

The Bible Notebook

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

That you may know Him
(John 20:31)

Volume 5

Chapters 13-15

By

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DEDICATION

To

Peggy, Sylvia, and Becky

(Peggy Bankston, Sylvia Hammett, & Rebecca Sanders)

It was always a pleasure to see you together

INTRODUCTION

The Gospel According to John

The late Dr. Bracy Campbell was, in his younger days, pastor of the First Baptist Church, Marks, Mississippi. Those who knew him were amused when he would walk out of his study at noon, and then go back into his office and call his wife to tell her the car was missing. She would say, "Bracy, you walked to the church this morning." Some of those who had classes under Dr. Campbell at Mississippi College aware of the fact that they were sitting under the proverbial absent minded professor. Some would tell of times when he would walk out of Nelson Hall, look around and spot a student he knew and ask him to drive him to his house where his wife had lunch waiting for him. After lunch, he would ask his wife to drive him back to school, only to have her say, "Bracy, you drove to school this morning." These were the simple stories. Some were a lot more amusing.

The most amusing story I heard about Dr. Bracy Campbell was probably "doctored" just a little. According to the story, Dr. Campbell once spoke in a chapel service at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. After the service he visited with friends from the faculty and with a number of students before asking one of the professors to give him a ride to the train station where he caught "The Panama Limited", or "The City of New Orleans" to Jackson. When he arrived, he called Mrs. Campbell and asked her to come pick him up at the train station. She said, "Bracy, you drove to New Orleans." Whereupon, as the story goes, he went back inside and bought a round-trip ticket to go back and get his automobile. So the story goes.

Dr. Campbell may have been the proverbial absent minded professor, but, there was nothing missing in his lectures, or in his awareness of the Word of God. One student realized that when he was reading the Bible reading before having prayer at the beginning of a class, there was something physically wrong with the way Dr. Campbell was reading. Then he realized, "He's reading from right to left. He is reading from the Hebrew Old Testament." Professor E. L. Douglas, who shared the office complex with Dr. Campbell, once told his class about the time a remarkable speaker spoke in chapel. Students and faculty members alike sat spellbound as they listened to the visitor. As they left the chapel, they were praising the speaker: he was dramatic, he was articulate, he was humorous, he was a powerful preacher. They were mesmerized. The two professors left chapel and walked to their offices, and when they walked into the outer office, Dr. Campbell turned around and closed the door, and then turned back to Professor Douglas and said, "Yes, it was wonderful, but what did he say?" Professor Douglas told his class that he tried to think what the speaker had said and really couldn't think of anything of any significance the he had said.

One morning, students and faculty members found their seats in chapel and someone announced that Dr. Campbell would be the speaker that day. Dr. Campbell walked out onto the stage, stopped at the speaker's stand and began: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God....." The absent minded professor quoted the entire Gospel of John that morning!

Volume V - Chapters 13-15

This volume calls for a decision that demands some serious consideration. In the first place, Chapter 12 is the pivotal chapter in this Gospel. Jesus' Farewell Discourse is recorded in Chapters 14-16. So what do we do with Chapters 13 and 17 if we do not include all five chapters? In addition, the Farewell Discourse actually begins in the latter part of Chapter 13. I could follow the New American Commentary and group Chapter 13-17 together as "The Farewell Cycle (13:1-17:26) [B & H Publishing, found in THE BIBLE NAVIGATOR, Electronic Bible Library Program, LifeWay Christian Resources, Tim Vineyard, creator - identified in this series by the initials NAC]. Instead, I will include only Chapters 13, 14, and 15 in this volume. My reason has to do with posting on the web site and e-mailing to those who request a copy. Jesus now turn from His earlier ministry to a ministry of preparing His disciples for His death, burial, and resurrection. The Farewell Discourses are a part of this section, as the author of the NAC material explains:

"Clearly there are farewell words that remind the reader of the farewell addresses by Moses and others to the people of Israel (cf. Deut 31-33). But rather than simply being a farewell speech, this section (involving more than just chaps. 14-16) begins with one of the most memorable acts of Jesus. Here he vividly demonstrates a model of discipleship by washing his disciples' feet and by issuing a new commandment of love, which epitomizes that model. This major section ends in chap. 17 with a multidimensional prayer of Jesus that not only represents what discipleship dependence ought to be like but provides in prayer form a unique summation of a number of the major concerns in the Gospel" [NAC].

F. F. Bruce follows the same chapter divisions, grouping Chapters 13-17 together under the title: "Jesus Reveals The Father to His Disciples" (Bruce, F. F., THE GOSPEL OF JOHN, William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, 1983, p. 278 - after this, BRUCE).

"The upper room ministry of chapters 13-17 is directed to the inner circle of disciples, whereas the ministry of the earlier chapters had been directed to the general populace of Jerusalem or Galilee - the world at

large. If our Lord's own people did not give Him the reception and recognition which might have been expected, He would, for the few remaining hours, concentrate on the few who did recognize and receive Him; it is they who are now called 'His own people' (hoi idioi). On them He had set His love in a special degree, and in the ministry of the upper room that love is poured out in action and word, as in the sequel it is poured out in suffering and death" [BRUCE].

This Volume in the Series

Throughout this series on the Gospel According to John, in what I call *The Bible Notebook*, every effort is made to keep both the opening declaration and the stated purpose of the Book in mind. The Prologue begins with the words: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1, HCSB). Everything else we find in the Fourth Gospel fits, hand in glove, between that statement and the purpose John provides for us: "Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of His disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may believe Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and by believing you may have life in His name" (20:30-31).

Volume IV (Chs. 10-12) begins with highlights or major themes of chapters 1-9. This volume will begin with a similar brief recap of chapters 1-12.

