

A Verse-by-Verse Study of John Chapters 10-12 (with John 9:35-41)

I worked on this paper in December 2012 to split it into nine parts in the proper format to put on several Christian article sites. I made some minor improvements to this paper at that time, including updating cross-references to my other papers.

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JOHN 9:35-10:42

John 9:1-5 are discussed on pages 49-52 of my book, *Holiness and Victory Over Sin*.

(35) Jesus heard that they had put him out [The preceding verse (34) ended with the words “So they put him out [Verse 13 mentions that they brought the man who had been born blind that Jesus healed “to the Pharisees”; the Pharisees are also mentioned in verses 15, 16, and 40].” The KJV; NKJV translate “they cast him out” in verse 34 and “they had cast him out” here in verse 35; the NIV has “they threw him out” in verse 34 and “they had thrown him out” here in verse 35. It is clear that they were angry with the man and removed him from their presence.¹], **and finding him, He said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”** [On “the Son of Man,” see under John 5:27 in my paper on John chapters 5-8. Jesus frequently referred to Himself as the “Son of Man”; on this title see, for example, Daniel 7:13, 14; Matt. 8:20; 9:6; 10:23; 11:19; 12:8, 32, 40; 13:37, 41; 16:13, 27, 28; 17:9, 12, 22; 18:11; 19:28; 20:18, 28; 24:27, 30, 37, 39, 44; 25:31; 26:2, 24, 45, 64; John 1:51; 3:13, 14; 5:27; 6:27, 53, 62; 8:28; 9:35; 12:23, 34; 13:31; and Acts 7:56. This title incorporated the fact that Jesus was a *man* (but not just a man); it also incorporated the ideas that He had come from heaven, that He would be glorified and taken to the right hand of God the Father after He finished His all-important mission on the earth, and that He was coming again to judge the world and to reign in God’s never-ending kingdom.] **(36) He answered, “Who is He, Lord** [“or *Sir*” (margin of the NASB); the NIV has, “Who is he, sir?”], **that I may believe in Him?”** [To believe in Christ Jesus in the full new-covenant sense includes submitting to Him in faith and living for Him (by His enabling grace through faith). I assume this man assumed (and rightly so) that the titles *Son of Man* and *Christ/Messiah* (cf. John 9:22) referred to the same person (Person). If he didn’t he would have found out before long.] **(37) Jesus said to him, “You have both seen Him, and He is the one who is talking with you.”** [Compare John 4:26. Before Jesus said what He did to this man in verses 35-37, the man was already convinced that Jesus was a prophet and a very special man of God (see John 9:17, 30-33). Here Jesus informed him that He was the Son of Man, and as the next verse shows, the man believed Him.] **(38) And he said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped Him.** [The man’s *worshipping* Jesus undoubtedly included his bowing down before him. The Greek verb used here (*proskuneō*) is sometimes

¹ The same Greek verb (*ekballō*) is used in verses 34 and 35. Some believe that the idea is included here that the man was put out of (excommunicated from) the synagogue. It is possible that he was put out of the synagogue, but I don’t believe that John intended to include that information here. I’ll quote John 9:22, “His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone confessed Him [Jesus] to be the Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.” For one thing, the Greek behind *being put out of the synagogue* in verse 22 is totally different than the Greek behind *being put out* in verses 34 and 35. For another thing, it doesn’t seem that the man was arguing before the religious leaders that Jesus was the Christ (see verse 35, 36). He did, however, greatly offend them by saying that Jesus was a prophet and speaking highly of Jesus rather than accept their verdict that He was a sinful man.

translated *bow down before*.² The NASB; NIV; KJV; and NKJV all translate “worshipped/worshipped” here; but we need not, and probably should not, assume that this man understood the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ at that time.³ The Jews did not believe the Messiah was to be deity. The NEB translates, “and bowed before him.” (39) **And Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind.”** [Verse 40 shows that Jesus’ opponents were listening to what He said here. He knew that they were listening. What He said here built on His having given sight to the man who was born *physically* blind, but He was speaking here in verse 39 (and in verse 41) of *spiritual* blindness and *spiritual* seeing, which is a lot more important than *physical* sight. This man was an example of one who was formerly *spiritually* blind (I’ll qualify this statement as we continue) but who now, through the coming of Jesus into this world, could see *spiritually*. He had entered into new-covenant salvation (in an early form of that salvation) through submitting to the Lord Jesus Christ in faith. This man knew that he needed the light of Christ, but most of the religious leaders rejected that light (cf., e.g., John 1:4; 8:12; 9:5; and 12:46-50). I believe we can assume that this man truly repented (he knew that he needed to be saved from his sins, and he wanted to change/be changed), unlike most of the religious leaders.

We don’t know much about this beggar’s (John 9:8) spiritual condition before he had this glorious encounter with Christ Jesus. He may have been a true disciple of God (the God of Israel) before Jesus came to him. (Even if he was a true disciple of God, he still needed to repent and receive new-covenant salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ.) A key point here (in the context of verses 39-41) is that the religious leaders (the Pharisees are the religious leaders in the spotlight in this chapter; see John 9:13, 15, 16, and 40) considered this man to be spiritually blind, an ignoramus who couldn’t possibly teach them anything of value—they were the spiritual elite who could *see*, they thought. See John 9:13-34, especially verse 34, “They answered him, ‘You were born entirely in sins, and are you teaching us?’ So they put him out”; and see Rom. 2:17-29. Some Pharisees were different (cf., e.g., John 9:16; Nicodemus [John 3:1-12; 7:50-52; and 19:39-42]).

The coming of Jesus into the world had the intended effect (as here in verse 39) of bringing the *judgment* of condemnation on many of the Pharisees (and other Jews who didn’t really know God or love Him and who were not open to repentance; cf., e.g., John 3:16-21; 8:21, 24; and 15:18-25).⁴ The Pharisees (many/most of them) *thought*

² The NASB translated this Greek verb as follows: bow down (1), bow down before (1), bowed down (1), bowed down before (2), bowing down (1), prostrated himself before (1), worship (32), worshiped (17), worshippers (1), worshipping (1), worships (1).

³ I’ll quote a few sentences from what D. A. Carson says here (*Gospel According to John* [Eerdmans, 1991], page 377). “The verb takes on the force of ‘to worship’ when the person before whom one prostrates himself is God. It is not clear that the healed man is yet ready to address Jesus as Thomas did after the resurrection, ‘My Lord and my God’ (20:28). It is likely that the healed man is offering obeisance to Jesus as the redeemer from God, the revealer of God. . . .” Verses like Rev. 19:10; 22:9 show that Christians are not to bow down to worship anyone but God (including God the Son).

⁴ “His [Jesus’] very presence in the world constitutes a separation . . . between those who believe on Him and those who reject Him. See on John 3:17” (M. R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament* MacDonald Publishing, no date, originally published in 1886], page 459).

they could see, but they couldn't.⁵ Jesus' last words here in verse 39 ("that those who see may become blind") don't mean that those who *really could see* would become blind, but that those who *thought they could see* would be shown to be blind and would go even deeper in their spiritual blindness and separation from God—they would be condemned when they rejected God's only plan of salvation (e.g. John 3:18, "Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he had not believed in the name of God's one and only son" NIV). God never drives people further away from Him who have a heart oriented toward Him and/or who are open to repent and submit to His saving grace. He dispenses His saving grace to those who will humble themselves, repent, and submit (in faith) to Him, His Son, and His salvation.

Compare Matt. 9:11-13, "When the Pharisees saw *this*, they said to His disciples, 'Why is your Teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners?' But when Jesus heard *this*, He said, '*It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means: "I desire compassion, and not sacrifice," for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.*' " (Much other scripture, including John 9:39-41, shows that the Pharisees were *blind* and *sick* and *sinners* too; but most of them would not accept that fact.); Matt. 11:25, 26, "At that time Jesus said, 'I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from *the* wise and intelligent [If they had had true *wisdom* they would have been ready to repent and submit to the Lord Jesus Christ.] and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this way was well pleasing in Your sight.'"; James 4:6, "... Therefore it says, 'God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble'" (cf. Prov. 3:34; Matt. 23:12; 1 Pet. 5:5); and Matt. 18:3, "and [Jesus] said to them, 'Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.'"

I'll quote part of what D. A. Carson says under verse 39.⁶ "At the spiritual level, *the blind* refers to those who are in spiritual darkness, and are therefore lost, and know it (just as the blind man repeatedly emphasizes how little he knows, vv. 25, 36). Jesus came to open their eyes, to give them the 'light' of revelation that will enable them to see. But *those who see* (which is Jesus' cryptic and ironic way of saying 'those who think they see'), like the Pharisees in this chapter who make so many confident pronouncements but who are profoundly wrong (vv. 16, 22, 24, 29, 34), inevitably reject the true light when it comes. So certain are they that they can see, they utterly reject any suggestion to the contrary, and thereby confirm their own darkness. That tragic conclusion is the *foreseen* result of Jesus' coming, and in that sense part of its purpose. Pastorally speaking, John is again stressing the point that a certain poverty of spirit (cf. Matt.

⁵ The religious leaders knew a lot more about the scriptures than the common people, like this beggar, and they were proud of their "knowledge" (cf., e.g., John 7:49; 9:16, 22, 24, 28, 29, 34; Rom. 2:17-25), but as Jesus said in John 5:47, for example, they didn't really believe Moses' writings—if they had believed his writings, they would have submitted to Christ Jesus (John 5:46). They didn't really know God (but they thought they did), which they demonstrated by rejecting His Son/the Messiah (John 7:28; 8:19, 42, 55; 15:21; 16:3; 17:25). In truth, they were *blind* guides anxious to lead others (cf. Matt. 15:14; 23:16, 17, 19, 24, 26).

I'll quote what Alfred Plummer says regarding "those who see" here in verse 39 (*Gospel According to St. John* [Baker, 1981 reprint of 1882 publication], page 213). "They who fancy they see, who pride themselves on their superior insight and knowledge, and wish to dictate to others; like 'they that be whole,' and 'righteous' in Matt. 9:12, 13, and 'the wise and prudent' in Matt. 11:25. These Pharisees shewed this proud self-confidence when they declared [in John 9:24], 'we know that this man is a sinner,' and asked [in John 9:34] "Dost thou teach us?" "

⁶ *Gospel According to John*, page 378.

5:3), an abasement of personal pride (especially over one's religious opinions), and a candid acknowledgment of spiritual blindness [not to mention their need for salvation] are indispensable characteristics of the person who receives spiritual sight, true revelation, at the hands of Jesus...."

I'll quote part of what Marcus Dods says under verse 39.⁷ "...the Pharisees were stone-blind to the world Jesus opened to them, because they thought that already they knew more than He did."

I'll quote part of what John Calvin says under verse 39.⁸ "...Christ says that they see [they think they see] who, deceiving themselves by a foolish confidence of wisdom, are guided by their own opinion and think their empty imaginings are wisdom. As soon as Christ appears in the brightness of His Gospel, they are blinded; not only in that their foolishness, which had been hidden in the darkness of unbelief, is now uncovered, but because they are plunged into a deeper darkness by God's righteous vengeance, and lose that small remnant of...what light had been theirs. ... Now if any man is puffed up by proud confidence in his own reason and refuses to submit to God, he may seem, apart from Christ, to be wise, but Christ's brightness will make him foolish. For the vanity of the human mind only begins to appear when heavenly wisdom is brought into view. ... before Christ shines, hypocrites do not resist God so obstinately. But as soon as the light is brought near them, they rise against God in open war. Because of this depravity and ingratitude they become doubly blind, and God, in righteous vengeance, puts out their eyes completely, which were formerly destitute of the true light. ... We ought all to be the more careful that we do not bring this dreadful punishment on ourselves through a foolish opinion of our own wisdom. Experience teaches us how true this statement of Christ is. For we see many mad with dizziness and rage simply because they cannot endure the rising of the Son of righteousness." **(40) Those of the Pharisees who were with Him** ["Some Pharisees who were with him" NIV; "And *some* of the Pharisees which were with him" KJV; "Then *some* of the Pharisees who were with Him" NKJV; "Some of the Pharisees around him picked this up" NAB. This group of people around Jesus, which included quite a few Pharisees, heard what He said to the man who had received his sight after Jesus found him (verses 35-39).] **heard these things and said to Him, We are not blind too, are we?"** [Jesus undoubtedly intended His words of verse 39 for the people around him, not just for the man who was healed. The Greek shows that those Pharisees expected a negative answer to their question. Surely Jesus wasn't classifying them with the spiritually blind.⁹ (The question of these Pharisees confirms that they considered themselves to be religious and quite perceptive spiritually—they were not to be classified with those, like the man born blind, who could not teach them in that he, for one thing, had been "born entirely in sins" [verse 34].) In one sense they were right. Jesus classified them as "those who see" in verse 39, but as we have discussed, He wasn't saying they could *really see*, but that they *thought they could see* and were proud of it. Actually, they were quite blind spiritually, which they proved by rejecting God's only Savior from sin.] **(41) Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin** [This is a class 2 conditional sentence in the Greek, which means that the "if you were blind" clause" was assumed to *not* be true. Jesus was saying that they were *not* blind (which, as we discussed, was true in one sense) and that they did, therefore, have sin.]; **but since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains** ["but now that you claim you can

⁷ *Expositor's Greek Testament*, Vol. 1 (Eerdmans, 1974 reprint), page 787.

⁸ *Gospel According to St. John*, Part One (Eerdmans, 1993 reprint), page 255.

⁹ Marcus Dods (*Expositor's Greek Testament*, page 788) mentions that the Pharisees asked this question "with indignant contempt."

see, your guilt remains” NIV]. [A primary point that Jesus was making here was that these Pharisees were sinners and, with all their knowledge of the scriptures, etc., they certainly had no excuse for their sin (and especially *now*; *now* that Christ Jesus had come into this world and they had rejected Him and His salvation)—their sinful rejection of Christ, His word, and His salvation has demonstrated that they didn’t really know God or love Him and His righteousness.

I’ll quote John 8:24; 15:22, 24, “Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe I am *He*, you will die in your sins. ... If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. ... If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin, but now they have both seen and hated Me and my Father as well.” The man who had been born blind had his sin removed through submitting (with repentance and faith) to the Lord Jesus Christ and His salvation, but the Pharisees had added to their sins the unforgivable¹⁰ sin of rejecting Christ and the salvation He came to bring—*their sin remained*.

A great reversal has taken place. Those like the man who had been born blind entered the kingdom of God (in an early stage of that kingdom) through repentance and faith while those who were proud of their religiosity, including their knowledge of the scriptures, were left on the outside, so to speak. *The blind began to see; those who could see became blind* [that is, those who thought they could see became more blind] (see verse 39).

I’ll quote two sentences from what Craig S. Keener says regarding verses 40, 41.¹¹ “The Pharisees sarcastically demand whether they, too, are blind (9:40). Jesus responds (9:41) that their very claim to see [they denied that they were spiritually blind] makes them all the more responsible for the light that has come to them; if they refuse to believe, their sin remains (8:24; 15:24; 16:9); those satisfied with their own condition were condemned to remain in it (cf. Rev. 3:17).” John Chapter 10. (1) Truly, truly [Amen, Amen], I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber.¹² [As the following verses show, Jesus is the Good Shepherd *who enters by the door into the fold of the sheep*. In verses 1-10, Jesus contrasts Himself with those shepherds/leaders who are *thieves and robbers*. Verse 8 mentions “thieves and robbers” and verse 10 mentions the “thief.” Who did Jesus mean by these “thieves and robbers”? I agree with the widespread viewpoint that Jesus was speaking of the religious leaders of the Jews. The Pharisees were the ones in the spotlight in chapter 9, but the Sadducees also qualified to be classified as thieves and robbers (in some ways they were worse than the Pharisees; for one thing, their doctrine was extremely faulty). The reader must understand that John didn’t write his Gospel

¹⁰ How could God forgive the sin of rejecting His Son, the only Savior, and the salvation He came to bring? The only way for them to be forgiven was for them to repent and submit to the Lord Jesus Christ and the One who sent Him. How could God let people have a place in His eternal kingdom who don’t love Him and are not submitted to Him and His righteousness? It would cause chaos.

¹¹ *Gospel of John*, Vol. 1 (Hendrickson, 2003), page 796.

¹² William Hendricksen (*Gospel of John* [Baker, 1953], page 97) points out that “in the interpretation of this sublime allegory commentators differ widely.” For one thing, many do not classify John 10:1-18 as allegory. These verses have a flexible, mixed construction. For one thing, Jesus is *the shepherd* in verses 1-18, and He is *the door* in verses 7, 9. I’ll quote part of what C. K. Barrett says on this topic (*Gospel According to St. John* [Westminster, second edition, 1978], page 367). “...it is neither parable...nor allegory, though it is related to both forms of utterance. It is a symbolic discourse in which symbolism and straightforward statement alternate and stand side by side.”

with chapters and verses; both were added at a later time. The first part of what we call chapter 10 is apparently directly tied to the end of chapter 9.

I'll quote a few sentences from what Leon Morris says under verse 1.¹³ "There is no introductory explanation of the occasion or the like [as we come to John 10:1]. The chapter opens with Jesus fairly launched on His discourse. This indicates that there is no great break with the previous section, a conclusion which is reinforced by the reference to the opening the eyes of the blind in v. 21. Moreover the blind man, so ready to heed the voice of Christ, clearly belongs among the sheep of this discourse, while the Pharisees are the embodiment of the false shepherds. The opening 'Verily, verily [Truly, truly]' ...agrees with this, for elsewhere it never begins a discourse. It always follows up some previous teaching. It indicates that the following statement is important, but also that it has a connection with the preceding. This passage then must be understood in the closest of connections with the story of the blind man."

It is clear that Jesus wasn't speaking here of the many good leaders *who came before Him* (see verse 8), like Moses, Joshua, and the many true prophets of God—they weren't *thieves and robbers!* It also seems clear that Jesus wasn't speaking here of false Christs/Messiahs *who came before Him*, because, for one thing, He didn't have a problem with false Christs/Messiahs; that problem was to come later (cf. Matt. 24:24).¹⁴ It is also clear, I believe, that Jesus was contrasting Himself with *men* here, not with the *devil*, evil angels, and demons, though it is true that the devil and his hosts were behind the "ministry" of the *thieves and robbers who came before Jesus* (cf., e.g., John 8:38-59; 2 Cor. 4:4; 11:12-15; and 1 John 4:1-6). The popular view around the body of Christ that the *thief* of verse 10 is the devil doesn't seem reasonable in this context, but that arch rebel *is* the ultimate being behind all the stealing, killing, and destroying that takes place in the world.

What does "the fold of the sheep" represent here? Based on what Jesus went on to say, this *fold* contains/represents the people of Israel, the elect and the non-elect combined.¹⁵ (The elect show themselves to be the elect by hearing the voice of the Good Shepherd and following Him in faith.) Jesus' use of the word *fold* in verse 16 serves as a strong confirmation of this interpretation. In verse 16 Jesus speaks of having "other sheep, which are not of this fold," that is, they are not of the Jewish fold—they are Gentiles. They too, like the Jews who heard Jesus' voice and followed Him in faith (very much including the man born blind), hear the voice of the Good Shepherd and follow Him in faith. Together they "will become one flock *with* one shepherd [the Good Shepherd]" (John 10:16).] **(2) But he who enters by the door is a [the] shepherd of the sheep.** [I would translate "the shepherd" with the NIV; KJV; and NKJV (or, "the Shepherd").¹⁶ Jesus was speaking of Himself here; He is the Shepherd of the sheep.

¹³ *Gospel According to John* (Eerdmans, 1971), page 501.

¹⁴ The first Jewish leader that was widely considered by the Jews to be the Christ/Messiah was Bar Kochba, who led an unsuccessful rebellion against Rome in the second Christian century. He was killed along with many of his followers in AD 135, and his rebellion came to an end.

¹⁵ "The shepherd is Jesus himself; he is pictured as coming to the Jewish fold and calling his disciples out" (F. F. Bruce, *Gospel of John* [Eerdmans, 1983], page 224).

¹⁶ The Greek doesn't have the definite article with the word for shepherd here, but quite often the definite article is required in the English translation where it was not required in the Greek. Significantly, the definite article is used with the word *shepherd* in the Greek in verses 11 and 14. I'll quote part of what Leon Morris says in a footnote here (*Gospel According to John* [Eerdmans, 1971], page 502). "ARV [ASV] margin [like the translation of the NASB] reads 'a shepherd,' but this is erroneous. This is another example of the definite predicate preceding the verb [that is, the Greek has the word "shepherd," which is a

What Jesus said of Himself here in verse 2 was true for many shepherds of literal sheep—what He said of Himself was built on that background.] **(3) To him the doorkeeper opens** [Since Jesus was the legitimate Shepherd, the One sent and authorized by God the Father, the doorkeeper opens the door for Him. The doorkeeper would not open the door for the religious leaders of Israel, who sent themselves—they were not legitimate shepherds; they were not sent or authorized by God. That’s a key point that Jesus was making in verses 1-6. In a figurative discourse like this one, we must guard against over interpretation of every detail, but it is reasonable to say here (and a few commentators do say) that the *doorkeeper* is God; if not God, it is a person assigned by Him to open the door for the legitimate Shepherd when He comes. It doesn’t insult the Father to say He is the One who permits entrance through the door, or denies entrance, any more than it insults Christ to call Him a *shepherd*, or a *lion*, or a *lamb*, or a *vine*, etc.], **and the sheep hear his voice** [These words (“hear his voice”) in this context, mean more than hearing His words; “his [His] own sheep” hear Him with open hearts, with understanding, with repentance, and with the submission of faith to His Person and His words.], **and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.** [The fact that “he [He] calls his [His] own sheep by name” calls attention to the fact that Christ’s (and God the Father’s) call to salvation has a very personal (Person to person) element through the omnipresent Spirit of God as He deals with individuals. (The shepherds of literal sheep would call their sheep by name, and the sheep knew the voice of their shepherd—they would not follow the voice of another shepherd, but would rather flee from that voice/shepherd.) He “leads them out” of the old-covenant fold and into the much more glorious new-covenant fold that embraces all true Christians/believers.

