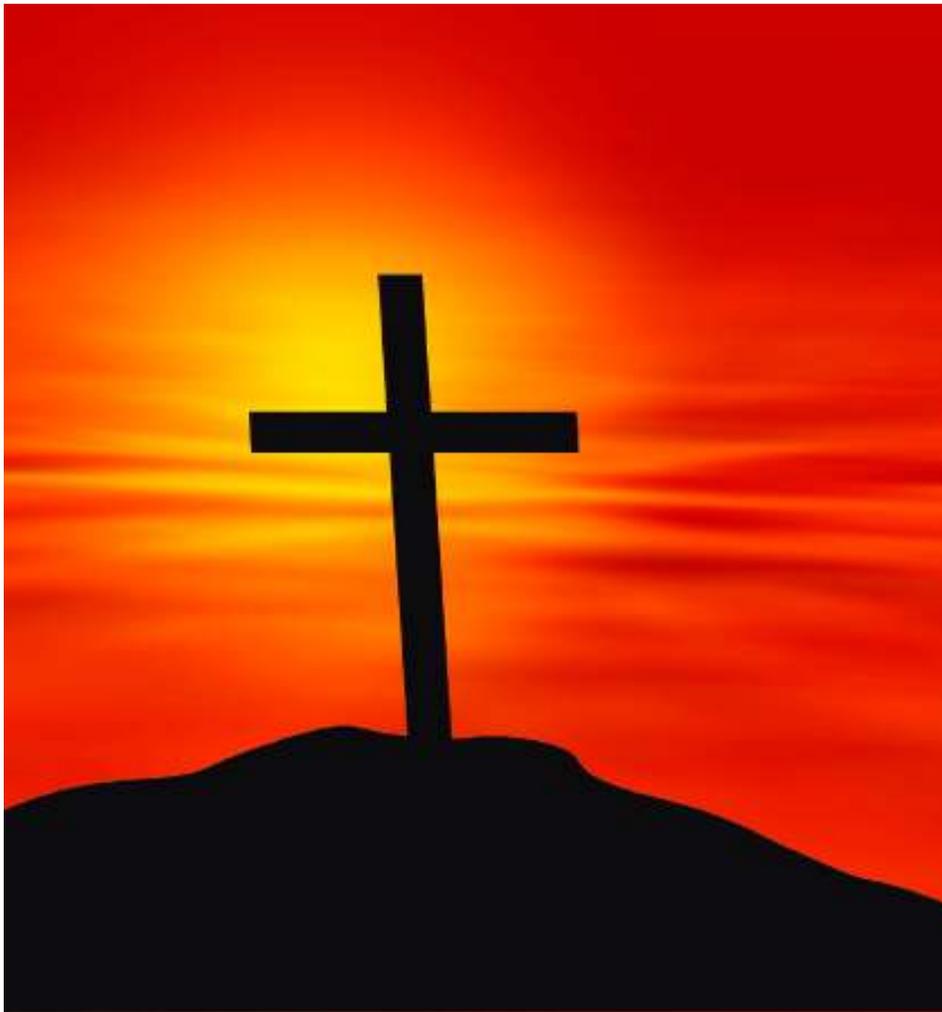


The Gospel of John



A Basis for Belief

The outline for this local study relies primarily on the work published by Homer Hailey in “That You May Believe, Studies in the Gospel of John”. This volume is currently out of print. If you are fortunate enough to have access to a copy, I highly recommend that you employ it in your study for this class.

In composing the Introduction I have considered the volume “John” in the Truth Commentary series by Daniel H. King Sr.

Workbooks respectively authored by Robert Harkrider and Mike Willis were also reviewed.

The gospel of John is unique among the gospel accounts. It is less historical than the synoptic accounts by Matthew, Mark and Luke. However, the parallels are strong making John’s history equally credible. Designed to produce faith, the Gospel of John delves into a number of logical arguments and evidences. This study will not be chapter by chapter and verse by verse. Rather it will be a discussion of our faith leading to a dramatic and rewarding conclusion. (*Ken Fleeman*)

The Gospel of John: A Basis for Belief **Compiled by Ken Fleeman**

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Introduction

Authorship – The Apostle John, Son of Zebedee

Internal Evidence:

The author appears to be Jewish and a native of Palestine based upon his intimacy with the history and geography included in the narrative. It is obvious that the author lived in the time of the record as he was known to the high priest and his household. The author is the only one to reveal that Peter was the one to strike Malchus in the garden. Lastly the level of detail in which he cites numbers, actions, reactions and the names of individuals left anonymous in the synoptic accounts (ie.. Peter's actions in the garden) all point to the author being an eyewitness.

External Evidence:

The authorship has only been seriously doubted in the last century. Remember that serious doubt is not credible evidence! Authors and historians contemporary with John and those in the first century attribute the work to John. Theophilus of Antioch in *Ad Autolyicum* written ~180 AD refers to John's opening premise. Irenaeus refers to John reclining on the Lord at the last supper and states that John taught the gospel at Ephesus. Eusebius cites a letter Irenaeus wrote to an individual named Florinus in which Irenaeus claims to be a student of Polycarp who knew John personally.

Tradition:

While unsubstantiated by scripture, tradition indicates that John was released from his exile on Patmos after the death of Domitian and spent the remainder of his life in Ephesus. Tradition further states that the account was written toward the end of John's life putting it in the last decade of the first century. Clement of Alexandria made that assertion citing earlier elders. Irenaeus states that John lived into the reign of Trajan which began in 98 AD making that late dating possible. Second century references quoting or paraphrasing excerpts of the gospel demand it be written prior to 130 AD and with high certainty written before 110 AD. Multiple credible historical references exist.

John's relationship with Jesus:

It is indisputable that John was the "disciple whom Jesus loved" (13:23; 19:26; 20:22; 21:7, 20). He is also known as the "apostle of love" as it is a recurrent theme in his writing. John reclined against Jesus at the last supper and was included with Peter and James at the Transfiguration and during Jesus' agony in the Garden of Gethsemane.

It is possible that Jesus, James and John were cousins. Compare Matthew 27:55, 56 with Mark 15:40, 41. See also John 19:25. This might further explain the depth of Jesus' affection for John and the placing of Mary in John's care.

Comparison to synoptic accounts:

- Differing style; John uses a distinct Greek style with an equally distinct, but small, vocabulary. King describes the style as "clear" and "impressive" with "solemn dignity". A Hebrew influence is seen by the extensive use of conjunctions throughout the Greek text.

- Differing purpose; John states his purpose is to instill belief in the reader. The synoptic accounts offer a linear historical perspective that certainly imparts knowledge of God's work and word. Knowledge of God's word certainly creates faith. John however presents a number of evidences throughout that bring one to greater faith.

- Incomplete but sufficient; The synoptic gospels offer a perspective of one journey by Jesus from his work in the region of Galilee to Jerusalem terminating in his crucifixion. John records three journeys of Jesus from the region of Galilee to Jerusalem (2:13, 5:1, 7:10). John's focus thereafter is on the Judean ministry which is overlooked by the other gospels. John covers half a year span of the Judean ministry but does not mention Jesus leaving Jerusalem, a necessity when harmonizing with the synoptic accounts. Remember John's purpose was to provide evidence for belief and not a full accounting of geography and chronology. That being said, John's references to a number of Passovers (2:13, 6:4 and possibly 5:1) and other feasts allow the scholar to calculate Jesus' earthly ministry at three plus years.

John limits his record to seven notable miracles. He records debates of Jesus rather than parables. Abstract themes of light, life, love, truth and abiding recur at regular intervals. John refers to a number of Old Testament characters and alludes to Old Testament scriptures and imagery rather than citing the "proof" texts common in the synoptic accounts.

1. Name a few internal evidences as to the authorship of this gospel. _____

2. Name a few external evidences as to the authorship. _____

3. What is John's purpose for writing this gospel? _____

4. Why would the synoptic accounts not be sufficient? _____

5. Do you ever struggle with your faith? To what do you turn to strengthen it? _____

6. What do you expect to learn or to gain from this study? _____

Lesson 1 - The Claims of Jesus

John Chapters One and Two

The Proposition

John's proposition comes at the end of his gospel. Everything that he is asking you to believe is summarized by his conclusion that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name". I appreciate very much our own beloved brother, Paul, when he says "there is nothing incidental or accidental in scripture". Do you realize just how much John is asking of his readers?

Let's consider the scope of John's assertion. One must believe that Jesus existed, believe that Jesus is the Christ, believe that Jesus is the Son of God, believe in God, believe that "believing" will result in eternal life, believe in eternity and then believe in one's own self to see it through! Eternal life depends upon this delicate thread called faith. If we waver the thread breaks and we are lost. If John lied we have no hope. Either Jesus was all He claimed to be or He was a scoundrel, a fraud, a lunatic or any other of the derogatory terms men have hurled in their efforts to discredit Him.

Belief requires evidence. We must rely on an author who would not even state his name. We must rely on the inspiration of an author who did not claim inspiration. He only claimed to be a witness (21:24). We must rely on the inspiration of Jesus who claimed to be revealing His Father's will. We must rely on the truthfulness of the author and the truthfulness of Jesus who made the claims. We must rely upon our own reasoning to fully accept or deny John's conclusion.

We must all render a verdict based on the evidence John presents. How strong or weak is the evidence? How clearly is the evidence presented? How well can we process or analyze the evidence presented? Will we be honest or will we insert our prejudices? And when the verdict is rendered do we have the will to carry out the necessary conclusions?

John proposes to set forth evidence to prove that Jesus is indeed the Christ, the Son of God. The evidence convinced John. It convinced many of his peers. That evidence has been preserved so that it may equally convince each succeeding generation which will honestly consider it. Jesus taught that it was the honest heart that produces fruit (Luke 8:15). It is the honest heart that will render a fair verdict.

The Prologue (1:1-18) makes a number of claims regarding the identity of Jesus and regarding His nature and purpose. Careful consideration of these claims is appropriate as they establish a framework for the further evidences to be presented in the Gospel of John.

Claim 1 - Christ is the Essence of Deity

"In the beginning was the Word" (1:1a). This statement propels us back to the beginning of time, to the creation (Ge 1:1). At this point the "Word" already "was", already existed making the "Word" eternal. This same being later "became flesh and dwelt among us" as the only begotten Son of God (1:14). Further, He was "with" God (1:1b). "With" implies a

bond, a relationship. Multiple persons with singular identities sharing commonalities that bind them together. Lastly he “was God”, Deity. Not past tense, not “a god”, not “the God”, just “God”. Whatever it means to be “God” must be attributed to the Word, the Son of God. (Heb 1:3). This person is eternal, communes with God and shares his Divine Essence.

Claim 2 - Christ is the Creator of the World

“All things were made through Him; and without Him was not anything made that had been made” (1:3) We get insight from Rev 4:11 that God purposed and planned the creation. We understand from John 1:3 that the “Word” executed that plan. To bring the concept into our realm, God is the owner and architect. Jesus is the general contractor.

Claim 3 - Christ is the Light and Life of the World

“In Him was life; and the life was the light of men” (1:4). How far apart are life and death, the animate from the inanimate? How far apart are light and darkness, knowledge from ignorance? It depends upon your distance from the source. Perhaps it depends upon what is standing between you and the source. Who can illuminate a darkened world and offer life to every inhabitant for the duration of time?

Claim 4 - Christ is Victorious over Darkness

“And the light shines in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not” (1:5). The purpose of light was to bring truth, illumination to men. There is an intense conflict between darkness and the truth, yet the darkness has never defeated the truth. The darkness swallows men but it cannot survive within the light. Still it co-exists with truth. There is still darkness in the world. The truth still exists. Unbelief still exists yet so does belief! Enter John the Baptist a witness to the light. He announces the imminent arrival of the light that “lights every man”.