In **Chapter One**, there is the Prologue, in which we find a statement about Jesus that destroys all cults, all false religions, and all heresies, as well as atheism and agnosticism. Yes, this Gospel has been around two thousand years and we still have cults, false religions, heresies, atheism and agnosticism, but their demise has been assured, as has the reward of all who embrace them. John begins this Gospel with the words, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. All things were created by Him, and without Him was not anything created that was created" (KJV). The first chapter proclaims Jesus to be life, light, Savior, the Lamb of God, the Messiah.

In **Chapter Two**, Jesus, through **the First Sign**, declares Himself to be the fulfillment of all Messianic prophecies. In **Chapter Three**, we read: "For God so love the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him will not perish, but have everlasting life" (my paraphrase). In **Chapter Four**, He says to the woman at the well in Samaria, "Everyone who drinks from this water will get thirsty again. But whoever drinks from the water that I will give him will never get thirsty again—ever! In fact, the water I will give him will become a well of water springing up within him for eternal life" (John 4:13-14, HCSB). Also, in **Chapter Four**, we have **the Second Sign**, the healing of an official's son from a distance.

In **Chapter Five**, we find **the Third Sign**, the healing of a man who had been sick for 38 years (on the Sabbath), as well His declaration about His relationship with His Father. He also offers witnesses who support His claim to be the Son of God. In **Chapter Six**, He feeds five thousand men, plus women and children with a child's lunch (**the Fourth Sign**). That evening His disciples were caught in a violent storm in the middle of the Sea of Galilee when Jesus came to them, walking on the water (**the Fifth Sign**). The next day, He declared, "**I am the bread of life**" (bold added by this writer).

In **Chapter Seven**, Jesus went to the Temple privately, but in the middle of the Festival of Tabernacles, He stood up and cried out, "If anyone is thirsty, he should come to Me and drink! The one who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, will have streams of living water flow from deep within him" (7:37-38). Without saying it in so many words, He is saying that He is water of life. He continues to make statements that support the great claims set forth in the Prologue.

In **Chapter Eight**, Jesus masterfully deals with a crowd bent on trapping him by forcefully dragging into His presence a woman caught in the act of adultery. When the scribes and Pharisees sought to paint Him into a corner from which there was no escape, He brilliantly put the ball back in their court. When they gave up and left, He dismissed the woman with an order for her to "Go, and from now on do not sin any more" (8:11).

In **Chapter Nine**, Jesus gives **the sixth sign**, the healing of a man born blind, after He had dealt with the question: whose sins caused his blindness, his or his parents'? The Jewish religious authorities were enraged that Jesus made a paste of spittle and placed on the eyes of the blind man on the Sabbath Day. They questioned the man about the One who had healed him and "He answered, '**Whether or not He's a sinner, I don't know. One thing I do know: I was blind, and now I can see.**'" (9:25, bold added by this writer). Wow! What a testimony.

Chapter Ten is very special for a number of reasons. First, Jesus makes two unforgettable "I AM" statements in this passage. Second, this chapter reveals that Jesus fulfills the hopes and promises of Psalm 23. Third, Jesus offers assurance of eternal security to every single person to whom He gives eternal life, whether they understand it or not (whether they believe it or not!). The Savior never announces anywhere that He will grant temporary life to anyone who believes in Him.

In **Chapter Eleven**, Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead after making another of those amazing I AM statements. He declared to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life." In **Chapter Twelve**, we have the anointing at Bethany by Mary and the Royal Entry (commonly called the Triumphant Entry).

When I was a child I participated in the Junior Memory Drills promoted by the Mississippi Baptist Training Union Department. I was perfect in the local church, associational drills, the district and the state drills. Many years later, I decided to see how much of the Gospel According to John I could memorize. I will not comment on how that went. All the Scripture I memorized was in the King James Version, whereas I studied from the American Standard or the New American Standard Bible for many years. Then, I was elected to serve on the board of trustees for LifeWay Christian Resources, where I was assigned to the Broadman and Holman Committee.

In the first committee meeting, Ken Stephens, President of B & H Publishing at the time, introduced Dr. Ed. Blum, the General Editor of the new Holman Christian Standard Bible. In that meeting, I learned about plans to publish a new translation of the Bible, the HOLMAN CHRISTIAN STANDARD BIBLE, a word-for-word translation, in contrast to a some popular phrase-for-phrase translations. Our committee went into executive session that day and voted to make the motion in the plenary session to go forward with the new translation. Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture in this series on the Gospel According to John will be from the HCSB. In a few cases the KJV may be paraphrased by this writer.

CHAPTER 13

Jesus Washes the Feet of His Disciples

13:1 - BEFORE THE PASSOVER. *“Before the Passover Festival, Jesus knew that His hour had come to depart from this world to the Father. Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.”* Passover was one of the three great festivals the Lord commanded the Israelites to keep each year. “Before the Passover Festival”, John wrote, “Jesus knew that His hour had come...” Robertson writes, “Just before, John means, not twenty-four hours before, that is our Thursday evening (beginning of 15th of Nisan, sunset to sunset Jewish day), since Jesus was crucified on Friday 15th of Nisan. Hence Jesus ate the regular passover meal at the usual time. The whole feast, including the feast of unleavened bread, lasted eight days” [Robertson, A. T., *Word PICTURES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT*, in the Bible Navigator (Electronic Bible Library), LifeWay Christian Resources, Technology Division, Nashville - after this, ATR]. There is some debate as to the time of this supper, as we shall see.

JESUS KNEW. The Greek demands that we see Jesus approaching the cross in full consciousness of what was about to happen. Nothing ever caught Jesus by surprise. He was fully aware of His identity when he confused the scholars at the temple when He

was twelve years old. He was in constant communication with His Father, who announced His approval at his Baptism, and at the Mount of Transfiguration. In John 18:4 and 19:28, we find examples of His awareness of His imminent death (see also, John 12:23). It was time for Jesus to depart from this earth to go back to the Father from whom He had come (John 14:12, 28; John 16:10, 28; John 17:5).