The fact that the true people of God (the elect) hear Jesus’ voice and respond to Him with faith, like the man born blind, further confirms that Jesus is the legitimate Shepherd. The false leaders proved that they didn’t know God and were not His shepherds by doing everything they could to try to keep the man born blind (and everybody else) from coming to the legitimate Shepherd (see John 9:16, 22, 24, 28-34; cf., e.g., Matt. 23:13). They, the illegitimate shepherds, dogmatically rejected the idea that Jesus was a man of God, much less the promised Christ/Messiah. They proved themselves to be thieves and robbers, not shepherds sent by God. But Jesus was the Good Shepherd, who calls His own sheep by name—He calls them out from the old covenant to the glories of new-covenant salvation, and they follow Him (see verses 4, 5, 10, 14-16, 26-28).] **(4) When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them** [On “his [His] own,” compare, for example, John 6:37-40, 44, 45. He puts them forth to go ahead of them and lead them into the fullness of new-covenant salvation, a salvation

definite noun, before the verb] and therefore lacking the article (see on 1:1). We should translate ‘the shepherd.’ ”

Here in verse 2 it would also be OK to translate “But he who enters by the door is shepherd of the sheep.” That’s the way William Hendricksen translates verse 2, and there are others who translate it that way. (With Hendricksen’s translation the word *shepherd* is understood to be definite because of the context even though the definite article is not used. When the indefinite article “a” is used with the word shepherd, as in the NASB, it communicates the idea that there is more than one shepherd. Greek, by the way, doesn’t have an indefinite article.) I’ll quote a sentence from what Hendricksen says here in a footnote (*Gospel of John*, page 104). “Though he speaks of *many* thieves, robbers, etc., he refers to only *one* shepherd.”

based on His soon-to-be-shed atoning blood. He, the Good Shepherd, goes ahead of them guiding them, protecting them, sanctifying them, saving them from all enemies, etc.], **and the sheep follow him because they know his voice.** [His people know His voice. See verses 3, 5, 8, 14, 16, and 27-29.] **(5) A stranger** [which includes the *thieves and robbers*, who are illegitimate shepherds] **they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers.** [See under verses 3, 4.] **(6) This figure of speech** [“illustration” NKJV] **Jesus spoke to them, but they did not understand what those things were which He had been saying to them.** [They didn’t understand what Jesus had said to them, so He went on to explain and expand on what He had said. It isn’t clear who the pronouns “they” and “them” refer to here and in verse 7; see John 9:35-41; 10:19-21. The Pharisees were certainly included, but it is quite possible that the other people around Jesus (including the man born blind and any other believers there) didn’t understand either. Quite often in the Gospels Jesus’ disciples didn’t understand what He had said and all the more so when He used figurative language. Frequently He would explain the meaning of His figurative language to the disciples when they were alone.] **(7) So Jesus said to them again, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.** [What it means for Jesus to be “the door of the sheep” is explained in verse 9. He is the door that leads to salvation and eternal life (see verses 9, 10, 28, 29). Compare what Jesus said in John 14:6, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.” Jesus’ figurative language was flexible enough for Him to be “the door” of the sheep and “the Good Shepherd” of the sheep. Revelation 5:5, 6 provide a prime example of the flexibility of figurative language: Jesus is called “the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David,” and He is pictured as “a Lamb standing, as if slain [He had been slain, as the Lamb of God, but now He has been raised from the dead], having seven horns [Seven is a symbolic number for perfection; the *seven horns* symbolize His perfect authority, dominion, and power] and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God, sent out into all the earth [The *seven eyes* communicate the fact that Jesus has perfect knowledge of what is happening everywhere through the omnipresent Spirit of God].”] **(8) All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them.** [See under verse 1. The man born blind, who was healed and saved in chapter 9, is a good example of a *sheep* (one of the elect sheep of God) who did not hear the thieves and robbers who came before Christ (the religious leaders/Pharisees) but who did hear Christ’s voice and begin to follow Him.] **(9) I am the door** [cf. verse 7]; **if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved** [cf. John 3:17; 5:34; and 12:47], **and will go in and out and find pasture.** [See under verse 7. We enter new-covenant salvation through Christ, which includes entering the kingdom of God (in an early stage of that kingdom). Finding “pasture” speaks of finding the things that we need to have life and to have it abundantly (cf. verse 10).] **(10) The thief comes only to steal and kill** [cf., e.g., John 8:40, 41, 44, 59] **and destroy** [See under verse 1.]; **I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.** [This abundant life starts with the new birth/the birth from above of John 3:1-8; also see, for example, John 1:4, 12, 13; 3:16-18, 36; 5:24-29; 6:51; 14:6; 20:31; Rom. 8:1-18; and 1 John 5:11-13.] **(11) I am the good shepherd** [On God the Father’s/Christ’s being the Good Shepherd, cf., e.g., Psalm 23;

Isa. 40:9-11; Ezek. 34:1-16, 23, 24¹⁷; 1 Pet. 5:4; and Rev. 7:17]; **the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.** [This verse, along with verses 15, 17, and 18, refers to the all-important voluntary atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Also see Heb. 13:20; John 15:13; and 1 John 3:16.] **(12) He who is a hired hand** [See under verse 13.], **and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep** [I would translate “the shepherd” with the KJV, NKJV, and the NIV (or, “the Shepherd”).¹⁸ The Shepherd here is the Lord Jesus Christ, who (with God the Father and the Holy Spirit) is also “the owner of the sheep.”], **sees the wolf coming** [A literal wolf was one of the animals that would attack literal sheep. The wolf here, in Jesus’ figurative discourse, represents any of the enemies that attack God’s people, whether those attacks come from/through men of the world, from/through false brethren, or are direct attacks from Satan and his hosts.], **and leaves the sheep and flees** [See under verse 13.], **and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.** **(13) He flees because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep.** [Jesus contrasts Himself with a hired hand. Unlike a hired hand, He is totally concerned about the sheep, and He is totally competent to protect His sheep from every enemy. A literal hired hand will typically have some concern for the sheep, but there is a definite limit to that concern and competence to protect. There is no limit to the concern, or to the saving ability, of the Good Shepherd. I don’t believe a “hired hand” should be equated with the *thieves and robbers* of verses 1, 8, 10. Apparently Jesus brought the person called the “hired hand” into His discourse here in verses 12, 13 to contrast His shepherding with the shepherding of that person, a person who didn’t own the sheep and had a limited concern for the sheep, thereby making the important points that He did own the sheep and did have a total concern for, and ability to protect the sheep. In the natural world there would typically be a big difference between the shepherd who owned the sheep and a hired hand. How much more so with the Lord Jesus Christ!] **(14) I am the good shepherd** [cf. verse 11], **and I know My own and My own know Me** [See under verse 15, and see verses 3, 4, 27.], **(15) even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father** [Compare Matt. 11:27; Luke 10:22; John 7:29; 8:55; and 17:25. These words, “even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father,” put the knowledge of Christ for His disciples and His disciples for Him of

¹⁷ Ezekiel chapter 34 is a very important cross-reference for John 10:1-19, 26-30. In the first ten verses of that chapter, God rebukes the shepherds of Israel for doing such a poor, *sinful* job of caring for the flock of God, which is the people of Israel. The shepherds were the rulers of the people, starting with the kings. (In Jesus’ day the Jews were under the Romans, but the religious leaders still had quite a bit of room to “minister” to the sheep, and they were doing a very poor, *sinful* job of shepherding God’s flock.) Starting in Ezek. 34:1, God prophesied of the day that He Himself would come to shepherd and save His sheep.

I’ll quote Ezek. 34:23, 24, “Then I [God the Father] will set over them one shepherd, My servant David [This shepherd is God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, the prophesied offspring of King David who would reign forever. The Lord Jesus Christ was also referred to as David in Jer. 30:9; Ezek. 37:24, 25; and Hos. 3:5.] and he will feed them; he will feed them himself and be their shepherd. (24) And I the LORD [Yahweh, God the Father], will be their God, and My servant David will be the prince among them; I the LORD have spoken.”

Like so many prophecies in the Old Testament, this prophecy receives a partial fulfillment in the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ but will not be completely fulfilled until He comes again at the end of this age. Also see Jeremiah chapter 23 (especially 23:1-8), which is a chapter that has much in common with Ezekiel chapter 34. Jeremiah 23:1-8 are discussed in my paper, *Verse-by-Verse Studies of Selected Prophecies from the Book of Jeremiah*.

¹⁸ See under verse 2.

verse 14 on the highest possible level. We, in union with Christ, through new-covenant salvation, are caught up into the super-glorious relationship between God the Father and God the Son. This includes the Father's loving us as He loves His unique Son (see John 17:20-23).

We, the sheep of the Good Shepherd's pasture, hear His voice to some extent before we are born again (cf. verses 3, 4, 9, 10, 16, 27, 28), but we really get to know God (the triune God) after we are born again and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Much of this knowledge comes through God's written Word, but there is a person to Person relationship established through the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in union with Him, by the indwelling Spirit.]; **and I lay down My life for the sheep.** [See verses 11, 17, 18.] **(16) I have other sheep, which are not of this fold** [cf., e.g., Isa. 56:8; John 3:16-18; 4:39-42]; **I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice** [On hearing Jesus' voice, see verses 3-5, 16, 27; cf., e.g., John 8:47; 18:37.]; **and they will become one flock** [cf. John 17:20-23; Eph. 4:4-6] **with one shepherd.** ["This fold" here in verse 16 speaks of the Jewish *fold* (the people of the old covenant); see under verse 1. The "other sheep, which are not of this fold" are the elect Gentiles, the Gentiles who will hear the voice of the Good Shepherd and follow Him in faith (cf., e.g., John 11:52; 12:20-24; 17:20-24; Eph. 2:11-22; and 1 Pet. 2:25). The "one flock *with* one shepherd" is the new-covenant church that embraces all true (born-again¹⁹) Christians. All true Christians are part of God's *true Israel*, along with the believers of Old Testament days (cf. Rom. 11:17-27). Of course the "one shepherd [Shepherd]" is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd. Because of God's foreknowledge and election, Jesus could speak of these Gentile sheep being His sheep/people before they became Christians (cf., e.g., Acts 13:48; 18:10; Eph. 1:4, 5). The Father gave the elect to the Son (cf., e.g., John 6:37, 39; 17:6, 24). The New Testament also teaches that Christ died for all mankind and that all are called to repent and submit to God and His plan of salvation (cf., e.g., Acts 17:30, 31; 1 Tim. 2:1-7; and 1 John 2:2).] **(17) For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again.** [This is at least one reason the Father loves His unique Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Father has always loved God the Son (cf., e.g., John 17:1-5, 20-26). This verse, with verses 11, 15, and 18 (and much other scripture), speaks of the all-important voluntary atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are saved (which includes being forgiven, born-again, sanctified, and ultimately glorified) through His atoning blood, and the devil, his followers, and death (spiritual death and physical death) are overthrown through Christ's atoning death. This verse and verses 11, 15, 18 speak of the *voluntary* nature of Christ's atoning death, but verse 18 elaborates on that important fact.²⁰] **(18) No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment** [cf. John 12:49, 50; 14:31; and 15:10] **I received from My Father."** [As I mentioned, this verse elaborates

¹⁹ When I speak of *born-again* Christians I am referring to those Christians who actually have been born again by the Spirit of God, in whom the Spirit dwells, and who continue in a life-flowing walk with Him, whether they call themselves born-again Christians, or not.

²⁰ The facts that God planned the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ before the foundation of the world (cf. Acts 2:22-24; 4:27, 28; and 1 Peter 1:20) and that Jesus voluntarily laid down His life do not lessen the guilt of those who put Him to death (the devil and the men). In one sense all of us (all mankind) were responsible for His death in that we were all sinners.

on (and emphasizes) the *voluntary* nature of the atoning death of the Lamb of God. See Matt. 26:53; John 10:11, 15, 17; cf. Heb. 12:2.²¹ No one takes it from Him; He lays it down on His own initiative; He has authority to lay it down, even as He has authority to take it up again (in His resurrection on the third day [cf. John 2:19-21]). I'll list several key reasons why Jesus voluntarily submitted to die on the cross: He knew that it was the Father's will. That reason, by itself, would suffice. (He loves the Father and always does His will [cf., e.g., John 14:31].) But, also, Jesus loved us and He knew that He was saving us (the elect) through His atoning death, and He knew that He was overthrowing Satan, his kingdom, and death (spiritual death and physical death) through His atoning death. The "commandment" to lay down His life *on a voluntary basis* and to take it again came from and by the "authority" of God the Father (cf., e.g., John 19:11.) **(19) A division occurred again among the Jews because of these words.** [Compare John 7:12, 31, 40-44; 9:16. Verse 21 shows that some of those Jews were open to Jesus. Some of the ones who were open to Jesus undoubtedly eventually became committed Christians. Also, it is quite possible that a few of Jesus' fiercest opponents in that audience later became committed Christians; the case of the apostle Paul shows that such things can happen by the grace of God in Christ.] **(20) Many of them were saying, "He has a demon [see John 7:20; 8:48, 49, 52; cf. Matt. 9:34; 11:18; 12:22-29; Mark 3:20-30; and Luke 11:14-26] and is insane.** [These fierce critics undoubtedly thought His supposed "insanity" was related (at least in part) with "[His supposedly having] a demon."] **Why do you listen to Him?" (21) Others were saying, "These are not the sayings of one demon-possessed. A demon cannot open the eyes of the blind [These words relate to the opening of the eyes of the man born blind spoken of in John chapter 9.], can he?" (22) At that time the Feast of the Dedication took place at Jerusalem [I prefer the translation of the NIV, "Then came the Feast of Dedication at Jerusalem." The things that took place in John 10:22-42 could have been more than two months after the events of John 10:1-21. The Feast of Dedication, which was/is also called Hanukkah, took place some two and one-half months after the Feast of Booths/Tabernacles, which was mentioned in John 7:2. That Feast of Booths/Tabernacles took place some six months before Jesus was crucified at the Feast of Passover. The Feast of Dedication (which lasted for eight days) started on the 25th of the month Chislev/Kislev (that month comes at the time of our November/December). The Feast of Dedication was not mentioned in the Old Testament because it celebrated things that took place after the Old Testament was written.**

The Feast of Dedication celebrated the cleansing of the temple and the resumption of sacrifices in the temple at Jerusalem on the 25th of Chislev of the year 164 BC, after the

²¹ "[Heb. 12:2] fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author [I would translate "leader" or "pioneer" or the equivalent] and perfecter of faith [He perfected faith in His Person; He was the *perfect* example of a man (though He was much more than just a man; He was the God-man) walking in faith, and especially as He faced the extremely difficult events that involved His atoning death; He (our great high priest) is also able to make us strong in faith as we look to Him and live for Him], who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising [I would translate "disregarding"] the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." "The joy set before Him" included His knowing that He was doing the Father's will and that He would end up at the right hand of God the Father. We too (fixing our eyes on Jesus) must continually press on in faith, knowing that God's grace is sufficient to bring us through every trial and take us to eternal glory.

Maccabees took the temple back from the forces of Antiochus Epiphanes²² and cleansed the temple. Forces from Antiochus Epiphanes had defiled the temple three years earlier by stopping the sacrifices being offered to God on the altar in the temple and setting up a pagan altar on top of God's altar and then offering sacrifices on that pagan altar to a pagan god. That pagan altar was called the "abomination of desolation" in Dan. 11:31. Also see 1 Maccabees 1:54, 59; 4:36-54; and 6:7.²³ The forces from Antiochus had first offered sacrifices on that abominable altar on the 25th of Chislev of the year 167 BC, which was exactly three years earlier (1 Macc. 1:59).; **(23) it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in the portico** [which had a roof supported by pillars] **of Solomon** [cf. Acts 3:11; 5:12]. [I'll quote part of what Andreas J. Kostenberger says here.²⁴ "Probably owing to the cold winter weather...Jesus taught not in an open court but in the temple area called Solomon's colonnade, which, being about two hundred yards long...offered protection from the raw east wind and was located on the east side of the temple."²⁵ This colonnade, which was commonly (but erroneously) thought to date back to Solomon's time but in fact derived from the pre-Herodian Hasmonean period, formed part of a magnificent covered structure that surrounded the outermost court of the temple on all sides."]

(24) The Jews [Those called "the Jews" here and in verses 31, 33 (and often in the Gospel of John) were opponents of Jesus.] **then gathered around** [The Greek verb used here (*kukloō*) could also be translated "surrounded" (with the NKJV) or "circled around," or the equivalent. The BAGD Greek Lexicon²⁶ lists this verse under the heading, "to move so as to encircle an object, *surround, encircle*" and under the subheading "with hostile intent...." Verse 31 confirms their *hostile intent*; verses 25-27 confirm that these Jews (at least most of them) were opponents of Jesus Christ who never would become His disciples. Such Jews had already determined to their satisfaction that Jesus was *not* the Christ (cf., e.g., John 5:18; 7:1, 19, 25, 47-52; 8:37-59; and 9:16, 21-24).

Those Jewish opponents were not about ready to submit to Jesus as the Christ if He were to *plainly* tell them, "I am the Christ," any more than the Jewish leaders were ready to submit to Him a few months later when the high priest said to Jesus at His trial before those leaders, "I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God" (in Matt. 26:63). Jesus answered in the affirmative in the next verse (Matt. 26:64), "... 'You have said it *yourself*; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you will see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING ON THE

²² Antiochus Epiphanes was mentioned in the book of Daniel, but not by name (see Dan. 8:8-14; 11:21-35; on those verses see pages 91-105 of my book, *The Mid-Week Rapture*).

²³ Antiochus' *abomination of desolation*, which prefigured Antichrist's end-time *abomination of desolation*, is discussed on pages 93-105 of my book, *The Mid-Week Rapture*. The verses I cited from 1 Maccabees are quoted there and discussed to some extent. Antiochus Epiphanes, also known as Antiochus IV, reigned over the Seleucid dynasty from 175-164 BC. That dynasty, which was centered in Syria, just north of Israel, was started by Seleucus, who had been a general under Alexander the Great who died in 323 BC. Seleucus was one of the four generals of Alexander who ended up taking over parts his extensive kingdom after he died. (See Dan. 8:8-11, 21, 22 [cf. Dan. 7:6 ("four heads"); 11:4]; see pages 91-107, 63 of *The Mid-Week Rapture*.)

²⁴ *John* (Baker, 2004), page 310.

²⁵ Kostenberger has a footnote. "See Josephus, *Jewish Wars* 5.5.1...; *Antiquities* 15.11.3...; 20.9.7...."

²⁶ Third edition, page 574.

CLOUDS OF HEAVEN.' " The next two verses (Matt. 26:65, 66) show that Jesus' confession that He was the Christ, the Son of God, the Son of Man, was all they needed, they thought, to convict Him of blasphemy and turn Him over to Romans to be killed, "Then the high priest tore his robes and said, 'He has blasphemed! What further need do we have of witnesses? Behold, you have now heard the blasphemy; what do you think?' They answered, 'He deserves death!' " I'll also quote the next two verses (Matt. 26:67, 68), which show their hatred of and contempt for Christ, "Then they spat in His face and beat Him with their fists; and others slapped Him, and said, 'Prophecy to us, You Christ; who is the one who hit You?' " (Also see Mark 14:61-65; Luke 22:66-71.)] **Him, and were saying to Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly [cf. Luke 22:67]."** [See under verse 25.] **(25) Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe** [John the Baptist, who was sent to prepare the way for Christ Jesus, had testified many exalted things about Him, including the fact that He was the Christ/Messiah (see John 1:6-8, 15, 19-36; 3:25-30; I'll quote John 3:28, "You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but 'I have been sent ahead of Him' "). Regarding Jesus' comment that He had told the Jews in Jerusalem that He was the Christ/Messiah, compare John 5:17-47; 7:14-52; 8:12-59; and 9:35-10:21 (the Pharisees were listening when Jesus told the man born blind who He was). Jesus didn't use the title *Christ/Messiah* of Himself in these passages, but John 7:26, 27, 31, 41, 42; and 9:22 show that the issue of whether Jesus was the Christ, or not, was a hot topic in those days. (Also see Matt. 2:4-6; 26:63-68; 27:17, 22; Luke 2:11, 26; 4:41; John 1:41 [Here Andrew found Peter and told him they had found the Messiah/Christ, referring to Jesus]; 4:25, 26 [Here Jesus told the Samaritan woman that He was the Christ/Messiah], 29; 11:27; and 20:31.) Although Jesus didn't use the word *Christ/Messiah* of Himself in John 5:17-47; 7:14-52; 8:12-59; or 9:35-10:21 (at least the title was not mentioned in any of the verses just listed), many of the things He said there indicated that He was the Christ/Messiah, and some of the things He said that were recorded by John claimed more for Himself than what the Jews expected the Christ/Messiah to be. The Jews didn't believe the Christ/Messiah would be deity for one thing.

I'll quote a sentence from what Henry Alford says under verse 25.²⁷ "He had often told them [that He was the Christ/Messiah], in unmistakable descriptions of Himself: see 5:19; 8:36, 56, 58, etc." I'll quote what Edward G. Dobson says under verses 25, 26.²⁸ "Christ had already told them (6:35; 7:37-39; 8:23-25). The problem was they had rejected what Christ had said about Himself. Christ had supplemented His claims by His works. The cause for their unbelief is rooted in the fact that they were not His sheep." And I'll quote part of what H. A. W. Meyer says under verses 25, 26.²⁹ "Jesus had not only *told* them (on many occasions, if not always so directly as, for example, to the woman of Samaria, or the man born blind) that He was the Messiah, but had also testified to the fact by His Messianic *works*. But they did not believe."

Jesus was reluctant to use the title Christ/Messiah. One reason for that was that there were several wrong ideas associated with that title circulating among the Jews in those days.³⁰ For one thing, many of the Jews were looking for the Christ/Messiah to

²⁷ *New Testament for English Readers*, Vol. 2 (Baker, 1983 reprint), page 557.

²⁸ *Liberty Bible Commentary*, New Testament (Old-Time Gospel Hour, 1982), pages 235, 236.

²⁹ *Meyer's Commentary on the New Testament*, Vol. 3 (Alpha Publications, 1980 reprint) page 328.

³⁰ I'll quote several sentences from what F. F. Bruce says under verse 24 (*Gospel of John* [Eerdmans, 1983], page 230). "Jesus had not so far said outright in Jerusalem that he was the Messiah. His

overthrow the hated Romans and exalt Israel (cf. Acts 1:6). (There are many prophecies in the Old Testament and the New Testament which show that the Christ/Messiah will overthrow the evil forces of this world, but those prophecies refer to His second coming. The Jews didn't realize that there would be two comings [two very different comings] of the Christ/Messiah.) John 6:15 gives a good illustration of the manifestations of fleshly zeal that Jesus was trying to avoid, "So Jesus, perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force to make Him king, withdrew to the mountain by Himself alone."

Matthew 16:13-20; Mark 8:27-30; and Luke 9:18-22, which are the verses where Peter confessed that Jesus is the Christ, illustrate two relevant points. For one thing, before the time of that confession (which was relatively late; the last year of Jesus' earthly ministry had already begun) it seems, somewhat surprisingly, that His apostles were not solidly established regarding the fact that Jesus was the Christ/Messiah. (See, for example John 1:41 ("[Andrew] found first his own brother Simon [Peter] and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' (which translated means Christ)"; John 1:41 took place just before Jesus began to call disciples to Himself; and see John 3:28, which as the context shows, refers to Jesus.) And on the occasion when Peter confessed that Jesus was the Christ, Jesus "warned the disciples that they should tell no one that He was the Christ" (Matt. 16:20 [Mark 8:30; Luke 9:21]; cf., e.g., Luke 4:41; Mark 1:34). Another reason Jesus was reluctant to use the title Christ/Messiah was that it greatly stirred up His opponents. As I mentioned, they were on record that Jesus was *not* the Christ/Messiah (cf., e.g., John 9:22).); **the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me** [cf., e.g., Matt. 11:2-6; Luke 7:18:23; John 2:14-17, 23; 5:36; 10:32, 37, 38; 14:11; and 15:24; it was prophesied in the Old Testament that the Messiah would do these works]. **(26) But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep.** [See, for example, John 8:47; 10:2-5, 11-16; and 17:2. It is important to see that Jesus was speaking these words to His opponents. He was telling them here (as He told His opponents in John 8:39-59) that the reason they didn't believe in Him was that they were *not* His people/sheep or people/sheep of God the Father (which to them would have been a shocking, obviously untrue statement). The true situation was *not* so much that Jesus was being rejected/judged/condemned by His opponents (centering in the Jewish leaders), as it appeared to man in the flesh—God, the sovereign God, was fully in control, as He always is—the truth of the matter was that His opponents rejection and condemnation of Jesus was part of the plan of God the Father, who sent His Son in a way that would demonstrate that His opponents were not really people of God. Their

description of himself as the good shepherd was as near to such a claim as made little difference, but he had not used the actual designation 'Messiah.' It was one thing for him to tell the woman at the well of Sychar who he was (John 4:26); to her the term 'Messiah' (or its Samaritan equivalent) had purely religious connotations. But among the Jews it had political and military implications, which Jesus was careful to avoid. ... But the authorities would not have been any more inclined to believe in him as the Messiah if he had made the claim 'plainly.' " I'll quote a sentence from what William Hendricksen says here (*Gospel of John*, pages 120, 121). "But although Jesus had not used the very words which the Jews were now trying to extract from his lips, he had, nevertheless employed phraseology which clearly implied the fact that he regarded himself as the Messiah; in the strictly *spiritual* sense however." I'll also quote a sentence from Gary M. Burge (*John* [Zondervan, 2000], page 295). "But given the explosive, highly politicized views of the Messiah in this period, it is not surprising that Jesus has used restraint so far."

rejection of Christ would bring about their judgment (condemnation). Their rejection of the Son of God showed where their hearts were; they didn't really love God the Father, His truth, or His righteousness. God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ were not at all surprised when so many of the Jews rejected and condemned Jesus.

