to His disciples. Marsh gets control over any misunderstanding; “It is as precarious to argue that it limits power to forgive sins to the apostles as to argue that it must extend to the whole Church.”

“Whosoever sins you remit, in the due execution of the powers you are entrusted with, they are remitted to them, and they may take the comfort of it; and whosoever sins you retain, that is, pronounce unpardoned and the guilt of them bound on, they are retained, and the sinner may be sure of it, to his sorrow.” (Henry)

Barrett says, “For the thought of this verse φ. Mt. 16:19; 18:18 (unless in these versus ‘binding and loosing’ mean ‘forbidding and permitting’) and Lk. 24:47 (forgiveness only). Φ. also the fact that Mt. 28:19, Mk. 16:16 both put into the mouth of Jesus before his departure a charge to baptize, which carries with it the offer of forgiveness. The authority conveyed implies an extension of the ministry of Jesus through that of the Holy Spirit. Jesus (in chapter 9) gave sight and faith, to the blind man who knew he was blind; to those who arrogantly claimed, ‘We see’, he could say only ‘Your sin remains’. This was both a fact and a punishment. The Spirit perpetuates the ministry of Jesus, and when he convicts of unbelief he convicts of sin, since the relation of men to Christ, determines their relation to God. ἀφίέναι (literally, ‘to release’, ‘to let

go') is used here only in John with the meaning 'to remit'. κρατεῖν signifies the opposite; 'to hold fast', 'to return'. [κρατέω > κράτος > democracy.]

Verse 24

Doubt regarding the resurrection is a feature of all the gospels: see Mt. 28:17; Mk. 16:14; Lk. 24:11,25,37,41.

Possibly Thomas appears as the doubting disciples on account of his name. Δίδυμος, a natural rendering of Thoma', a 'twin', means primarily 'double', 'twofold.' On the other hand, the earlier references to Thomas suggest a loyal but obtuse, rather than a doubtful and hesitating character. His attitude to the resurrection appearance (like that of Mary, v. 17) may be compared with that of the unthinking beholders of signs earlier in the ministry (φ. e.g. 2:9; 3:4; 4:48; 6:26l et al.)

Verse 25

'Except I shall see... I will not believe' Thomas required the grossest and most palpable evidence that the body he knew to have been killed in a specific manner had indeed been reanimated. He would be satisfied neither with a substituted body which was not the body of the Lord who died on the cross, nor with a spiritual body or apparition. The risen Christ must be both visibly and palpably identical with the old. Such hesitation, so conclusively removed, had of course high apologetic value." (Barrett)

Verse 26

Barrett thinks that John means the next Sunday. Others see in the mention of eight days, the new week of creation – seven plus Resurrection day φ. eight sides to a Baptismal font. "Eight days stay is the whole of the Passover at which Jesus died." (Marsh)

Jesus again enters silently. There is no rebuke of Thomas' unbelief, nor for the other disciples who forsook Him and fled. Ryle finds himself unable to regard this expression [Peace] as being nothing more than the ordinary salutation of courtesy. It seems to me to be full of deep and comfortable truth. It implied that the great battle was fought and the great victory won over the world, and peace with God obtained for man according to the old promise. It implied that our Lord came to His disciples with peaceful, gracious, and forgiving feelings."

Verse 27

Says Barrett, “Jesus accepted the challenge of physical investigation. Φ. vv. 17,20. Thomas was offered exactly what he sought. John does not say that he accepted the opportunity; rather he hints (v. 29) that sight was sufficient. But John was evidently of opinion that the resurrection body, though it could pass through closed doors, could also be handled; it was physically ‘real.’

ἄπιστος... πιστός; ‘faithless... believing’. Neither word occurs elsewhere in John. ἄπιστος many times in 1 and 2 Corinthians and twice in the Pastorals means ‘the unbeliever’, the person who is not a Christian. It may here mean that Thomas is (or perhaps represents once who is) neither ἄπιστος or πιστός; he is urged to become πιστός, a believing Christian. γίνεσθαι; ‘to show oneself’ φ. Jn. 15:8, et al. probably has the meaning here: ‘Show that you do believe’.”