THE HOUR HAD COME. Jesus was well aware of the fact that His death was imminent, just as He had been aware of the fact that He would not be stoned by an angry mob at the temple complex on His last visit to the temple. Jesus had come, we are told in John 3:16, to die for the sins of the world. Such was the Father's love for the one creation created in His image. The Lord was fully aware of the fact that the time had come for Him to die so that all who believe in Him will have everlasting life. Jesus loves all people, but "He has a special love for His sheep: He loved His own. Then He showed them the full extent of His love: His humble service (13:1-17), His teaching (13:18-17:26), and finally His death (chaps. 18-19) are in view. All three revealed His love" [BIBLE KNOWLEDGE COMMENTARY, QuickVerse Electronic Bible Software - after this, BKC].

John, while inspired by the Holy Spirit, continues to give us personal insight into the nature and character of Jesus. Here, "the meaning seems to be that Jesus continued his devotion to the disciples until the very end of His life—and this is all the more remarkable when we consider how Jesus could have been absorbed with his own conflicts" [NEW COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE, NEW TESTAMENT, QuickVerse Bible Software program - after this, NCWB].

LOVED HIS OWN. The time had come for Jesus to show the depth of His love for the world, and at this moment His love for His true followers is remarkable. John writes, "Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end."

"The passover feast began on the 15th Nisan at sunset, the passover lamb being slain the afternoon of 14th Nisan. There seems no real doubt that this meal in John 13:1-30 is the real passover meal described by the Synoptics also (Mark 14:18-21; Mat 26:21-25; Luke 22:21-23), followed by the institution of the Lords Supper. Thus understood (this verse) serves as an introduction to the great esoteric teaching of Christ to the apostles (John 13:2-17:26), called by Barnas Sears The Heart of Christ" [ATR].

God so loves the world that He gave His Son (John 3:16), and Jesus loved His own disciples, whom He was about to leave in order to go to the Father (see John 17: 6-11). This does not include the Jews who rejected Him (1:11), only those who committed themselves to Him. Jesus was about to demonstrate His great love for His disciples, and His love for the world would be demonstrated in His death on the cross.

13:2 -SUPPER. “Now by the time of supper, the Devil had already put it into the heart of Judas, Simon Iscariot’s son, to betray Him.” This was the annual Passover supper (13:1), “which Jesus and his disciples partook of before the ‘Lord’s Supper’ (cf. Matt. 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-26; Luke 22:7-39)” [NCWB]. The HCSB has “by the time of supper”, whereas Vincent insists that the present participle in the original denotes “while a *supper was in progress*” (or during supper). “The A.V. is wrong, even if the reading of the Received Text be retained; for in v. 12 Jesus reclined again, and in v. 26, the supper is still in progress. It should be, *supper having begun*, or *having been served*. It is important to note the absence of the definite article: *a supper*, as distinguished from *the feast*, which also is designated by a different word” [VINCENT’S WORD STUDIES, VOL 2, QuickVerse Software, electronic Bible library, 2007 - after this, VINCENT].

Robertson and others agree that the correct text is during supper, because it is the “present middle participle of *ginomai* (not *genomenou*, second aorist middle participle, ‘being ended’) genitive absolute. Verse John 13:4 shows plainly that the meal was still going on” [ATR]. It is, however, a fair presumption that “by the time of the supper, the Devil had already put it into the heart of Judas to betray Jesus. He just had not completed his act of betrayal before the supper.

THE DEVIL. The existence of a personal devil is assumed, not explained or defended here. Even at the beginning of His public ministry when Jesus withdrew to the wilderness for forty days where He was tested by the devil, no effort is made by Matthew (Ch. 4) to defend the existence of Satan.

The inspired Scripture assumes that anyone with even a rudimentary knowledge of Genesis 3 would accept the fact that Satan exists. When I was in seminary, we were well into an intensive course in Revelation before a fellow student asked our professor if he believed that Satan really exists. The professor admitted that he believed that Satan was only the personification of evil, not a real person. Genesis declares the existence of Satan, with no more explanation of his existence than there is of the existence of God in Genesis 1:1. Old Testament scholars will debate the passage in Ezekiel 28 until the Lord returns, but let us consider that passage:

“You were in Eden, the garden of God.... You were an anointed guardian cherub, for I had appointed you.... **From the day you were created you were blameless in your ways until wickedness was found in you.** Through the abundance of your trade, you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I expelled you in disgrace from the mountain of God, and banished you, guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. Your heart became proud because of your beauty; For the sake of your splendor you corrupted your wisdom. **So I threw you down to the earth;** I made a spectacle of you before kings” (Ezek 28:13-17, HCSB, bold added by this writer).

John was inspired by the Holy Spirit to tell us that Satan “had already put it into the heart of Judas, Simon Iscariot’s son, to betray Him.” They were in the process of eating the supper, but Satan had already put it in Judas’ mind to betray Jesus. Luke tells us (Luke 22:3) that Satan entered Judas when he offered to betray Jesus, so John is right when he uses the word “already” here. He repeats it in John 13:27. A year earlier (John 6:70) Jesus knew Judas was a servant of Satan.

13:3 - JESUS KNEW. *“Jesus knew that the Father had given everything into His hands, that He had come from God, and that He was going back to God.”* John wrote these words under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who knew what Jesus knew, and when He knew it. We are not told how early Jesus comprehended His mission of earth, or even the fact that He was the Son of God. We do know that when He amazed the religious scholars at the temple when he was only twelve years old. He had an understanding of Scripture. It does not stand to reason that those scholars would have been amazed if a twelve year old boy had been asking them to tell him the story of David and Goliath. They would have been amazed if He had been talking with them about Messianic prophecies.