It's important and comforting to know that God is in sovereign control, but it is also important to understand that our sovereign God has set things up in a way that requires people to respond to Him and His grace—we have a part to play from the beginning to the end; faith (and repentance) is something we do in response to God and His grace, and by His enabling grace. Jesus goes on to speak of those who *are* His (and the Father's) sheep in verses 27-30.] **(27) My sheep hear My voice** [See John 10:3, 4, 16.], **and I know them** [See John 10:14.], **and they follow Me** [See John 10:3, 4. *Hearing* the Shepherd's voice and *following* Him are things the sheep do as free moral agents.³¹ They respond (in faith) to the saving grace of God in Christ Jesus, the Good Shepherd. It isn't emphasized in this passage, but the New Testament makes it very clear that Christ's sheep (true Christians) must *continue to follow* the Shepherd by grace through faith. God's grace enables us to begin to follow Christ and to continue to follow Him; it does not, however, force us to repent and to begin to follow Christ or force us to continue to follow Him. He doesn't give us saving faith to begin with, and He doesn't force us continue on in faith to the end.³² God didn't create robots!

It is totally necessary, however, for us to understand that the fact that we must appropriate and cooperate with God's grace by faith does not detract from the fact that we are saved 100% by the saving grace of God in Christ. God must receive all the glory! We don't (by God's definition) *earn* salvation by receiving and cooperating with God's saving grace. As the apostle Paul says in Rom. 4:16, "For this reason [since the old covenant Law could not save us] it is by faith [faith in God the Father, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; faith in the gospel of new covenant salvation], that it may be in accordance with grace..." Faith receives and cooperates with what God makes available by His grace. His grace enables us to be strong in faith and makes us righteous and holy.

In verse 28 Jesus went on to say that His sheep "will never perish; and that no one will snatch them out of [His] hand." Many believe that what Jesus said in verse 28 proves that it is impossible for born-again Christians to lose their salvation. If the New Testament didn't have anything more to say on the topic than what Jesus said in John 10:28 (and in John 6:37, 40, 44), I would agree that it isn't possible for born-again Christians to lose their salvation, but the New Testament contains a large number of very clear passages which demonstrate that born-again Christians can lose their salvation. Losing one's salvation is not the will of God, however; we are totally secure while we continue to believe what we are required to believe and do what we are

³¹ People are in spiritual death and bondage to sin and Satan after the fall, but the will is still free to some extent: People have some capacity to respond to God's grace and to appropriate and cooperate with that grace. We are totally dependent on God's grace to save us, and we are saved one-hundred percent by His grace, but we must respond to, appropriate, and cooperate with His grace on a continuous basis by faith in accordance with His Word, which shows His will.

³² See my *A Paper on Faith* (it is on my internet site; Google to Karl Kemp Teaching).

required to do by His sufficient grace through faith, in accordance with His Word.³³ God is not trying to get rid of us, quite the contrary; and no one can snatch us out of His hand.]; **(28) and I give eternal life to them** [See John 10:10; cf., e.g., John 3:16, 36; 5:24; 6:40, 47; 17:2, 3; 20:31; 1 John 2:25; and 5:11-13.], **and they will never perish** [cf. John 3:16]; **and no one will snatch them out of My hand.** [See under verse 27. Compare John 6:37-40. These words at the end of verse 28 build on what Jesus said in John 10:12. Jesus spoke in that verse of the *wolf* being able to come and *snatch* sheep when shepherds other than the Good Shepherd (Christ Jesus), who (with God the Father) is the owner of the sheep, are (supposedly) shepherding the sheep. The same Greek verb for *snatch* (*harpazō*) is used in verses 12, 28, and 29. The *wolf* represents any enemy (whether the devil, evil angels, demons, evil men, etc.) who want to snatch/take away sheep (as many as possible) from God and His kingdom.

Jesus made it very clear in John 10:12, 28, 29, and other verses, that He will protect His disciples from all enemies. It is important to know, however, that He does not override the will of Christians and force them to be faithful to Him. But He always provides sufficient grace (enabling grace) for us to stay faithful; He will not let us be tempted beyond what we are able to endure, for example (1 Cor. 10:13); and He warns and chastens in various ways if we need to repent (cf., e.g., 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 11:27-32; 1 Tim. 1:20; Heb. 12:5-17; and Rev. 2:4; 3:1-5, 15-20). The Good Shepherd is not trying to get rid of us; He does not want to lose any of His sheep (thank God!),³⁴ but let's not try to see how far we can stray from faithfulness (faithfulness to God includes believing the truth and living the truth) and still be His sheep. Talk about dangerous, evil experimentation! We must make it top priority to stay faithful to Him by His grace and in accordance with His word, which includes His commandments!

Christians are totally secure in God as they walk in faith and do the things He requires of them by His grace (which includes holding the truth and living the truth in the righteousness and holiness of God), but to the extent Christians are living in fleshiness, worldliness, sin, doubt, and ignorance of God's Word (which defines the covenant He made with us), they should *not* feel secure. When Christians are not living in the center of His will by His grace and feel insecure they should be thankful that their conscience isn't satisfied—it shouldn't be satisfied—they are not living in a place that is acceptable or secure.

I'll quote a few sentences from what R. C. H. Lenski says under verse 28.³⁵ "The 'hand' of Jesus is his power. His gracious power is all-sufficient to protect every believer forever. ... Yet a believer may after all be lost (John 15:6). Our certainty of eternal salvation is

³³ Start with the discussion under John 6:37-45 in my paper on John chapters 5-8. Other references are cited there. See my paper titled, "Once Saved, Always Saved?" Both papers are located on my internet site.

³⁴ Compare, for example, Jesus' parable about the man who had a hundred sheep and lost one of them in Luke 15:1-7. The man left the ninety-nine and went to look for the lost sheep until He found it. This parable certainly shows that God (the triune God) is not trying to get rid of any of His sheep. Quite the contrary! But we can't afford to miss what Luke 15:7 says about the need for the sheep lost in sin to repent. "I tell you that in the same way, there will be *more* joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance." God calls to repentance, but the lost/straying sheep must repent (in response to the loving call of the Good Shepherd to repent and by His enabling grace).

³⁵ *Interpretation of St. John's Gospel* (Augsburg Publishing House, 1943), page 756.

not absolute. [It is absolute if we continue to do the things God requires of us by grace through faith. This includes our making it a top priority to learn what He requires of us and to live in the righteousness and holiness of God. *If* we should sin (cf. 1 John 2:1, 2), we must make it a top priority to appropriate forgiveness, to make things right as far as possible, and to do everything possible to avoid sinning again.] While no foe of ours is able to snatch us from our Shepherd's hand, we ourselves may turn from him and may perish willfully of our own accord."

I'll quote part of what Joseph H. Mayfield says here.³⁶ "Some have taken this to mean that one is eternally secure regardless of what a man does himself in respect to his relationship to God. But the guarantee of security – it is a wondrous and adequate promise – is that nothing outside man can destroy him while he is putting his faith in God. [We are saved by faith in God/Christ/the gospel; we must, of course, continue to have faith, and faith without works is dead.] Westcott says 'If man falls at any stage in his spiritual life, it is not from want of divine grace, nor from the overwhelming power of adversaries, but from his neglect to use that which he may or may not use. We cannot be protected against ourselves in spite of ourselves.'³⁷" See my paper titled, *Once Saved, Always Saved?*, which is on my internet site."³⁸ **(29) My Father, who has given them to Me** [cf. John 6:37, 39, 44, 45³⁸; and 17:2, 24], **is greater than all** [The triune God is obviously greater than all the beings/things that He has created. It is also true that God the Son and God the Spirit (uncreated Persons/Beings) are in some ways subordinate to God the Father (cf., e.g., John 14:28; 1 Cor. 15:27, 28).³⁹]; **and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.** [In verse 28 Jesus said that no one will be able to snatch the elect out of His hand. One reason for that is that it is the Father's will (cf. John 6:37-39), and Jesus always does the Father's will; He is able to perfectly do the Father's will because He always has the authority and power of God the Father backing Him up, for one thing—as Jesus says in verse 30, He and the Father *are one*. They *are one* in purpose; they are one in what they do; there is no competition or jealousy or superiority complex or inferiority complex or strife; God the Father and God the Son relate together perfectly and love one another with perfect love.] **(30) I and the Father are one.**" [See under

³⁶ *Beacon Bible Commentary*, Vol. VII [Beacon Hill Press, 1965], page 130.

³⁷ B. F. Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John* (John Murray, 1908), page 158.

³⁸ As I mentioned, John 6:37-45 are discussed in some detail in my paper on John chapters 5- 8, which is on my internet site.

³⁹ On the full deity of the Lord Jesus Christ (God the Son) and on His subordination to God the Father, see under John 1:1-5, 9-18 and under Col. 1:15-18 in my paper on those passages. The Holy Spirit is briefly discussed there too. Also see my subsequent papers, *Who Do We Worship?*; *Who Do We Pray To?*; *More on the Trinity*; and *The Name Yahweh and God the Father and God the Son*.

I'll quote Deut. 6:4 and briefly comment on that verse, "Hear, O Israel! The LORD [Yahweh in Hebrew] is our God, the LORD [Yahweh] is one!" When it said that Yahweh is one it was not denying the Trinity (which was not fully revealed in the Old Testament, but which is fully revealed in the New Testament); it was denying the polytheism that all of the other peoples held to in the days of Moses. Deuteronomy 6:4 was boldly proclaiming what all the other nations didn't want to hear, that there is really only one God, the God who created everything that exists, the God who revealed Himself to Abraham and Israel. The Hebrew noun *echad* translated "one" here could also be translated "alone" (see, for example, the KB *Hebrew Lexicon of the Old Testament* under *echad*). I'll quote Deut. 4:39 which is another verse in the book of Deuteronomy that boldly proclaimed the unpopular truth that Yahweh alone is God. "Know therefore today, and take it to your heart that the LORD [Yahweh], He is God in heaven above and on the earth below, there is no other." Deuteronomy 6:4 is discussed in greater detail in my paper, *More on the Trinity*.

verse 29. What Jesus said here in John chapter 10 (and what the Bible consistently says on this topic) makes it quite clear that Jesus wasn't saying that He and the Father are the same Person. He wasn't saying that He and the Father are the same Person any more than He was asking (in John 17:22) that Christians cease being individual persons when He prayed to the Father "that they may be one, just as we are one." The orthodox Christian view has always been that there are three Persons in the Godhead, the Trinity; One God (the triune God), three Persons. (See footnote 39.) We may not be able to fully understand the Trinity: We are limited to what God has chosen to reveal to us, and we are limited by our present level of existence, but the Trinity isn't all that complicated or unreasonable.

Why shouldn't the God of creation, the uncreated God who has always existed and who created the time system of our world when He created our world, be a triune Being? God is not asking us to believe that one equals three or that three equals one. They don't! The Father speaks *about* the Son and *to* the Son, and the Son speaks *about* the Father and *to* the Father, the Son was sent by the Father and goes back to the right hand of the Father, where He is right now; the Father loves the Son and the Son loves the Father; the Son reigns with the Father in new Jerusalem of the eternal state; etc. It is true that God didn't choose to reveal His triune Being to His people in Old Testament days (at least He didn't clearly reveal this truth at that time, and Israel didn't get the message), but there were a lot of other things that God didn't clearly reveal back then too: His revelation is progressive.] **(31) The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him.** [See John 8:59. The Jews were convinced that Jesus was claiming far too much for Himself. If you take His words of verse 30 in the fullest sense, He was claiming to be deity with the Father (cf., e.g., John 3:16-18 [Jesus was the "unique Son" sent from heaven into the world⁴⁰]; 5:17-23, 25-29; 6:48-51; 8:12-19, 24, 28, 56-59; 9:5; 10:3, 4, 11-18). In John 1:1-18, for example, the apostle John clearly declared the deity of God the Son. The Jews were on record that Jesus was *not* the Christ/Messiah (the anointed One) who had been promised in the Old Testament, and they certainly weren't open to the idea that He was deity with God the Father—to them that idea was totally blasphemous. As I have mentioned, the Jews did not understand that the Messiah was to be deity.

The Jews did not have the authority from Rome to carry out the death penalty (cf. John 18:31), but that doesn't mean they never killed anybody themselves, the stoning of Stephen being a case in point (Acts 7:54-8:1).

I'll quote what John Calvin said under verse 31.⁴¹ "When godliness upholds God's glory, it burns with a zeal directed by the Spirit of God. In the same way, unbelief is the mother of fury, and the devil so stirs up the ungodly that they breathe out slaughter. The result shows their motive in putting the question to Christ, for His open confession, which they pretended to want, at once drives them to madness. And yet though they are carried away with such violence to oppress Christ, there is no doubt that they hid behind a colour of legality, as if they were acting according to the command of the law by which God commands false prophets to be

⁴⁰ I should point out that I don't believe the apostle John was quoting Jesus in John 3:16-21. As discussed in my paper on John 1:19-4:54, I believe that Jesus' words ended at John 3:12 and that the apostle John wrote John 3:13-21 (under the inspiration of God).

⁴¹ *Gospel According to St. John*, Part one, translated by T. H. L. Parker (Eerdmans, 1993 reprint), page 274.

stoned (Deut. 13:5).”] **(32) Jesus answered them, “I showed you many good works from the Father [cf., e.g., John 2:23; 3:2; 5:17-20, 36; 9:3, 4; 10:25, 38; and 14:10, 11]; for which of them are you stoning Me?”** [Jesus’ opponents didn’t accept the fact that His *works* were *from the Father*. They were convinced, for one thing, that His healings on the Sabbath could not be of God (cf., e.g., John 5:16; 9:13-16). More importantly, as the next verse shows (along with verses 29-31), they were convinced that He was blaspheming (which is a very serious sin according to the Old Testament, punishable by death [cf. Lev. 24:10-16]) when He said things like what He said in verses 29, 30 (cf., e.g., John 5:17, 18; 19:7). However, His works were from God the Father, and He was deity with God the Father, whether they accepted it, or not.] **(33) The Jews answered Him, “For a good work we do not stone You [verse 31], but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man [Jesus was a “man,” but He was much more than just a man; He was the God-man.], make Yourself out to be God.”** [See under verse 32. The New Testament makes it very clear that the Lord Jesus Christ was deity with God the Father (and God the Spirit).⁴² But Jesus wasn’t interested in discussing His deity with those who totally rejected Him and His word (cf., e.g., John 10:25-27). His response in verses 34-36 was evasive, as His responses often were with His opponents (cf., e.g., Matt. 21:23-27; 22:41-46; and John 2:18-22).⁴³ Jesus went on to exhort His opponents (to repent and) to believe in Him because of His works in verses 37, 38, but as verse 39 shows, His response of verses 34-36 and His exhortation of verses 37, 38 did not affect them much (at least not most of them), which didn’t surprise Him at all.] **(34)** [See under verses 33.] **Jesus answered them, “Has it not been written in your Law [On the words “your Law,” cf. John 8:17. The word “Law” was used here in a fuller sense than of the Mosaic Law; sometimes the word covered the entire Old Testament (cf. 1 Cor. 14:21 [where Paul was quoting from Isaiah]; Rom. 3:19; John 12:34; and 15:25).], ‘I SAID, YOU ARE GODS’?** [Jesus quoted these words from Psalm 82:6a. Psalm 82 is discussed in my paper titled *Verse-by-Verse Studies of Selected Eschatological Psalms*.⁴⁴ As discussed there, I believe the word *gods* (Hebrew *elohim*) was used in Psalm 82:1 and 6 as a term of significant respect for the role (under God) of the rulers/judges of mankind worldwide (cf. Rom. 13:1-7).⁴⁵ God was not saying (in Psalm 82), and Jesus was not suggesting here, that the rulers/judges were *gods* in any literal sense. Jesus’ opponents were right to insist that there is only one God (the God of creation; the God who revealed Himself to Abraham). They were wrong in that they didn’t leave room for the fuller revelation regarding the triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).] **(35) If he [“He” NKJV] called them gods, to whom the**

⁴² See footnote 39.

⁴³ Jesus didn’t deny His deity in verses 34, 35. How could He? He *was* deity. Nor did He offer any proof for His deity in verses 34, 35. He showed in verses 34, 35 that the Old Testament sometimes used the word *god* (Hebrew *elohim*) of humans, but He wasn’t saying, of course, that they were deity (God).

I’ll quote two sentences from what Gerald L. Borchert says under verses 34-38 (*John 1-11* [Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996, 2000, 2002], page 343). “Perhaps it is best to remember that Jesus raised the issue in a rhetorical fashion [quoting from Psalm 82:6a and commenting on the meaning of these words] because he knew his opponents could not supply an answer that would be adequate to defend their charge of blasphemy against him. ... The argument is similar to Jesus’ unanswerable question when he quoted Psalm 110:1 in his ... arguments with the Jews (cf. Matt. 22:41-46; Mark 12:35-37; Luke 20:41-44).”

⁴⁴ The paper is located on my internet site (Google to Karl Kemp Teaching).

⁴⁵ The word *elohim* is (apparently) used of the judges of Israel in Ex. 21:6; 22:8; and Jud. 5:8.

word of God came [The “word of God came” to the rulers/judges in the sense that Psalm 82:6a was addressed to them (Psalm 82:1b spoke of the rulers/judges as *elohim*).] **(and the Scripture cannot be broken** [Jesus clearly had a high view of Scripture (the Old Testament; the New Testament wasn’t written yet); it was given through men, but it was the Word of God; it could not be broken.]), **(36) do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world** [God the Father sanctified (or we could translate *consecrated*⁴⁶) His unique Son and sent Him into the world to be born of the virgin and carry out His infinitely important mission. See, for example, John 1:1-18; 4:34; 5:23, 24, 30, 36-38; 7:16, 18, 28, 29, 33; 8:16, 18, 26, 29, 42; and 9:4. But His opponents didn’t accept any of that.], **‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’?** [Jesus hadn’t used the words “Son of God” of Himself earlier in this discourse, but He had spoken of God as His Father in a very special sense (see verses 25, 28-30; cf., e.g., John 5:17-29 [Jesus called Himself the “Son of God” in John 5:25; and note the use of the word “Son,” with the word “Father,” in John 5:19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26; and 10:15, 18). John the Baptist had said at the beginning that Jesus was “the Son of God” and the New Testament is full of verses that confirm that He was the Son of God.⁴⁷] **(37) If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me** [Jesus made it clear that His works were the works of His Father (cf. John 5:17-30; 10:25; 14:10, 11; and 15:24). He also made it clear here in verses 37, 38 that He wasn’t backing off from calling God His Father (His Father in a very special sense).]; **(38) but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father** [cf. John 14:10, 11, 20; 17:21-23, 26].” [With these words of verses 37, 38, Jesus exhorted His opponents to reconsider their rejection of Him. His works, which came from the Father, served as a very strong testimony to the fact that He was the Christ and the unique Son of God, not a blasphemer. For one thing, the Old Testament had prophesied the Messiah/Christ would do these works (see John 5:36, and see under that verse in my paper on John chapters 5-8). Taken in the fullest sense, the words “the Father is in Me, and I in the Father” proclaim the full deity of God the Son with God the Father (cf., e.g., John 1:1-5, 14-18; Heb. 1:1-3). It would have been a very important first step if Jesus’ opponents would have accepted the fact that He had been sent from God/heaven and that He did the works the Father had sent Him to do and spoke the words the Father had sent Him to speak by the anointing of the Spirit of God, but they rejected all of that.] **(39) Therefore they were seeking again to seize Him, and He eluded their grasp.** [Apparently Jesus’ opponents cooled off enough during their interchange with Him recorded in verses 32-38 that they did not try to throw their stones at Him,⁴⁸ but they did seek to seize Him again. Apparently they wanted to seize Him so He could be tried (and condemned by) the religious leaders of Israel. Apparently the word *again* refers back to John 7:30, 44. Jesus’ eluding their grasp may have had a supernatural component (cf. Luke 4:30; John 8:59). God’s appointed time for Jesus to be seized, “tried,” and crucified was still a few months off (see verse 22), at the Feast of Passover.] **(40) And He went away again**

⁴⁶ See the BAGD Greek Lexicon.

⁴⁷ For a start, see under the word “son” in an exhaustive concordance.

⁴⁸ It had already been determined that Jesus was to die by crucifixion (cf. Psalm 22:1, 14-18; Zech 12:10; John 18:31, 32; 19:37); there was no way that the Father was going to allow Jesus’ opponents to stone Him to death.

beyond the Jordan to the place where John was first baptizing, and He was staying there. [See John 1:28.] (41) Many came to Him and were saying, “While John performed no sign, yet everything John said about this man was true.” [John had been given a lot to say about the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:6-8, 15, 19-37; 3:27-30).] (42) Many believed in Him there.

JOHN CHAPTER 11

Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany [I'll quote part of what H. G. Anderson says regarding Bethany.⁴⁹ “[The meaning of the word *bethany* is] uncertain, though probably *house of dates or figs* [*beth* is *house* in Hebrew]. A village about two miles SE of Jerusalem (John 11:18) on the road to Jericho at the Mount of Olives [on the east side of the Mount of Olives] and near to Bethpage from which vicinity Jesus sent for the colt (Mark 11:1; Luke 19:29). ... According to Luke, our Lord's ascension took place near Bethany (Luke 24:50, 51).”], **the village of Mary and her sister Martha** [cf. Luke 10:38-42]. **(2) It was the Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair** [See John 12:1-8.], **whose brother Lazarus was sick. (3) So the sisters sent word to Him, saying, “Lord, behold, he whom You love** [Verse 5 mentions that Jesus “loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus” (cf. verses 33-36). The Greek verb for *love* used here in verse 3 is *phileō*; the Greek verb used in verse 5 is *agapaō*. I agree with the scholars who believe that John used these two verbs with essentially the same meaning here (cf., e.g., John 3:35, which uses *agapaō*, and John 5:20, which uses *phileō*.] **is sick.”** [It is clear that Mary and Martha (and undoubtedly also Lazarus, if he was conscious) were expecting (or at least hoping; they were aware that the Jews in Judea wanted to kill Jesus) that Jesus would come and heal Lazarus (see verses 21, 32). But Jesus had other plans. He already knew (undoubtedly by revelation from the Father [cf., e.g., John 5:19, 20, 30]) that He was to raise Lazarus from the dead (see John 11:4-15).] **(4) But when Jesus heard this He said, “This sickness is not to end in death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it.”** [As this account continues we learn that Jesus meant that although Lazarus would die, He would raise him from the dead—this sickness would not “end in death”, and that through this miracle God (the Father) would be glorified and the Son of God. God the Father would be glorified because the people would see His work, which was a manifestation of His glory (see verse 40), and they would ascribe glory to Him (glorify Him) for that work. Jesus, the Son of God, would be glorified because the miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead was wrought by Him, but not apart from the involvement of God the Father (cf. verses 41-43).

Verse 45 shows that many of the Jews who were there believed in Jesus because of that miracle (cf. John 12:11). Verse 46 shows that some of the Jews who were there were not convinced that the raising of Lazarus was a good work of God: They went to the Pharisees (enemies of Jesus) to tell them what had happened.] **(5) Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.** [Jesus had/has a special love for the apostles and all true disciples (cf., e.g., John 13:1, 34; 14:21, 23; 15:9, 10, 12-14; and 17:20-26). It seems though that He had a *very* special love relationship with some disciples: Consider, for example, John the apostle (cf. John 13:23-26; 19:26; 20:2; and 21:7, 20-22); Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus (Luke 10:38-41; John 12:1-8 [with Matt. 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; John 11:2]; and John 11:28-35); and Mary Magdalene (cf. John 20:1, 11-18; Luke 8:2).] **(6) So when He heard that he was sick, He then stayed two days longer in the place where He was.** [Jesus didn't want to get to Bethany until

⁴⁹ *Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Vol. 1 (Zondervan, 1975, 1976), pages 527, 528.