Claim 5 - Christ is the Creator and Benefactor of Humanity

We established that Jesus created the world in verse three. “He was in the world”, “the world was made through Him” (1:10a) but the world did not recognize Him. The world did not recognize their creator, their sustainer. Heb 1:3 reminds us that he “upholds all things by the word of His power” and Col 1:17 that He is the one by whom “all things consist”. How is it possible that mankind did not recognize Him? The Apostle Paul says that “the world through its wisdom knew not God”, they “glorified Him not as God” and “exchanged the truth of God for a lie” choosing to worship themselves (1 Cor 1:21; Rom 1:21, 25). Thus Jesus appears to grant the “right to become children of God” (11-13) to the Jews who reject Him and to the Gentiles who have already refused God.

Claim 6 - Christ is the Revelation of the Father

“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth” (1:14). God revealed in a visible, tangible form. One who was not of this world residing in it. This is reminiscent of God previously abiding in the tabernacle among his people (Ex 40:34-38). Now His Son dwells among men in this tent of flesh. John “beheld His glory”. What glory? Was He deserving?

“No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him” (1:18). This is in keeping with prophecy that God would be with us. “Immanuel” (Isa 7:14); God’s “fellow” (Zech 13:7); the “child..born”, the “son..given” whose name was to be “Wonderful, counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (Isa 9:6, 7).

Claim 7 - Christ is the Fullness of Grace

Not only is His glory as the only begotten of the Father but John also said “we behold Him as one full of grace and truth” (1:14). “For of His fullness we all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (1:16, 17). We have established that Jesus is the Essence of God. John is further claiming that Jesus is completely Divine! The Apostle Paul records, “For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in Him should all the fullness dwell” (Col 1:19) and, “in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and in Him you are made full” (Col 2:9, 10). Jesus is 100 PERCENT God in the flesh (Col 2:9). All of God’s truth, all of God’s goodness reside in and emanate from Jesus.

These are the claims. What are the options? Could it be that Jesus never lived and this is all fiction? Perhaps Jesus did live and went around doing good. He was a good teacher, a great philosopher and a moralist who has been immortalized by his followers. Perhaps He was not the Messiah but a zealous but a mentally unstable Jew who knew the Law so well that others were conned by His personal belief that He was the Messiah. Jesus is perhaps the greatest con-artist in history persuading millions to believe in His deception over centuries. Only one more option remains. That Jesus is exactly who He claimed to be and exactly who John represents Him to be: the Christ, the Son of God, the Messiah of prophecy.

Could John’s imagination be that immense? Could he have written such a compelling story that it has lived for centuries? Of course he could have. Other stories have survived longer. BUT, we just consider them as stories. This “story” affects people in a way that defies explanation. This story changes hearts, it affects the course of kingdoms and lends hope to those who are beyond hopeless.

If Jesus was not the Christ then this will not make Him a good man. If he was merely a good man how do you explain the empty tomb, subsequent miracles and the growth of the church among the Gentiles? It is improbable that the teachings of a deceiver would continue to bear good fruit as these teachings do without fail every time they are faithfully implemented.

1. List the seven claims of John’s prologue. _____

2. What does belief require? Why? _____

3. In what three ways is Jesus the Essence of Deity? _____

4. What roles do God and Jesus play in creation? _____

5. Explain the relationship between light and darkness? _____

6. What is Jesus' relationship to Darkness? _____

7. How did mankind respond to their creator and benefactor? _____

8. How much of God and what parts of God does Jesus represent? _____

9. Based on the seven claims, what are possible conclusions one might reach? _____

10. What do you think of the Christ? _____

11. Do you believe in Him? Why or why not? _____

Lesson 2 – The Claims of Jesus

John Chapters Three and Four

Relationship to God

Claim 1 - That He Came From God

In a late hour discussion with Nicodemus, Jesus specifies a new birth as necessary to gain the privileges of citizenship in God's kingdom (3:1-8). Nicodemus does not comprehend the spiritual nature of the birth (3:9). Jesus rebukes him gently for this inability in light of Nicodemus' role as a teacher to Israel (3:10-12). Jesus describes his ability to impart this knowledge by telling Nicodemus that "no one has ascended into heaven, but he that descended out of heaven, even the Son of man... (3:13). He came from heaven therefore was qualified to speak of these heavenly things.

After miraculously feeding the multitude of five thousand, Jesus claimed to be the bread of life. "For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world" (6:33). "I am the bread of life" (6:35). "For I am come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of Him that sent me" (6:38). He claims again to have come down from heaven in 6:38 and 6:51. The breaking point for many was his question in 6:52, "What then if you should behold the Son of man ascending where he was before?"

Jesus arrives in Jerusalem apart from his brothers for the feast of tabernacles (7:2). He finds conflicting opinions as to his work (7:12). With the public divided and the Jewish leadership intent on killing him Jesus boldly goes to the temple and resumes teaching. Some Jews expected the Messiah to arrive from an undetermined location (7:27) while others knew he was to come from Bethlehem (7:42). Jesus acknowledged that many knew his family and that he was from Nazareth. What they did not know was "Him who had sent Him (7:27, 28). "I know him; because I am from him and he sent me" (7:29).

Jesus realized that his witness alone was not legally sufficient, though true. Additional witness would be required (5:31). His audience was not competent to judge his claim as they had no personal knowledge of God (8:14).

Having come from above, Jesus now resided in the world. Still He claims to be separate from the world he inhabits. "I am not of this world" (8:23). How do we reconcile this? Only by means of a miraculous birth. He was recognized as the son of Joseph and Mary. Had Joseph been his father He would have been "of this world". There is no other explanation in order for Him to be both the Son of God and the Son of man. Acceptance of this fact is a prerequisite of salvation. "For except that you believe that I am He, you shall die in your sins" (8:24). The claims will be confirmed in His death (8:28).

"Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that he came forth from God, and goes unto God" humbles himself and begins to wash the disciples' feet (13:3). It defies logic that one not of this world, one who came from God, one who was God, would stoop to the level of a servant. The lessons however were too important to be left untaught. There was the obvious lesson of continued humility and servitude but

what about the implied lesson of moral purity? One among them was not clean (13:11). Perhaps Peter instinctively felt this lesson most deeply. His resistance to Jesus' service was likely the result of understanding his moral state compared to that of his Lord.

Claim 2 – He Alone Has Seen God

“Not that any man has seen the Father, save he that is from God, he has seen the Father” (6:46). We considered John's declaration of the same in the Prologue (1:18). Paul speaking of the inability to see God says “whom no man has seen, nor can see” (1 Tim 6:16).

What then of numerous encounters with characters of old? Adam (Gen 3); Abram (Gen 17:1; 18:1,2) Two of the three conversing with Abram are later identified as angels (Gen 19:1, 15). Jehovah also appeared to Isaac and Jacob (Ex 6:3). An understanding of this apparent contradiction appears when we consider God's appearances to Moses. God promised to speak “face to face” with Moses a permission to see His “form” (Num 12:8). Moses and seventy-three others “saw the God of Israel” on Mt. Sinai (Ex 24:9-11). Yet God denied Moses a view of His face. Such would have meant death (Ex 33:20). In each of these instances the form of God was revealed. Whether the representation was a man, an angel, a vision or other form, none looked upon God's face.

So it is that Jesus can claim that “He that has seen me has seen the Father” (14:9). No other men have been so fortunate than those who beheld the fullness of God in the form His Son.

Claim 3 – That He Knows God

Knowledge can be acquired by education and training or be inherent by situation and experience. Jesus speaks of His knowledge of the Father from both perspectives. In describing himself as the Good Shepherd He says, “I know my own, and my own know me, even as the Father knows me, and I know the Father” (10:14, 15) He uses the same term indicating acquired knowledge in His prayer “O righteous Father, the world knew you not, but I knew you” (17:25). Elsewhere He says “I know Him; because I am from Him, and He sent me” (7:29). The context is sufficient to know that this is the latter form of knowledge. It is inherent by relationship and by situational experience thus firsthand and absolute. Consider also John 8:55.

Claim 4 – That He Reveals God

John stated in the Prologue that Jesus had declared God (1:18). Jesus not only makes this claim (12:44, 45) but further claims to reveal the word of God (12:49, 50). To see Jesus was to see the Father and to hear Jesus was to hear the Father. Full revelation.

Jesus made the same assertions to his disciples while observing the Passover. “If you had known me, you would have known my Father also: from henceforth you know him, and have seen him (14:7). Philip did not grasp the significance of the statement and asked Jesus to show them the Father and that would be sufficient for them (14:8). This is another glimpse into the humanity of the disciples. It is painful to realize that we often share this lack of spiritual perception with Philip and Nicodemus and that we share the

impulsiveness of Peter as well as the doubts of Thomas. “Have I been so long with you , and do you not know me, Philip? He that has seen me has seen the Father; how do you say, Show us the Father?” (14:9-12)

Claim 5 – That He Is Equal With God

This claim appears to have made the most impact on the hearts of men. Upon Jesus’ arrival in Jerusalem He heals an infirm man beside the pool of Bethesda. The Jews are outraged that this “work” was done on the Sabbath. In response Jesus answers, “My Father works even unto now, and I work” (5:17). The Jews realized the implication of this relationship. The Son of God would also be God (5:18).

On a subsequent visit to Jerusalem for the Feast of Dedication (10:22), the Jews confront Jesus wanting Him to confess “plainly” if He is the Christ (10:24). In response Jesus describes His relationship to His “sheep” (10:1-16). He boldly claims that no one can snatch them out of His hand or from the Father’s hand. “I and the Father are one” 10:30). This is more than two persons with one responsibility. It is two persons with equal ability and equal purpose. Jesus is the “express image” of the Godhead (Heb 1:3) or you will recall the fullness of God’s essence.

Jesus fully accepted his equality with God as demonstrated by acceptance of worship (9:38) yet fully submitted to the Father to the point of death (Phil 2:6-8).

Claim 6 – That He Does the Work of God with the Power of God

Recall the miracle that Jesus performed at the pool of Bethesda in chapter 5. This healing offered substantiation that Jesus was indeed equal with God. Yet, Jesus promised to show greater works than this one (5:19, 20). Jesus claimed that He could give life at will (5:21). Not only physical life but spiritual (5:24). This life would be upon the basis of hearing His word (5:25) and since God is eternal the life he granted would be eternal (5:26).

Just as the granting of life is reserved for God, so is Judgment. This too has been delegated to the Son (5:22, 23). Jesus’ primary purpose was to save (3:17). Man’s love for darkness would condemn him (3:18-20). Jesus’ determination would be righteous and impartial (5:30). Those condemned would remain in darkness (12:46) as they refused to obey the word Jesus would speak (12:48). Again impartial because the words would be those given by the Father (12:49, 50). Judgment is based on the individual’s love for darkness (3:19), evil deeds (5:29) and allegiance with Satan (12:31; 16:8, 11) compared to the standard of truth (8:16) and righteousness (7:24).

The granting of life was not limited to spiritual life. He also possessed the ability to grant physical life to those already deceased. Jesus promises a future, final resurrection when “all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment” (5:28, 29).

Claim 7 – That He Possesses the Attributes of God

In order for Jesus to be God He must be eternal. “Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad” (8:56). This statement offended the Jews (8:57) to which Jesus claims to be eternal. “Before Abraham was born, I am” (8:58). Not a claim of superior age, a claim of to be ageless. The same claim Jehovah made to Moses (Ex 3:14). Jesus refers again to his existence prior to time in his prayer. “And now, Father, glorify me with yourself with the glory which I had with you before the world was” (17:5). Jesus had given that up to come here.

Another attribute of deity is omnipotence. Jesus stated his intent to raise Lazarus (11:11) indicating that he possessed power only available to God.

Omniscience also belongs exclusively to God. Jesus knew the hearts and thoughts of men (2:25). He knew the intimate details of the Samaritan woman’s life (4:16-18). He knew what God expected in worship (4:23, 24). He knew who would betray him, how he would die, when he would die and what would follow.

A final attribute associated with God is omnipresence. Jesus promised His disciples that after preparation of their eternal mansions he would come again so that they could be with Him (14:3). Hailey asserts that this return is not at final judgment. Rather Jesus accomplished this in the sending of the Holy Spirit promising, “I will not leave you desolate: I come unto you” (14:14-18). Remember also the promises to be with two or three gathered in His name and to partake of the Lord’s Supper with them in the kingdom.