THE FATHER. In John 5:37, Jesus declared that the Father testified about Him; and in 5:43, He announced that He had come in the Father’s name. In John 6, Jesus taught, “Everyone the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will never cast out” (6:37). There was never a time during His public ministry when Jesus did not know that the Father had “given everything into His hands.”

HE HAD COME FROM GOD. This separates Jesus from all those, like Mohammed, who have created their own religions. At His baptism, and again at the Transfiguration, the Father declared His relationship with the Son, as well as His approval of His Son. Jesus often withdrew to be alone with the Father, so He had perfect knowledge of the fact that He had come from the Father, and that He would return to Him. His awareness of this is evident all through the Four Gospels.

13:4 - SO HE GOT UP. *“So He got up from supper, laid aside His robe, took a towel, and tied it around Himself.”* “So” holds before us the information that Jesus’ knew He was about to return to the Father, and directs our attention to the action that followed that statement. Jesus was reclining at the table, according the custom of the day, not sitting upright in a chair as portrayed in the well known painting of the Last Supper. Right in the middle of the supper, Jesus arose, laid aside the outer robe, and picked up a towel and tied it around Himself, an action that must have puzzled His disciples.

13:5 - HE POURED WATER. *“Next, He poured water into a basin and began to wash His disciples’ feet and to dry them with the towel tied around Him.”* What exactly is Jesus doing here?

His disciples have at times acted like children, seeking a position of power and prestige

in the Lord's coming kingdom. James and John's mother sought for her sons rank over the other disciples, one on the right hand and the other on the left hand of the Lord, and from all indications they coveted such positions. Was Jesus simply teaching them that those who are greatest in His kingdom are those who serve others without seeking reward or position? If we read the entire account (13:3-12) we must not discount the importance of this lesson. The author of the material in the NEW AMERICAN COMMENTARY points out some facts that agree with what this writer has taught for years:

“To get the full impact of this scene one should review the setting again. The text is not unrelated to the issue of ambition among the disciples, who wanted the chief seats in Jesus' coming 'kingdom' (cf. Matt 20:21; see also Mark 10:37, where the word 'glory' is used instead). And since it was the sons of Zebedee who were making the request, this idea of glory probably left an indelible impression on the evangelist here and on all the disciples. These disciples undoubtedly had evidenced the human trait of ambition. Moreover, Peter was clearly convinced of his own ability to follow Jesus, as is indicated later in this chapter (cf. John 13:37). And to complete the picture of the disciples, Judas had apparently already schemed the betrayal of Jesus (13:11; cf. Mark 14:10-11; Luke 22:3-4). It was in this very human-centered context that Jesus adopted the totally different example of a humble servant to be the model for discipleship.

The picture is made more intense when one understands that at the meal they were undoubtedly reclining (not sitting) with their heads facing the center and their feet stretched out behind them. They supported themselves on one elbow (primarily the left) and reached for food with the right hand. The participants at the meal could ignore the one washing their feet” [NAC].

I have two questions about the above note. First, if they had washed their feet before entering the home, they would not have needed to have them washed again. Second, even though they were reclining at the meal, if someone had gotten up from any position around the circle, those opposite him would have noticed it and their attention would have caused others to notice. When Jesus moved, we can be sure John would have been the first to notice, since he reclined, propped on his left elbow immediately beside Jesus, as would the person behind Jesus.

Some believe that the primary lesson is in that which is symbolized in each step Jesus took as He washed the feet of His disciples. One interesting aspect of this is in the timing. Foot washing was necessary in a day when people wore open sandals and walked on dusty roads and paths. I started on my high school baseball team when I was a freshman. I didn't have any idea how little I knew when I took the field in my first high school game. The pitcher for the Lambert, Mississippi team was a lefthander, and I realized as we watched him warm up, that my older teammates were paying a lot of attention to him. When I went to the plate the first time I looked at the pitcher, and as

he looked to his catcher for a signal, I noticed his socks! His were light brown in color. Pants to baseball uniforms came only to the calf, not all the way down to the ankle. This pitcher was not wearing white socks. I didn't have long to think about that, but I noticed it from time to time as the game progressed. Later in the game his socks took on a different look. Then I realized that He was not wearing socks. What I saw was a bare leg from his shoes to his baseball pants. He had perspired and dust had settled on his legs. As the game progressed, sweat began to cut little miniature trenches through the dirt. Of course, he had kicked around on the mound with his cleats when he was warming up before the game and his legs had become coated with dust before I noticed him.

When I was growing up, children usually went barefoot during the summer and after school. We lived on our family farm and when I was ten to twelve years old I worked in the fields and ran up and down gravel roads barefooted. I know how important it was to wash one's feet when he came inside after being out in the dust, and at times, mud. Foot washing was necessary in ancient Palestine after people had walked on those dusty roads. Normally, one washed his own feet before he entered a home, or had his feet washed by a family member or a servant. "It was a mark of honor for a host to provide a servant to wash a guest's feet; it was a breach of hospitality not to provide for it (cf. 1 Sam. 25:41; Luke 7:40-50; 1 Tim. 5:10). Wives often washed their husbands' feet, and children washed their parents' feet. Most people, of course, had to wash their own feet" [BKC].

Had Jesus and His disciples not washed their feet before they entered this home that evening? Possibly so. In which case, what Jesus did was symbolic. If not, what He did in washing the feet of His disciples was both practical and symbolic. However, was the symbol simply is one of service, or was there more to it? Some think so.