Lazarus had been dead for a while. It isn't clear how far He had to travel to reach Bethany because it isn't clear where Jesus was staying at that time.⁵⁰ As it turned out Lazarus had been dead and buried for four days when Jesus arrived at Bethany and raised him from the dead (see verses 17, 39).] **(7) Then after this** [after the two days mentioned in verse 6] **He said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."** [The following verses show that Jesus meant let us go to Bethany in Judea, where He would raise Lazarus from the dead. But it is significant that the Jews in Judea (especially in Jerusalem) wanted to kill Jesus (see verses 8, 16, 46-54).] **(8) The disciples said to Him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone You, and are You going there again?"** [See John 10:31; cf. John 8:59.] **(9) Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours⁵¹ in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. (10) But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him."** [In verses 9, 10 Jesus builds on the fact that during the "twelve hours" of the *day*, when we have the light of the sun, we are able to see where we are going and do *not* stumble, but during the hours of the *night*, when we don't have the light of the sun, we stumble. Building on that He speaks of the *light* in a figurative/spiritual sense, of the light of God that enabled Him to see spiritually and to know what the Father would have Him do and how to do it at all times and in all circumstances. Walking in the Father's will, He would never stumble; He (by virtue of who He was and by the Spirit) had the light of God in Him. Furthermore, as John 8:12; 9:5 (and other verses) show, Jesus was the Light of the world. The main point that Jesus was making here was that He knew what He was doing; He wasn't walking in the night/darkness; He wasn't going to make a mistake!] **(11) This He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus** [These words, "our friend," show that the disciples also had a special relationship with Lazarus.] **has fallen asleep** [that is, Lazarus has died; cf. Matt. 9:24; 27:52; Mark 5:39; John 11:13; Acts 7:60; and 1 Thess. 4:13-18; there was no idea that those who died passed into an unconscious state of "soul sleep" (cf., e.g., Luke 16:19-31; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:21, 23; and 1 Thess. 4:13-18 [departed believers are with Christ now in spirit; He will bring them with Him at His second coming]).]; **but I go, so that I may awaken him out of sleep."** [As verses 12-14 show, Jesus was speaking of raising Lazarus from the dead.] **(12) The disciples then said to Him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover** ["he will be saved (from

⁵⁰ John 10:40 informs us that "He went away...beyond the Jordan [River, on the east side of the river] to the place where John [the Baptist] was first baptizing, and He was staying there." See John 1:28. We know that the Bethany of John 1:28 must have been near the Jordan River because John was baptizing in that river, but there is a difference of opinion regarding where that Bethany was located. D. A. Carson (*Gospel According to John*, page 407) opts for the viewpoint that that Bethany was "in the region of Batanea, approximately 150 kilometers [93 miles] to the north-east of Jerusalem." It takes some time to travel distances like that when you are walking. Carson (page 408) says, "From Jewish sources it is well known that a day's journey for a healthy person was considered to be 40 or 45 kilometers [25-28 miles]."

⁵¹ I'll quote part of what William Hendricksen says here (*Gospel of John* [Baker, 1955], page 141. "The Jewish day has twelve hours. Whether it be winter or summer it always has exactly twelve hours, though the length of the hour differs, ranging all the way from (what would be) 9 hours and 48 minutes to 14 hours and 12 minutes. Thus the Jewish hour, being stretchable, differs from ours which is always of the same duration." And I'll quote a sentence from what D. A. Carson says on this topic (*Gospel According to John*, pages 408, 409). "In days before accurate time-pieces existed, both the Romans and the Jews divided the daylight period into twelve 'hours,' which therefore varied in length with the changing seasons."

this sickness and get well)”.] [As the following verse shows, the disciples thought that Jesus was speaking of literal sleep.] **(13) Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that He was speaking of literal sleep. (14) So Jesus then said to them plainly, “Lazarus is dead, (15) and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so that you may believe; but let us go to him.”** [Jesus’ disciples already believed in Him,⁵² but they would believe on a deeper level after experiencing this spectacular miracle. No matter how solid and great the faith of believers, they can, and should, always be growing in faith. Our faith can grow through seeing and experiencing miracles, but the primary thing we need to be strong in faith and to be growing in faith is an ever-increasing knowledge and understanding of the word and will of God along with a walk in His righteousness and holiness. God is faithful to His word and to His people. Our faith grows during times of trials/testings/difficulties (assuming we stay faithful during those times)—at such times we learn that God is faithful and His enabling grace is sufficient, and, like an athlete, we grow in things like ability, strength, and endurance.] **(16) Therefore Thomas** [one of the twelve apostles (cf. Matt. 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15; John 14:5, 20:26-28; and Acts 1:13), **who is called Didymus** [Compare John 20:24; 21:2. Morris points out that “ ‘Didymus’ is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew ‘Thomas,’ both of which mean ‘twin’ ” and he discusses these names in a footnote.⁵³], **said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, so that we may die with Him.”** [Jesus had just said, “Let us go to him [Lazarus].” Even though the disciples were concerned that the Jews in Judea wanted to kill Jesus (see verse 8), and even though (as this verse shows) Thomas voiced a concern that the disciples might all die with Jesus, Thomas (and the other disciples) was committed to Jesus and obedient to go with him to Bethany. Thomas’ words here seem to be quite pessimistic and cynical, and he seems to question (to doubt) whether Jesus knew what He was doing—maybe He was making a mistake; maybe His love for Lazarus was clouding His judgment; maybe He was going to get them all killed.⁵⁴ But *Jesus always knew what He was doing*, and He always perfectly accomplished the Father’s will (see verses 9, 10).

⁵² And they believed on a much deeper level than when they had seen Him work His first miracle (John 2:11); they were believers before He worked that first miracle too.

⁵³ *Gospel According to John*, page 544. In the footnote, he mentions (for one thing) that “the name [the Hebrew name Thomas] does not appear to be attested before the New Testament....”

⁵⁴ Jesus had demonstrated time after time that His opponents would not be able to kill Him until it was the Father’s time for Him to lay down His life, and He knew when that time had not yet arrived (and it had not yet arrived at the time He went to raise Lazarus), and He knew when it had arrived (when He went to Jerusalem for that last Passover). Furthermore, Jesus was well able to protect His disciples, which He did. It was necessary for His disciples (especially the apostles) to remain alive to carry on the foundation-laying work assigned to them. It was reasonable for the disciples to have some concern for their safety, but the fact that Jesus’ opponents had not tried to arrest or kill the disciples made Thomas’ statement all the more unreasonably cynical and pessimistic. Thomas may have spoken these words off the top of his head (so to speak), without really thinking about what he was saying, but it seems that his words were quite inappropriate.

Notice that John informs us that Thomas was speaking to his “fellow disciples”; apparently he didn’t say these words in the presence of Jesus. I’ll quote two sentences from what F. Godet says here (*Commentary on the Gospel of John* [Zondervan, reprint of the 1893 edition], page 177). “The words of Thomas to the other disciples betrays indeed more of love for the person of Jesus than of faith in the wisdom of His course of action. Their meaning is this: ‘If He actually desires to have Himself killed, let us go and perish with Him.’”

It seems that Thomas was so absorbed with his negative assessment of the situation that he had essentially overlooked what Jesus had said about His raising Lazarus from the dead, which would bring glory to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (see John 11:11-15; 12:9-11, 17-19), which would bless Lazarus, Mary, and Martha, and many others, and which would work for the good of the disciples (see verse 15). Thomas' doubt and pessimism showed forth again a few months later when he told the other apostles that he wouldn't believe that Jesus had been raised from the dead (when they told him that they had seen Christ after His resurrection) until he saw Him in person and the imprint of the nails in His hands, etc. (see John 20:24-29). Hopefully Thomas left his doubting and pessimism behind after He saw the Lord, and especially after he received the Holy Spirit (which included his being born again)—I assume that he did.] **(17) So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days.** [See verses 6, 39. "It was the custom of the Jews, as well as other people of the Near East generally, to bury their dead on the day of death (cf. Acts 5:1-10). A speedy burial was necessary because embalming was not a custom practiced by the Jews. The body would be washed, anointed with perfumes, and wrapped in white cloth."⁵⁵ "Among the Jews the dead were mourned for a period of thirty days. No work was done during the first three days. Deep mourning or lamenting lasted the rest of the week."⁵⁶] **(18) Now Bethany** [the village of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha (John 11:1)] **was near Jerusalem, about two miles off;** **(19) and many of the Jews** [It seems that at least most of these Jews were not opponents of Jesus, unlike "the Jews" of verse 8 (cf. verses 31, 33, 36, 45, and 46). Verse 45 shows that many of these Jews believed in Jesus after witnessing this miracle. Some of them undoubtedly already believed in Him. But verse 46 shows that some of these Jews went to the Pharisees, undoubtedly knowing that they were enemies of Jesus, to inform them of these things.] **had come to Martha and Mary, to console** [cf. verse 31] **them concerning their brother. (20) Martha therefore, when she heard that Jesus was coming** [and that He was on the outskirts of Bethany (see verse 30)], **went to meet Him, but Mary stayed at the house.** [I assume that Mary had not yet heard that Jesus had arrived on the outskirts of Bethany (see verse 28).] **(21) Martha then said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died** [cf. verses 3, 32, 37]. **(22) Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You."** [It is clear that Martha believed in Jesus (cf. verses 22–27), including her believing that He was a healer and that her brother would not have died if Jesus had gotten there before he died. Her words here in verse 22 seem to include the idea that she also believed He could raise Lazarus from the dead. It had apparently been reported to the sisters what Jesus said in verse 4 about this sickness not ending in death, but for the glory of God (cf. verse 40). Subsequent events, however, show that Martha wasn't at all convinced that Jesus *would* raise Lazarus from the dead at that time (see verses 23-27, 39, 40).

Jesus had already raised at least two people from the dead (cf. Matt. 11:5; Luke 7:22), the widow's only son (Luke 7:11-17) and Jairus' daughter (Matt. 9:18, 19, 23-26; Mark 5:21-24, 35-43; and Luke 8:41, 42, 49-56). However, those incidents were somewhat different in that (apparently) the widow's son hadn't been dead very long in that they were carrying him out to bury him and Jairus' daughter had just died, whereas Lazarus

⁵⁵ J. Carl Laney, *John* (Moody Press, 1992), pages 206, 207.

⁵⁶ Laney, page 207.

had already been in the tomb for four days. Many commentators refer to a later Jewish belief that could have some relevance here, a belief that could have been held in the days of Martha and Mary, the belief that the soul stayed near the body for three days after death, hoping to return to the body, but leaving and going on to Sheol/Hades when serious decomposition set in. Anyway, I am quite sure that Martha (and essentially all true believers) would have agreed that God *could* raise Lazarus from the dead after four days, or forty days, or four hundred days.] **(23) Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” (24) Martha said to Him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.”** [Compare, for example, Dan. 12:2; Luke 14:14; John 5:28, 29; Acts 23:6-8; and 24:15. See under verse 22. Jesus’ ambiguous words in verse 23 apparently included the fact that He would raise Lazarus from the dead at that time (a short while later). He had come to raise Lazarus from the dead (verses 4, 11-15, 25, 26).] **(25) Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life [cf., e.g., John 1:4; 5:21-26; 6:35-58; and 14:6]; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies** [These words mean more than that believers will be resurrected and inherit eternal life at the end of this age, which is what Martha had just said. (That’s what the Old Testament believers were looking forward to.⁵⁷) His words include the new-covenant reality that believers receive spiritual/eternal life *now*, starting with the new birth of John 1:12, 13; 3:3-8⁵⁸ (cf., e.g., John 3:15-18, 36; 5:24), and that even those Christians who die physically remain alive through the spiritual/eternal life of God that they have in union with Christ (cf., e.g., 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:21, 23). This life was not available until Jesus, the Lamb of God, had borne our sins (back to Adam) with the guilt and the penalties (including the major penalty of spiritual death), so we could be set free from spiritual death and receive spiritual/eternal life in the new-covenant dimension (in Christ by the Spirit).⁵⁹ We will not inherit the fullness of eternal life and be glorified, however, until the end of this age, at the time of Christ’s second coming.], **(26) and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die.** [Compare John 6:50; 8:51; and 10:28. They *live* spiritually/eternally in that they participate in the spiritual/eternal life of God (by the Spirit of life) through *believing* in Christ Jesus. They may die physically, but for a born-again Christian that is gain. If they die physically they begin to experience the life of God in a fuller sense; they go to be with God in a fuller sense than when they lived on the earth in physical bodies. As Jesus said of the born-again Christian in verse 25, he “will live even if he dies [physically].” Born-again Christians will never die spiritually, not as long as they continue to be united with Him who is life, by faith; not as long as they continue to be believers.] **Do you believe this?”** [I don’t believe Martha

⁵⁷ Before Jesus had overthrown sin, Satan, and death (spiritual death and physical death) in His atoning death and resurrection, Old Testament believers went to Sheol/Hades (a place associated with death) at death (but not as a place of torment). Even Jesus went to Sheol/Hades when He died, but He didn’t go to stay; He was resurrected on the third day. He took the Old Testament believers from the righteous compartment of Sheol/Hades to heaven after He was resurrected. See under Eph. 4:8-10 and the discussion titled “A Discussion on the Meaning of the Word *Hades* in Acts 2:27, 31; the Meaning of *Paradise* in Luke 23:43; and the Meaning of *Abraham’s Bosom* in Luke 16:22” in my paper that includes Ephesians chapters 1 and 4.

⁵⁸ The Bible also speaks of Christians spiritual/eternal life beginning with a spiritual resurrection (cf. John 5:21, 25, 26; Rom 6:4-11).

⁵⁹ It is very significant that the Lamb of God also bore our bondage to sin so we could be redeemed out of the kingdom of sin and live in the righteousness and holiness of God. See my book, *Holiness and Victory Over Sin: Full Salvation Through the Atoning Death of the Lord Jesus Christ*.

understood all the details regarding what Jesus just said to her in verses 25, 26, but her answer in verse 27 shows that she did believe that Jesus was the promised Christ, the Son of God, and she undoubtedly understood and believed that she, and all believers, would be saved through Him.] **(27) She said to Him, “Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ** [cf., e.g., Matt. 16:16; Luke 4:17-21 with Isa. 61:1, 2; John 1:41; 3:28; 4:25, 26; 20:31], **the Son of God** [cf. John 1:34, 49; 3:16-18, 36; 5:19-26; 10:36; 11:4; and 20:31], **even He who comes into the world** [Compare Psalm 118:26 with John 12:13. Jesus came into the world (from heaven, having been sent from the Father) through the virgin birth (cf., e.g., Luke 1:26-38; John 1:9, 14; 3:31; 17:5; and Phil. 2:5-8), but Martha may not have known about His unique birth or of His deity at that time.].” **(28) When she had said this, she went away and called Mary her sister, saying secretly** [See verse 20. It seems that Jesus wanted to spend some time alone with Mary, as He had with Martha, but (as verses 31-33 show) it didn’t turn out that way. If it had been necessary, He could have made sure that He saw her by herself.], **“The Teacher** [cf. Matt. 26:18; Mark 14:14; Luke 22:11; and John 13:13] **is here and is calling for you.”** **(29) And when she heard it, she got up quickly and was coming to Him.** [Verse 30 shows that Jesus “had not yet come into the village.”] **(30) Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha met Him** [cf. verse 20]. **(31) Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and consoling** [cf. John 11:19] **her, when they saw that Mary got up quickly and went out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. (32) Therefore** [“Then” KJV; NKJV], **when Mary came where Jesus was, she saw Him, and fell at His feet, saying to Him, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.”** [Martha had spoken these same words to Jesus in verse 21.] **(33) When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit** [I assume that Jesus’ being *deeply moved in spirit* included a compassionate response to the *weeping* of Mary and the Jews who had come with her, and especially the weeping of Mary in that He had a very special love relationship with her (see under verse 5). Verse 35 informs us that Jesus *wept* too. His being *deeply moved in spirit* surely involved His love for Lazarus, and Martha too (cf. verses 3, 5, and 36). The same Greek verb (*embrimaomai*) translated “He was deeply moved [in spirit]” here is also used in verse 38, where it is translated “[Jesus, again] being deeply moved [within].” This Greek verb apparently includes another component here in verse 33 and in verse 38 (another component besides His compassionate, sympathetic response); it apparently includes Jesus’ being deeply moved against the enemy death (cf., e.g., 1 Cor. 15:25, 26), which is a close companion with sin and Satan.⁶⁰ The fact that this Greek verb is coupled with (followed by) the verb “was

⁶⁰ The BAGD Greek Lexicon has three headings under the verb *embrimaomai*: 1. insist on something sternly, warn sternly Mark 1:43...Matt. 9:30. 2. As an expression of anger and displeasure...*scold, censure*...Mark 14:5.... 3. to feel strongly about something, be deeply moved [in Himself] John 11:38;...[in the spirit] verse 33........”

Many commentators insist that the idea here (based on the meaning of this verb) is an expression of indignation or anger. This verb is used at the end of Mark 14:5 of some people’s (cf. John 12:4-6) indignation against the woman who “wasted” the perfume on Jesus a few days before His crucifixion. I’ll quote several sentences from what William Hendricksen says under John 11:33, 34 (*Gospel of John* [Baker, 1953], pages 154, 155). Hendricksen includes (rightly I believe) the ideas of *indignation* and of *sympathy*. He speaks of Christ’s indignation against sin and the suffering, grief, and (footnote continues)

troubled” here in verse 33 fits well with including the idea that Jesus’ *being deeply moved* in spirit includes His indignation against death. Anyway, it’s very clear that He was strongly motivated to do something about (to undo) the death of Lazarus. He had been planning to raise Lazarus from the dead for many days now—He came to Bethany for that purpose. Verse 34 informs us that the next thing Jesus did was to ask where Lazarus was buried.] **and was troubled** [cf. John 12:27; 13:21], **(34) and said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to Him, “Lord, come and see.” (35) Jesus wept.** [See under verse 33. Compare Luke 19:41. “These tears were the expression of love, love not only for Lazarus...but also for Mary, Martha and others (see on 11:33). They were tears of genuine sympathy (Heb. 4:15; cf. Rom. 12:15).”⁶¹] **(36) So the Jews were saying, “See how He loved him!”** [When the Jews saw Jesus weep, they said, “See how He loved him [Lazarus].” On the love of Jesus for Lazarus, see verses 3, 5. See under verse 33.] **(37) But some of them said, “Could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind man, have kept this man also from dying?”** [He could have, of course, but He had greater plans.] **(38) So** [“Then” NKJV] **Jesus, again being deeply moved within** [The word “again” here refers to the fact that this same verb, “being deeply moved [within/in spirit]” was used in verse 33. Apparently Jesus’ *being deeply moved within again* was related here in verse 38 (at least to some significant extent) to His arrival at the tomb, which was associated with the enemy death.], **came to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone was lying against it** [cf. Matt. 27:60; Mark 15:46; Luke 24:1, 2; and John 19:41; 20:1]. **(39) Jesus said, “Remove the stone** [cf. John 20:1].” **Martha, the sister of the deceased, said to Him, “Lord, by this time there will be a stench, for he has been dead four days** [cf. John 11:17].” **(40) Jesus said to her, “Did I not say to you**

sorrow that it causes. It seems to me that any indignation against sin would be in the background here, with at least most of the indignation being directed against death, though it is certainly true that physical death came with sin and that sin is the primary problem that mankind must face throughout this age. Then he says, “The intense emotion which surged in the heart of the Lord comprised at least one other element besides indignation. ... The entire setting clearly indicates that it also included *sympathy*. In fact the immediate context does not even mention sin. It speaks only about the weeping of Mary and of the Jews, and we are given the impression that it was *this* weeping which led to *his* weeping (cf. 11:33, 34 with 11:35). The context, therefore, is one of sympathy rather than one of anger. Also [the following verb, translated “was troubled”]...suggests inward *disturbance*...rather than purely indignation. ... It would seem, therefore, that the translation *was deeply moved in the spirit* is the best. Thus rendered, the verb is sufficiently comprehensive to include both indignation and sympathy. The intense upsurge of emotion was probably visible in Christ’s look, tone of voice, and (perhaps *especially*) in his constant sighing. [I don’t know about the sighing.] ...”

I’ll quote a small part of what Herman Ridderbos says here (*Gospel According to John* [Eerdmans, 1997], page 402). “...the context as a whole makes clear that Jesus’ anger is directed...against that which brought them [Mary and those accompanying her] to this outburst of grief, the death of Lazarus itself. While this is already the obvious implication of verse 34, it is even more evident in verse 38, where it is not the weeping people but the tomb that again evokes in Jesus this intense emotion of aversion and sorrow. ... Jesus’ inner agitation is not limited to what in his confrontation with death, applies to himself, but also expresses itself in his solidarity with the grief of those who go once more to the tomb to weep over the loss of their dear brother and friend. He weeps with those who are weeping. ...”

I’ll quote a small part of what Andreas J. Kostenberger says here (*John* [Baker, 2004], pages 339, 340). “A survey of the major commentators on this verse reveals a bewildering array of interpretations. Some say that Jesus was deeply moved but deny that he was angry.... But most insist that Jesus’ emotions went beyond sorrow to actual indignation. The object of Jesus’ anger is variously identified as death itself...or the realm of Satan represented by death...or the mourners unbelief...or combinations of all three....”

⁶¹ William Hendricksen, *Gospel of John*, page 155.

that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?” [The Greek shows that the three uses of the pronoun *you* in this verse are singular, referring to Martha. John didn't mention in the preceding verses that Jesus had clearly told Martha that *if she believed she would see the glory of God in the raising of Lazarus at that time*, but He did mention (in verse 4) that Jesus had said that this sickness would not end in death, but for *the glory of God*, and (in verses 21-27) that He had spoken to her about Lazarus rising again, about His being the resurrection and the life for those who believe, etc. Also, Jesus may have spoken more words to Martha than those recorded in verses 21-27.⁶² The next verse shows that Martha did not try to stop those removing the stone.] **(41) So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised His eyes** [cf. John 17:1], **and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.** [Jesus had known that He, under God the Father, would raise Lazarus from the dead before He made the trip to Bethany (cf. John 11:4, 11-14). Here in verse 41 Jesus could have been thanking the Father in advance for raising Lazarus in answer to His prayer.⁶³ That is a very common viewpoint in the commentaries, but it is quite possible that God the Father had already brought Lazarus back to life when Jesus thanked Him. We don't know all the details. Jesus could have been thanking the Father here for hearing an unmentioned (non-public) prayer that He had just prayed. The Father could have just given Jesus a vision, for example, in which He saw Lazarus come forth from the tomb in response to His calling Him forth, or He could have seen in a vision that Lazarus had already been brought back to life.] **(42) I knew that You always hear Me; but because of the people** [“Literally *crowd*” (margin of NASB)] **standing around I said it, so that they may believe that You sent Me.”** [It was important that the people (as many as possible) view this miracle in the proper light so that it would be a powerful sign that demonstrated that Jesus was who He claimed to be, that He was the Christ, the Son of God, sent from heaven, from God the Father, to save all who believe in Him. The people must know that Jesus worked this miracle in the will of God the Father and by His power; they must know that all of His words and works were of God the Father.