Verse 28

That Thomas is not apart from the disciples is shown by his presence among the worshippers. The gift of the Holy Spirit is given to all. “That he has received the gift is shown in his full personal concession of faith,” says Strachan, “Confession of faith [Thomas is the only one who called Him God], in the apostolic Church, is always regarded as the work of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:3)”. “The simple worship of the primitive Church may be reflected in certain aspects of the Thomas story. The service probably began with a benediction in the form we find at the beginning of Paul’s letters. ‘Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.’ This would be followed by an invocation of Jesus (‘Come, Lord Jesus’ Rev. 22:17,20), and a confession that He is Lord (1 Cor. 12:3).” (Lindsay) Says Strachan, “Thomas utters a full Christian confession.”

As for the scars on His body, Temple explains the suffering of the Son of Man in this way, “Only a God in whose perfect Being pain has its place can win and hold our worship; for otherwise the creature would in fortitude surpass the Creator.”

Says Marsh, “It is quite plain from John’s narrative that Thomas did not accept the invitation to touch the Lord’s hands or feel his side. He had learnt in the mere ‘seeing’ of the glorified Lord that sense and sight were not the sufficient things he had supposed. In a strongly paradoxical way he had found through seeing that seeing was not believing.”

Verse 28

“My Lord and my God”. The collocation of κύριος and θεός is common in the LXX... κύριος is a frequent Christian title for Jesus (φ. Jn. 13:13f), and appears in the confession of faith ‘Jesus is Lord’ probably a primitive credal formula used at baptism and similar occasions (Rom. 10:9; 1 Cor. 12:3). When this confession was interpreted in terms of the Old Testament, where κύριος = θεός, the fuller formula was close at hand. Frequently, John’s language is carefully chosen so as to be both biblical and Hellenistic. Christ is called θεός only in John (1:1; 1:18; si v.l. ; φ. 5:18; 10:33) and in the Pastorals (and possibly, but not probably in Rom. 9:5). The difference between the present verse and 1:1 (where θεός is anarthrous) cannot be pressed; here the articular nominative is used for vocative. There can be no question that John intended this confession of faith to form the climax of the gospel; it is his final Christological pronouncement. It may be taken from a liturgical setting; indeed the whole passage (from v. 19) may be liturgical in origin. The disciples assemble on the Lord’s Day. The blessing is given: εἰρήνη ὑμῖν. The Holy Spirit descends upon the worshippers and the word of absolution (φ. v. 23) is pronounced. Christ himself is present (this may suggest the eucharist and the spoken Word of God) bearing the marks of his passion; he is confessed as Lord and God. That such a setting as this was in John’s mind is supported by the fact that in the next verse the horizon of thought is explicitly extended to include all Christians.

Verse 29

At the close of this gospel (v. 31) John emphasizes the continuity of the Church of his own time with Jesus and his disciples. The wider community was in view from the beginning (φ. 17:20).

“Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed”. In this solemn and impressive pronouncement, Jesus does not ask questions, but declares the truth. It is possible that John may have intended the meaning, Do you believe simply on seeing me, that is, without the touch you asked for? But this seems over-subtle. The contrast is not between seeing and touching, but between seeing, and believing apart from sight, between Thomas who saw, and the later Christian believers who did not. The words do not convey a reproach to Thomas; the beloved disciple and Mary Magdalene also believed when they saw (see esp. v. 8); indeed, but for the fact

that Thomas and the other disciples saw the incarnate Christ there would have been no Christian faith at all. Φ. 1:18,50f; 2:11; 4:45; 6:2; 9:37; 14:7,9; 19:35.

“Blessed” φ. Mt. 5:3, and other passages; Ps. 2:12.