"The action of rising from supper and setting aside his garment depicted how he, who existed in God's form, equal with God (Phil. 2:6), was willing to divest himself of that reputation. And the action of taking the towel and girding himself with it illustrated how he humbled himself to take the form of a servant. After washing the disciples' feet (a sign of his cleansing ministry), he put his garments on again and returned to his former position (13:12). This exhibited his return to glory and to God. The entire scene is very close to what Paul verbalized in Philippians 2:5-11. John 13:3-12 provides the portrait, Philippians 2:5-11 the caption" [NCWB].

That writer might be right, but it still seems that a simple and practical lesson is being taught.

13:6 - SIMON PETER. *"He came to Simon Peter, who asked Him, 'Lord, are You going to*

wash my feet?" We are not told where Jesus started in his circuit of the disciples who were still reclining at the table, but when he came to Simon Peter, possibly the senior member of the twelve, and without a doubt the most vocal, he exclaimed emphatically, "Lord, are **YOU** going to wash **MY** feet?" (Emphasis added to show the emphatic nature of Peter's objection. One can hardly be blamed for inferring that Jesus came to Peter first. Others disagree: "In between the act of rising and returning, Jesus washed the disciples' feet. All the disciples accepted the washing—until Jesus came to Peter, who refused to let Jesus wash his feet" [NCWB].

Regardless of the order in which Jesus washed the feet of the disciples, we cannot overemphasize the intensity of Peter's statement: "Every word here is emphatic. Dost thou-- the Son of God, the Messiah--perform the humble office of a servant--toward me, a sinner? This was an expression of Peter's humility, of his reverence for Jesus, and also a refusal to allow him to do it" [BARNES' NOTES ON THE NEW TESTAMENT, in The Bible Navigator Electronic Bible Library, LifeWay Christian Resources, Technology Division - after this, BARNES]

13:7 - JESUS ANSWERED. *"Jesus answered him, "What I'm doing you don't understand now, but afterwards you will know."* Jesus knew exactly what He was doing and He was not about to be put off by Peter's objection. He simply stated that Peter didn't understand what He was doing at the moment, but he would understand "afterwards", but what does He mean by "afterwards"? It would certainly be after the Resurrection, but He more than likely meant after Pentecost. As Jesus will explain in His Farewell Discourse, "When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth" (John 16:13). Sadly, some today tell us they pray for another Pentecost. If they refer to the coming of the Holy Spirit, they are misguided. There was but one Pentecost that could fulfill the promises Jesus made about the coming of the Holy Spirit. Just as there was one Incarnation and one Crucifixion, there was but one fulfillment of the promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit to fill, empower, and guide the saints.

13:8 - YOU WILL NEVER. *"You will never wash my feet – ever!" Peter said.' Jesus replied, 'If I don't wash you, you have no part with Me."* Peter, as on other occasions, speaks impetuously, without waiting for an explanation from Jesus. He had rebuked Jesus for announcing His coming death (Mark 8:32), and now he used a strong double negative to protest what Jesus was about to do. This was not arrogance on Peter's part; it was a matter of his misguided humility before Jesus. Barnes is right: "This was a decided and firm expression of his reverence for his Master, and yet it was improper" [BARNES]. Jesus had just declared that washing the feet of His disciples had a special meaning, and Peter should have submitted to it. "We should yield to all the plain and positive requirements of God, even if we cannot now see how obedience would promote his glory" [BARNES]. Today, one occasionally hears a church member make a statement that is designed to show his or her devotion to Jesus, but the statement is theologically weak. We must be careful when we condemn Peter, for we may be just as guilty.

Peter's outcry here may be the reason many infer that Jesus came to Peter first, but if it had been important for us to know that, the Holy Spirit would have inspired John to reveal it. He did not look for the lesson Jesus was teaching, but reacted impulsively at the picture of His Lord acting like a slave and washing his feet.

JESUS REPLIED. Peter's protest was strong and emphatic, and Jesus' reply was instant and authoritative: "If I don't wash you, you have no part with Me." Robertson is right when he notes that Jesus refers to a relationship that is "Not simply here at the supper with its fellowship, but in the deeper sense of mystic fellowship as Peter was quick to see. Jesus does not make foot-washing essential to spiritual fellowship, but simply tests Peter's real pride and mock-humility by this symbol of fellowship" [ATR].

If I believed that foot washing was a third ordinance commanded by the Lord, along with baptism and the Lord's Supper, I would perhaps base that conviction on this passage. However, as one writer puts it, "This does not mean, 'Unless you are baptized you cannot be saved,' but, 'Unless I wash your sins away by My atoning death (cf. Rev. 1:5) you have no real relationship to Me" (cf. 1 John 1:7)" [BKC].

13:9 - NOT ONLY MY FEET. "Simon Peter said to Him, 'Lord, not only my feet, but also my hands and my head.'" First, Peter didn't want Jesus to wash his feet; now he wants a complete bath!

Of course, he didn't expect that; he only wanted to show his desire for a complete relationship with Jesus. At first, Jesus was doing too much, now He is doing too little. He still doesn't get the point.

13:10 - ONE WHO HAS BATHED. "One who has bathed," Jesus told him, "doesn't need to wash anything except his feet, but he is completely clean. You are clean, but not all of you." Peter, perhaps facetiously, declared that if washing his feet proved a relationship with Jesus he wanted to be bathed all over. Jesus pointed out the obvious. When one had bathed, then walked on dusty roads and trails, he didn't need a bath, he only needed his feet washed. The writer for this volume in this volume in the NEW COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE explains that:

"In speaking to Peter, Jesus used two different Greek words (*nipto-* and *louo-*) to convey two different kinds of washing. The two washings, one initial and the other continual, are very important to the Christian life. The Greek word *nipto-* appearing in 13:5, 6, 8, and in the last part of 13:10, is used throughout the Septuagint and NT to indicate the washing of the extremities (i.e., the hands and the feet). *Louo-* (from which is formed the perfect participle *lelouomenos* in 13:10) specifically means bathing. According to the customs of those times, once a person had bathed his body, he needed only to wash his feet before partaking of a meal. Jesus was going around to all the disciples washing their feet until Peter

protested. In his response to Peter, the Lord appropriately used both words in order to advance a precious truth: as he who has been bathed needs only to wash his feet daily, so he who has been bathed by the Lord (through his word, the Spirit, and/or baptism—see John 15:3; Tit. 3:5; Eph. 5:26) needs only to wash himself day by day from the filth and defilement which he accumulates by his contact with the world” [NCWB].