Jesus had said in verse 4 that this sickness would not end in death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified in it. It was necessary for the people to learn that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, so that they could be saved through faith in Him. Verse 45 shows that many Jews believed in Christ because of this spectacular miracle; also see John 11:47, 48; 12:9-11, 17-19.] **(43) When He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth** [“come out” NIV].” [We could understand Jesus words in the fuller sense “Lazarus, arise/be raised from the dead and come forth from the tomb.”⁶⁴ John 5:19-30 are an important cross-

⁶² A. T. Robertson comments that “the report of the conversation [of Jesus with Martha in verses 21-27] is clearly abridged” (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol. 5 [Broadman Press, 1932], page 205). We don't know for sure that it was reported to Martha and Mary what Jesus said in verse 4, but it is highly probable that the person(s) who brought word to Jesus (a word sent by the sisters) that Lazarus was sick (see verse 3) would have reported back to the sisters what Jesus said.

⁶³ I'll quote part of what A. T. Robertson says here, “Clearly Jesus had prayed to the Father concerning the raising of Lazarus. He has the answer before he acts. ‘No pomp of incantation, no wrestling in prayer even; but simple words of thanksgiving, as if already Lazarus was restored’ (Dods)” (*Word Pictures*, Vol. 5, page 205).

⁶⁴ When Jesus raised the widow's son, He said, “Young man, I say to you, arise!” (Luke 7:14), and when He raised Jairus' daughter He “took her by the hand and called, saying, ‘Child, arise!’” (Luke 8:54; cf. Mark 5:41). Unlike Lazarus, who had been dead and in the tomb for four days (John 11:17, 39), neither

reference. I'll quote the most relevant words of John 5:28, 29, "an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth...."⁶⁵ John 5:28, 29 prophesy of Jesus' voice raising all the dead (a resurrection of the body) at the end of this age. Other verses show that the believers and unbelievers will not be raised at the same time. The unbelievers will not be raised until the end of the millennial kingdom (Rev. 20:5, 11-15). We are not informed what words Christ will say to the believers in John 5:28, but His words will cause the resurrection of their bodies and they will come forth from the tombs." His *loud voice* raising Lazarus prefigures His authoritative *voice* raising the dead at the end of this age (cf. 1 Thess. 4:16).

There is a big difference, however, between the resurrection of Lazarus and the resurrection of the believers (including Lazarus) at the end of the age. Lazarus was raised with his mortal body to die again. At the end of this age, all believers who will have died before that time will be raised with glorified bodies, never to die again. Many believers of the last generation never will die; they will be glorified when Jesus returns at the sounding of the last trumpet without passing through death (cf. 1 Cor. 15:51, 52; 1 Thess. 4:17; and Rev. 11:15).

I'll quote Jesus' words of John 5:25 too, "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live." In John 5:25 Jesus was speaking of those who are *spiritually* dead hearing His voice and receiving eternal/spiritual life now (throughout this age), starting with the new birth/the birth from heaven (see John 5:24). They will hear His voice in the gospel of new-covenant salvation in repentance and faith and will be born again/born from heaven. See under John 11:25, 26.] **(44) The man who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings** [cf. John 19:40], **and his face was wrapped around with a cloth** [cf. John 20:7]. **Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."** **(45) Therefore many of the Jews who came to Mary** [cf. John 11:19, 31, 33], **and saw what He had done, believed in Him.** [The Gospel of John makes it very clear that true believers/disciples/Christians must go beyond believing because they saw signs (cf., e.g., John 2:23-25; 8:31-36). It's OK to start with signs, but it isn't OK for us to wait for signs in our day before we investigate the gospel, and our faith must ultimately be grounded in God and His Word, not signs.] **(46) But some of them** [some of the Jews who had seen what Jesus had done] **went to the Pharisees and told them the things which Jesus had done.** [These Jews would have understood (at least most of them would have understood) that most of the Pharisees (but not just the Pharisees; many of the other members of the Sanhedrin were Sadducees) were strong opponents of Jesus (cf., e.g., John 7:32, 45-52; 9:13-10:39; and 11:47-57).] **(47) Therefore the chief priests**⁶⁶ **and the Pharisees** [Compare John 7:32, 45 (The two verses just cited are the only verses where the "chief priests" were mentioned earlier in the Gospel of John); 11:57.] **convened a council** ["called a meeting of the Sanhedrin" NIV; cf. Matt. 5:22;

the young man nor Jairus' daughter had been dead long enough to be buried (they were taking the young man to bury him when Jesus met them).

⁶⁵ The Greek verb translated "will come forth" in John 5:29 is *ekporeuomai*. John 11:43 has the adverb *deuro*, which is sometimes translated *come!* John 11:43 has *deuro* followed by the adverb *eksō*, which means *out, outside, away*. The Greek verb used in John 11:44 for "[Lazarus] come forth" is *ekserchomai*.

⁶⁶ On the *chief priests*, see the footnote under John 7:32 in my paper on John chapters 5-8, and see below, still under this verse (John 11:47).

26:3-5. I'll quote a paragraph from what F. F. Bruce says here.⁶⁷ "The Sanhedrin, the supreme court of the Jewish nation, comprised seventy-one members, including the high priest, who presided over it by virtue of his office. The chief priests (the high priest, the captain of the temple and the members of the leading priestly families), together with the party of the Sadducees, to which most of them belonged, formed a majority of the court; the Pharisees constituted an influential minority."

I'll quote part of what Donald A. Carson says here.⁶⁸ "The highest judicial body in the land was the Sanhedrin, which under Roman authority controlled all Jewish internal affairs. It was simultaneously a judiciary, and legislative body, and, through the high priest, an executive.... In Jesus' day the (seventy?) members of the Sanhedrin were dominated by the chief priests, *i.e.* priests drawn from the extended family of the high priest, who presided over it (as the seventy-first member?). Virtually all the priests were Sadducees. The Pharisees constituted an influential minority; most of them were scribes. The rest of the members were elders, landed aristocrats of mixed (or few) theological views."

Leon Morris expresses the viewpoint (and quite a few commentators agree with him) that "apparently an informal meeting is meant, and not the official Sanhedrin." The fact that Caiaphas, the high priest, doesn't seem to have been officially presiding over this council (cf. verses 47-53) fits that viewpoint., **and were saying, "What are we doing? [cf. John 12:17-19] For this man is performing many signs [cf. John 2:1, 23; 3:2; 4:54; 6:2, 14, 26; 6:30; 7:31; 9:16; 12:18, 37; and 20:30, 31].** [One major problem was that these "chief priests and the Pharisees" wouldn't accept the fact that these were *true* signs of God, signs that pointed to the fact that Jesus Christ was the Christ, the Son of God. They denied that He was the Christ, the Son of God (cf., e.g., John 5:16-18; 7:1, 32, 47-52; 8:59; 9:9:22, 24; 10:31; and 11:53, 57). I'll quote part of what Leon Morris says here.⁶⁹ "It has always been the case that those whose minds are made up to oppose what Christ stands for will not be convinced by any amount of evidence. In this spirit these men recognize that the miracles have taken place, but find in this a reason for more wholehearted opposition, not for faith. In their hardness of heart they continue on their own chosen line and refuse to consider the evidence before their eyes."] **(48) If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place [“Our place” apparently refers to the temple (cf. Acts 6:13, 14; 28:27, 28).] and our nation.** [The “chief priests and Pharisees” voiced the viewpoint that if most of the Jews were to become followers of Jesus the Romans would consider it rebellion against Caesar and Rome and would come with their armies and take away their place and their nation.⁷⁰ What the Jews cried out before Pilate when he wanted to release Jesus is

⁶⁷ *Gospel of John* (Eerdmans, 1983), pages 249, 250.

⁶⁸ *Gospel According to John*, page 420.

⁶⁹ *Gospel According to John*, page 565.

⁷⁰ Several thousand zealous Jews who took matters into their hands (in the flesh) and proclaimed Jesus King (cf. John 6:15) could probably have started a rebellion sufficient to cause the Romans to powerfully react, but that wasn't part of God's plan, and it didn't happen that way. At a minimum the Romans could have taken away the considerable rights that the Jews enjoyed, which included their being permitted to worship in the temple and to be governed (to some extent) by the high priest and Jewish Sanhedrin. "Take away our nation" ...refers to the feared removal of the Jews' semiautonomous status by the Romans" (Andreas J. Kostenberger, *John*, page 350). In a worst-case scenario, the Romans would totally destroy the nation, including destroying the temple and Jerusalem and killing a large number of Jews and exiling the rest of them. The members of the Sanhedrin realized that they were the ones who would have to answer to Rome first and that they had the most to lose, including their positions of authority and influence.

relevant here, “If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar; everyone who makes himself out *to be* a king opposes Caesar” (John 19:12; cf. John 18:33-37). As John 18:36, for example, shows, their viewpoint was invalid since Jesus’ kingdom was not of this world (cf., e.g., Matt. 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-17; Luke 6:15; 20:19-26; Rom. 13:1-7; and 1 Tim 2:1-4); He didn’t stir up rebellion against Rome.

When the Roman armies finally did come to destroy Jerusalem (including the temple) and most of the nation, they came because of the rebellion of the *Jews* against Rome that started in AD 66 (Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed in AD 70, some forty years after Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead), not because of *Christians* rebelling. More importantly, the New Testament shows that the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem, etc. came as judgment that resulted from Israel’s lack of repentance and rejection of Christ and the gospel (cf., e.g., Matt. 21:33-46; 22:1-14, especially verse 7; 23:37-24:2; and Luke 21:20-24).] **(49) But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year** [cf. Matt. 26:3, 57; Luke 3:2; John 18:13, 14, 24, 28; and Acts 4:6; Caiaphas was high priest from AD 18-36; “that year” was a very special year, the year that the Lamb of God was crucified and resurrected, etc. (cf. John 11:51; 18:13)], **said to them, “You know nothing at all** [Caiaphas’ words here in verse 49 were meant to emphatically state the fact that Jesus must be killed, *period*: There was no room for further questions and hesitation. “ ‘Ye know nothing at all’ shows a rudeness which is alleged to have been typical of the Sadducees.”⁷¹], **(50) nor do you take into account that it is expedient** [“it is better” NKV] **for you** [This “you” is plural in the Greek, referring to the Jewish leaders of the nation, the members of the Sanhedrin.] **that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish.”** [See John 18:14. Caiaphas meant these words in the sense that it was necessary (politically expedient) for them to kill Jesus so that Israel would not perish at the hands of the Romans (see verses 47, 48). Many of the Jewish leaders had long before determined that they must kill Jesus (cf. John 5:18; 7:1; 8:40, 44, 59; 10:31), but the primary reasons they gave for killing Him before were religious, especially His supposed sin of blasphemy for making Himself out to be God (cf. John 5:18; 10:33). Caiaphas was not denying those religious charges against Jesus, but he spoke here of the supposed need to kill Him because He was becoming so popular that it would lead to big trouble with the Romans (see under verses 47, 48).

Caiaphas was making the same mistake that the leaders of Israel had often made throughout the history of the people. His reasoning was political *and left God out of the equation*. The only really important question for the Jewish leaders (and all the Jews and all the Gentiles) was whether Jesus was God’s promised Messiah/Christ, or not. If He was who He claimed to be, and He was (which He proved, for one thing, by His works), they must submit to Him and trust God to deal with the Romans. Their primary problem was (as Jesus frequently pointed out) that they did not really know God the Father, or love Him, or believe His Word, and they were not about to repent and submit to Him from their hearts.] **(51) Now he did not say this on his own initiative, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, (52) and not for the nation only, but in order that He might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.** [John’s point here in verses 51, 52 was that the words of the high priest (Caiaphas) of verses 49, 50, can

⁷¹ Leon Morris, *Gospel According to John*, pages 566, 567.

also be understood in a higher, prophetic sense of the *divine necessity* for Jesus, the Lamb of God, to die (to die His atoning death) so that Israel could be saved, referring to elect of Israel, who would be saved through new-covenant salvation in Christ Jesus. And verse 52 shows that He didn't die for the Jews only, but also for the Gentiles (cf., e.g., John 10:16), that many Jews and Gentiles (all the elect) would be saved and not perish (cf. John 11:50; 3:16; and 10:28) through faith in Christ Jesus.⁷² **(53) So from that day on they planned together to kill Him.** [As I pointed out, the leaders of Israel had determined a long time before this to kill Jesus. They would have killed Him earlier except for the overriding consideration that the Father's time for Him to be killed had not yet come, and He did not permit it. Furthermore, it was necessary for Him to be crucified, not stoned, etc. Anyway, there can be no doubting the fact that from *that* day on it had been determined by the Jewish leaders at the highest level that it was a high priority item for them to kill Jesus, and as soon as possible. The next time Jesus would come to Jerusalem would be for the Feast of Passover. (Passover wasn't far off; see verse 55. John 10:22 brought us to the Feast of the Dedication, which typically falls in our December. After that Jesus had gone to the place where John the Baptist was first baptizing (John 10:40-42), where He stayed until He went to raise Lazarus from the dead. Then, as John 11:54 shows, Jesus went to a city near the wilderness called Ephraim. Passover came in the Jewish month that corresponds with our March/April). The Jewish leaders would then succeed in killing Jesus, because it was the Father's plan that the Lamb of God be slain on that Passover, on the very day when the lambs were being slain in the temple for Passover (cf. John 18:28; 19:14).] **(54) Therefore Jesus no longer continued to walk publicly among the Jews, but went away from there to the country near the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim** ["...Ephraim, a village north of Jerusalem. Ephraim has been identified with Et Taiyibeh, a few miles northeast of Bethel. ... The town was on the edge of the Judean desert, into which Jesus could flee if necessary."⁷³]; **and there He stayed with the disciples.** [Compare John 4:1-3; 7:1; and 10:39, 40.] **(55) Now the Passover of the Jews was near** [in the Jewish month that comes at the time of our March/April], **and many went up to Jerusalem out of the country before the Passover to purify themselves.** [I'll quote part of what F. F. Bruce says here.⁷⁴ "If the first of the three Passovers [the three Passovers mentioned in the Gospel of John (see John 2:13, 23; 6:4; see under John 2:13 in my paper on John 1:19-4:54)] fell in AD 28, 'forty-six years' after Herod began the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple (John 2:20) [in 20/19 BC], this third Passover would be that of AD 30. [It seems most likely that Jesus was crucified in AD 30; some say AD 33. See under John 12:2.] ... The necessity of ceremonial purification (e.g. after contact with a corpse) before keeping the Passover is laid down in Num. 9:6ff. Josephus confirms that pilgrims came up about a week before Passover and indicates that they spent the days in Jerusalem before the feast undergoing the appropriate purificatory rites."

I'll also quote part of what Donald A. Carson says here.⁷⁵ "More likely...the one [Passover] mentioned here (11:55) is the third and last for the period of Jesus' ministry, which therefore establishes that his public ministry ran a little over two years. [Many believe that

⁷² The words "the children of God who are scattered abroad" could include the Jews who did not live in Israel.

⁷³ Merrill C. Tenney, *Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Zondervan, 1981), page 122.

⁷⁴ *Gospel of John*, pages 252, 253.

⁷⁵ *Gospel According to John*, page 424.

there was another Passover not specifically mentioned in the Gospel of John, and that the period of Jesus' ministry lasted more than three years.] If the first Passover was in AD 28, forty-six years after the date Herod the Great began the rebuilding of the temple (2:20), the year of Jesus' death and resurrection is AD 30. ... The need for ceremonial purification before Passover is stipulated in Num. 9:6ff. for those who had contracted ceremonial defilement of some sort (e.g. by touching a corpse), and was still operative in Jesus' day (cf. Schlatter, pp. 261-262)."

J. Carl Laney speaks of the need to be cleansed from any ceremonial defilement before taking part in the Passover (cf. Lev. 7:21). I'll quote part of what he says about how this cleansing was accomplished.⁷⁶ "According to the Mishnah, this was done in a ritual bath called a *miqveh* (*Mikva'ot* 4.1). Excavations south of the Temple area have uncovered 48 *miqva'ot* (the plural of *miqveh*) that served the pilgrims who sought purification before climbing the steps into the Temple area."⁷⁷ The ritual baths in Jerusalem that I have seen pictures of consisted of a rather small underground pool of water that was deep enough for people to immerse themselves after walking down steps into the pool.

The ritual bath was not sufficient to remove defilement that came through contact with death. Numbers chapter 19 teaches about ritual defilement through contact with death and how the Jews were to be cleansed through being sprinkled on the *third* day and on the *seventh* day with hyssop that had been dipped in a mixture of the ashes of a sacrificed red heifer and water. It would have been a very serious sin for Jews to go to the tabernacle/temple, while in an unclean state (cf. Num. 19:13, 20).

I'll quote part of a sentence from what Andreas J. Kostenberger says here.⁷⁸ "...recent scholarship estimates that the population of Jerusalem swelled from about one hundred thousand inhabitants to some one million during [the Feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles]." **(56) So they were seeking for Jesus, and were saying to one another as they stood in the temple, "What do you think; that He will not come to the feast at all?"** [cf. John 7:11] **(57) Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where He was, he was to report it, so that they might seize Him** [cf. John 7:32; 11:53].

⁷⁶ *John*, page 217.

⁷⁷ "William Sanford La Sor, 'Discovering What Jewish *Miqva'ot* Can Tell Us About Christian Baptism,' *Biblical Archaeology Review* (January/February 1987) 52-59."

⁷⁸ *John* (2004), page 354.

JOHN CHAPTER 12

Jesus, therefore, six days before the Passover [“Then six days before the Passover” NKJV; cf. John 11:55], **came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.** [Jesus had left Bethany after raising Lazarus from the dead and gone to Ephraim because the Jews had decided at the highest level that He must be killed (John 11:46-54). Now, six days before the Passover, He came back to Bethany, which was a village very close to Jerusalem, knowing that He must be crucified at Jerusalem that Passover. Regarding the day of the week that Jesus came back to Bethany (six days before the Passover) and was anointed (for His burial) by Mary, see under verse 2.] **(2)** [See Matt. 26:6-11; Mark 14:3-9. Matthew 26:6; Mark 14:3 show that these things took place at the home of Simon the leper in Bethany. (Presumably Jesus had healed Simon of leprosy.) Those accounts in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, which were written long before John wrote his Gospel, didn’t mention that the woman who anointed Jesus was Mary the sister of Lazarus and Martha, or that Mary had anointed His feet and wiped them with her hair after anointing them. (Matthew 26 and Mark 14 spoke only of the woman’s having poured the expensive ointment on His head. Apparently she poured the ointment on His head *and* on His feet; John 12:3 shows that she used a rather large quantity of ointment.⁷⁹) Furthermore, Matthew and Mark didn’t mention that Judas Iscariot was the one (at least he was the ring leader) who criticized Mary for “wasting” the money that the expensive ointment was worth (she could have sold it, Judas said, and given the money to the poor), and Matthew and Mark leave the (apparently wrong) impression that this anointing took place *after* Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem.⁸⁰ John was undoubtedly thankful that (in the will of God) he was able to add this important information to the accounts in Matthew 26 and Mark 14. Thank God for the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, *and* John!] **So they made Him a supper there, and Martha was serving** [cf. Luke 10:38-42]; **but Lazarus was one of those reclining at the table with Him.** [The most common view is that this supper took place Saturday

⁷⁹ I’ll quote part of what F. Godet says here (*Gospel of John* [Zondervan, reprint of the 1893 edition], pages 206, 207). “These flasks of nard hermetically sealed were probably received from the East; to use the contents of them, the neck must be broken; this is what Mary did, according to Mark 14:3. This act having a somewhat striking character, she must have performed it in the sight of all the guests, consequently over the head of Jesus already seated at the table. His head thus received the first fruits of the perfume (cf. Matthew and Mark: ‘she poured it *on his head*’). Only after this, as no ordinary guest was here in question [and the time setting was very special; she anointed Him for His burial, whether she understood that detail, or not], and as Mary wished to give to her guest not merely a testimony of love and respect, but a mark of adoration, she joined with the ordinary anointing of the head (which was self evident; cf. Psalm 23:5; Luke 7:46) an altogether exceptional homage. As if this precious liquid were only common water, she pours it over His feet, and in such abundance that it was as if she were bathing them with it; so she was obliged to wipe them. For this purpose she uses her own hair. This last fact carries the homage to a climax. . . . Every act in this narrative breathes adoration, the soul of the act. Perhaps the report of the homage rendered to Jesus by the sinful woman of Galilee [Luke 7] had reached Mary. She was unwilling that the friends of Jesus should do less for Him than a stranger.”

⁸⁰ John indicates that this anointing took place the day *before* that triumphal entry (see John 12:12-15). I’ll quote two important sentences from what Donald A. Carson says on this point (*Gospel According to John*, page 426). “It must be remembered. . . that the time indicators in Matthew/Mark are notoriously loose. These Evangelists often order their accounts according to topic, not chronology.”

evening (after the Sabbath was over), the evening before Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. I somewhat favor the viewpoint that this supper took place *Sunday* evening before Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem on *Monday*.⁸¹] **(3) Mary then took a**

⁸¹ F. F. Bruce and F. Godet are two of the commentators who believe Jesus arrived at Bethany and the supper and anointing took place on Sunday. "Six days before the Passover" (John 12:1) can be understood several different ways, depending on what day the Passover started and on how you do the counting. I believe the apostle John wrote from the viewpoint that the Passover began at sunset on Friday, on which evening the Jews ate the Passover meal. (By Jewish reckoning that would have been the 15th day of the month, which began at sunset, and the lambs were slain on the 14th day [Exod. 12:6].) On Friday afternoon Jesus died on the cross when the Passover lambs were being slain in the temple. On Friday evening (the 15th day happened to fall on the sabbath that year), they ate the Passover meal. According to the Gospel of John, the day that Jesus was tried before Pilate and crucified (which was Friday) was the "the day of preparation for the Passover" (John 19:14; also see John 13:1; 18:28; 19:31, 42 [these verses are discussed in my papers on John chapters 13-17 and John chapters 18-20]).

From this point of view, although the meal that Jesus ate with His apostles on Thursday evening was called a Passover meal (and rightly so), it was eaten a day before the Jews ate the Passover meal and before the Passover lambs were slain in the temple. It is interesting that there was no mention of a sacrificial lamb in the accounts of the Passover meal that Jesus ate with His apostles in the accounts in Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. (See the discussion at the beginning of my paper on John chapters 13-17.)

I'll quote a few sentences from what J. N. Sanders and B. A. Mastin say here (*Gospel According to John* [Hendrickson, 1968], page 282). "1. According to the [Gospel of John], the Passover began on the following Friday evening (by our reckoning of the days), which (again by our reckoning) would make the day of Jesus' arrival in Bethany on Saturday. But since he is unlikely to have traveled on a Sabbath, we should probably reckon the six days in the ancient manner, i.e. *inclusively*. 2. Then the supper would have been on Sunday evening by our reckoning. . . ." It does seem unlikely that Jesus would have traveled far on the sabbath. We don't know the details regarding that journey to Bethany six days before the Passover; see John 11:54; Matt. 20:29-21:11; Mark 10:32-11:10; and Luke 18:35-19:44.

I'll quote part of what G. Ogg says regarding the *day* of the month and the *year* that Jesus was crucified in the article on the "Chronology of the New Testament" in the *New Bible Dictionary*, second edition (Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1982), page 202. "Of attempts to determine the year of the crucifixion the most fruitful is that made with the help of astronomy. According to all four Gospels, the crucifixion took place on a Friday, but whereas in the Synoptics [Matthew, Mark, and Luke] that Friday is 15 Nisan, in John it is 14 Nisan. [The major difference is that the Synoptic Gospels give the impression that the lambs were slain in the temple before Jesus ate the Last Supper with His apostles on Thursday evening, but John shows that the Last Supper (John chapter 13) actually took place the day before the lambs were slain in the temple and the Jews ate the Passover meal. It would have been appropriate for Jesus to participate in the Passover meal with the rest of the Jews, but it was much more appropriate, it seems to me, for Jesus to die when the Passover lambs were being slain in the temple, and John informs us that that is just what happened.] The problem then that has to be solved with the help of astronomy is that of determining in which of the years 26-36 [Pontius Pilate was procurator of Judea from AD 26-36.] the 14th and 15th Nisan fell on a Friday. But since in NT times the Jewish month was lunar and the time of its commencement was determined by observation of the new moon, this problem is basically that of determining when the new moon became visible. Studying this problem, Fotheringham and Schoch have each arrived at a formula by applying which they find that 15 Nisan was a Friday only in [AD] 27 and 14 Nisan was a Friday only in [AD] 30 and 33. Since as the year of the crucifixion 27 is out of the question [essentially all agree AD 27 is too early], the choice lies between 30 (7 April) and 33 (3 April)."