The man who was wearied by journeying (4:6), thirsty on the cross (19:28) and died the death of a mortal was very much God at the same time.

1. Where was Jesus from and how did he arrive here? _____

2. Has man ever seen God? To what extent? _____

3. Name two ways that Jesus knows God. _____

4. Name some of the Powers of God. _____

5. Name the four attributes of God. _____

The Claims of Jesus

Lesson 3 – Relationship to the Messianic Hope

John Chapters Five and Six

Relationship to the Messianic Hope

Both kings and priest were anointed indicating appointment to their respective offices (Lev 4:, 1 Sam 24:6; 2 Sam 19:21). From the time God promised that one would sit upon the throne of David forever (2 Sam 7:11-16) the Hebrews anticipated the arrival of an “anointed one” to fill that promise. Thus the Hebrew term “messiah”, “an anointed one”. The equivalent in Greek is “christ”. Isaiah revealed that this ruler would be born of a virgin and called “Immanuel” (Isa 7:13, 14). Approximately one hundred years later Jeremiah adds “Behold, the days come, says Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and He shall reign as king and deal wisely”. (Jer 23:5, 6). This king would effect the salvation of Judah and Israel. Ezekiel describes this one as a shepherd-prince (Ezek 34:23, 24) and Zechariah calls him “the Branch” (Zech 3:8). Zechariah revealed that the king would not only sit on the throne but also serve as priest (Zech 6:12, 13). The people’s expectations sometimes exceeded or else ignored prophecy. Some did not know from where to expect the Messiah (7:27). Others wondered if the Christ would do more miracles that Jesus (7:31).

Claim 1 – That He Was the Messiah

When returning to Galilee via Samaria Jesus paused near Jacob’s well and there conversed with a Samaritan woman. The discussion led the woman to believe that Jesus was a prophet. Jesus indicated the spiritual nature of worship. She expressed the anticipation of a Messiah who would reveal all things. (4:25). Jesus replied, “I that speak unto you am He” (4:26).

Some months later at the feast of dedication the Jews demand that He plainly declare whether or not He is the Christ (10:24). The inquiry did not appear to be honest as the restoration of sight to a man born blind as recorded in chapter nine had not convinced them. His works should have been sufficient (10:25). He offered them no further comment having already openly stated the reaction of Abraham to His revelation (8:56, 58). The Jews blindly rejected the evidences as Jesus of Nazareth did not meet their expectations of the Messiah.

Claim 2 - That He Was a King

The Jews were right in expecting the Messiah to be a King. They completely missed that nature of His rule. Their circumstance under Roman oppression caused them to long for physical deliverance. The desire was so high that the multitudes planned to make Jesus a King upon His feeding of the five thousand. Jesus perceived their intention and escaped to the mountains alone (6:15). The following day Jesus revealed His role as the bread of life. The message had little appeal leaving Him with just a handful of followers (6:66).

Upon returning to Jerusalem for the Passover Jesus arrives to palm strewn roadways and shouts of “Hosanna: Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of

Israel" (12:12, 13). Hosanna means "save I pray and fulfills Psalm 118:25, 26 and Zech 9:9, 10.

Pilate demands to know if Jesus is a King (18:33). Jesus is careful to state that His kingdom is not of this world and that His servants have no interest in warfare. They are not a threat to Rome (18:36). Jesus boldly says, "You say rightly that I am a king" (18:37). It was the purpose of His birth and the purpose of His death.

Claim 3 – That He Was a Prophet

Another misconception of the Messiah was that He was three persons. The Pharisees sent a contingent to question John the Baptist regarding his identity. John denied being the Christ to which they responded "What then? Are you Elijah? And he said, I am not. Are you the prophet?" To which John the Baptist again replies "No" (1:19-22). This perplexes the delegation. "Why do you baptize, if you are not the Christ, neither Elijah, nor the prophet?" (1:25). Considering the promised return of "Elijah" in Malachi chapter four and a special prophet promised by Moses in Deuteronomy chapter eighteen it is easy to understand their confusion (7:40). We realize that Jesus fulfilled all three promises in one person.

Others expected the prophet and messiah to be one and the same. Those who had been among the five thousand fed observed "This is of a truth the prophet that comes into the world" (6:14, 15). As you recall Jesus escaped to the mountain recognizing their desire to crown Him as king. Moses was quite specific when he said "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words in His mouth, and He shall speak unto them all that I will command Him" (Deut 18:18, 19).

It was Jeremiah who introduced the concept of a Redeemer. Isaiah expanded that by saying "And a Redeemer will come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, says Jehovah. And as for me, this is my covenant with them, says Jehovah: my Spirit that is upon you, and my words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, nor out of the mouth of your seed, nor out of the mouth of your seed's seed, says Jehovah, from henceforth and for ever" (Isa 59:20, 21). The Redeemer would also be a revealer of God's word, a prophet.

Jesus was careful to state that He acted in sync with the Father (5:19), at the will of the Father (6:38) and under the Father's command (14:31). He emphasized that His teaching was directed by the Father (7:16; 8:26, 28; 12:49; 14:10, 24; 15:15). All of this indicates that He was a true prophet. We can deduce that Jesus is God's final revelation based on the message of eternal life (17:3). He was the indeed the Redeemer and Prophet of Old Testament prophecy.

Claim 4 – That He Was the Good Shepherd

A good shepherd has a personal interest in the sheep under his care. Jesus claimed such when He said "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (10:11). He goes on to speak of His intimate knowledge of the flock and the fact that He had other sheep that would eventually be brought into a single fold. This

description of self had messianic implications. Isaiah comforted the exiles with an illustration of a shepherd (Isa 40:11). Ezekial prophesied of a time when Jehovah would set up David as a single shepherd ruling as prince (Ezek 34:11-31). To reinforce the message Ezekial was to join two sticks representing Judah and Ephraim (the house of Israel) (Ezek 37:15-28). It would be necessary to first smite the shepherd and scatter the sheep (Zech 13:7) after which they be brought back together in one fold (10:10, 11, 16-18).

Claim 5 – That He was the Son of God

Jehovah promised David that the one He would raise to sit on David's throne would be His Son (2 Sam 7:14). The psalm of Ethan states "He shall cry unto me, You are my Father...I also will make him my first-born, the highest of the kings of the earth" (Psa 89:26, 27). The second Psalm speaks of the world rising up against Jehovah and His anointed (Psa 2:2). Still God establishes the king up on the "holy hill of Zion" (Psa 2:6). The anointed king then announces "I will tell of the decree: Jehovah said unto me, You are my Son; This day have I begotten you" (Psa 2:7). The Messiah was to be king as well as the Son of God.

The relationship of Jesus to the Father is unique. We recognize him as God (eternal, omniscient and omnipresent). The relationship He has with the Father is a determination, an arrangement. Jesus, equal to the Father, submitted Himself to the Father. The claim of a Son was a claim of equality which the Jews recognized immediately (5:17, 18). The equality carried through His work (5:19), the raising of the dead (5:21), judgment (5:22) and to sharing honor with the Father (5:23).

The ultimate demonstration of this equality will come with the spiritual rebirth of those dead in sin (5:25, 26). Jesus prayed that the Father would return Him to the glory He shared with the Father prior to creation (17:1-5). While both Jesus and faithful men are sons of God, Jesus and the faithful are not equals. The faithful are a demonstration of His power as God. Jesus and the Father are equals.

Further evidence of Jesus equality was that He accepted worship from the previously blind man (9:38). Jesus asked him "Do you believe on the Son of God?" The reply, "Who is he, Lord, that I may believe on Him?" The gentleman already recognized Jesus as a prophet (9:17) and as one from God (9:33). Jesus then reveals Himself by saying "You have both seen Him, and He it is that speaks with you" (9:33-37). Jesus knew that God was the object of worship and that worship is to be conducted in spirit and in truth (4:23, 24). Accepting worship is a claim to Deity.

Peter states his belief in the "Holy One of God" (6:66-69) and later Martha confesses "Yes, Lord: I have believed that you are the Christ, the Son of God (11:25). Jesus denied neither profession. Those who knew Jesus were convinced of His identity.

Claim 6 – That He was the Son of Man

The claim to be the Son of Man is likely much more than a claim to humanity. Jesus uses this term more often than any other to refer to Himself. Stephen is the only one to use it

thereafter in reference to Jesus. Daniel records a vision in Daniel chapter seven in which the Ancient of Days sits in judgment over four beasts which arise from the sea. After the judgment of the fourth beast “behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man, and he came even to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him, And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (Dan 7:13, 14). Daniel foresaw “a son of man” given an eternal kingdom. Jesus referred to Himself as “The Son of Man”.

To Nathaniel Jesus promised to show the opened heavens with “angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man” (1:51). To Nicodemus He explained that the only one to ascend to heaven would be the Son of Man who had descended from heaven (3:13). This Son of Man would be lifted up granting eternal life to whoever believed on Him (3:14). “When you have lifted up the Son of Man then you will know that I am He” (8:28). All men would be drawn to the one uplifted (12:23, 32). Still the Jews did not recognize Him asking “who is this Son of man?” (12:34).

At the last supper Jesus announced it was time for the Son of Man to be glorified (13:31). Jesus exemplified all that God intended for man. Tempered by suffering, He is ultimately a compassionate and an empathetic judge.

Claim 7 – That He Was the Mediator Between God and Man

Jesus, as King of Israel, claimed access to heaven (1:49, 51). His description to Nathaniel is reminiscent of Jacob’s dream (Gen 28:12). He came for the purpose of bringing eternal life (3:16-18), revealed the light of God to man (3:19-21) and revealed the will of the Father (6:38). He was sent from God (13:13, 14) and would draw all men to God (12:32). “I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one comes to the Father, but by me” (14:6), a spiritual door to divine pasture and protection (10:9). Jesus went to prepare a place for His disciples (14:2, 3). Men were to ask in His name (14:14) and petitions were to be made to God through Him (15:16; 16:23, 24).

1. What misconceptions did the Jews have about the Messiah? _____

2. In what ways did Jesus meet their expectations? _____

3. In what ways did Jesus fulfill the expectation of prophecy? _____

4. Explain the difference between “Son of Man” and “Son of God”. _____

The Claims of Jesus
Lesson 4 – Relationship to Human Needs
John Chapters Seven and Eight

Relationship to Human Needs

The time of Jesus arrival is described as the “fullness of time”. Rome held much of the civilized world under its thumb. Poverty and despair were widespread. The Jews longed for deliverance from this oppression. One can understand their extreme disappointment when Jesus declined to serve as an earthly king. Jesus offered no resistance politically or socially, rather He set about ministering to the spiritual and moral needs of mankind. Roman conquest logistically provided the ministers of God’s word worldwide access to souls via improved roads, a common language and initially relative safety.

The revolution Jesus started affected the hearts of men. Infusing character and hope into the world has caused mankind to rise out of oppression, organize peaceful societies and reach out to less fortunate ones. Had Jesus simply restored the kingdom to Israel there would have been no moral improvement. We sometimes say that “You can take the boy out of the country, but you can’t take the country out of the boy”. You may change one’s circumstance but that change will likely not affect one’s heart. Jesus directed us mankind toward a greater purpose. “Work not for food which perishes, but for the food which abides unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall give unto you; for Him the Father, even God, has sealed,” (6:27)

Claim 1 – That He Was the Revelation of God

Despite his proximity to Jesus Philip still desired to see God. Jesus reprimanded Him. Had Philip truly known Jesus he would already know the Father. “He that has seen Me has seen the Father”. If the person and teaching of Jesus were not sufficient then the miracles Jesus performed should suffice (14:7-11).

Claim 2 – That He Was the Way

Thomas also did not fully understand the implications of Jesus as Messiah. Jesus promised to prepare a place and indicated that the disciples knew the way to it. Thomas denied knowing where Jesus was to go. Jesus simply says “I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one comes to the Father, but by Me” (14:4-6).