One thing I did not find in commentaries I consulted is an answer to a question I raised earlier. When a group of men were going into a home for a meal, would they not have washed their feet before entering the house? When guests visited a home of a wealthy family a servant might wash the feet of guests, probably before they entered the house. They would not begin the meal without their feet being washed. In that case, what Jesus did was more symbolic than hygienic.

13:11 - FOR HE KNEW. *“For He knew who would betray Him. This is why He said, ‘You are not all clean.’* Jesus had known all along that He would be betrayed, and He knew who would betray Him. He had mentioned it a year earlier (John 6:64, 70). In spite of that, Jesus treated Judas with the same courtesy He had shown the other disciples. Robertson notes that *“The articular present participle of paradidōmi (the betraying one) means that Judas was already engaged in the process”* [ATR], as seen in 13:2.

The Significance of Footwashing

13:12 - HE RECLINED AGAIN. *“When Jesus had washed their feet and put on His robe, He reclined again and said to them, ‘Do you know what I have done for you?’* Jesus had risen from the floor, taken off his outer robe, tied a towel around his waist, and washed the feet of His disciples.

That was a job for a healthy young man, not an older man with bad knees! After washing the feet of all the disciples, Jesus reclined with them again around the meal. He would have put His outer robe on again before reclining. Some have noted that in the Gospel According to Matthew, Jesus sat down to teach His disciples. It was almost as though that position was His position of authority as he delivered the Sermon on the Mount. Here, He will instruct them from a reclining position. Jesus often did that which was unexpected, so teaching from this position must not have surprised His disciples.

As soon as He had settled in his place, he asked them if they understood what He had done for them.

This was a probing question, and it must have seem such to both Peter and Judas. Surely no one answered, but all expected an answer. They had traveled with Him three years and knew when their Teacher was about to instruct them.

13:13 - TEACHER. *“You call Me Teacher and Lord. This is well said, for I am.”* The disciples, and even some Pharisees, called Jesus Teacher or Rabbi, a term normally reserved for an expert in the Law. They also called Him Lord. *“This word is applied to one who rules, and is often given to God as being the Proprietor and Ruler of all things. It is given to Christ many hundred times in the New Testament”* [BARNES]. It is the common title for Jesus in the Pauline Epistles. Among the various sects within Judaism leaders sought honors, prestige, rank, and esteem. Jesus taught His followers:

*“But as for you, **do not be called ‘Rabbi,’** because you have one Teacher, and *you are all brothers.* **Do not call anyone on earth your father,** because you have one Father, who is in heaven. And **do not be called masters** either, because you have one Master, the Messiah. The greatest among you will be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted”* (Matt 23:8-12, bold and italics by this writer).

There are two lessons here for one who follows Jesus. First, do not exalt human beings, and don't seek adulation and glory from others. Second, recognize Jesus as Teacher and Lord, for He is both.

13:14 - SO IF I. *“So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.”* The average reader will see where Jesus is going with this, but technically, when Jesus said, “so if I,” He was using the condition of the first class, assumed to be true. *“With first aorist active indicative of niptô, ‘If I, being what I am, washed your feet’ (as I did)”* [ATR]. Jesus is both Lord and Teacher. When we look to Jesus as Lord, we submit to Him as would a slave. When we acknowledge Him as Teacher, we humble ourselves before Him as His pupil.

YOU OUGHT TO WASH. The disciples had squabbled over rank, and had a falling out about which ones would sit on Jesus right hand and which one would sit on His left hand in His coming kingdom. James and John had been overly ambitious and others had been jealous. Jesus, their Lord and Teacher had humbled Himself so much as to assume the role of a slave when He washed their feet. If He was willing to do that, they should follow His example and serve one another.

ILLUSTRATION: When Kathleen Blanco announced that she was going to run for governor of Louisiana, a few prominent ladies in the Monroe, Louisiana area invited her to visit so they could make plans to support her candidacy. The hostess asked my son Mark do floral arrangements, and to cater the event. He had taken everything he needed to the home, arranged the flowers, set the food in the kitchen and set out dishes and silver ware. He had not made it back into town before the hostess called and told him that Kathleen Blanco wanted to meet the person who had done the arrangements and cooked the food. He drove back out to Frenchman's Bend to meet the lady who

was running for governor. Kathleen Blanco told him she loved the flowers and wanted to meet anyone from Monroe who would prepare Cajun food for anyone from South Louisiana.

As soon as he had finished talking with the gubernatorial candidate, a lady stopped him and said, "Mark, we are out of plates! What can we do?" He said, "You can wash some." She said, "I...I can't wash plates." Mark said, "I can", and headed for the kitchen where he began washing plates. Before he knew what was happening, a lady walked up to the sink and began drying the plates as he washed them. The lady who helped him was none other than Kathleen Blanco. The next day, she asked the lady who was driving her around Monroe to take her by Mark's shop so she could see some more of his work. Kathleen Blanco was elected Governor, without my vote, but with my admiration. When there was a need, this affluent lady with a politically powerful background, did not hesitate to assume the role of a kitchen maid when there was a need.