“they that have not seen, and yet have believed”. Φ. 1 Pet. 1:8.

The aorists in John may be ‘timeless’ but probably indicate the fact that when John wrote the Church was composed of men who had seen no such resurrection appearance as Thomas had seen, and yet had been converted (had come to believe). The blessing is probably intended for all Christians other than eye-witness, not for those only who were able to believe without signs and wonders. Whatever be the historical value (from the standpoint of modern scientific historical criticism) of the resurrection narratives John himself takes historical testimony with full seriousness. The disciples of the first generation had the unique distinction of standing as a link between Jesus and the Church; John indicates in this saying that their successors equally may believe, and that their faith places them on the same level of blessedness with the eye-witnesses, or even above it.” An oft-quoted Rabbinic passage is cited by Barrett for comparison: “The proselyte is dearer to God than all the Israelites who stood by Mount Sinai. For if all the Israelites had not seen the thunder and the flames and the lightnings and the quaking mountain and the sound of the trumpet they would not have accepted the law and taken upon themselves the kingdom of God. Yet this man has seen none of all these things yet comes and gives himself to God and takes on himself the yoke of the kingdom of God. Is there any who is dearer than this man?”

R. Simeon b. Laqish (C.A.D. 250).

Verse 30

“The stress on signs done by Jesus and beheld by his disciples is important and illuminates the structure and method of the gospel as a whole; there is no disparagement of the role of eye-witnesses.

Verse 31

Both the purpose of the gospel and the author’s theology are summed up in this verse... This verse forms the conclusion and (with the confession of v. 28) the climax of the gospel as originally planned. The words and themes mentioned here run throughout the gospel:

“believing”, “Jesus as Christ and Son of God”, “life”. “In his name”, however, has no real parallel. The meaning seems to be “... that you may have life on account of him, by his agency, by virtue of your believing relationship with him.”

“ye might believe” KJV; “ye may believe”, Gk. Says Barrett, “The present subjunctive (strictly interpreted) means ‘that you may here and now believe, that is, become Christians.’ This variant (in some MSS πιστεύητε; and in others πιστεύσητε) raises acutely the question of the purpose of the gospel; was it written to confirm the faithful, or as a missionary tract to convert the Hellenistic world?

“believing ye might have life.” Says Stauffer, “John connects faith and life directly, without righteousness as a middle term.” Barrett says, “contrast Paul.”

Marsh says, “Praying in his name means more than ending a prayer with the words ‘through Jesus Christ our Lord’; it means offering prayer in Jesus Christ, as if the believer were his Lord, and his prayer the prayer of the Lord. Name is person, and to pray in the Lord’s name is to pray in his person.”

Concerning the Resurrection, Mk. 16:12 says “he appeared in another form.” That His body was changed after the Crucifixion is doubtless; He still retained the same scars. Having risen from the grave and now appearing to His disciples, Jesus calls the fishermen at the Lake of Tiberias, or Gennesaret. “Here our Lord walked on the waters, and came to the disciples toiling in rowing, and enabled Peter for a while to walk on the sea. Here He stilled the wind and waves with a word. Here he granted to four of his disciples a miraculous draught of fishes. On the banks of this lake, He fed a multitude with a few leaves and fishes. On a high ground overhanging this lake He cast out the legion of devils, and allowed them to drive 2,000 swine into the sea. In the towns upon this lake, Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, He did some of His mightiest works. Sitting in a boat on this lake, He delivered the parable of the Sower. In short, of all the districts in which our Lord preached and wrought miracles, there was none which saw and heard so much as the district round ‘The Sea of Tiberias’.” (Ryle)

Barrett says this chapter must be regarded as an addendum. Considering style and language he leaves open the possibility that John was the author, but begins with an examination of chapter 21’s vocabulary; “The following 28 words found in chapter 21 are absent from chapters 1-20:

αἰγιαλός – shore
 ἀλιεύειν – to fish; “a fishing” KJV
 ἀποβαίνειν – they went up < ἀπέβησαν
 ἀριστᾶν – to dine
 ἀρνίον – little lamb
 βόσκειν – to feed
 γηράσκειν – to be old < γηράσης
 γυμνός – naked
 δίκτυον – net
 ἐκτείνειν – to stretch forth
 ἐξετάζειν – to ask
 ἐπιστρέφειν – to turn

Ζεβεδαῖος – [sons] of Zebedee

ζωννύναι – to gird oneself

ἰσχύειν – to be able

ἰχθυς – fish

μακράν – far

νεώτερος – younger

οἶσθαι – to suppose

πῆχυς – cubit

ποιμαίνειν – to shepherd

προβάτιον – sheep

προσφάγιον – fish

πρωία – morning

σύρειν – to drag

τολμᾶν – to dare

τρίτον – the third time”

He thinks it unlikely that, after the apostolic mission charge, the disciples would have returned to their vocation as fishermen. He says that John’s purpose in adding the narrative was to distinguish between Peter and the beloved disciple, both dead by the time this chapter was written. “They are represented as partners of whom neither can take precedence of the other. Peter is the head of the evangelistic and pastoral work of the Church, but the beloved disciple is the guarantor of its tradition regarding Jesus.” (Barrett)

Verses 1-14

Barrett says, “Seven disciples of whom one is Peter and another the beloved disciple, following the lead of Peter determine to resume their work of fishing in the sea of Tiberias. Their night’s work is fruitless, but in the morning an unknown person on the shore instructs them to cast on the right side of the boat, which they do, with instance success. The beloved disciple recognizes Jesus, Peter swims to shore, and the rest follow with the net full of fish. They find preparations for a meal already afoot, and share it with Jesus, who distributes bread and fish to them. Peter meanwhile, under orders from Jesus, draws up the net which contains 153 fish.

The main point in this narrative, as appears in the next, lies in the representation of the two chief disciples, Peter the quicker to act, the beloved disciple the quicker to see and believe (as in 20:6-8). They, and the other disciples share with Jesus a meal which has evidently some eucharistic significance, and together, but with the stress laid on Peter's part, they draw in the catch which represents the fullness of the Church.

The narrative recalls Lk. 5:1-11 (a miraculous catch of fish, but not a resurrection appearance) and 24:13-35 (a resurrection appearance in which a quasi-eucharistic meal takes place), and does not seem to be a unity. There are several hints of unevenness in the story; the miracle is wrought because the disciples have no fish; when they come to land they find fish already cooking yet are bidden to bring fish from their catch, though we do not hear that they do so. No fewer than three words (προσφάγιον, ἰχθυς, and ὀψάριον) are used for fish in different parts of the narrative.

Verse 1

μετὰ ταῦτα – a general transition. Contrast 20:26 where a precise indication of time is given.

Verse 2

Nathanael is mentioned by no other evangelist. Κάνα is mentioned only in John. The [sons] 'of Zebedee' is here the first and only reference in John. The beloved disciple is mentioned a little later (v. 7) and therefore may have been James or John. The presence of two unnamed disciples makes it possible that the beloved disciple was not a son of Zebedee.

Verse 3

Night is said to be the best time for fishing. "Christ's remarkable appearance to the disciples, when they were in the act of fishing, was meant to remind them and the whole Church of the primary duty of ministers. They were doing work which was strikingly emblematic of their calling. They were to be 'fishers of men'.

The want of success in catching fish which the disciples had, until the Lord appeared, was meant to teach that without Christ's blessing ministers can do nothing.