Claim 3 – That He Was the Savior

No greater need existed then or now than that of salvation from sin. The Mosaic law was not designed to remove sin (Deut 27:26). The Gentiles had refused God and were in a depraved state (Rom 1). Jesus was introduced as “the Lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world” (1:29). Belief in Him would yield eternal life for those who loved light and rejected darkness (3:14-19).

Sin holds all who serve it in bondage under Satan. Only the Son could offer freedom (8:34, 35). Satan would be cast out (12:31), would have no relationship with Jesus (14:30) and would ultimately be condemned (16:11).

Claim 4 – That He Was Light

“In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not” (1:4, 5). Men did not understand or appreciate the illumination Jesus provided. Nor have men been able to extinguish that light. “I am the light of the world; he that follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life (8:12). Jesus’ stay in this world was brief. It was His expectation that men would become sons of light (12:35, 36). “I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believes on Me may not abide in the darkness” (12:46).

Claim 5 - That He Was Spiritual Sustenance

Not only did Jesus come to give life but to give it abundantly (10:10). It is one thing to instill life. It is another to nourish it. There is a difference between surviving and thriving. There is a difference between existing and living. Jesus offered abundant spiritual life.

Claim 6 – That He Was the Water of Life

Water is a critical element to nourish life. Jesus was the source of living water (4:10) capable of eliminating spiritual thirst (4:13). Jesus described a well of water springing up within a believer to the Samaritan woman. Later he uses the figure of “rivers of living water” (7:37-39). Jesus is able to impart nourishment that is self sustaining.

Claim 7 – That He Was the Bread of Life

Following the miraculous feeding of the five thousand Jesus claims to be the bread of life. Jews meeting in the synagogue in Capernaum referred to Moses feeding the fathers in the wilderness. Jesus corrects them. It was not Moses but the Father who provided them sustenance. The Father would also feed them presently “true bread out of heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life unto the world” (6:32). This appealed to the audience and they requested to be given this bread. “I am the bread of life: he that comes to Me shall not hunger, and he that believes on Me shall never thirst” (6:35).

The Jews were not pleased with this answer and murmured among themselves. Jesus affirmed that “I am the living bread which came down out of heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: yea and the bread which I give is my flesh, for the life of the world” (6:51).

Claim 8 – That He Was the Vine

We understand that the nourishment of a plant is delivered through the trunk or main vine to the branches. Jesus claimed to be the “true vine” (15:1). It would be necessary to abide in the vine, abide in the word of God and to bear fruit to bring glory to the Father (15:4-10).

Claim 9 – That He Was Shepherd and King

Jeremiah acknowledged long ago that it was not within man to direct his own steps (Jer 10:23). Man requires divine guidance. A shepherd sustains and protect. A king provides courage and leadership. Jesus was both shepherd and king. It was obvious that the Jewish rulers held the people in contempt (7:48, 49). Jesus claimed to be a

compassionate leader, one willing to die for those in His care (10:11-15). Not only compassionate but ultimately capable (10:27-29). He explained the nature of his rule and boldly claimed to be king before Pilate (18:37). His followers would be those who subscribed to Truth.

Claim 10 – That He Was the Resurrection

Mankind longs for an afterlife. Many cultures made elaborate preparation. Most notable are the Egyptians and more recently the American Indian. The physical possessions of the deceased were buried along with the corpse supposedly to be available for use in the afterlife. Jesus promised eternal life as well as a resurrection (6:39, 44, 54). His power to do so would be proven in His own resurrection (2:29-21). This power was his own (10:17). Physical death would not alter or prevent his power over the life of His believers. "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believes on me, though he die, yet shall he live: and whosoever lives and believes on me shall never die" (11:25).

1. What are man's greatest needs? _____

2. How did Jesus reveal the Father to Philip? _____

3. How was Thomas to find his way to Jesus? _____

4. How is Satan affected by Jesus role as Savior? _____

5. Describe the light and how mankind reacted to it. _____

6. What two life giving substances does Jesus represent? _____

7. Describe two leadership roles fulfilled by Jesus. _____

8. Does eternal life come before or after the resurrection? _____

Testimony Supporting the Claims of Jesus

Lesson 5 – Human Testimony

John Chapters Nine and Ten

Human Testimony

John has included evidences both human and divine in support of his proposition and purpose. The human testimony presented is that of John the Baptist and the testimony of those closest to Jesus during his ministry. In regard to John the Baptist's witness Jesus said "You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. But the witness which I receive is not from man... The witness which I have is greater than that of John... the Father that sent me, he has borne witness of me" (5:33-37). Still the witness of John the Baptist bears scrutiny as it was testimony sanctioned by God.

The Testimony of John the Baptist

The author includes no historical information regarding John. Rather he begins with a minimal description of John's ministry beyond the Jordan (1:28; 3:23, 26). The mission was divine (1:6, 33). John the Baptist recognized Jesus as his superior stating he was not worthy to untie Jesus' shoes (1:27). He claimed to be the "friend of the bridegroom" and understood his role was temporary whereas Jesus would be glorified (3:30).

John's work had two primary purposes. The first was to prepare man for the impending kingdom. The second was to testify to Jesus as the Son of God. "There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him" (1:6, 7). The Apostle John makes at least thirty references in his writings to "bearing witness". Fourteen of them are within this gospel record.

John the Baptist denied the identities of Elijah, the Christ and "that prophet" (1:20, 21). His reply was "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said Isaiah the prophet" (1:23). His testimony is presented to three primary audiences. First was the delegation from Jerusalem who questioned his identity. The second was a crowd assembled the following day to hear his teaching. To them he proclaims Jesus to be the "Lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world" (1:29). John was certain of this as he had seen the Spirit descend upon Jesus at His baptism (1:34). He repeats that assertion to two of his disciples who abandon John to follow Jesus (1:36). The third audience was a lone disciple who complained to John that the one to whom John had borne witness was now baptizing and "all men come to Him" speaking of Jesus (3:26). This was good news indicating that John's work had been successful. It was time for John's work to diminish in order for Jesus' work to flourish (3:30).

John's testimony included five premises. (1) Jesus is the "glory" that was to come from God; (2) Jesus is "the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world"; (3) Jesus is "the Son of God"; (4) Jesus existed "before me" and (5) Jesus "must increase" while John "must decrease". Jesus acknowledged John's work describing him as a "lamp that burns and shines; and you were willing to rejoice for a season in his light" (5:33, 35).

The Testimony of Those Who Knew Jesus

Those who encountered Jesus reacted in various ways. Jesus still invokes strong reactions although it has been centuries since He resided on earth. John records fifteen individuals or groups that are notable.

The Early Disciples

Based on John the Baptist's testimony that Jesus was the Lamb of God, disciples began following Jesus (1:36). One named Andrew, found his brother Simon announcing "We have found the Messiah" (1:41). The following day Jesus invited Philip to "Follow me". Philip found Nathaniel exclaiming "We have found him, oh whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, wrote" (1:45). Jesus revealed His knowledge of Nathaniel's location and character to which Nathaniel responded "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel" (1:49).

Belief is not proof. However, the fact that the initial impression of Jesus' identity remained unchanged throughout the life of these disciples is strong evidence as to the reality of their understanding.

Mary, the Mother of Jesus

From the time Jesus stated at age twelve the necessity of being "about my Father's business", Mary kept the saying in her heart. Now in the beginning of His ministry she turns to Him to resolve a crisis at the wedding feast in Cana. She instructs the servants "Whatever he says unto you, do it" (2:1-5). Ordinarily a guest would not be responsible or capable of addressing such a dilemma. Mary was convinced that Jesus could.

Additionally, it is Mary's silence at the cross that speaks loudest of her belief in her son. Had He been a mere mortal she could have exposed the fact and prevented untold suffering for herself and for Him. However, she allowed and endured it all. Accepting His fate by "making himself the Son of God" (19:7). Either He was from above (8:23) or Mary shares the deception.

Nicodemus

This man was so moved by the teaching of Jesus that he visited under the cloak of darkness to learn more about the man who so zealously overthrew the moneychanger's tables and purged the temple with a scourge. Nicodemus was a prominent Pharisee who confessed "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do, except God be with him" (3:2). We do not know if Nicodemus became a disciple. We do know that he defended Jesus' right to offer a defense (7:50, 51). He also accompanied Joseph on the mission to request and then bury the body of Jesus following the crucifixion (19:39).

The Samaritans

The woman with whom Jesus conversed at the well was convinced that Jesus was a prophet (4:19). She leaves her waterpot behind to ask her neighbors "Could this be the Christ?" (4:29) She was convinced, just as Nathaniel had been, by Jesus' knowledge of her past life. "He told me all things that ever I did" (4:39). In a matter of days spent in

Samaria others confessed “Now we believe, not because of your speaking: for we have heard for ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Savior of the world” (4:42).

Peter

We have discussed the feeding of the five thousand numerous times. A number of lessons can be extracted. Jesus extricates himself from the intent of the multitude. He is specific about the spiritual nature of His work. The multitude concluded that this was “a hard saying” (6:60). Jesus assures that it is the spirit that profits and gives life. The words that He spoke “were spirit and life” (6:63). This stark contrast caused many disciples to go back and “walk no more with him” (6:66). Jesus challenges his closest disciples “Will you also go away?” (6:67) Peter offers a statement of incredible insight and faith, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that you are the Holy One of God” (6:68). Peter faltered and denied association with Jesus. However, he recovered and remained true to his confession.

The Multitude

The multitude also was divided. Many were ready to make Him king. Others could not get past his background. “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?” (6:42) Many in Jerusalem acknowledged Him as a “good man” while others believed he was “leading the multitude astray” (7:11, 12). Did the Jewish rulers know that this is the Christ (7:26)? Would the Christ do more signs than the signs this man has done (7:31)? Was it possible that this man was “the Prophet” or the “Christ”? Would the Christ come from Galilee or from Bethlehem (7:40-43)? So the people were divided.

Some spread palm branches in His path and shouted “Hosanna: Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel” (12:13) while others shouted “Away with him, away with him, crucify him!” The chief priests denied any king but Caesar (19:15). Many rejected Him completely but some were convinced that He was the Christ.

The Jews

This group collectively stood in opposition to Jesus. Their admissions as well as their opposition provide sound testimony as to the identity of Jesus. The Jews marvel at Jesus’ knowledge of Jewish letters as one “having never learned” (7:15). They did not deny his healing of the blind man. They chose to attribute His power to a demon (10:21, 21). The internal controversy exposes them as prejudiced and dishonest. They admit to His good works but attribute it to the forces of evil.

The Pharisees

The Pharisees, a sect of the Jews, also admitted to the signs performed by Jesus. They admitted the healing of the blind man but were also divided over the source (9:16). The Pharisees were concerned with the miracles Jesus performed. “What do we do? For this man does many signs” (11:47). Their concern was for their position. “If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation’ (11:48). “Behold how you prevail nothing; lo, the world is gone after Him (12:19). The only solution the Pharisees could offer was to put Him to death!

Caiaphas determined that “it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not” (11:49, 50).

The Officers

The Sanhedrin ordered their officers to arrest Jesus. They returned empty handed with the explanation “Never man so spake” (7:46). This infuriated the Pharisees who asked the officers “Are you also led astray?”

The Man Born Blind

This beneficiary of Jesus’ mercy recognized Jesus as a prophet (9:17). The Pharisees were not satisfied with that description. They brought in the parents of the healed man to question them. They deferred to their son admitting only that this indeed was their son and that he had been born blind. The Pharisees ordered the healed man to give glory to God stating emphatically that Jesus was a sinner (9:24). The healed man could not come to the same conclusion as he could now see. The man confirmed his belief in Jesus by worshipping Him upon Jesus’ claim to be the Son of God (9:35-38).

Mary and Martha

These two are dear friends of Jesus along with their brother Lazarus. Upon Lazarus’ death the sisters send for Jesus. Upon Jesus’ arrival both greeted Him with the confidence that had He been present, Lazarus would not have died (11:21, 32). Martha adds “And even now I know that, whatsoever you will ask of God, God will give you (11:22). Jesus assured Martha that Lazarus would rise again. Martha was already confident of that event expecting it however to be at the “last day” 11:23, 24). Could not the same one who had the power to prevent death effect the raising of Lazarus prior to the “last day”? Jesus reassures Martha that He is the resurrection and the life. Martha responds “Yes Lord: I have believed that you are the Christ, the Son of God, even He that comes into the world” (11:27).