13:15 - AN EXAMPLE. *"For I have given you an example that you also should do just as I have done for you."* As noted earlier, some have made various attempts to explain why Jesus washed the feet of His disciples> One view is that the whole foot washing incident as symbolic of Jesus' coming, His humiliation, sacrificial service, and return to glory. However, it seems sufficient to accept Jesus' explanation. He said that he did it as "an example that you also should do just as I have done." The Greek word rendered "example" (hupodeigma), means to show something before one's eyes as an illustration or as a warning, as in Matthew 3:7. It is found only here in John, but it is also used in James 5:10; 2 Peter 2:6; Hebrews 4:11; 8:5; 9:26.

One question (alluded to earlier) that comes to mind when one studies this passage has to do with whether or not the Lord was establishing a new church ordinance here. The Lord's Supper and Baptism were practiced by the early church, but there is no evidence that foot-washing was ever practiced as an ordinance. In those days, when one walked in open sandals on a dusty road, foot washing was a practical matter. When I was serving on the board of trustees for LifeWay Christian Resources it was an honor and a pleasure to vote for my friend George Iwarahira, an outstanding business man from Hawaii, as chairman of the board of trustees. I visited often with George and his wife Shirley at board meetings. They always brought chocolate covered macadamia nuts for all the trustees, and they invited us to visit them in Hawaii. George added, "But when you come to our house you will have to take your shoes off at the door." Shirley had an English name, but the Japanese tradition was still important to her. She honored the tradition of her heritage. Foot-washing was neither a cultural or hereditary matter. It was a practical. In a wealthy home, the lowest slave might be assigned the job of washing the feet of guests.

It is important to observe that Jesus' work as a servant did not end here. In fact, His

greatest work as a servant lay just ahead of Him. The Cross was just around the corner, so it was imperative for the disciples to understand the principle He is teaching them. After the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, they would understand what He was saying to them.

“ The scene in Mark 10:32-45, which is set in the context of the third passion prediction and which deals with the ambition of the two sons of Zebedee, evidences some similar elements to this Johannine story. Although that Markan story concerns the request of the brothers for seats of honor next to Jesus in glory, the model Jesus offered them and the rest of the disciples is the cup of death and the way of servant humility (not the way of the Gentile lords of power). Indeed, the purpose for the coming of the Son of Man was not to be served but to be a servant ‘and to give his life as a ransom’ (Mark 10:45). The understanding of self-giving servanthood is basic to the model Jesus established here in John also” [NAC].

AS I HAVE DONE FOR YOU. Jesus had given them a practical example, and instructed them to follow it. The BIBLE KNOWLEDGE COMMENTARY explains that

“Many groups throughout church history have practiced literal foot-washing as a church ordinance. However, present culture in many lands does not call for the need to wash dust from the feet of one’s guests. Whereas the Lord’s Supper was practiced by the early church as an ordinance, it apparently did not practice foot-washing as an ordinance in church gatherings. This passage emphasizes inner humility, not a physical rite. A Christian widow’s practice of ‘washing the feet of the saints’ (1 Tim. 5:10) speaks not of her involvement in a church ordinance but of her humble slavelike service to other believers. Not to follow the example of Jesus is to exalt oneself above Him and to live in pride” [BKC].

13:16 - A SLAVE IS NOT. “ *I assure you: A slave is not greater than his master, and a messenger is not greater than the one who sent him.*” There were 60 million slaves in the Roman Empire at this time, and while some masters gave their slaves rank over others, they were still slaves who must obey every command of their master. When religious authorities questioned John the Baptist as to whether or not he was the Messiah, he “answered them all, ‘I baptize you with water, but One is coming who is more powerful than I. **I am not worthy to untie the strap of His sandals.** He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Luke 3:16, bold added by this writer). John understood that he was the slave and Jesus the master. He was not worthy to wash the feet of Jesus.

After being elected to serve on the board of trustees for LifeWay Christian Resources, I

was assigned to the Broadman and Holman Committee, which oversees the division that publishes Bibles and books for LifeWay. In the first committee meeting, Dr. Ed Blum, the general editor of the Holman Christian Standard Bible met with the committee to answer questions about the translation process. At lunch that day, Dr. Jimmy Draper brought Dr. Blum to my table to answer question asked by a trustee from Florida. The man was disturbed that the translators were using the word “slave” instead of the traditional word “servant” in the new translation. Dr. Blum graciously replied that the HCSB is a word-for-word translation, and that they had used the literal translation of the Greek. He added, “When you become a Christian, you are no longer your own. You are bought with a price, the blood of Jesus Christ.”

As the slave is not greater than his master, so the messenger is not greater than the one who sent him. In that day, the one sent with the message may well have been a slave. In which case he was certainly not of greater authority than his master.

13:17 - IF YOU KNOW. *“If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.”* It is important to know what Jesus had taught them by His example. However, knowing and doing are often two different things. One can only imagine how John felt as he wrote these words fifty or so years later. He and his brother James had been the greatest offenders. The true believer’s blessings come, not from what he knows, but from what he does.

Jesus does not explain His promise here, but He promises that those who follow His example are blessed. My son Mark was still in elementary school when my mother died. After the visitation, he told us he was standing by my mother’s casket when a lady walked up and stood there for some time. Finally, she said, “She loved me when I was good, and she loved me when I was bad.” Mark didn’t know the lady, but it didn’t matter. We heard many testimonies like that. My mother, Claudine Cofer Sanders, lived to serve others. She not only clothed my sons from her store, she put back shirts and pants for her young pastor who was in seminary, and she provided food, clothes, and money for others. When she was treasurer of her church, she even covered insufficient fund checks given by members a few times, just so no one would be embarrassed. People would talk with her about intimate problems, knowing they would be kept in strictest confidence. Twelve years after my mother’s death I preached a revival in my home town and I could hardly believe the times someone would begin a conversation by saying “Your mother....” and then proceed to tell a story about her. When one lady said, “Your mother was my best friend”, I was surprised that she knew my mother, other than to speak to her. Ross Hood, who owned a furniture store in town, said, “Your mother was the best woman in the world” (which I knew was an exaggeration), but once again, I was surprised that he knew her that well. The Bible clearly tells us that a good name is rather to be chosen than great wealth. My mother was blessed, even during her eight year battle with a brain cancer and the advanced aging process caused by the chemotherapy and powerful radiation therapy.