Verse 5

προσφάγιον – “food”: not found elsewhere in the N.T. or LXX. It is perhaps “fish” as that which is a relish for bread. (Barrett)

Verse 6

“The right side recalls Ezekiel 47:1,2, the vision of the waters issuing from the right side of the Temple. The draught is also reminiscent of Ezekiel 47:10, the picture of fishers in these waters. ‘Their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many.’” (Strachan) “The marvelous success which attended the cast of the net, when Christ gave the command, was meant to teach that, when Christ is pleased to give success to ministers, nothing can prevent souls being brought into the Gospel net, converted, and saved.” (Ryle)

Not able to “haul” in the net: The word “haul” is the same as at 6:44: “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me ‘draw’ him.” Barrett thinks that John means only suggest that implicit obedience to Jesus brings instant success. ἐλκῦσαι – “to draw”. “John was not unaware of the parabolic nature of the incident he was recording.” (Marsh)

Verse 7

Greetings were not made naked. The religious duty was not kept in the baths where all were naked.

Verse 9

Jesus can feed them without their aid; they cannot fish without His.

As has been considered, the bread and fish had been given to Galileans at a previous Passover time. Can it be that the fish already provided represent the Jews to whom the Lord came (and whom He still represents), and that the fish caught represent the Gentiles, thus bringing in the whole of mankind?, Marsh wonders.

In light of Psalm 78:19, God has furnished a table in the wilderness.

The fire of coals apposes the same in 18:18. The material is the same as in 6:9, bread and fish, but the combination may have symbolical, or sacramental, significance; see on v. 13. (Barrett)

Verse 11

“The drawing of the net to shore at last, was meant to remind the disciples and all ministers, of what will happen when the Lord comes again. The work of the Church will be completed, and the reckoning of results will take place.

The dinner prepared and provided for the disciples, when the net was drawn to the shore, was meant to remind ministers that there will be the great marriage supper of the Lamb at last, when Christ Himself shall welcome His faithful servants and ministers, and ‘come forth and serve them.’ (Lk. 12:37).

The respective positions of the disciples and Christ, when they first saw Him, may possibly be intended to represent the respective positions of Christ and His people during this dispensation. There were on the water of the sea. He was looking at them from the land. Just so Christ is in heaven looking at us, and we are voyaging over the troublous waters of this world.

Our Lord’s sudden appearing on shore, when the morning broke, may possibly represent our Lord’s second advent. ‘The night is far spent, and the day is at hand.’ When the morning dawns, Christ will appear.” (Ryle)

For the 153 fishes, Hoskyns cites Ezek. 47:10; Mt. 13:47,48 in relation to the number of known species of fish (the disciples do not eat them because they represent converts to the faith). Unlike lambs (also mentioned in this chapter) fish die when taken out of their element. The number is there “to symbolize a perfect and unique catch of fish.” (Hoskyns)

According to Jerome, there are 153 species of fish, yet the net is not broken. There is room for all in the gospel church.

153 is $1+2+3+\dots+17$. “Seventeen is the sum of 7 and 10, both numbers which even separately are indicative of completeness and perfection. The fish then represent the full total of the catholic and apostolic church. That 153 is triangular and represents the Trinity is hardly credible since the Trinitarian formula had yet to be established. If this figure is allegorical, then it is possible that vs. 3, 6, and 9 should be taken allegorically.

“yet was not the net broken”: The Church remains one, in spite of the number and variety of its members.” (Barrett)

“The net did not break”: “The gift of God is always more than we can receive yet it never bursts the vessel which we can offer for its reception.” (Temple)

Augustine compares Luke 5 at the beginning of our Lord's ministry with Jn. 20:11; "The one miracle was the symbol of the Church at present, the other of the Church perfected; in the one we have good and bad, in the other good only. There Christ is on the water, here He is on the land; there the draught is left in the boats, here it is landed on the beach; there the nets are let down as it might be, here in a special part; there the nets are rending, here they are not broken; there the boats are on the point of sinking with their load, here they are not laden; there the fish are not numbered, here the number is exactly given." (Whitehead)

Verse 12

"Come and dine": "to take breakfast, the first meal of the day.