The Disciples at Supper

Having spent approximately three years with His disciples, Jesus prepared them for His departure and their future work. Chapters fourteen through sixteen are filled with comfort, instruction and promise. The disciples state their confidence by saying “Now know we that you know all things, and need not that any man should ask you: by this we believe that you came forth from God” (16:30).

Pilate

Pilate had the opportunity to hear the charges against Jesus and examine Him personally. Even after hearing the claim of kingship and the nature of the kingdom, Pilate was convinced that Jesus was innocent. Three times Pilate proclaimed Him innocent (18:38; 19:4, 6). Weakening to the mob Pilate scourges Jesus and finally ceremonially washes his hands granting the Jews request to have Jesus crucified. Despite the outcome, the Roman court boldly testifies to the innocence of Jesus.

Thomas

This disciple is often labeled as one who doubted. Yet, this is the disciple who announced his intent to accompany Jesus to Bethany despite the risk to his life (11:16). He professed to not know where it was that Jesus was about to go (14:5) and after Jesus resurrection demanded proof in the form of the nail and spear prints (20:25). The demand vanished when confronted by the resurrected Jesus granting Thomas permission to examine his wounds. Sight of Jesus was sufficient for Thomas to pronounce Him “My Lord and my God” (20:28). Thomas’ faith far exceeded his doubts.

The Author

The author concludes his record of the crucifixion describing “straightway there came out blood and water. And he that has seen has borne witness, and his witness is true: and he knows that what he says is true, they you also may believe” (19:34, 35). John concludes “This is the disciple that bears witness of these things” to which his companions add “and we know that his witness is true” (21:24).

Friends and enemies alike attested to Jesus’ ability to raise the dead, work miracles and teach as no other man could teach. They proclaimed Him to be a prophet, the Christ and the Son of God and conducted themselves according to their belief.

1. What was unique about John the Baptist’s testimony? _____

2. Who did the earliest disciples believe Jesus to be? _____

3. In what two ways did Mary testify of her son? _____

4. What did Nicodemus believe about Jesus? _____

5. How did the Samaritans respond to Jesus? _____

6. What evidences do the enemies of Jesus provide? _____

7. Which of these witnesses speaks most convincingly to you? _____

Testimony Supporting the Claims of Jesus

Lesson 6 – The Father’s Testimony - Works

John Chapters Eleven and Twelve

The Father’s Testimony - Works

Jesus found himself at odds with the Jews, not only for His healing a lame man on the Sabbath, but for claiming equality with God (5:2-9). Jesus did not take this on Himself but was only acting as His Father would act (5:19). He promised the Jews that they would see greater works than this one of healing (5:20). Those greater works would include the raising of the dead, the infusion of life (5:21).

The works directed by the Father were not limited to healing. God also delegated all judgment to Jesus. Refusal to honor Jesus was a refusal to honor the Father (5:22, 23). The claim to judgment also indicated equality with God (5:18). More than that, it indicated God’s delegation and approval.

Secondly, Jesus held the power of spiritual life. Those who would hear His voice could receive that life (5:24-27).

Thirdly, based upon His ability to give life (5:21), Jesus claimed a complete resurrection of all mankind prior to judgment (5:28, 29). His word will be the standard (12:48-50).

John the Baptist testified of Jesus. Jesus appeals to a greater witness. “the witness that I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father has sent me. And the Father that sent me, he has borne witness of me” (5:36, 37).

In regard to the healing of the lame man at the pool of Bethesda Jesus says “I did one work, and you all marvel because of it” (7:21). “Are you angry with me, because I made a man completely whole on the Sabbath?” (7:23) Works such as this, were intended to bear witness to Jesus (10:25). “If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do them, though you believe me not, believe the works: that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father” (10:37, 38).

Three distinct terms are used in the New Testament to describe the miraculous works of Jesus. Those terms are “signs”, “wonders” and “powers”. These further define the purpose and effect of the miraculous work. A “sign” is just that, a sign, mark, a token, an authentication by God, a disclosure of the nature and purpose of God (Thayer). John records Jesus as saying “Except you see signs and wonders, you will in no way believe (4:48).

A “wonder” is a prodigy [impressive or outstanding example, dictionary.com] , a portent [sign, warning, omen, dictionary.com]: any miracle (Thayer). John makes no other reference to “wonders” than this single quote of Jesus.

The last is “power”. “Power” indicates strength, ability, power, inherent power (Thayer). John does not use the term “power” in his record, preferring to use “work”. To us the concept miracles is indeed marvelous, awesome. From John’s perspective they are the natural extension of the nature and activity of God.

Witnesses to the Signs

The signs in general testify of Jesus as do those who witnessed these signs. We have discussed Nicodemus (3:2), the Jews (7:31) and the Pharisees (11:47). All acknowledge that signs had been performed.

Witnesses to the Man Born Blind

Reaction to this sign was significant. The Jews were outraged, the neighbors astonished (9:10), his parents afraid and the man healed was determined to worship the Son of God (9:10-30).

Witnesses to the Raising of Lazarus

This, the final miracle recorded by John, pushed the Pharisees into council. They were determined to put Jesus to death (11:53). “What do we do? For this man does many signs. If we let him alone, all men will believe on Him” (11:47, 48). Jesus later enters Jerusalem in what we call His Triumphant Entry (12:13). Likely instigated by the excitement over the raising of Lazarus (12:18). The Pharisees were perplexed. “Behold how you do not prevail; lo, the world is gone after Him” (12:19). Never do the Pharisees deny the signs, they only deny the divine source and power of the signs. The signs were so compelling that the Pharisees feared that “all men” would believe in Jesus. Why did they not believe?

The Seven Signs Recorded by John

1. Turning Water to Wine (2:1-11)

We have discussed Mary’s confidence in her son to address this situation. Jesus instructs the servants to fill six waterpots with water and deliver them to the governor of the feast. Upon inspection, the “water” was determined to be wine and that of superior quality. Only the Lord of creation could transform matter from one substance to another. The disciples who witnessed believed.

2. Healing the Nobleman’s Son (4:46-54)

A Nobleman of Capernaum finds Jesus in Galilee seeking assistance for his ill son. Jesus instructed him to “Go your way; your son lives”. The man believed and traveled home to discover that his son had been healed at the precise hour Jesus gave the command. Jesus’ power was not limited by time or distance

3. Healing the Lame Man (5:1-9)

This sign occurred in Jerusalem at the Pool of Bethesda. A man lame for thirty-eight years retained hope that he could be healed in the pool. Jesus commanded “Arise, take up your bed, and walk”. The man did so immediately. Jesus again demonstrated His power over time and the natural process of healing.

4. Feeding the Five Thousand (6:1-14)

Returning to Galilee to the northeast shore of Lake Tiberias, Jesus encounters multitudes longing to see Him. After a time teaching He has them sit while five loaves and two fish are distributed among them. Ample is supplied to feed five thousand men as well as the women and children present. Jesus demonstrated power of quantity as well as His compassion. He also demonstrated the ability to feed the multitude spiritually, a “meal” they were less willing to accept.

5. Jesus Walking on the Sea (6:16-21)

The crowd had been dismissed and Jesus withdrew to the mountain to be alone. Meanwhile the disciples put out on the lake by boat. During the night a fierce storm arises threatening their lives. Jesus arrives in their hour of desperation walking on the sea. At first afraid, He assures them and they receive Him into the boat. John makes no mention of Jesus calming the storm. It was sufficient to know that Jesus had the power to appear in an hour of need.

6. Restoring Sight to the Blind Man (9:1-12)

Back in Jerusalem Jesus encounters a man who was born blind. Jesus places clay on the man’s eyes and instructs him to wash in the Pool of Siloam. We have discussed at length the reaction to this miracle. Jesus demonstrated his power over physical darkness substantiating His claim to be “the light of the world” (8:12).

7. The Raising of Lazarus (11:39-44)

This miracle demonstrates Jesus’ power to give life. This gives credibility to His promise to rise from the grave and effect a final resurrection of all peoples.

We have not witnessed signs such as these. We rely on the testimony of those who did see them. Hailey pronounces the signs “revelations” as they give us insight into the character and power of God. What kind of God prevents embarrassment to His friends, heals the sick, heals the lame, feeds the hungry, calms fears, restores sight and returns the dead to their loved ones?

1. Name three types of works Jesus would do. _____

2. What three terms are used to describe miraculous works? Explain. _____

3. Who authorized the works Jesus performed? Why? _____

4. Which of the seven signs speaks the most to you? Why? _____

Testimony Supporting the Claims of Jesus

Lesson 7 – The Father’s Testimony - Scripture

John Chapters Thirteen and Fourteen

The Father’s Testimony - Scripture

Jesus appealed to Old Testament scripture as an additional witness to His works. Luke records “These are my words which I spoke to you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning Me” (Luke 24:44). To the Jews Jesus said “You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me; and you will not come to me, that you may have life” (5:39, 40).

Jesus possessed a unique attitude toward scripture. “Is it not written in your law, I said, You are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came (and the scripture cannot be broken)... (10:34, 35). We can draw three conclusions. Scripture is law, scripture is the word of God and scripture cannot be broken.

God bore witness to Jesus through scripture (5:38). The scripture pronounced that “rivers of living water” would flow within believers (7:38). Judas’ betrayal also fulfilled scripture (13:13; 17:12). The scriptures testified to Philip. He tells Nathaniel “We have found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, wrote, Jesus of Nazareth” (1:45).

Scripture - The Writings of Moses

The Seed of the Woman

Jesus appeals to the writings of Moses. “For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?” (5:45-47). Moses predicted the seed of the woman would impose a lethal blow to the authority of the serpent (Gen 3:15). The Jews placed importance on their relationship to Abraham. They refused to believe that they were in bondage (8:31-33). Their bondage limited their relationship to God whereas Jesus as Son had freedom and could offer them freedom (8:34-36). The behavior of the Jews indicated their heritage was that of Satan and not of Abraham (8:38-44). Jesus brought judgment upon the prince of the world (12:31; 14:30; 16:11) fulfilling Moses prediction.

The Seed of Abraham

We should not discount the importance of the seed of Abraham. The Jews did not realize that it was not their physical relationship to Abraham that was important. Rather it was the relationship of Jesus to Abraham as fulfillment of promise. “And in you shall all the families of the earth be blessed” (Gen 12:3; 22:18). “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad” (8:56). Jesus had an established relationship with Abraham.

The Heavenly Ladder

Jacob fled from Esau to Padan-aram where he dreamed of a ladder reaching into heaven. The angels of God ascended and descended on it (Gen 28:12). Here God renews the promise to Jacob. “And in your seed shall all the families of the earth be

blessed” (Gen 28:14). The imagery is the same in Jesus’ description to Nathaniel (1:51). Jesus is the ladder, the access to heaven by which heavenly messages are delivered.

The Prophet

The Israelites were frightened by the voice of God on Mount Sinai. They begged Moses that he might stand between them and God in matters of revelation. They were forbidden to seek alternate sources such as sorcery or divination (Deut 18:9-14). Ultimately God would raise up a prophet from among the people who would be like Moses. It would be the responsibility of the people to hear the prophet and respond appropriately (Deut 18:18, 19). Jesus met the criteria. God raised Him up from among His brethren; God sent Him (7:16), God gave Him the words to speak (8:28; 12:49); and all who refused His words would be judged by His words (7:24; 12:48).

Types and Shadows

The law of Moses contained imagery that partially revealed the nature of things to come. Sacrifices (Heb 10:1-4), the Passover lamb and the care not to break its bones (Ex 12:46; Num 9:12; John 19:36) and the sprinkling of blood are examples. God did not “delight” in burnt offerings (Psa 40:6-9). They were a precursor to the “Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!” (1:29, 36, 45).