Ogg goes on to say that he believes the chronology of the Gospel of John is the more probable (that Jesus was crucified on the 14th day of the month) and that "until at least the beginning of the 3rd century it appears to have been the more generally accepted throughout the church." But he points out that the "attempts to reconcile the Gospels on this matter have not secured general consent, and discussion of the problem continues." (The primary problem is that Matthew, Mark, and Luke leave the impression that Jesus ate the Passover meal with the rest of the Jews on Thursday evening, while John shows that the Jews hadn't eaten the Passover meal yet when Jesus was on the cross. Apparently then, the Passover meal that Jesus ate with His disciples and His crucifixion both took place on the 14th day of the month, which

pound [“about a pint” NIV; the NIV has a footnote, “Greek *a litra* (probably about 0.5 liter [where a liter is about a quart, or 2 pints])”; the *Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament* by Barclay M. Newman, which is a companion volume with the United Bible Societies’ *Greek New Testament* says *litra* means “*pound* (of the Roman pound weighing 11.5 ounces)”; the BAGD Greek Lexicon (3rd edition) says *litra* means “*a (Roman) pound* (327.45 grams)”; in a marginal note the NASB says “I.e. a Roman pound, equaling 12 oz.”] **of very costly perfume** [or “very costly ointment, or oil, of pure nard”; Greek *muron*] **of pure nard** [“The ‘pure nard’ was a fragrant oil prepared from the roots and stems of an aromatic herb from northern India. It was an expensive perfume, imported in sealed alabaster boxes or flasks which were opened only on special occasions.”⁸²], **and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair** [This was a touching scene (cf. Luke 7:36-50, especially verses 37, 38, 44-46; 10:38-42; John 11:2, 5, 28-36).]; **and the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. (4) But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, who was intending** [or, who was going] **to betray Him** [Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, one of the twelve apostles, betrayed Jesus (cf. John 6:70, 71; 12:5, 6; 13:2, 10, 11, 18, 19, 21-30; 18:2, 3; Matt. 10:4; 26:14-16, 20-25, 47-50; 27:3-10; Mark 3:19; 14:10, 11, 17-21, 43-45; Luke 6:16; 22:3-6, 21-23, 47, 48; Acts 1:15-26). Verse 6 shows that Judas had been sinning all along, stealing from the money box. An apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ stealing, even stealing from the Lord, certainly demonstrates that Judas’ heart was far from being right with God. For one thing, He surely should have known that he wouldn’t get by with it.

Matthew 26:14-16 with 26:6-13 and Mark 14:10, 11 with 14:3-9 indicate that Judas went to the chief priests to betray Jesus right after this “wasteful” anointing of Jesus. Judas was undoubtedly humiliated by Jesus’ rejection of his criticism of Mary (John 12:7, 8), which was a mild rebuke to Judas, but it is very clear that his betrayal of Jesus was motivated by much more than that one incident (including his listening and then yielding to the devil [cf. John 13:2, 27]).], **said, (5) “Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii** [see under verse 2; cf. Mark 14:5; a denarius was a day’s wage for a laborer (cf. Matt. 20:2-13)] **and given to poor people?” (6) Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and**

[by Jewish reckoning] began at sunset Thursday that year.) He also points out that he considers it noteworthy that the astronomer’s calculations do not support the idea that Jesus was crucified on the 15th day of the month in that, according to their calculations, the 15th day of the month does not fall on a Friday in any of the years considered possible for His crucifixion.

I’ll also quote part of what W. P. Armstrong and J. Finegan say on the date of the crucifixion of Jesus in the article titled “Chronology of the NT” in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, fully revised, Vol. 1 (Eerdmans, 1979), page 689. “The Gospels name the day before the sabbath (Friday) as the day of the crucifixion...and the Synoptic Gospels represent this Friday as Nisan 15—the day following (or according to Jewish reckoning from sunset to sunset, the same day as) the day on which the paschal supper was eaten [on Thursday evening].... But the fourth Gospel is thought by many to represent the paschal meal as still uneaten [by the Jews] when Jesus suffered (John 18:28; cf. 13:29).... Astronomical calculations show that Nisan 14 could have fallen on Friday in...30 and again in...33 (H. von Soden, *Eb*, I, 806; cf. B. W. Bacon, *JBL*, 28 [1909], 130-148; J. K. Fotheringham, *JTS*, 11 [1910], 120ff.; R. A. Parker and W. J. Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology 626 B.C.–A.D. 75* [1956]), but the empirical character of the Jewish calendar [which depended on man’s observing when the new moon first became visible] renders the result of such calculations uncertain (*HJP*², I, 590f.). In the year...30 Friday, Nisan 14, would fall on Apr. 7; in...33 Friday, Nisan 14, would fall on Apr. 3. ... The date of the crucifixion is probably Friday, Apr. 7, A.D. 30. [I assume that date is correct.]”

⁸² Edwin A. Blum, *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, New Testament (Victor Books, 1983), page 316.

as he had the money box [cf. John 13:29; Luke 8:3], he used to pilfer what was put into it. [See under verse 4. It seems clear that Judas had been stealing from the money box for a long time, perhaps from the first time he had an opportunity.] **(7) Therefore Jesus said, “Let her alone** [This imperative is 2nd person *singular* in the Greek. Jesus was speaking to Judas. The *plurals* in the Greek in verse 8 show that He was speaking to all the people there.], **so that she may keep it for the day of My burial.** [I believe an amplified/expanded translation like the following communicates the intended idea, “*she has done this* [that is, she has kept the expensive ointment, instead of selling it and giving the money to the poor, as you (Judas) say she should have done] so that she might keep it [and have it to anoint Me, as she has just done in preparation] for the day of My burial.” The translation of the NIV conveys this same basic idea. “It was intended [by God] that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial” NIV. It is quite possible that Mary didn’t know that she was anointing Jesus in preparation for His burial, but Jesus knew that she was. Even if Mary didn’t realize that she was anointing Jesus in preparation for His burial, she could have been led by God the Father to anoint Jesus.] **(8) For you always have the poor with you, but you do not always have Me.”** [Compare Matt. 26:11; Mark 14:7; and Deut. 15:11.] **(9) The large crowd of the Jews** [This large crowd undoubtedly included many Jews who had come early to Jerusalem for Passover (see John 11:55; 12:12, 17, 18).] **then learned that He was there; and they came [to Bethany], not for Jesus’ sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He raised from the dead. (10) But the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death also; (11) because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and were believing in Jesus.** [The raising of Lazarus from the dead played a major role in the events of Jesus’ last days before the cross (cf. John 11:45-57; 12:9-11, 17-19). There was, of course, no legal basis for the chief priests to kill Lazarus. He was “guilty” only of believing in Jesus and of being raised from the dead, but they determined that *it was politically expedient* for him to die (cf. John 11:50).] **(12)** [See Matt. 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-10; and Luke 19:29-40.] **On the next day** [This is our “Palm Sunday.” But I somewhat prefer the viewpoint that this happened on Monday.⁸³ As I mentioned under John 12:2, I somewhat prefer the viewpoint that Jesus went to Bethany and was anointed by Mary on *Sunday*. If that viewpoint is correct, the “next day,” the day of Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem, would be *Monday*. On the branches of palm trees which the people were spreading in the road before Jesus (some undoubtedly waved the palm branches too), see Matt. 21:8; Mark 11:8; and John 12:13. Matthew 21:8; Mark 11:8; and Luke 19:36 show that many were also spreading their coats in the road before Him.] **the large crowd who had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem** [A large number of the Jews who had come early to Jerusalem for the Feast of Passover went out to meet Jesus (see John 11:55, 56; 12:17, 18). John 12:17, 18 indicate that many of these Jews went out to meet Him because of the testimony of the people who had been there when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. “Many of these pilgrims would have been Galileans who were familiar with His ministry; many others would have heard of the raising of Lazarus (cf. John 11:55-57) and eagerly sought an opportunity to see Jesus.”⁸⁴], **(13) took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet Him** [See under verse 12. The Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark,

⁸³ F. F. Bruce, F. Godet, and J. Carl Laney are thereof the commentators who favor Palm *Monday*.

⁸⁴ Donald A. Carson, *Gospel According to John*, page 431.

and Luke) show that Jesus traveled in a westerly direction from a location on the eastern side of the Mount of Olives, near Bethany and Bethpage, across the Kidron Valley, to enter Jerusalem. For at least much of that trip, Jesus was riding on a borrowed donkey (cf. John 12:14, 15).], and **began to shout, “Hosanna! BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD, even the King of Israel** [On the “King [of Israel],” see John 1:49; 6:15; 12:15; 18:33-39; 19:14, 15, 19-22.]” [The words “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD [*Yahweh* in the Hebrew]” are quoted from Psalm 118:26. The most common view is that *Hosanna* is an abbreviated form of a Hebrew imperative (of the Hebrew verb *yasha*)⁸⁵ that means *save* joined with the Hebrew particle *na*, which means *now* or *we pray* or *please*. It is significant that this Hebrew imperative and particle are used in Psalm 118:25, the verse just before Psalm 118:26 (and in other verses of the Old Testament).⁸⁶ The imperative is addressed to *Yahweh* in Psalm 118:25. The imperative meaning *save now* or *save we pray* or *save please* fits perfectly with the words that follow (here in John 12:13) from Psalm 118:26.

Psalm 118 is a messianic psalm (a psalm that prophesies of the Messiah, Christ Jesus), and it seems clear that these Jews (at least many of them) recognized it as a messianic psalm. Many of these Jews were disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is shown by Luke 19:37-40. (Luke 19:39 shows that the Pharisees were there too; they weren't there to exalt Christ Jesus.) I'll quote Luke 19:37-40, “As soon as He was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen, (38) shouting: ‘BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!’ (39) Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, ‘Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.’ (40) But Jesus answered, ‘I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!’ ”

After Jesus miraculously fed five thousand men (plus women and children) from five loaves and two fish, the Jews wanted to take Jesus by force and make Him the King of Israel (see John 6:15).⁸⁷ Jesus rejected their proposal and withdrew because, for one thing, He knew that most of them were *not* submitting to Him, the only Savior from sin and death, in repentance and faith (they weren't true disciples). They were looking for a king to overthrow the Romans and bless them. Many of the Jews shouting the praises of Jesus at His triumphal entry into Jerusalem were undoubtedly just as shallow and fleshy and as misinformed about the primary purpose for the coming of Christ Jesus into the world as those who wanted to make Him king earlier, but some of them were true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, and I'm confident that many of them were in the process of becoming true disciples, and/or would later become true disciples.

I'll quote Psalm 118:21-26a and make a few comments in brackets. “I shall give thanks to You, for You have answered me, And You have become my salvation. [These words which are addressed to *Yahweh*, the God of Israel, speak of thanking Him for answering their prayer(s) and saving them through the Messiah/Christ. He saves them from their sins (and spiritual death and the devil) and from those who have been oppressing them on the earth. Although the singulars “I” and “me” are used here in verse 21 (and often

⁸⁵ The Hebrew verb is in the hiphil stem, which explains the “ho” on the front of the word.

⁸⁶ J. N. Sanders and B. A. Mastin may be right when they say “Hosanna is a transliteration of the Aramaic (rather than the Hebrew) for, ‘Save we pray’ (*Gospel According to St. John* [Hendricksen, 1988 reprint], page 288). C. K. Barrett expresses the same viewpoint, that *Hosanna* probably is a transliteration of the corresponding Aramaic, not the Hebrew (*Gospel According to St. John* [Westminster, 1978], page 418).

⁸⁷ That miracle took place near Passover, (at least) one year before Jesus triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

throughout verses 10-21), it is clear that all the believers (the righteous) of Israel are involved in this salvation (see verse 15). Verses 22-26a use the plurals “our,” “us,” and “we.”] (22) The stone which the builders rejected [Christ Jesus] Has become the chief corner stone. [See Matt. 21:42-44; Mark 12:10, 11; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:10, 11; Eph. 2:20; and 1 Pet. 2:7.] (23) This is the LORD’S [*Yahweh’s*] doing [speaking of His saving work in and through Christ Jesus]; and it is marvelous in our eyes. (24) This is the day [the day of salvation] which the LORD has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it. (25) O LORD, do save [or, “save,” instead of “do save”], we beseech You [As I mentioned, *hosanna* is an abbreviated form of the Hebrew behind “save, we beseech You.”]; O LORD, we beseech You, do send prosperity! (26) Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD....”

Some commentators make the point that *hosanna* was sometimes used as a shout of praise. I’ll quote part of a footnote from Andreas J. Kostenberger that discusses this point.⁸⁸ “...probably Barrett (1978; 417-18) is correct that at the time of Christ, the phrase might have been no more than a ‘jubilant shout of praise’ as part of a ‘spontaneous ovation’ (cf. Morris 1995: 516; R. Brown 1966: 457).” In this overall context and with Psalm 118:25, 26 and the added words “even the King of Israel” here in John 12:13, I have to favor the viewpoint that *Hosanna!* was more than a jubilant shout of praise and that it included the idea of *save now* or *save we pray* or *save please*. The Septuagint (the Old Testament translated into Greek) doesn’t transliterate the Hebrew; it translates the Hebrew with two Greek words that mean “save now.”] **(14) Jesus, finding a young donkey** [John knew that most of his readers would know that Jesus sent two of His disciples to borrow this young donkey (see Matt. 21:1-7; Mark 11:1-7; and Luke 19:29-35). Jesus knew that He was fulfilling prophecy, as He often did (cf., e.g., John 19:28-30).], **sat on it; as it is written, (15) “FEAR NOT, DAUGHTER OF ZION; BEHOLD, YOUR KING IS COMING, SEATED ON A DONKEY’S COLT.”** [There is widespread agreement that this “quotation” comes from Zech. 9:9; I’ll quote Zech. 9:9 (Zechariah 9:9, 10 contain one of several very significant prophecies regarding the Lord Jesus Christ in the book of Zechariah. Zechariah 9:9 deals with His first coming; Zech. 9:10 deals with His second coming.⁸⁹), “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem [*Zion* equals *Jerusalem* here.!] He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey [The word “colt” refers to a young male donkey (or horse, etc.); the word “foal” refers to a young donkey (horse, etc.) male or female.]” I’ll also quote Zech. 9:9 from the Septuagint version, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion; proclaim it aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, the King is coming to thee, just, and a Saviour; he [He] is meek and riding on an ass, and a young foal.”] **(16) These things His disciples did not understand at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him** [cf. Luke 24:6-8; John 2:22; and 14:26], **and that they had done these things to Him.** [Jesus’ disciples didn’t understand until after He was glorified that the events spoken of in verses 14, 15 fulfilled Old Testament prophecy (cf. Luke 24:27, 44-47).] **(17) So** [The NIV translates “Now.”] **the people** [“Lit. *crowd*,” margin of NASB], **who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead** [cf. John

⁸⁸ *John*, page 369.

⁸⁹ Old Testament prophecies frequently combine things that were to happen at Jesus’ first coming with things that will happen at His second coming. God didn’t choose to clearly reveal in the Old Testament that there would be two very different comings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Zechariah chapters 9-14 are discussed on pages 191-237 of my book, *Mid-Week Rapture*.

11:42, 45], **continued to testify** [or, “were testifying”] **about Him**. [It is best, I suppose, to think of this *testifying* taking place *before* (cf. John 12:9-11), *during*, and *after* Jesus’ triumphal entry. It is reasonable to think that many of those who had been there when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead were testifying whenever they had an opportunity, but they undoubtedly showed some restraint when in the presence of obvious enemies of Jesus (cf., e.g., John 11:57).] **(18) For this reason also⁹⁰ the people** [“*Lit crowd*” margin of NASB] **went and met Him, because they heard that He had performed this sign** [cf. Luke 19:37; John 12:11]. [Some of the people who heard about Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead had gone to meet Him before the triumphal entry (cf. John 12:9, 12); some undoubtedly also went to meet Him during and after His triumphal entry (see under verse 17; note that there was a crowd (“the crowd”) with Jesus in verses 29, 34).] **(19) So the Pharisees said to one another, “You see that you are not doing any good; look, the world has gone after Him.”** [Compare John 11:47-54, 57. John 12:20-24, 31, 32 (and many other verses) show that before long (in a way far beyond what these Pharisees meant) multitudes worldwide were going after the Lord Jesus Christ to become His disciples.] **(20) Now there were some Greeks among those who were going up to worship at the feast** [Typically in the New Testament “Greeks” are Gentiles (as contrasted with Jews), and not just Gentiles who lived in Greece (cf., e.g., Rom. 1:16; Gal. 3:28). There is widespread agreement that these *Greeks* were *God-fearing* Gentiles (cf. Acts 13:16, 26, 43; 17:4, 17), Gentiles who worshiped the God of Israel but did not become full converts to Judaism. (Many God-fearing Gentiles became Christians through the ministry of the apostle Paul and others; the apostle Peter was sent to Cornelius.) These God-fearing Greeks were allowed to worship in the temple, but they were not permitted to go beyond the outer court, which was called the court of the Gentiles.

These Greeks who *wished to see Jesus* (verse 21) prefigure the Gentiles going after the resurrected Christ; the world going after Him was mentioned in verse 19, and in verse 32 Jesus prophesies of drawing all men to Himself (cf. John 10:16). Many Gentiles (and Jews) across the world have become Christians throughout this age (including us; thank God!); **(21) these then came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee** [Andrew and Peter were also from Bethsaida (John 1:44) and (apparently) also James and John, in that they were partners with Andrew and Peter in the fishing business (Luke 5:1-11; cf. Matt. 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20). We are not told why these Greeks came to Philip, who was one of the twelve apostles. The fact that his name happened to be Greek could have been relevant,⁹¹ or perhaps he was the most fluent in Greek. It is also possible that one or more of these Greeks knew Philip.], **and began to ask him, saying, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.”** [As these verses continue, John doesn’t inform us if Jesus met with these Greeks, or sent a message to them. It is very clear, however, that Jesus was interested in every Jew and Gentile who was open to Him and the gospel. If these Greeks were open, and I assume that at least some of them were, I’m sure that Jesus eventually dealt with them as individuals one way or another (by the

⁹⁰ The NIV does not include the word “also.” The KJV; NKJV have “also,” but they include it after “the people.” The United Bible Societies’ *Greek New Testament* (fourth revised edition) includes the Greek word [*kai*] translated “also” by the NASB in brackets, which shows that there is some doubt regarding this word in the Greek. The word “also,” if it is included, includes the idea (a legitimate idea) that there were other reasons for going to meet Jesus besides the fact that He had raised Lazarus from the dead.

⁹¹ His name was an obvious Greek name. Andrew was the only other apostle who had a Greek name.

Spirit, by sending Christians to them, etc.)] **(22) Philip came and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip came and told Jesus. (23) And Jesus answered them, saying, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified** [The New Testament typically speaks of Jesus being glorified in His resurrection and His being taken up to the right hand of God the Father (cf., e.g., John 7:39; 12:16, 32; 13:1, 32; 17:1, 5; and Acts 2:33). Having been glorified by the Father (after the victory He won on the cross), Jesus was able to carry out God’s new-covenant plan of salvation, which includes the full salvation and ultimate glorification of all believers and the overthrow and total removal of the devil (cf., e.g., John 12:31) and all who continue to follow him in his rebellion against God (whether angels, demons, or people). The good fruit that results from Christ’s atoning death also includes the new heaven and new earth, with its new Jerusalem.

Christ’s being glorified in this context undoubtedly includes the fact that a large number of people worldwide will submit to Him as Savior and Lord; He is glorified by them when they submit to Him and worship Him (cf. John 17:8-10). It is also true that those who reject Him will eventually bow their knee before Him (but not as those who love Him) and will admit that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father and His glory (cf. Phil. 2:9-11).] **(24) Truly, truly [Amen, Amen], I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.** [Compare John 10:15; 15:13; and 1 Cor. 15:36. Jesus likens His atoning death to a grain of wheat falling into the earth and dying (at least it dies in one sense), which then brings forth a harvest of very good fruit. The fruit that comes forth from His atoning death is super-spectacular. See under verse 23 for a brief description of that all-important fruit. For one thing, every person who has a place in God’s new heaven and new earth with its new Jerusalem will have that place through the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ (cf., e.g., Rev. 21:27).

As Jesus continues in verses 25, 26, we see that His illustration of the need for (the seed and) Him to die to bring forth a harvest of good fruit also applies in some ways to all who would become Christians, not just to Himself. The call to become Christians includes the call to die to sin and (living for) self and to live for God in His truth, righteousness, and holiness, always doing His will from the heart by His grace.⁹² This call includes our being willing to literally lay down our life for Christ in physical death; we cannot cling to our life in this world in any way. Those, including many who call themselves Christians, who love their life in this world (the world whose ruler is the devil [cf. John 12:31]) and do not live for God and make His will and His righteousness top priority forfeit spiritual/eternal *life*. In a very real sense they lose their souls (see, for example, Matt. 10:28; 16:24-27; and Mark 8:34-38⁹³). But Christians who die to the sinful life of the old man to live for God in His truth, righteousness, and holiness

⁹² Verse 24 refers to Jesus’ atoning death, but He was dead to sin and the things of the world and perfectly lived for God the Father all the years before He died on the cross. His life was the perfect example of a man (though He was much more than just a man) living the crucified, sanctified life.

⁹³ The Greek noun (*psuchē*) translated *soul* in the verses just cited is translated *life* in Matt. 16:25; Mark 8:35 and twice in John 12:25. The NASB (1995 edition) normally translates *psuchē* as *soul(s)* (47 times) or as *life/lives* (43 times). When it is translated *life/lives* it typically refers to *life* in this world (not life by the Spirit of God or eternal life in God’s kingdom). To lose one’s soul does not mean that the soul ceases to exist but that the soul loses what man was created to have (fellowship with God in His kingdom of eternal life) but to be totally separated from Him and everything good in the second death, the lake of fire.

experience eternal life now in a preliminary form as born-again Christians and will inherit eternal life in its full glory at the end of this age.

It is absolutely necessary for Christians to understand that dying to sin and the old man, which is the same thing as crucifying/putting-to-death/laying aside the old man and being freed from sin (cf., e.g., John 8:31-36; Rom. 6:6, 11, 17, 18, 20; Gal. 5:24; Eph. 4:22; and Col. 3:5-9) and being born again and beginning to live for God as a new man in union with Christ, by the Holy Spirit, in God's righteousness and holiness, which is the same thing as being resurrected (by the Spirit) and walking in newness of life, or becoming new creations in Christ, or putting on the new man in Christ (cf., e.g., Rom. 6:4, 5, 8-11; 8:2-14; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 5:16; Eph. 4:23, 24; and Col. 3:1-4, 10, 11) is a supernatural work of God by His saving grace in Christ, which includes all the work of the Holy Spirit. We must continuously appropriate and cooperate with God's grace and walk by His Spirit by faith in accordance with His Word.

I'll quote 1 Peter 2:24 and make some comments in brackets, "He Himself bore our sins [with the guilt and the penalties, including the major penalties of spiritual death and bondage to sin] in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds [literally "wound"; this *mortal* wound includes the beatings, scourging, crucifixion, etc., all that He bore for us as the Lamb of God in His atoning death; the wages of sin is death] you were healed [The primary healing is spiritual, including the new birth and being made righteous and holy, but it also includes every other type of healing we could ever need.]" Things like positive thinking, trying harder, and striving in the flesh are no match for enemies like sin and Satan.