Verse 13

The distribution is the act of the host who pronounces the blessing in a Jewish meal. The parallel acts of 6:11 and this verse recall also the distribution by Jesus of the bread and wine at the last supper. This meal was probably intended to call to the minds of the readers eucharistic associations (cf. the manifestation of Jesus to the two disciples at Emmaus, Lk. 24:30f,35). A fish occurs along with bread in some early representations of the eucharist; and fish-symbolism was very widespread in early Christianity.

Verse 14

'This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself'. Apparently the appearance to Mary Magdalene is not counted (perhaps because she was not a μαθητής); that of 20:19-23 is the first, that of 20:26-29 the second.

Verse 15

'lovest thou more than these'. Two interpretations are possible: a) 'Do you love me more than these other disciples do?' b) 'Do you love me more than this fishing gear, which represents your ordinary life and which now once more I am summoning you to leave?'" (Barrett)

The examination of Peter uses two forms of love ἀγαπᾷς > φιλῶ. "In the first two questions Jesus uses the verb for the higher love (agapaō), a divine love which implies absolute loyalty. And Peter answered with a verb denoting a lower love, the love of friendship (philēo).

But in the third question Jesus used the lower word ‘Do you love me as a friend?’ When twice Peter failed to rise up to Jesus’ standard of love, then Jesus came down to the love of which Peter was capable. It was Peter’s failure in this regard which grieved him when Jesus asked ‘the third time, Lovest thou me?’” (Hobbs)

“Observe how he calls him Simon, son of Jonas. He does not call him Cephas, nor Peter, the name he had given him (for he had lost the credit of his strength and stability, which those names signified), but his original name, Simon. [His threefold questions to Peter] restore him to his apostleship, now that he repented. Christ, having thus appointed Peter his doing work, next appoints him his suffering work. Having confirmed to him the honour of an apostle, he now tells him of further preferment designed him – the honour of a martyr φ. Jn. 13:36.

The word, Follow me was a further confirmation of his restoration to his Master’s favour, and to his apostleship; for Follow me was the first call. Follow me: ‘Expect to be treated as I have been, and to tread the same bloody path that I have trodden before thee; for the disciple is not greater than his Lord’” (Henry).

The attempts to explain the two words used for “love” in the Restoration of Peter narrative have resulted in no fixed distinction between them. Says Strachan, “The Greek Septuagint uses both words indifferently to translate the Hebrew word love, אָהַב. Similarly two different words are used for feed [βόσκει (v. 15); ποιμαίνει, shepherd, ‘tend’ (R.V.) (v. 16)]. Also the distinction of words, lambs, sheep, in these verses, does not discriminate between younger and older members of the flock, but is again purely stylistic. In 1 John 2:12,14, the term little children includes both fathers and young men. It is merely an intimate form of address used by teachers to pupils.

More than these: ‘These’ has been taken to refer to the boats and nets. Much more probably the reference is to Peter’s superior protestations recorded in Mk. 14:29; Lk. 22:33; Jn. 13:37.”

Verse 18

“There is a reference to the brisk fashion in which Peter, the young man, had ‘guided himself’ to plunge into the sea (v. 7).” (Strachan)

This verse may be meant as a proverb, “In youth man goes free, where he wishes, in old age he must allow himself to be led, even where he does not wish.” (Barrett)

Verse 19

“A reference to crucifixion (ca. 64 A.D. in Rome) is in the stretching forth of the hands.

Verse 23

μένειν ‘tarry’ KJV; ‘abide’ Gk.

Verse 24

‘these things’ may refer to the Appendix (viz. 21:15-22).” (Strachan)

Temple concludes, “So the story of this Gospel ends with a little group standing apart from the company of the disciples. It consists of three: the Lord of love, the disciple in whom self would be offered, and the disciples in whom self would be forgotten.... If we are to enter into the life to which the Lord Jesus invites us, the self in us must be eliminated as a factor in the determination of conduct; if possible, let it be so effaced by love that it is forgotten; if that may not be, let it be offered. For if we are to come to the Father, self must be either offered or forgotten.”