Remember also the brass serpent Moses lifted up to offer relief from fiery serpents. Jesus also was lifted up to offer life (3:14, 15). God provided sustenance in the form of manna and later the living bread (6:33-57). Water came from flinty rock at Rephidim (Ex 17:1-7; Deut 8:15; Psa 114:8) and at Zin (Num 20:2-13). Jesus could eliminate thirst as the water of life (4:10, 14).

Scripture - The Prophets

Jesus’ Birthplace

There was some discussion as to the origin of the Christ. Jesus was known to have come from Galilee. The Christ was expected from Bethlehem (7:41, 42). Samuel spoke of the King who would be born to sit on the throne of David (2 Sam 7:12-16). Isaiah speaks of the eternal nature of His rule (Isa 9:6, 7). Micah specified the birthplace naming Bethlehem Ephrathah of Judah (Mic 5:2). Jesus was indeed born in Bethlehem, a fact obviously not known to many.

The Forerunner

John identified himself as the “voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said Isaiah the prophet” (1:23). Isaiah described John as “The voice of one that cries, Prepare in the wilderness the way of Jehovah; make level in the desert a highway for our God” (Isa 40:3).

The Spirit

John was convinced of Jesus’ identity after seeing the Spirit descend and rest upon Jesus (1:32, 33). Several prophecies are fulfilled in this event. “And the spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon Him” (Isa 11:2). “Behold, my servant whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights: I have put my Spirit upon Him” (Isa 42:1). “my Spirit is upon you, and

my words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth (Isa 59:21). John testified “For He whom God sent speaks the words of God: for He gives not the Spirit by measure” (3:34). God did not limit the power or influence of the Holy Spirit when bestowing the Spirit upon Jesus.

The Teaching

Nicodemus recognized Jesus as a teacher come from God. The prophets predicted that all would be taught of God. Men would be drawn to Jesus as a result of that teaching (6:44, 45). They would also enjoy peace (16:33; 18:20; Isa 54:13; 48:16). Jeremiah spoke of a time when all men would know God and men would enjoy forgiveness of sin (Jer 31:33, 34).

The Rejected Teacher

Not many Jews were as receptive of Jesus as Nicodemus appeared to be. Isaiah laments “Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?” (12:38; Isa 53:1). The Jews were blinded and their hearts were hardened, therefore God could not heal them (12:39-41; Isa 6:9, 10). It was not because of God’s decree, rather it was their own choice. Jesus gave them opportunity to walk in light before being consumed by darkness (12:35). Zechariah spoke of a time when the Branch would use those both near and far to rebuild the temple. It would only come to pass if they would “diligently obey the voice of Jehovah” their God (Zech 6:15).

The King’s Entrance

Refusing to be crowned king after feeding the five thousand (6:15), Jesus finally accepts the accolades of those strewing palm branches in His path as He enters Jerusalem (12:13; Psa 118:26). This followed the raising of Lazarus from the dead. Jesus selected the colt of a donkey rather than the mount of a king to make His arrival (Zech 9:9, 10). Jesus did claim to be king before Pilate but was careful to describe the nature of His kingdom. The Jews wanted nothing to do with a spiritual kingdom and demanded He be crucified (19:15).

Crucifixion and Burial

Numerous prophecies are also fulfilled in His death. From the casting of lots for his clothing (19:24, Psa 22:18) to the piercing of His side with a spear ((19:31-37). As He was already dead they did not break His legs (Zech 12:10). Joseph of Arimathaea, a man of means, along with Nicodemus provide the spices for burial and Joseph’s own grave provided a resting place (19:38-42) for the one who did not even own a place to pillow His head. “And they made His grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in His death” (Isa 53:9). The disciples were surprised to see the empty tomb even though they were aware of the scripture that He must arise from the dead” (20:9). Even after the offering of His life, God prolonged His days in raising Him (Isa 53:10).

The Psalms

John references the Psalms seven times. Six referenced are psalms of David while the other is a psalm of Asaph. We discussed Jesus’ attitude toward the Psalm written by

Asaph spoke of it as law (10:34; Psa 82:6). There is a strong relationship between David of old and the new David, the Messiah. Hosea referred to the coming king as David (Hos 3:5). The same was the seed of David (2 Sam 7:11-14). Jeremiah says “I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and He shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land” (Jer 23:5). Jeremiah later identifies the Branch of David as David, “but they shall serve Jehovah their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them” (Jer 30:9; Psa 89:14; 97:2, 3).

Ezekiel refers to this David as a shepherd. “And I will set up one shepherd over them, and He shall feed them, even my servant David: He shall feed them, and He shall be their shepherd. And I, Jehovah, will be their God, and my servant David prince among them” (Ezek 34:23, 24; 37:24).

1. Zeal (Psa 69:7-9; John 2:13-17)

Jesus’ demonstrated His passion for the sanctity of His Father’s house by driving out the moneychangers and overturning their tables. The disciples recognized this as fulfillment of the Psalm of David as they “remembered that it was written, Zeal for your house shall eat me up”.

2. Familiar Friend (Psa 41:9; John 13:8; 17:12)

The sharing of bread has significance in most cultures. We open ourselves to a deeper relationship when we invite others to share a meal with us. This makes the betrayal of Judas more treacherous than that of a casual acquaintance. The one that “eats my bread lifts up his heel against me”. Lifting up the heel was a sign of derision reserved for an enemy. “Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, Who did eat of my bread, Has lifted up his heel against me.”

3. Hated Without a Cause (Psa 35:19; 69:4; John 15:24, 25)

David in prayer asked Jehovah “Let not them that are my enemies wrongfully rejoice over me; Neither let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause”. Later he proclaims that the ones who hate him without reason are “more than the hairs of my head”. These prove to be Messianic when Jesus is violently rejected by the Jews. “He said, that the word may be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause”.

4. Crucifixion; Parting Garments (Psa 22:1-21; John 19:24)

The hatred of the Jews culminated in the crucifixion of Jesus. The twenty-second Psalm describes the scene. It describes the desperation of one forsaken by God, the derision of the crowd, the physical experience as death nears including intense thirst, the casting of lots for His clothing and finally the cry to God for deliverance.

5. Gall and Vinegar (Psa 69:21; John 19:28-30)

His garments divided and His suffering nearing an end, Jesus made arrangements for the care of His mother. Knowing that scripture must be fulfilled He said “I thirst”. In response a sponge is filled with vinegar and lifted with a hyssop branch to His mouth. “When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar; He said, It is finished: and he bowed His head, and gave up His Spirit.”

6. The Resurrection (Psa 22:22-31; 16:10; John 2:19-22; 20:9)

No direct Psalm is mentioned by John in regard to the resurrection. He does record Jesus' reference to the destruction of the temple and its restoration in three days. We know this reference to be to His body (2:19, 21). Following His resurrection the disciples "believed the scripture, and the word Jesus had said" (2:22). Later John makes reference to the disciples' ignorance of the "scripture, that He must rise again from the dead" (20:9).

The twenty-second Psalm refers to events that occur after the crucifixion alluding to a resurrection. The declaration of God's name "in the midst of the assembly" and praise "in the great assembly". "All the kindreds and nations" would worship. The kingdom would belong to Jehovah. It is described as "a seed" that would serve Him and "a people that will be born". This is a description of triumph, not defeat ending in the grave.

Lastly the sixteenth Psalm does make a specific reference to a resurrection. "For you will not leave my soul in Sheol; Neither will you allow your holy on to see corruption."

1. Name three types of Old Testament scripture. _____

2. What attitude did Jesus have about scripture? _____

3. List some references to Jesus from the Law of Moses. _____

4. Explain the use of Types and Shadows in the Law of Moses. _____

5. List some references to Jesus from the Prophets. _____

6. How is prophecy related to our faith in Jesus? _____

7. List some references to Jesus from the Psalms. _____

8. How can poetry be scripture? _____

Testimony Supporting the Claims of Jesus
Lesson 8 – The Father’s Testimony – The Empty Tomb
John Chapters Fifteen and Sixteen

The Father’s Testimony – The Empty Tomb

The Stone Removed

The final testimony John presents from the Father is the Empty Tomb. The first reference in John to a resurrection comes from this statement of Jesus; “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up...But He spoke of the temple of His body.” (2:19, 21). An empty tomb indicates a bodily resurrection, not just a calling of the spirit from the grave.

The body of Jesus was taken from the cross by Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus and placed in Joseph’s own tomb. John does not record the request and posting of a guard or the controversy among the Jews that followed. He begins with the fact that the sepulcher was open and the stone removed. It was Mary Magdalene who made this discovery (20:1). This begs the question, Who removed the stone? The Jews were glad He was dead and it was they who wanted a Roman guard. The Roman guard has no incentive as they were liable for failing to keep the tomb secure. The disciples were scattered and no match against the Roman guard. The only possible conclusion is that the removal of the stone was a divine act.

Jesus subsequently demonstrated His ability to come and go miraculously among the disciples (20:19, 26). Why remove the stone? It is apparent that the stone was removed as evidence of the resurrection. Any who would look within could easily see the body was not present (20:5, 6).

The Body Gone

Mary, in addition to discovering the open tomb, discovered also that the body of Jesus was gone. The same questions might be raised about the missing body, “How” and “Why”? Mary did not know (20:2) nor did Peter and John as they went to the tomb to substantiate Mary’s story.

The Grave Clothes

John arrives at the tomb before Peter but waits and they enter together. They discover the grave clothes “and the napkin, that was upon His head, not lying with the linen clothes, but rolled up in a place by itself” (20:6, 7). The presence and placement of the grave clothes do not indicate the hasty theft of a corpse. They testify of the deliberate removal and apparent lack of need for grave clothes. John says “and he saw, and believed. For as yet they did not know the scripture, that He must rise again from the dead” (20:8, 9). It is improbable that they were not aware of the scripture. They were just beginning to understand that it applied to Jesus!

The Appearances of Jesus

To Mary Magdalene

While searching for answers as to the missing body of Jesus, Mary encounters Jesus but does not recognize Him. He asks why she is crying and for whom she is searching?

(20:15). Mary realizes it is Jesus when He speaks her name. She calls Him “Teacher” and apparently clings to Him. He instructs “Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father”. It is likely not a matter of physical touch. He later invites Thomas to touch His hands and side. It is a matter of a changed relationship. Jesus is the resurrected Lord, Savior, Priest and King. “Go unto my brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God” (20:17).

To the Disciples

The second appearance is to the disciples inside a locked room. He announces “Peace be unto you” (20:19). He shows His hands and side to prove His identity. They “were glad, when they saw the Lord (20:20). Jesus was about to send them out just as the Father had sent Him to teach.

To Thomas and the Eleven

Thomas was absent at the second appearance. Thomas refused to accept their testimony. “Except I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe” (20:25). Jesus appears to the disciples a week later, again appearing in a locked room and challenges Thomas to examine the marks in His body (20:27). It does not appear necessary for Thomas to examine the evidence. Sight of Jesus convinced him to confess “My Lord and my God” (20:28).

To the Disciples by Galilee

A few days later seven disciples go fishing. Jesus appears to them a third time after a night of fruitless toil on the sea of Tiberias. He asks from the shore if they have had success. Receiving a negative response, Jesus instructs them to cast the net of the right side of the boat. The net is immediately full of fish causing John to recognize the man on the shore as Jesus. Peter plunges into the water in his haste to get to Jesus.

Following their breakfast Jesus quizzes Peter on his commitment to Jesus by asking, “Do you love me more than these?” (21:15). Peter’s replies do not satisfy Jesus who realizes Peter’s impending denial. Jesus instructs Peter to “tend” and “feed” His sheep and to “follow” Him.

The Effect Upon Witnesses of the Resurrection

Mary Magdalene

Mary Magdalene rushes to the disciple announcing “I have seen the Lord; and that He had said these things unto her” (20:17, 18). Mary was convinced that she had encountered the Resurrected Jesus.

Peter

Mary’s startling claim caused Peter to run to the tomb so see for himself if such was true. The profound implication of the empty tomb was the basis of Peter’s future faith and teaching.