We are totally dependent on the grace of God in Christ. God the Son became a man (but much more than just a man; He was the God-man and He wasn't spiritually dead); He lived a sinless life; He died for us bearing our sins with the guilt and the penalties so we could die to sin and the self-life and live for God as born-again Christians, in union with Christ, indwelt by the Holy Spirit. We die to sin and the self-life and live for God by the grace of God in Christ through faith, a faith that is based on God's Word. We cannot die to sin or live for God in His righteousness and holiness apart from repenting and submitting to God and His Word in faith and walking by faith (which includes walking in/by/after the Holy Spirit) on a continuous basis, and we must understand that our being dead to sin and our righteousness and holiness come one-hundred percent by the grace of God in Christ—God (the triune God) must receive all the glory.

Serving Christ and *following* Him (see verse 26) includes dying to living in sin and for self and the things of this world by the enabling grace of God in Christ.] **(25) He who loves his life** [in this world] **loses it** [He loses real life, eternal life; he loses his soul. Matthew 16:26 speaks of forfeiting/losing one's soul], **and he who hates his life in this world**⁹⁴ **will keep it** [He will keep his soul instead of losing it; he will keep real life and gain life eternal.] **to life eternal.** [See under verse 24. It is significant that the Greek noun behind the first two uses of the word *life* in this verse is *psuchē*, which is used here for *life in this world*, and which is contrasted with the spiritual, *eternal life* of God. The

⁹⁴ We hate the sinful life of the old man. We don't hate the sanctified life of the born again Christian in this world that is lived for God by His grace in His truth, righteousness, and holiness.

Greek noun behind the last use of the word *life* in this verse is *zōē*. The Greek adjective *aiōnios*, *on*, translated “eternal,” is used with *zōē* here.

To love our life in this world here includes clinging to that *life* and not wholeheartedly submitting to God and His Son and His new-covenant plan of salvation, which enables us to die to sin and the self-life and to live for God, always doing His will from our hearts in His truth, righteousness, and holiness.⁹⁵ Loving our life in this world (the self-life that doesn’t center in God and His truth, righteousness, and holiness) results in missing God’s spiritual, eternal life and continuing on in spiritual death, which will culminate in complete separation from God and His life in the second death of Rev. 20:14, which is the lake of fire. On the other hand *to hate our life in this world* and to submit to God and His Son and to be faithful to Him and the gospel of new-covenant salvation (by His grace) results in inheriting the fulness of eternal life and glory at the end of this age.⁹⁶ I’ll quote 2 Tim. 2:11-13, “It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him; (12) If we endure, we will also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us; (13) If we are faithless, He remains faithful [He remains faithful to do what He said He will do, including denying those who are faithless and deny Him], for He cannot deny Himself.”⁹⁷

Hating one’s life in this world obviously includes hating everything sinful, but it also includes loving God above everyone and everything else. I’ll quote Luke 14:26, “If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate [“I.e. by comparison,” margin of NASB] his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.” God (not us, or anyone, or anything else) must be Number One in every area—He must be our God. “No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and not the other. You cannot serve God and wealth [or any other idol]” (Matt. 6:24). “To hate...one’s life means to turn one’s back on it as of secondary importance compared with the cause that matters most.”⁹⁸

Dying with Christ (in union with Christ, by faith/the Spirit) to the things of this world in order to live for God is the same thing as denying ourselves and taking up our cross⁹⁹ and following Him on a continuous basis, which Jesus also spoke of (see Matt. 10:37-39; 16:24-28; Mark 8:34-38; Luke 9:23-26; 14:26-33; 17:33; Gal. 2:20; 6:14; and Phil. 3:17-21).

I’ll quote part of what D. A. Carson says here.¹⁰⁰ “The person who *loves his life will lose it*; it could not be otherwise, for to love one’s life is a fundamental denial of God’s sovereignty, of God’s rights, and a brazen elevation of self to the apogee of one’s perception, and therefore an idolatrous focus on self, which is the heart of all sin. Such a person loses his life, *i.e.* causes his own perdition. By contrast, the one *who hates his life* (the love/hate contrast reflects a semitic idiom that articulates fundamental preference, not hatred on some absolute scale: *cf.* Gen. 29:31,

⁹⁵ John 3:19 shows that *loving our life in this world* includes loving the darkness (loving the things of sin and Satan, including the lie); see John 3:19 (see on John 3:19-21 in my paper on John 1:19-4:54). Also see 1 John 2:15-17.

⁹⁶ We receive the down payment of eternal life when we submit to the gospel in faith and are born again by the infinite Spirit of God.

⁹⁷ 2 Timothy 2:11-13 are discussed in my paper titled, *Verse-by-Verse Studies of Ephesians Chapters 1 and 4; and Romans 8:16-39*, which is on my internet site (karlkempteachingministries.com).

⁹⁸ David J. Ellis, *New Layman’s Bible Commentary* (Zondervan, 1979), page 1321.

⁹⁹ This involves our being dead to everything that is outside the will of God for us.

¹⁰⁰ *Gospel According to John*, pages 438, 439.

33; Deut. 21:15 AV, NASB margin) *will keep it for eternal life* (cf. Mark 8:35 [and] parallels – which also follows a passion prediction [which predicts Jesus’ death]). This person denies himself, or, to use another of Jesus’ metaphors, takes up his cross daily (Mark 8:34 [and] parallels), *i.e.* he chooses not to pander to self-interest but at the deepest level of his being declines to make himself the focus of his interest and perception, thereby *dying*.”

I’ll quote part of what Leon Morris says here.¹⁰¹ “‘Hateth’ is of course not to be taken literally, but ‘hating the life’ is the natural antithesis of loving it (cf. Matt. 6:34=Luke 16:13; 14:26). It points to the attitude that sets no store by this life in itself. The man whose priorities are right has such an attitude of love for the things of God that it makes all interest in the affairs of this life appear by comparison as hatred. This man will keep his life ‘unto life eternal’”

I’ll quote part of what William Hendricksen says under verses 25, 26.¹⁰² “He who when the issue is between me and my gospel, on the one hand, and whatever has been dearest to him (father, mother, son, daughter, material things, the whole world, his own life, Matt. 10:37; 16:26; Luke 17:32) on the other hand, chooses...the latter, will perish everlastingly. I will at my coming be ashamed of him (Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26). But he who, in this *world*—that is, in the midst of the present adulterous and wicked generation (Mark 8:38...)—is willing to sacrifice his life¹⁰³ for me and my gospel (Mark 8:35) will guard and preserve it (Luke 17:33), so that it will blossom forth into everlasting life in the mansions above.... If anyone serves me, let him follow me all the way, even though it be the way of self-denial and the cross (Matt. 16:24; 10:38; Mark 8:34), bearing in mind that the way of the cross leads to the crown.”

And I’ll quote part of what F. F. Bruce says under verses 25, 26.¹⁰⁴ “The principle stated in verse 24 is of wide application; in particular if it is true of Jesus, it must be true of his followers. They too must be prepared to renounce present interests for the sake of a future inheritance. [Bruce acknowledges that we already have a down payment of our inheritance, being born-again Christians.] This is a Johannine counterpart to the Synoptic saying about the disciple’s obligation to take up his cross and follow his Master (cf. Mark 8:34-38). To love one’s life here means to give it priority over the interests of God’s kingdom; similarly to hate one’s life is to give priority over it to the interests of God’s kingdom.” **(26) If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me** [In this context the primary idea is *following Christ* to die to the self life and the life of this world (which includes dying to sinning) and to live, in union with Him as born-again Christians, in the truth, righteousness, and holiness of God, always doing His will. As the following words show, those who serve Christ and follow Him throughout the rest of their lives in this world (though they are not of this world) will also follow Him to glory—they will be glorified with Him; they will have a place in God’s eternal, heavenly kingdom (cf., e.g., John 14:2, 3; 17:24; and Rom. 8:17, 18). Later in this verse (26) Jesus even said that the Father will honor them.

Romans 8:17, 18 show that dying with Christ and being faithful to Him includes being willing to suffer (suffer the things that go with being faithful to Christ, like self-denial, trials, persecution, and temptation) if we want to be glorified with Him, “and if children [born-again children of God] heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him* so that we may also be glorified with *Him*. (18) For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”]; **and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves**

¹⁰¹ *Gospel According to John* (Eerdmans, 1971), pages 593, 594.

¹⁰² *Gospel of John* (Baker, 1953), page 197.

¹⁰³ Hendricksen has a footnote, “The *life* in such passages is the *self*: the terms *himself* and *his life* are used interchangeably; see Luke 9:23, 24....”

¹⁰⁴ *Gospel of John* (Eerdmans, 1983), page 265.

Me, the Father will honor him. [See under the first part of this verse.] **(27) Now My soul has become troubled** [Compare Matt. 26:37, 38; Mark 14:33, 34; and John 13:21. Jesus understood something of the extreme difficulty of the all-important assignment He was facing.]; **and what shall I say, ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour.** [Jesus was speaking of the hour that included His arrest, trial(s), beatings, scourging, and crucifixion. But He came to be the Lamb of God (cf., e.g., John 1:29, 36; 6:51; 10:15, 17, 18; 12:23, 32, 33; 18:11; Matt. 26:39, 42, 51-56; and Luke 22:42). What Jesus said in Luke 22:42 (and the parallel verses in Matthew and Mark; cf. John 6:38) is very significant, “Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will but Yours be done.” We must follow Jesus in saying, “yet not My will but Yours be done.” That’s what it means to die to sin and the self-life and really make God *our* God.] **(28) Father, glorify Your name.** [The Father *would* glorify His name by doing the things He must do (including preparing His Son for, and sustaining Him in, His hour of great trial¹⁰⁵) for the new-covenant plan of salvation to become reality through the all-important atoning death of His Son.] **Then a voice came out of heaven** [cf. Matt. 3:17; 17:5; Mark 1:11; 9:7; and Luke 3:22; 9:35]: **“I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.”** [The Father had glorified His name through the life and ministry of Jesus to this point; He would glorify it again—and He would glorify it to a much greater extent—through the atoning death of His Son, through resurrecting Him and taking Him up in glory to His right hand, and through all the good fruit that would result from what Jesus had done and would now do.] **(29) So the crowd of people who stood by and heard it were saying that it had thundered; others were saying, “An angel has spoken to Him.”** [It seems clear (based on what the people were saying) that the crowd did not understand what the Father had said to the Son (cf. Acts 22:9). Nevertheless, it was important for them to hear His voice (as verse 30 shows); at least many of them realized that the voice had come from heaven to Jesus.] **(30) Jesus answered and said, “This voice has not come for My sake, but for your sakes.** [This voice came for *their* sakes in that it served as one more powerful confirmation of the fact that Jesus was who He claimed to be, the God-man sent from God the Father, the Christ, the promised Savior. Jesus knew that the Father always answered His prayers (cf. John 11:42), so He didn’t need the Father to affirm that He would glorify His name through Christ, even as He had already glorified His name. And He didn’t need to Father to give Him that affirmation by speaking with an audible voice from heaven. However, the Father’s response to Jesus’ prayer of verse 28 surely proved to be a substantial blessing to Him as He faced the extremely difficult task of going to the cross. I’ll quote a sentence from what William Hendricksen says here.¹⁰⁶ “It seems reasonable that here as elsewhere in similar expressions (see on 4:21; 12:44) the meaning is: “Not *exclusively* for my sake has this voice occurred, but *also* for your sake.’ ”] **(31) Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world** [cf. John 14:30; 16:11; Eph, 2:2; 2 Cor. 4:4; 1 John 4:4; and 5:19] **will be cast out.** [The judgment of this world began in a very substantial sense with the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ and His attendant resurrection and ascension to the right hand of God the Father, which initiated new-covenant salvation. The devil was defeated at the cross (cf. John 16:11; Col. 2:10-

¹⁰⁵ In some ways Jesus had to endure the cross alone, in that our sins would separate Him from the Father (cf. Matt. 26:46; Mark 14:34).

¹⁰⁶ *Gospel of John*, page 201.

15; and Heb. 2:14-18). His defeat was manifested in a preliminary sense as the Lord Jesus Christ ministered on the earth before His death. (He resisted temptation and lived a sinless life; the devil had no place in Him [John 14:30], He cast out demons [cf. Matt. 12:28, 29], etc.) The devil's defeat was manifested in a fuller sense when Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to the right hand of the Father. His defeat was manifested in a fuller sense yet when believers (in union with the resurrected Christ) were born again and entered into new-covenant salvation, starting on the day of Pentecost.

Since sin, Satan, and spiritual death have been overthrown, those who submit (in faith) to Christ and the gospel throughout this age can now be born again, sanctified, and set free from the kingdom of Satan (which includes his evil angels and demons). At the end of this age (right in the middle of Daniel's 70th week, at the time of Christ's second coming and the rapture), Satan and his angels will be cast down to the earth from their privileged position in heavenly places (Rev. 12:4, 7-12; cf. Eph. 6:12). At the end of Daniel's 70th week, Satan (and presumably his angels and demons along with him) will be cast into the abyss for the duration of the millennium (Rev. 20:1-3). And after being loosed from the abyss for a short season at the end of the millennium, Satan (and those aligned with him) will be cast into the eternal lake of fire (Rev. 20:7-10.) **(32) And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw [cf. John 6:44] all men to Myself.** [Jesus was "lifted up from the earth" in two ways; both ways seem to be included here; the two ways are closely related.¹⁰⁷ He was *lifted up from the earth* on the cross. Verse 33 confirms that Jesus included that idea here. He was also *lifted up from the earth* to heaven, to the right hand of God the Father. He had to be *lifted up* in both senses in order to carry out the Father's plans to save and to judge and ultimately to bring forth His new heaven and new earth with its new Jerusalem of the eternal state that is totally filled with the glory of God.

Jesus' drawing all men to Himself builds on His all-important atoning death, which is so prominent in this context. He died bearing the sins of all mankind back to Adam (cf. John 1:29; 1 John 2:2), and all are invited to repent and submit to God's new-covenant plan of salvation, very much including the Gentiles (Acts 17:30, 31; 1 Tim. 2:3-6), but it is very clear in John chapter 12 (and throughout the New Testament) that all people will not repent and submit to God's new-covenant plan of salvation. Some people love sin and the darkness and they have no desire (and the gospel doesn't stimulate a desire) to repent and be made righteous with the very righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. John 6:44, which uses the same Greek verb for *draw* as this verse, speaks of God's *drawing* the elect of God.] **(33) But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die.** [See under verse 32.] **(34) The crowd then answered Him, "We have heard out of the Law [As in John 10:34 (and other verses), "the Law" was used here in a fuller sense than of the Mosaic Law; it referred to the entire Old Testament.] that the Christ is to remain forever [cf., e.g., Isa. 9:7; Ezek. 37:25; and Dan. 7:14]; and how can You say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'?** [See verses 32, 33. John 3:14; 8:28 also speak of the *Son of Man's being lifted up*. The crowd's point seems to be that if the Christ is to remain forever after He comes (that is, He is to remain forever in God's worldwide kingdom, which is centered in Jerusalem) how can

¹⁰⁷ The Greek verb (*hupsoō*) that is translated "I am lifted up" here is also used of Jesus being *lifted up* on the cross in John 3:14; 8:28, and it is used of His being *lifted up* (or you could translate *exalted*) to heaven, to the right hand of God the Father, in Acts 2:33; 5:31. The verb is also used in John 12:34.

Jesus say that He (the Son of Man¹⁰⁸) must be lifted up. I'm confident that the crowd didn't really understand much about what Jesus meant by His being lifted up. Some of the people in the crowd probably thought that He meant He would be lifted up to heaven somehow; others may have thought that He meant He would die; but there was much confusion regarding what He meant. Even Jesus' apostles didn't yet have an adequate understanding of His atoning death, resurrection, and being lifting up to heaven (cf., e.g., Luke 24:13-49; John 20:9).] **Who is this Son of Man?"** [This crowd seemed to rightly understand that Jesus claimed to be the Christ and the Son of Man.] **(35)** [Jesus didn't answer the crowd's specific questions of verse 34, but He went on to exhort and warn them in verses 35, 36 of their need to believe in Him (to submit to Him in faith), who is the Light, while He was still with them (cf. John 1:4, 5, 7-9; 9:5; and 12:46).] **So Jesus said to them, "For a little while longer the Light is among you** [Jesus was "the Light" (cf., e.g., John 7:33)]. **Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness** [Compare 1 John 1:6; 2:11. The *darkness* goes with Satan's kingdom (cf. Col. 1:13) of sin, spiritual death, and the absence of the truth (though there are plenty of half-truths to try to confuse the issue).] **does not know where he goes** [He doesn't know where he is going because he is in the darkness; he doesn't know the truth, righteousness, or holiness of God and isn't appropriating the saving grace of God in Christ.]. **(36) While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light** [cf. Luke 16:8; John 8:12; Eph. 5:8; and 1 Thess. 5:5]." **These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them** [cf. John 8:59]. [This marked the end of Jesus' public ministry. In a very few days He would be crucified.] **(37) But though He had performed so many signs before them** [Jesus had performed many more miraculous signs before Israel than those recorded in the Gospel of John (see John 20:30 and the Synoptic Gospels). And Jesus did a lot more than just work many signs in their midst: He was perfect in every way; He spoke nothing but the truth; He lived nothing but the righteousness and holiness of the truth of God; He was deity, God the Son, and His coming was prophesied in some detail in the Old Testament.], **yet they were not believing in Him.** [John 12:37-41 are discussed in some detail on pages 42-47 (pages 37-39 of the internet version) of my *A Paper on Faith*. Isaiah 6:8-13 are discussed there too. Isaiah 6:10 is loosely quoted in John 12:40. Some things that I said there will not be repeated here; so too for the references to other discussions on these important topics mentioned below. On verses like these we must be extra careful to seek God for the *balanced* truth of what the Bible teaches.

Some of the Jews submitted to Christ and the gospel in faith, but most of them didn't. The same thing happened when the gospel was sent to the Gentiles. It's hard to believe just how serious and deep-seated the sin problem is in the heart of man, according to the Bible. It seems unbelievable that so many people would choose to follow the devil in his rebellion against God, who—praise God!—happens to be a good God, a very good God. The fact that He demands repentance and submission to Himself, His Son, and His Word in faith and won't allow sin and rebellion to continue in His kingdom forever goes with His being a *good* God. God's kingdom (or universe/world) cannot function as

¹⁰⁸ Jesus frequently referred to Himself as the Son of Man, including in verse 23; on the Son of Man, see under John 1:51 in my paper on John 1:19-4:54, dated August 2005.

it must, in divine order, if He permits the rebellion of the devil, evil angels, demons, or men to continue *with the resultant chaos, suffering, and pain*.

It's true that those who rejected Christ and the gospel could offer some *excuses*, but they weren't (and they aren't) *valid* excuses before God. The Jews could say, for example, that some things were *confusing*. Verse 34 provides an example, and the New Testament gives quite a few other examples. I'll cite several examples: Though many Jews knew the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem, many didn't know that Jesus *was* born in Bethlehem; they thought He was born in Galilee (cf. John 7:41, 42). Most of the Jews didn't have room for the Person of God the Son, or the fact that Messiah was to be deity, or the virgin birth, so they had an *excuse* for rejecting Him as a blasphemer when He told them (to some extent) who He was. Though the Old Testament prophesied of the Suffering Servant and the atoning death and sanctifying work of the Messiah, those prophecies were not well understood, and most of the Jews were looking for the Messiah to deliver them from the hated Romans, not for Him to save them from spiritual death and sin. Most of them didn't even realize that they had a serious sin problem, but they did (cf., e.g., Luke 13:1-5). And most of the religious leaders of the Jews rejected Christ Jesus from the beginning (cf., e.g., John 7:47-51); the religious leaders couldn't mostly be wrong, could they?

God could have eliminated most of this *confusion* if He wanted to, but it served His purpose. For one very important thing, He allows much room for demons and false prophets to do their evil work. He provides/permits *excuses* for those who are looking for them.¹⁰⁹ He knows (and foreknew) the hearts of all people and understood the seriousness and depth of the sin problem. He didn't want people to join up and call themselves His people, or disciples of Christ, for the wrong reasons or with a half-hearted commitment. He was looking for those who would face the reality that they were sinners in spiritual death and in desperate need of the Savior from sin; Christ came and initiated the new covenant to save sinners from their sins and to get their hearts and lives in divine order and to keep them there forever. And He was looking for those who would humble themselves before Him and press into God's salvation and righteousness for the right reasons in spite of the confusion and against substantial opposition. Those

¹⁰⁹ To say essentially the same thing with different words, sometimes the Bible speaks of God's *hiding* the truth from some, while *revealing* it to others (to those who are humble before God and care about Him and His righteousness, to those who will repent and respond to His grace and come into divine order when they hear about it, to the elect). See, for example, Matt. 11:25-30; Luke 10:21-24; and 19:41-44. Note that Jesus put the blame on Israel in Luke 19:44 for not recognizing the time of their visitation. God doesn't hide the truth from those who are open to Him and the truth.

In our day, people who are looking for excuses to reject Christ and the gospel can find plenty of them. For example, a very large number of people (including many who call themselves Christians) are convinced that science (and other things) has proved that the Bible is full of errors. (The truth of the matter is that the Bible accurately communicates what God wanted to communicate, but it certainly doesn't incorporate our present scientific understanding of the universe, for example. If He would have incorporated that information in the Bible, it would not have communicated well to the peoples of the past few thousand years, and it would have greatly detracted from God's ability to communicate the all-important truths He wanted to communicate to them.) God could have avoided many of these "excuses," but He didn't. Then too, all of the sin, strife, confusion, and greatly differing interpretations of the Bible among those who call themselves Christians serve as a sufficient excuse for those looking for excuses. And quite often God's idea of righteousness, judgment, etc. don't fit the world's ideas. Many are quick to judge God in many ways, but before long all will know that really there is only One Judge that matters, and He has never does anything wrong, regardless of men's judgments.

who begin to cooperate with God's grace and seek first His kingdom and His righteousness will find His salvation and righteousness by His grace.

God cannot tolerate sin and rebellion in His eternal kingdom. He hates sin and rebellion! We'll see more about these things in verses 38-41, verses that speak of God's *blinding* the eyes and *hardening* the hearts of most of the Jews (things like allowing *confusion* and *hiding* the truth lead to *blindness* and *hardening* of hearts) so they wouldn't repent in some shallow way that didn't really change the direction of their hearts and lives; we cannot modify the gospel or accept God on *our* terms. We can try, but it won't work! We must make Him our God and do everything His way from the heart. We can't fake it before Him..

God sent His Son to die for all mankind, and He calls all to repent and to submit to Christ and the gospel in faith, but He knew before He created the universe, or man, that many never would repent after the fall. He cannot accept shallow, insincere repentance or a half-baked commitment to Himself, Christ, or the gospel. The sin problem isn't solved if sin and rebellion continue in the heart, and it is not possible for rebels to have a place in God's new heaven and new earth with its new Jerusalem. The all-powerful atoning blood of Christ (which is backed up by the all-powerful Spirit of God) can't cleanse the hearts and lives of sin and rebellion for those who don't want (with a top priority) to repent and live for God, doing everything His way, in His righteousness. We must appropriate and cooperate with His saving, sanctifying grace by faith on a continuous basis in accordance with His Word. God and His righteousness must become the top priority of our hearts (cf., e.g., Matt. 6:33). There is no other acceptable alternative for God's people.] **(38)** [See under verse 37. Verses 38-41 are quite important, but like John 6:37-39, 44¹¹⁰ and quite a few other verses, we must be careful that we don't read more into these verses than what was intended—we desperately need *the balanced truth* of what the Bible teaches about God's role and the role He left for man when it comes to salvation.¹¹¹ God doesn't make people repent; He doesn't give people saving faith; He doesn't make people continue in faith to the end; and He doesn't force people to become righteous and holy or force them to stay righteous and holy (we become righteous and holy and continue in the righteousness and holiness of God by grace through faith). Faith is our response to God's offer of grace. No one could repent or have saving faith or be righteous and holy if God didn't take the initiative in our salvation. He must receive all the glory. Our salvation comes one-hundred percent by the grace of God in Christ. We can't earn salvation by faith (to the extent we earned salvation, it wouldn't come by grace); we receive and cooperate with God's saving grace by faith. God set it up that way.