John

Although a condensed narrative, John provide minute details such as the placement of the napkin within the grave and the mix of “blood and water” rushing from Jesus side (19:34). He relates the number of fish (153) taken the morning after a night of catching nothing. John was to first to conclude that Jesus had been resurrected (20:8). The fact that John provided this testimony in his old age speaks to his belief in the things which he recorded (19:35).

The Disciples

Scattered the night of Jesus arrest and meeting thereafter behind locked doors (20:19, 26), the disciples are transformed into courageous liaisons for Jesus (1 Pet 1:3-5; 1 John 3:1-3). They lead the charge of God’s spiritual army that ultimately conquers the world.

Thomas

The effect upon Thomas is perhaps the most compelling of the human testimony presented. One who insisted on proof (11:16; 20:25) is compelled to confess Jesus as his Lord and his God (20:28). The confession states not only his belief but his allegiance to Jesus.

Answering Skeptics

John states four premises. 1) Jesus died upon the cross. 2) His body was removed from the cross and placed in a tomb. 3) Jesus was resurrected on the third day; and 4) He appeared to many disciples thereafter. Critics have advanced numerous theories to explain away the conviction of early disciples.

The Swoon Theory

This theory claims that Jesus did not die but rather was in a comatose state reviving in the coolness of the tomb. The theory does not explain away the pierced side, survival in a tomb for three days without sustenance or the strength to roll away the stone, a concern of the women visiting early the first day of the week. It does not explain how a mortal in this condition could overcome the Roman guard and how he could keep his existence a secret until his natural death at some future time.

The Theft of the Body

The theory that the disciples stole the body was one concocted by the Jews the day of Jesus resurrection. It was known as fraudulent from its inception. This theory does not explain how the disciples overtook the Roman guard. Nor does it explain how the disciples could proclaim a message of superior morality if the cornerstone of their doctrine rested upon a fraud.

Others have suggested that the enemies of Jesus took the body. This has no logical basis either. The Jews insisted that Jesus be killed and insisted that the tomb be guarded to prevent tampering with the body.

The Vision Hypothesis

This perspective suggests that the body of Jesus remained in the tomb and that the appearances were visions. This is unlikely as it substitutes one miraculous event for another. If the visions were possible, so was the resurrection.

Various Others.

1) The "Cause" theory suggests that Jesus' "cause" was revived in the disciples. It was His body and not His "cause" that was buried. 2) The "Illusion" theory suggests that the disciples were seeing an optical illusion or a ghost. 3) The "Hallucination" theory would be one in which the disciples, under duress, hallucinate or imagine encounters with Jesus. 4) The "Prank" suggests that Pilate ordered the removal of Jesus' body in order to humiliate the Jews. None of these are plausible as three of the four do not explain the empty tomb and none explain the appearances to the resurrected Jesus.

The testimony God provides in the empty tomb is the most compelling of the Father's testimonies regarding His Son.

1. Describe the Stone and the significance of its removal. _____

2. What is the significance of the missing body? _____

3. What is the significance of the grave clothes? _____

4. Who first encountered the resurrected Jesus and how did she respond? _____

5. Describe the effect of the empty tomb upon Peter and John. _____

6. How do we answer skeptics of the empty tomb? _____

Testimony Supporting the Claims of Jesus
Lesson 9 – The Testimony of Jesus – His Moral Glory
John Chapters Seventeen and Eighteen

The Testimony of Jesus – His Moral Glory

Controversy swirled around Jesus and His teaching. Some thought He was demon possessed while others argued that a demon could not open the eyes of the blind (10:20, 21). The complete harmony of Jesus' conduct with His teaching is strong evidence as to His identity. Jesus challenged those of His day, "If any man desires to do His (God's) will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself" (7:17). There are five areas in which Jesus' conduct harmonizes with His doctrine.

The Matter of Sin

Jesus draws a distinction between sin and himself. We know sin to be a violation of law, literally a "missing of the mark". Just as a projectile is intended to fly true toward a defined target, conduct is to remain true to the "target" defined by law.

Jesus' attitude toward sinners was also unique. He had ultimate compassion toward those ensnared in sin. A perfect example is the woman taken in adultery. The Pharisees brought her to Jesus with intent to accuse Jesus of opposing the Law of Moses. He turns the tables by agreeing with the law but challenges the one who was sinless to cast the first stone (8:7). A witness was obligated to throw the first stone, afterward the people would join in (Deut 17:7). The accusers depart without taking action against the woman. Jesus instructs her to go and "sin no more" (8:1-11).

The Jews were not sinless by their own admission in this case. Jesus says "I go away, and you shall seek me, and shall die in your sin: whither I go, you cannot come" (8:21). The Jews were bondservants of sin. As such they would be discharged from the Master's house. However, Jesus as God's Son had authority to grant freedom from sin (8:34-36).

Jesus concludes that their sinful behavior relates them to the devil, not to Abraham whom they claimed as their father. Both a murderer and liar, Satan's conduct most closely resembles the conduct of the Jews (8:44). They ultimately demonstrate this in the false condemnation and crucifixion of Jesus. Previously they could not convict Him of sin (8:46). They weakly claimed that he was "a Samaritan, and had a demon" (8:48) offering no evidence of either.

Sin prevented the Jews from following Jesus, brought them into the bondage of sin and related them to the devil. Jesus offered a solution to their situation. The bronze serpent of old served as a type. Just as it was lifted up to offer life in the wilderness, so Jesus was lifted up to offer eternal life (3:14, 15). He was the bread of life (6:51) and the shepherd who gave is life to save His sheep (10:11, 15). He accomplished the offering of life in death (12:31-33).

Jesus understood sin, its origin, its consequences and the necessity of mankind being free from sin. He represented Himself to be without sin and the remedy for sin. He

exhibited mercy to the sinner and sacrificed His life to save the same. It was His purpose and he completed that purpose (19:28-30).

Relation to Law

We determined that sin is violation of law. In our discussion of Jesus' attitude toward scripture, we determined that scripture is law. Jesus had the utmost respect for law recognizing God as its source. The Jews were outraged by His claim to be God. Jesus referred to the scripture which referred to them as gods. Scripture was ultimately true and unbreakable. If they were gods, then it was possible for him to be God based on the same scriptures (10:30-36). Jesus claimed to be one with the Father, equal to the lawgiver.

Jesus further claimed to be God's spokesman, one who revealed the will of God. "My teaching is not mine, but His that sent me": "as the Father taught me, I speak these things"; "For I spoke not from myself; but the Father that sent me, He has given me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak" (7:16; 8:28; 12:49; also 5:19; 14:23, 24; 15:10). Jesus claimed the right of lawgiver by saying "A new commandment I give to you" (13:34).

In relation to the law Jesus taught that law was from God, that He was one with God, that He was God's spokesman and that He had the right to issue new commandments. Jesus' life harmonized perfectly with the old law and with the new law He proclaimed.

Relation to the Kingdom

Sin is violation of law, law determines behavior by commandment and thirdly, law operates within the realm of a kingdom, a defined area of authority. God is a spirit therefore His law must apply within a spiritual kingdom.

Jesus denied being a threat to Caesar before Pilate. His kingdom was not of this world (18:35, 36). Jesus did not deny His rightful role as King. It was the reason He was born (18:37). The kingdoms of Pilate and Caesar were material. Jesus' kingdom was conceptual, one based on truth. It would be established, extended and perpetuated by truth.

Jesus' teaching was consistent. To Nicodemus he described a spiritual rebirth to enter the kingdom (3:5-7). To the woman in Samaria He taught that God would be worshipped in spirit and in truth without a prescribed physical location (4:20-24). Jesus refused an earthly kingdom (6:15).

The disciples were taught that they were branches in a vine. They were to "love one another, even as I have loved you". They were to take this attitude into the world and bear fruit so that they could abide in the vine. The world would refuse to love them because they were not of the world (15:1-19; 17:14, 16).

Jesus emphasized that the kingdom He founded was not of this world, rather it is a kingdom of truth. It is entered by a spiritual birth and its citizens worship in spirit and truth.

Its citizens are not of this world. Jesus refused an earthly crown, repudiated violence (18:11) and posed no threat to existing earthly kingdoms. He promised joy and peace despite tribulation (15:11; 14:27; 16:33) and taught His disciples to deny their earthly desires.

Relation to Man

The kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom comprised of fleshly men. Jesus claimed kinship to man when He said "But now you seek to kill me, a man that has told you the truth" (8:40). He became weary, He became hungry, He showed sorrow and compassion and He knew intense thirst (4:6; 11:35; 19:38).

While a man, Jesus was also distinctly different that man. Man was in darkness while He was the light of the world (3:18-20). He accepted worship (9:38) which belongs exclusively to God (4:23). He was most distinct in His resurrected form (20:17). The Savior, Priest and King was about to ascend to sit at the right hand of God.

Relation to God

Behind the kingdom is God. He is the designer, creator and lawgiver. Jesus claimed to know God, come from God, was sent by God and came down out of heaven (7:29; 6:38; 10:30). To know Him was to know the Father (14:7-10). That knowledge would provide eternal life (17:3). He shared glory previously with the Father (17:5), would return to the Father (16:10, 17, 28) and He is the only way to the Father (14:6).

Philip had seen the Father by his association with Jesus and should have recognized it. Jesus life was in harmony with His claims to know God.

1. How is Jesus separate from sin? _____

2. What is Jesus' attitude toward sinners? _____

3. What is Jesus relation to law? _____

4. How are Jesus, the kingdom and man related? _____

5. How is Jesus related to God? _____

Testimony Supporting the Claims of Jesus

Lesson 10 – The Holy Spirit’s Testimony

John Chapters Nineteen and Twenty

The Holy Spirit’s Testimony

Thus far in considering divine testimony we have considered the testimony of the Father and that of Jesus. The Father provided testimony in the form of signs, fulfilled scripture and in the resurrection. Jesus lived a life harmonious with His teaching while performing signs and fulfilling scripture. The Holy Spirit is also active in testimony. John records more about the Holy Spirit’s person, character, coming, work and witness than any of the other Gospels.

From the time Judas departed on his treacherous errand, Jesus offers serious instruction to the remaining apostles preparing them for His imminent death (John 14-16). He promises the eleven that the Holy Spirit would be sent to them in His stead (14:26; 15:26, 27; 16:7, 13). Thereafter He offers an earnest prayer to the Father in which He pleads for their faith and unity (John 17).

The Mission of the Holy Spirit

He Was to be a Comforter

“And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive; for it beholds Him not, neither knows Him: you know Him; for He abides with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you desolate: I come to you” (14:16-18). The Holy Spirit is referenced four times as a Comforter. A comforter in this sense is a liaison, mediator, intercessor and/or helper. Jesus promises “another” Comforter. The Holy Spirit would serve the same purpose that Jesus is currently serving to the Apostles. Not only would the Holy Spirit teach them all things, He would remind the Apostles of all that Jesus had taught them (14:25, 26).

I also find it fascinating that Jesus says regarding the Holy Spirit, “I come to you”. We know Jesus and the Holy Spirit to be two distinct persons. Jesus would remain in Heaven while the Holy Spirit assumed Jesus’ role as Comforter on earth. I conclude that just as Jesus represents the character and purpose of the Father, the Holy Spirit represents the character and purpose of Jesus. Therefore He also represents the character and purpose of the Father. The Father, Son and Spirit are One.

He Was to Bear Witness

The signs and teaching of Jesus were sufficient to expose sin (15:22, 24). This caused the Jews to hate Jesus intensely (15:25; Psa 69:4). Jesus promised an additional witness in the Holy Spirit, “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceeds from the Father, He shall bear witness of Me” (15:26).

He Was to Convict the World

“And He, when He is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (16:8). The term convict apparently has a broad definition ranging from

convincing to conviction. The Holy Spirit would accomplish both. Those who did not believe on Jesus would be convicted of sin (16:9). He would convince the world of righteousness, “because I go to the Father, and you behold me no more” (16:10). Further He would convince the world of judgment. Jesus would be exalted and the prince of this world dethroned (16:11). The revelation of the Holy Spirit offered further testimony to the world convincing many to believe. Those who refuse to hear Him are condemned.

He Was to Guide the Apostles into all Truth

Not only would the Holy Spirit remind the Apostles of all that Jesus had taught them (14:26), He would guide them into all the truth (16:12, 13). One may doubt the signs as man today has never seen a sign. However, the complete revelation of the Holy Spirit is compelling.

Part of the Holy Spirit’s work was prophetic. “And He shall declare to you the things that are to come” (16:13). Consider the resurrection and transformation of our bodies (1 Cor 15). He predicted a “falling away” preceding the revealing of “the man of sin” (2 Thess 2:1-7). What about the return of Jesus and the destruction of this world (2 Pet 3)? Numerous prophecies are housed in Revelation. Some would “shortly come to pass” (Rev 1:1-3), while others are clearly fulfilled in final judgment yet to come. We have confidence in the fulfillment of future prophecy based on the accuracy of ancient prophecy.

He Was to Glorify Christ

Beginning with Pentecost, all things done under the direction of the Holy Spirit were for the purpose of glorifying Jesus. “He shall glorify Me: for He shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you” (16:14). Christ remained the center of the kingdom and the center of teaching.

The Spirit’s Testimony

The arrival of the Holy Spirit is further testimony to the truth of Jesus return to the Father. Jesus repeatedly claimed that He came from the Father and necessarily would return (7:33; 14:12, 28; 16:5). Despite His death He claimed the power to take up His life again (10:11, 17). “Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you” (16:7).

The promise that rivers of living water would arise within believers was a portent of the Holy Spirit. “But this spoke He of the Spirit, which they that believed on Him were to receive: for the Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified” (7:39). From the disciples misunderstanding the triumphal entry (12:16) to the Greeks approaching Philip desiring to see Jesus, the time was drawing near for Jesus to be glorified (12:23). At the last supper Jesus announced that His glorification was imminent. “Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him; and God shall glorify Him in Himself, and straightway shall He glorify Him” (13:31, 32).

The Holy Spirit could not arrive and begin His work until after Jesus was glorified. As the Holy Spirit did not arrive until Pentecost, we will look to a few scriptures outside the Gospel of John to substantiate the work to the Holy Spirit.

The Mystery is Revealed

The Holy Spirit was to guide the Apostles into all truth and reveal the secret things of God. Paul clearly states that the Holy Spirit had revealed to him the things previously unknown (Eph 3:1-5). One to these premises is that the Gentiles were to be included. Now revealed we can read and understand, eliminating the need for further revelation or private interpretation.

The gospel is a mystery revealed by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:6-13). The gospel contains wisdom that is not of this world. It was in fact, God's wisdom concealed. We learn that it was foreordained before creation and hidden from all the rulers of the world. Now it has been revealed by the Holy Spirit as it is only the Spirit of God who can know the things of God.

The Grace of God is Made Known

Complete revelation of God's grace to mankind was accomplished by the Holy Spirit. Moses gave the law while Jesus brought grace and truth (1:14, 16, 17). The purpose was to instruct man how to live and for what to look (Tit 2:11-14). The prophets of old foretold the grace that was to come (1Pet 1:10). The revelation was accomplished by the "preaching of the Gospel by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven" (1 Pet 1:12).

The Faith has been Once for All Delivered

Peter refers to a "like precious faith" (2 Pet 1:1). Jude writes of a "common salvation". The body of faith upon which this common salvation is based required earnest defense (Jude 3). Recall a "great company of priests were obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7). "The Faith" is obviously what was taught and obeyed. The "like precious faith" and "common salvation" result from the teaching of "The Faith". This doctrine was delivered one time by the Holy Spirit. We do not expect additional revelation or clarification.

Man is Made a Partaker of the Divine Nature

The Apostles were permitted a taste of Divine Power. They were to be "clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). The power was a result of the Holy Spirit coming upon them (Acts 1:8). Not all men will have the opportunity to share Divine Power but all do have the opportunity to share a Divine Nature. The Holy Spirit has made it possible for men to know and replicate the character of God. "But as many as receive Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (1:11-13). "Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (3:5). Those convinced by the Spirit were promised rivers of living water within them (7:38, 39; 16:8). By a new birth sinners are transformed into the likeness of God.

Men Are Thoroughly Furnished to Every Good Work

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:16, 17). If the man of God may be complete then scripture is complete. The Holy Spirit concluded His work. This is further testimony to the deity of Jesus.

1. How does Jesus prepare the Apostles for His impending death? _____

2. Who does Jesus promise to send and why? _____

3. How did the Holy Spirit provide comfort? _____

4. How does the Holy Spirit bear witness to Jesus? _____

5. In what three areas does the Holy Spirit convict the world? How? _____

6. Into what did the Holy Spirit guide the Apostles? _____

7. How is the Holy Spirit related to prophecy? _____

8. Who did the Holy Spirit glorify? How and when did He do this? _____

9. Name five works of the Holy Spirit that support John's record of the Holy Spirit. _____

10. How is the Holy Spirit like Jesus? How is He like the Father? _____

Yet They Believed Not on Him

Lesson 11 – Unbelief

John Chapter Twenty-one

Unbelief

How is it that the Jews of Jesus day rejected Him? Faced with the evidence of the signs, His teaching and flawless example, they refused to believe (12:37). How is this possible? Was it a lack of evidence? Not every man witnessed a miracle. Not all heard Him teach. Not all saw Him crucified. Only a few thousand saw Him after the resurrection. It would be decades before John's Gospel was penned. Does this excuse them? John addresses several types of responses which we will consider.

Superficial or Fickle Belief

Following the purging of the Temple "Many believed on His name, beholding the signs which He did" (2:23). Their belief was shallow and short lived. Persuaded by the Jewish rulers many shouted for His crucifixion a short time later (19:15). When the excitement passed, interest waned and people became disinterested. When teaching unopposed in Jerusalem people surmised that the rulers must know this is the Christ. However, their partial knowledge of Jesus' origin caused them to dismiss Him (7:25-27).

Lack of Spiritual Perception

Upon discovering that He had no interest in becoming an earthly king the multitude abandoned Him (6:15, 60, 66). The concept of spiritual bread and water did not interest them. They were primarily concerned with their social situation. Many want a combination of social and spiritual, a concept not taught by Jesus. It is easy to criticize the people of Jesus day from Nicodemus (John 3), to the multitude, to the Pharisees. Nicodemus appears to have become bolder as time passed but we do not know if he was converted (7:50, 51; 19:38-40).

Sometimes association or kinship hinders spiritual perceptions. Jesus' own brothers did not believe on him (7:5). We often say that familiarity breeds contempt. It is hard for us to look past character blemishes and impossible to read the motives of the heart.

Fear and Moral Cowardice

Fear paralyzes. We may fear retribution or what others may think about us if we place our beliefs into action. Some fear failure and thus will not even try. Some do not wish to pay the price of discipleship. The people desired to see Jesus but were afraid to speak to him because they feared the Jews (7:13). The parents of the man born blind were afraid to defend their son's conclusion about Jesus because they also feared the Jews would exclude them from worshipping in the synagogue (9:21, 22).

Moral cowardice can stand between us and salvation. We must be able to express our convictions and behave in accordance with them. Pilate is a vivid example. It took Pilate very little time to conclude that the Jews had no case against Jesus. He proclaims Him innocent on three occasions (18:38; 19:1-4, 6) but caves to the increasingly outspoken crowd. Pilate offers them a choice between the murderous Barabbas and the innocent

Jesus. Finally he scourges Jesus and presents Him to the crowd. They have no compassion and insist Jesus be crucified. Pilate delivers Him without further opposition (19:16).

Lack of Love for God

Lack of love for God is likely the primary reason for all of the condition we will discuss. Jesus said "I receive not glory from men. But I know you that you do not have the love of God in you. How can you believe, who receive glory one of another, and the glory that comes from the only God you do not seek" (5:41, 42, 44). Without love for God there is no incentive to seek His glory.

Love of Darkness

Those who did not believe in Jesus found themselves condemned. "And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil. For everyone that does evil hates the light, and comes not to the light, lest his works should be reprov'd" (3:19, 20). Unless we overcome our love of evil we have no hope. Consider Judas who betrayed his Lord for thirty pieces of silver.

Love of the Glory of Men

How sad that one would bypass hope of eternal life for the accolades of men. "Even of the rulers many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the glory that is of men more than the glory that is of God" (12:42, 43). Was this moral cowardice or pride, perhaps both?

Love of Self and Material Things

Jesus knew from the beginning who it was that would betray Him (6:64, 71; 12:4; 13:11). The betrayer, inspired by Satan, boldly took bread with Jesus in the presence of His closest companions (13:2, 18). Jesus spoke without contempt about Judas and made no effort to evade him (13:21-30; 18:1-3). Jesus presented Himself without hesitation to the arrest party (18:4-11). What a stark contrast between the one who selfishly loved material things and the one who loved God.

Hardened and Prejudiced Hearts

It is possible for our hearts to become hardened against the very things that are designed to produce a tender response. This was true of the Israelites at Meribah (Psa 95:7-9). It was true of Pharaoh when presented with the awesome abilities of the I AM. The Jews of Jesus' day were no different. "He has blinded their eyes, and He hardened their heart; Lest they should see with their eyes, and perceive with their heart, and should turn" (12:37-40). How could they close their heart to the one to whom Jesus restored sight or to the lame man made whole after suffering for thirty-eight years. They held their traditions in higher regard than justice and mercy and refused to yield. "If you were blind, you have no sin: but now you say, We see: your sin remains" (9:40, 41).

Intellectual Pride

The Pharisees ridicule the officers who failed on an early attempt to arrest Jesus. The officers had been halted by the power of Jesus' teaching. The Pharisees arrogantly ask, "Have any of the rulers believed on Him, or of the Pharisees?" (7;48). The assumption is that the officers have no grounds to believe until they, the Pharisees, and rulers believe. We see the same intellectual pride running rampant through the denominations of men and the halls of academia. This equates to dishonesty as evidence is discounted in exchange for the glory of men (12:42, 43).

Indifference

Another attitude that stands between men and salvation is apathy or indifference. One may have heard of Jesus, or may have witnessed a sign or perhaps heard Him teach. Yet that witness was not moved to believe. Some are willing to be entertained at length by religion but do not care to make application.

1. What is unbelief? _____

2. Describe a superficial belief. Can you cite a parable to help explain it? _____

3. Why is spiritual perception necessary? _____

4. What affect can fear have on potential believers? _____

5. Describe four ways misplaced love affects belief. _____

6. What is the difference between prejudice and indifference? _____

7. What are the dangers of intellectual pride? _____

The Gospel of John A Basis for Belief

Conclusion

We began this series of lessons with the proposition John presents as a conclusion, that “Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name”.

- Do you have a greater appreciation for the enormity of this statement? _____

Belief requires evidence. We must rely upon our own reasoning to fully accept or deny John’s conclusion. We must all render a verdict based on the evidence John presents.

- Does John provide sufficient evidence to conclude that Jesus is the Christ? _____

- How strong or weak is the evidence? _____

- How clearly is the evidence presented? _____

- How well can you process or analyze the evidence presented? _____

- Will you be honest or will you insert your own prejudices? _____

- Do you have the will to carry out the necessary conclusions? _____

Let’s consider again the scope of John’s assertion.

- Do you believe that Jesus existed?

- Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ?

- Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God? _____

- Do you believe in God? Who does that include? _____

- Do you believe that "believing" will result in eternal life? _____

- Do you believe that you are capable of seeing your faith through to judgment? How? _____

- What are you going to do to make your calling and election sure? _____

Never a man lived like Jesus. Never a man spoke like Jesus spoke. Others have claimed to work miracles or to speak for God but their lives fell miserably short of their claims. Not so with Jesus. His life was lived in perfect harmony with scripture.

His enemies acknowledged His miracles. They could not disprove His resurrection. They could not stop His kingdom. His disciples transformed from cowards into lions of faith. The Gospel has affected the affairs and kingdoms of men from the arrival of Jesus until this day.

Who are you to discount the testimony of the witnesses? Who are you to deny the power of God when you are part of His awesome creation? Who are you to refuse to love God who sent His Son to die in your place? What will you do with Jesus? Do you believe?