¹¹⁰ John chapter 6 is discussed verse-by-verse in my paper on John Chapters 5-8. Those verses are also discussed in some detail in my *A Paper on Faith*. A primary goal for that paper was to show that, though our faith is dependent on the saving grace of God, He doesn't give us saving faith or make us continue in faith. We must respond with faith to God's saving grace; we must appropriate and cooperate with His saving grace by faith on a continuous basis.

¹¹¹ I have discussed these things in some detail in my papers, always aiming for the balanced truth of what the Bible teaches. Start with John 6:37-39, 44, 45 in the paper on John Chapter 5-8 and the references I cited to my other writings there (see under John 6:37). If you want to get the complete picture on these very important, very controversial topics, you should read all of those discussions. It will be well worth your time. There is page after page of important discussions and quotations dealing with these topics, for example, under Romans chapter 9 in my paper on Romans chapters 9-11.

The fact that the Bible teaches that God elects/chooses some individuals and *draws* (and calls) them in a special sense (cf. John 6:44 with 6:37, 39) doesn't mean that man doesn't have a substantial role to play in God's salvation plans. The Bible also makes it clear that we still have to respond to God and His grace with faith in accordance with His Word on a continuous basis. It is also important to know that the Bible teaches that Christ died for all and that all are called to repent and submit to the gospel in faith (cf., e.g., John 3:16-18; Acts 17:30, 31; 1 John 2:2; and 1 Tim. 2:4-6).¹¹²

John's quotation of Isa. 53:1a here in John 12:38, "LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT," includes the idea that the elect (as free moral agents¹¹³) must *believe* God's offer of salvation (the gospel), which includes submitting to, and acting upon, God's report; if we don't submit and act, we didn't really believe.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, it is important to see that God's election/choosing of individuals is based (at least to some significant extent) on His knowledge (and foreknowledge) of the individuals. He knew which Jews of Isaiah's generation (and of every other generation) truly were His people, for example, and He knew those who weren't. He knew that most of them would not repent at the preaching of Isaiah (or Jeremiah, Ezekiel, etc.), but He also knew that if He judged Israel intensely that some would eventually repent. (See, for example, Isaiah 6:8-13.¹¹⁵) God foreknew all people before He created the earth; He knew their hearts, including knowing how they would respond to His call to repent and to submit (in faith) to Him and His Word. People are different in their responses to God (Abel and Cain; Jacob and Esau; and Antichrist, for example), but the elect are totally dependent on God's grace and must give Him all the glory for their salvation. There is no room for boasting in man (cf., e.g., 1 Cor. 1:26-31).

Now let's discuss Isa. 53:1b, which John also quoted here in verse 38, "AND TO WHOM HAS THE ARM OF THE LORD BEEN REVEALED?" This *revealing* is the opposite of His *hiding* and His allowing *confusion*, etc. (see under verse 37). God's *revealing* Himself to the elect in John's day, for example, goes with His special *drawing* of the elect (cf. John 6:44). It is to be understood that those who *believed* the message of new-covenant salvation in Christ (spoken of in Isa 53:1a) were dependent on God's *revealing* the mighty saving work He was to accomplish through Christ Jesus by His mighty arm.

Isaiah 52:12-53:12, which are some of the most important prophetic verses in the Old Testament, are so awesomely remarkable that we are dependent on God to open the eyes of our hearts to adequately understand them. Those verses prophesy of the

¹¹² No persons need fear that if they begin to seriously respond to God's call to repent and look to Him in accordance with His Word on a consistent basis that He will reject them. And as they press on they will receive more light. Christ died for them, and they are called to repent and submit to Christ and the gospel in faith.

¹¹³ Man is in spiritual death and bondage after the fall, but man still has some freedom of the will and some capacity to have faith and to cooperate with the saving grace of God in Christ.

¹¹⁴ The apostle Paul quoted Isa. 53:1a in Rom. 10:16, "However, they [the Jews] did not all heed [obey] the good news [the gospel]; for Isaiah says, 'LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?' " Paul's point in context was that although Israel had heard the gospel (see Rom. 10:14-18), they (speaking of the majority) rejected it—"they did not all heed [obey] it"; they did not submit to it in faith. I'll quote Paul's concluding verse of that chapter, "But as for Israel He says, 'ALL THE DAY LONG I HAVE STRETCHED OUT MY HANDS TO A DISOBEDIENT AND OBSTINATE PEOPLE [quoting from Isa. 65:2].'" Israel was responsible for this unbelief, disobedience, and obstinance.

¹¹⁵ We'll discuss these verses below, under verses 40 and 41.

Suffering Servant of God (Christ Jesus) who bore our sins with the guilt and the penalties (very much including the penalties of spiritual death and bondage to sin so we could be forgiven and begin to live in the righteousness and holiness of God, not to mention being saved from the penalty of hell) so that we could be saved with a very full and glorious salvation.

And it wasn't just that the elect were dependent on God to *reveal* the gospel to them, John goes on in verse 39 to loosely quote Isa. 6:10 to make the point that God blinded the eyes and hardened the hearts of the people of Israel (speaking of the majority) in his day (as well as in Isaiah's day and other generations). Blinding the eyes and hardening the hearts is a more forceful way of saying what we spoke of under verses 37, 38 with words like allowing confusion, providing excuses not to believe, and hiding the truth. One of the primary factors that led to the hardening of the hearts of Israel in most generations was the false prophets and apostate religious leaders (who were often motivated by demon spirits) who kept telling the people everything but the full truth—they didn't call the people to repent, and they typically told the people what they wanted to hear.] ***This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet which he spoke: "LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT? AND TO WHOM HAS THE ARM OF THE LORD BEEN REVEALED?"*** [John was quoting from Isa. 53:1; see above, under verse 38.] **(39) For this reason they could not believe, for Isaiah said again** [John was loosely quoting from Isa. 6:10 in verse 40. See under verse 37, 38.], **(40) "HE HAS BLINDED THEIR EYES AND HE HARDENED THEIR HEART, SO THAT THEY WOULD NOT SEE WITH THEIR EYES AND PERCEIVE WITH THEIR HEART, AND BE CONVERTED AND I HEAL THEM."** [Compare Deut. 29:2-4. Isaiah 6:10 (in context with Isa. 6:8-13) speaks of a judicial blinding of the eyes and hardening of the hearts of the majority of the people of Israel of Isaiah's generation (and future generations) because of their unrepentant, deep-seated unbelief and sinfulness. God knows the hearts. The book of Isaiah speaks much of their serious need to repent and of their unrepentant hearts. God doesn't blind the eyes or harden the hearts of people who are open to Him and repentant, but Israel had closed their eyes and hardened their hearts. God had also hardened Pharaoh's heart back in the days of the exodus from Egypt, but the book of Exodus makes it very clear that Pharaoh's heart was hard to begin with, and he further hardened his heart time after time too. God doesn't harden hearts that aren't already hard before Him.

We need to be continuously looking to God for the balanced truth of what the Scriptures teach. What some passages teach must be balanced out with what other passages teach to learn the *balanced* truth. And on the topic we are discussing we must admit, I think, that God hasn't revealed as much as we would like to know. However, He does reveal as much as we need to know.

I'll quote part of what Leon Morris says under verses 39, 40.¹¹⁶ "The present passage ascribes everything to the will of God. Unless His hand is in it nothing is possible. But when John quotes 'he hath blinded their eyes...' he does not mean that the blinding takes place without the will or against the will of these people. So with the hardening of their heart. These men chose evil. It was their own deliberate choice, their own fault. Make no mistake about that. Throughout his Gospel John has insisted upon the seriousness of the decision forced on the Jews by the presence of Jesus, on their responsibility, and on their guilt. He is not now

¹¹⁶ *Gospel According to John*, page 604.

removing all that. What he is now saying is that the hand of God is in the consequences of their choice (*cf.* the threefold ‘God gave them up’ [where Paul happens to be speaking of sinful *Gentiles*] in Rom. 1:24, 26, 28).”

God wasn’t going to tolerate a superficial, half-hearted repentance with a superficial *healing*. He didn’t want them to be converted in a superficial way that wouldn’t really have dealt with the serious sin problem in Israel. As Isaiah 6:11-13 show, God blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts in a way that led to the very intense judgment of Israel, and He mentioned that intense judgments would come in the future (see under verse 41). The first such judgment to follow was the Babylonian captivity and the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem. Through such judgments (and other means), God preserved a repentant remnant in Judah/Israel (see Isa. 6:13).¹¹⁷

The apostle John applied the words of Isaiah 6:10 to the majority of the Jews of his generation. Intense judgment fell on the Jews of John’s generation, starting in AD 66, when the Jews rebelled against the Romans (as they had rebelled against the Babylonians). Their primary problem was that they *were rebelling against God*. The Romans destroyed the temple and much of Jerusalem in AD 70. God’s people (and that includes Christians) never get by with continuing in unrepentant sinfulness, rebellion,

¹¹⁷ John “quoted” Isa. 6:10 in John 12:40. The three verses that follow in Isaiah (Isa. 6:11-13), which are the last verses of that chapter, are very important to the full interpretation of that prophecy. I’ll quote Isa. 6:11-13 and make several comments in brackets. As always, unless otherwise indicated, I’m quoting from the latest NASB edition (1995 edition). “Then I [Isaiah] said, ‘Lord, how long?’ [That is, how long will the unrepentant sinfulness and the consequent intense judgment(s) of Judah/Israel continue?] And He answered, ‘Until cities are devastated and without inhabitant, Houses are without people And the land is utterly desolate. (12) The LORD [Yahweh] has removed men far away [from the land of Judah/Israel], And the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land [because there were so few people left in the land]. [The first major installment of these prophetic words came to pass with the Babylonian captivity, which started in 605 BC. These prophetic words of Isaiah chapter 6 were given to Isaiah when God commissioned him to be a prophet, in the year King Uzziah died (739/740 BC; see Isa. 6:1). Isaiah ministered to the Southern Kingdom of Israel (often called Judah), with its capital at Jerusalem (*cf.* Isa. 1:1). It is noteworthy, however, that the Northern Kingdom (sometimes called Israel) was destroyed by the Assyrians and large numbers of Israelites were sent into exile, from which they never returned—the capital city, Samaria, fell to the Assyrians in 722/721 BC. The Assyrians attacked Judah but God prevented them from taking Jerusalem or destroying the nation.] (13) Yet there will be a tenth portion in it [The “tenth portion” includes the repentant, righteous *remnant* left of Judah/Israel after the intense judgments through the Babylonians. Many unrepentant Jews were purged from Judah/Israel in those years of judgment, and many of those who were left as a remnant had done some serious repenting. Many Jews who were relatively righteous before that judgment were motivated to draw closer to God too.] And it [the tenth portion/the remnant left after that judgment] will again be subject to burning [“it will again be laid waste” NIV. The NIV has a period after the word *waste* and starts a new sentence with the words, “But as the terebinth. . .”]. Like a terebinth or an oak Whose stump remains when it is felled. The holy seed is its stump’ [These last words show that the sin problem was far from being permanently solved in Judah/Israel after the Babylonian destructions and exiles: Further intense judgments against the large numbers of unrepentant sinners in Judah/Israel would be coming in the future. The last such shaking (judgment/burning) will take place in the last days and will involve the (rebuilt) temple and Antichrist (*cf.*, e.g., Isa. 66:1-6; Dan. 12:1; Joel 2:30-32; Zech. 13:8; 14:1, 2; Matt. 24:15-22; Rom. 9:27-29; and 2 Thess. 2:3, 4, 7, 8). The repentant end-time *remnant* of Judah/Israel will receive the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved by Him, starting, I believe, right in the middle of Daniel’s 70th week, right after the great tribulation of Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21, 22, 28-31, at the time of Christ’s second coming and the rapture (*cf.*, e.g., Isa. 10:21-23; 27:12, 13; Dan. 12:1; Joel 2:32; Zech. 12:10-13:1; 14:3-11; Rom. 11:25-27; and Rev. 11:13). I’ll quote a sentence from what F. Delitzsch says here about these judgments that end with the end-time remnant of Israel becoming part of God’s “new Israel” (Vol. 7 of Keil and Delitzsch, page 203). “The passage contains an outline of the history of Israel to the end of time.”.]”

and unbelief. Also see under verse 41.] **(41) These things Isaiah said because he saw His glory, and he spoke of Him.** [Compare Luke 24:27, 44-47. I'll quote part of what I said regarding the meaning of John 12:39-41 on pages 37-39 on the internet version of my *A Paper on Faith*. "There is widespread agreement that the apostle John is saying that when Isaiah saw the Lord [and His glory], as recorded in Isaiah chapter 6, he was seeing the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God.¹¹⁸ Isaiah 6 is a relevant chapter in that the 'quotation' in John 12:40 is from Isa. 6:10. ... Here we need to discuss the meaning of John 12:39, 40. The end result of what these verses say is that it was the will of God that many of the sons of Israel not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be healed by Him. If you read too much into these words, you end up with ideas John [or, more importantly, God] never intended. Why would God will such a thing? Doesn't the Bible say He wants all to repent and believe and be saved (e.g., 1 Tim. 2:3-6)?

The dominant theme underlying John 12:39, 40 (a theme that permeates John chapters 1-12 and Isaiah chapters 1-6) is that many of the sons of Israel were so far from God, and so given over to sin, that any repentance and faith would be extremely superficial, and the end result would be bad, bad for the Body of Christ, and even bad for the persons who wouldn't really be submitting to Christ or God the Father (their sin and guilt would ultimately be increased).

When John writes (quoting from Isa. 6:10) 'And I...heal them,' he is not speaking of the glorious spiritual healing (which includes the new birth and the transformation to righteousness and holiness) that is offered to all who repent and submit to the gospel in faith. For all who receive that healing, the sin problem will truly be solved, as it must be. John is thinking of a superficial healing, mostly in the external dimension, that makes things seem a little better for a while, and that postpones judgment for a while, but doesn't really begin to solve the primary problem, the sin problem. For one thing, God did not want to postpone intense judgment. (That was also so for Israel in the days of Isaiah.) When John wrote these words, Israel was headed toward intense judgment and shaking because of the depth of their sin problem (cf., e.g., Matt. 21:33-46; 23:37-39; and 24:1, 2). Intense shaking came to Israel after they rebelled against Rome, starting in AD 66."

I'll also quote part of what I said under the discussion of Isa. 6:8-13, which is found on pages 40-42 on the internet version of my *A Paper on Faith*. "Before we leave these verses [Isa. 6:8-13], I should point out that the Septuagint version of Isa. 6:9, 10, which is quoted in Matt. 13:14, 15 and Acts 28:25-27, gives a different slant to these verses.¹¹⁹ Both *slants*

¹¹⁸ Although there is widespread agreement that John meant that Isaiah saw God the Son (one way or another) when he saw the Lord in Isa. 6:1-7, I believe John probably meant that Isaiah saw the *glory of the Lord Jesus Christ* through the revelations he received about Him (cf., e.g., Isa. 9:6, 7; 11:1-10; 42:1-9; 49:1-7; 52:12-15; 53:10b-12; and 63:1-3). Isaiah probably saw God the Father on His throne in Isa. 6:1 (as in Rev. 4:2-5:7, for example). Compare John 8:56 regarding Abraham's rejoicing that he had seen Christ's day (apparently by revelation).

¹¹⁹ In Matt. 13:14, 15 (also see Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10) Jesus "quoted" from Isa. 6:9, 10 to explain to His disciples why He spoke to the multitudes in parables. (This was at least one reason He often spoke to them in parables.) I'll quote Matt. 13:10-17 and make several comments in brackets. "And the disciples came and said to Him, 'Why do You speak to them in parables?' [In Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Jesus' disciples came to Him and asked this question after He had given the parable of the sower. He answered their question (verses 13-17) and went on (starting in verse 18) to explain the parable of the sower to his disciples.] (11) Jesus answered them, 'To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven ["Because it has been given to you" NKJV], but to them it has not been granted. [Jesus *revealed* these important truths to His disciples but *hid* them from the multitudes. Very often the disciples did not understand the parables until Jesus explained the parables to them. It is clear that the multitudes did not understand the parables if the disciples did not understand them.] (12) For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. [The reason (a very important and easy to understand reason) that Jesus gave the understanding to His disciples is that they appreciated and were using what they had from God. They

are, of course, biblical. *We need the balanced truth of what the Bible teaches!* The Septuagint version doesn't mention any role of God [like His blinding eyes or hardening hearts (as in John 12:39, 40)] in Israel's rejection of the Word of God as spoken through Isaiah. As discussed above, Israel was responsible for their unbelief. God always willed the repentance and faith of the sons of Israel (and of all mankind), but not on a superficial level. (Of course I'm not denying God's foreknowledge; He knew the hearts of all mankind before the foundation of the world.)] **(42) Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him** [The raising of Lazarus from the dead probably was a significant factor in convincing some of these rulers to "believe" in Jesus. However, the rest of the words of this verse and verse 43 show that their faith/believing left a lot to be desired. We can undoubtedly say that those rulers

were making God and the things of God top priority, and they were hungry for more understanding and the grace to more fully live in the truth, righteousness, and holiness of God, always doing His will from the heart (in faith). On the other hand those who were living on the edge of the kingdom of God, if even that close, had not been using what little they had from God, and they were not hungry to receive what the Father was offering them through the Lord Jesus Christ. Why should God give more truth and grace to those who wouldn't use it. God knows the hearts, and He knows what we are doing. We can't fool Him.] (13) Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. [God didn't want people like that to see, hear, or understand much of what Jesus was saying, not until they were ready to repent in a serious way and make God and the things of God top priority.] (14) In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, 'YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE; (15) FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES, OTHERWISE THEY WOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I WOULD HEAL THEM.' [God always desires the repentance of His people *if it is true repentance*, and He has promised to heal and save those who truly repent. True repentance is a whole lot more than feeling bad about what you have done and/or wanting to be forgiven. True repentance includes the desire to stop sinning and to begin to live for God in every way (by His grace).] (16) But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. (17) For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see *it*, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear *it*.' "What a great blessing it is to be able to understand and to begin to live in the kingdom of God as born-again Christians through the atoning death (and resurrection and ascension) of the Lord Jesus Christ that initiated new-covenant salvation. If we don't make understanding these things and living in the center of God's will top priority, we will miss God's best in this life, and in the worst-case-scenario we could find ourselves being rejected by God. God is often calling His people to make some changes (to repent), but I have discovered over the years that many Christians don't want to hear that.

And I'll quote Acts 28:23-29 and make some comments in brackets; this passage also quotes Isa. 6:9, 10 from the Septuagint version and helps show that Israel was responsible for their unbelief:] 'And when they [Acts 28:17b shows that "they" were "the leading men of the Jews (at Rome)."] had set a day for him [the apostle Paul, who had just been sent to Rome as a prisoner], they came to him at his lodging in large numbers; and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God, and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening. (24) And some of them were being persuaded by the things spoken, but others would not believe. (25) And when they did not agree with one another, they began leaving after Paul had spoken one parting word, "The Holy Spirit rightly spoke through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers, (26) saying, 'GO TO THIS PEOPLE AND SAY, "YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; AND YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE; (27) FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, AND WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES; LEST THEY SHOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, AND HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I SHOULD HEAL THEM.'" ' (28) Let it be known to you therefore, that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will also listen.'" ' "

who didn't press on to solidify their faith didn't become true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Nicodemus, a Pharisee, was one of the rulers who believed in Christ Jesus (cf. John 3:1-12; 7:50-52; and 19:39-41; see under John 7:47-50 in my paper on John chapters 5-8). Joseph of Arimathea was another (see Matt. 27:57-60; Mark 15:43-36; Luke 23:50-53; and John 19:38-42). As these references show, a few days after the events spoken of in John 12:27-36, these men rather publicly manifested their faith in burying Jesus' body. I'll quote John 19:38, "After these things Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate granted permission. So he came and took away His body." It isn't clear to what extent Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus were *secret* disciples of Jesus *after* they buried Him, perhaps not at all, which would have led to very serious problems with the rulers of the Jews. It would have been very difficult for them to keep what they had done secret, even if they wanted to keep it secret.], **but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him** [cf. Matt. 10:32, 33; Luke 12:8, 9] **for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue** [cf. John 9:22; 16:2]; **(43) for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.** [Compare John 5:41, 42, 44.] **(44) And Jesus cried out and said** [It isn't clear when Jesus cried out these words. Quite a few commentators believe that in verses 44-50, now that Jesus' public ministry to the Jews had ended (see John 12:36b), John gave a brief summary of some of the key things that Jesus had cried out before the Jews. William Hendricksen speaks of verses 44-50 as "a summary of previous public teaching (and to some extent also of subsequent private instruction)...." R. C. H. Lenski says, "He [John] adds another paragraph in which he combines previous utterances of Jesus and fashions them into a brief summary of Jesus' call and testimony to his nation. This constitutes an impressive declaration on the supreme importance of faith and on the fatal error and doom of unbelief."], **"He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me.** [Jesus' point here was not that believers did not believe in Him, but that when they believed in Him they were also believing in the One who had sent Him, God the Father. Compare Matt. 10:40; John 5:24.] **(45) He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me.** [Compare John 14:9. Jesus revealed God the Father by being who He was (He was God the Son; cf. John 1:18); He was like the Father in every way, and He spoke the words the Father gave Him to speak and did the works the Father gave Him to do.] **(46) I have come as Light into the world** [Compare John 1:4; 3:19-21; 8:12; 9:5; and 12:35, 36. The Light includes the truth, righteousness, and holiness of God; God (the triune God) is the only source of truth, righteousness, and holiness and of everything else that is good, including life (spiritual life and physical life).], **so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness** [The darkness excludes the truth, righteousness, holiness, and spiritual/eternal life of God; the devil's kingdom is a kingdom of sin, unholiness, spiritual death, and darkness (cf. Luke 1:79; 22:53; Acts 26:18; 2 Cor. 6:14; Eph. 5:8-11; Col. 1:13; 1 Pet. 2:9; and 1 John 1:5).]. **(47) If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them** [cf., e.g., Matt. 7:24-27], **I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world.** [Compare John 3:15-21; 8:15. At His first coming Jesus did not come to judge the world (the emphasis was on His coming to save the world), but it will be different at His second coming: He is coming to judge the world too (cf., e.g., John 5:22, 27-29; 9:39; Matt. 16:27; Acts 10:42; 17:31). See under verse 48 too.] **(48) He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what**

will judge him at the last day. [Compare Deut. 18:18, 19; John 5:45-47; and 8:47. One key point that Jesus made here in verses 47, 48 was that when people reject Him (Him who is God the Son, who had been sent by God the Father) and do not receive His sayings (which, as verse 49, 50 and other verses show, were the words the Father had given Him to speak) will be judged guilty of rejecting God's Christ, who is the only Savior from sin, spiritual death, and darkness. How can sinful people be saved from damnation when they reject God's only plan of salvation? There is a powerful exhortation to faith in Christ Jesus and the gospel of new-covenant salvation here and a powerful warning against unbelief. People are responsible for what they do with Christ and the gospel.] **(49) For I did not speak on My own initiative** ["of Myself"], **but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment** [cf. John 10:18; 14:31; and 12:50] **as to what to say and what to speak** [cf. John 7:16; 8:26, 28, 38; 12:50; 14:10, 24; and 17:8]. **(50) I know that His commandment is eternal life** [The Father's commandment results in eternal life for all who are saved through submitting in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ and the gospel of the new covenant.]; **therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me."**

May the will of God be fully accomplished through this paper and His people be edified!

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