13:18 - NOT SPEAKING ABOUT ALL. “ *I’m not speaking about all of you; I know those I have chosen. But the Scripture must be fulfilled: The one who eats My bread has raised his heel against Me.*” Jesus had stated in verses 10-11 of this chapter that one of them was not a sincere believer, but rather than reveal more about that one person at that point, He chose to explain the significance of what He had done when He washed the feet of His disciples. Now he returns to that subject, and to that disciple. Jesus had known from the beginning that one of His followers would betray Him. John had already written, “ But there are some among you who don’t believe.” (For **Jesus knew from the beginning those who would not believe and the one who would betray Him.**)” (6:64, bold added by this writer). See also, 6:70: “Jesus replied to them, “Didn’t I choose you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is the Devil!”

Though some debate what happened when Jesus chose Judas, the statement in 6:70 “would argue that even though Judas could be designated as a devil-man, he nevertheless had been chosen by Jesus as a member of the company. On the other hand, one must not move in the opposite direction to assume that the choice of Judas by Jesus was a determination of his role as betrayer. Such a theory would be close to the harsh theory of reprobation” (NAC).

THE SCRIPTURE MUST BE FULFILLED. “The one who eats My bread has raised his heel against Me,” the Lord said. Jesus says of Judas what David had said of Absalom: “Even my friend in whom I trusted, **one who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me**” (Ps. 41:9, bold added by this writer). He announced the betrayal “in the presence of his disciples so that they could regard the fulfilled prediction as an additional validation of Jesus’ Messiahship at the time they most needed encouragement” [NCWB]. Jesus had chosen Judas, not because he was evil, nor to make him evil. However, He is saying that when He chose Judas He “foresaw that he would abuse my bounty, give way to iniquity, deliver me into the hands of my enemies, and bring ruin upon Himself” [ADAM CLARKE, in THE BIBLE NAVIGATOR, LifeWay Christian Resources - after this, CLARKE].

“Has lifted up his heel against me” may, denote the trick of a wrestler who uses his heel to trip an opponent. In which case, the wrestler trips the opponent deliberately in order to take him down. There is nothing accidental in it. When the late Louis L’Amour landed in Europe during WW II, his commanding officer saw his name and asked if he was the Western writer. He said, “you are the general’s favorite writer!” The general was Eisenhower. Ronald Reagan loved his work. He was called America’s favorite story teller. His son Beau edited and sent to the publisher a number of volumes of short stories after his father’s death. Some students of the Old West are convinced that he is perhaps the only writer of Western fiction who might have lived most of the parts of which he wrote. In every book he wrote, as far as I can recall, there is a fight scene in

which he gave a blow-by-blow description of the fight. He fought something like seventy professional fights, so he understood boxing. He was a merchant mariner, who had been stranded in foreign ports. During the Great Depression he lived for some time in a house with a number of men who would go to the docks looking for any kind of work they could find until they were able to find a ship that needed a sailor. They paid ten cents a night rent for their cot.

L'Amour knew a lot about brawling, dirty fighting. A dirty fighter never let his opponent get up if he ever got him down. What did he do? If the man was trying to get up the fighter might kick the man with the toe of his boot. If the man went down and couldn't get up, the dirty fighter might "put the heel" to him. He would stomp the helpless man. There have been times when someone watching a fight between two acquaintances would stick his foot out and trip one of the fighters. The man doing the tripping may have been considered a friend by the man he tripped. That is really dirty. And so was Judas Iscariot when he put the heel to the man who chosen him as a disciple.

We must be careful that we do not conclude that Judas had no choice but to betray the Son of God, or that God had created him a "devil" (6:70). How do we explain it, then? "This treachery of Judas was according to the eternal counsels of God (John 12:4), but none the less Judas is responsible for his guilt. For a like elliptical clause see John 9:3; John 15:25... It was a gross breach of hospitality to eat bread with any one and then turn against him so" [ATR].

13:19 - I AM TELLING YOU. *"I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am [He]."* At this point, Jesus told the twelve apostles that one among them would betray Him so that when it happened they would believe "that I am [He]." This announcement must have shot through Judas like an electrical shock that touched every fiber of his being. Jesus had known all along that he was a thief, a liar, and a betrayer of his Leader. This was news to the other eleven apostles, but when we flash forward and see how discouraged they were between the time of His death and His resurrection, we can appreciate what Jesus is doing when He makes this announcement. He is preparing them.

THAT YOU WILL BELIEVE. Robertson notes that this is a " Purpose clause with hina and present active subjunctive of pisteuô, 'that ye may keep on believing.' Cf. Isa 48:5. That I am he (hoti egô eimi). As Jesus has repeatedly claimed to be the Messiah (John 8:24, 58, etc.)" [ATR].

Note that the word "He" is in brackets in the HCSB, whereas other translations show by italics that the word was not in the original. The word is supplied to smooth out the reading, but if we read it without the "He", are we not reminded that Yahweh had identified Himself to Moses at the burning bush as "I AM"? In any study of John's account we should not lose sight of the Prologue. John begins with the now familiar

words, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). That verse declares that Jesus is One with the Yahweh (the great I AM). Here, Jesus is preparing His true followers to believe He is the Messiah. The non-believer might not see that, but how can any true believer deny it?

13:20 - THE ONE WHO RECEIVES. *"I assure you: The one who receives whomever I send receives Me, and the one who receives Me receives Him who sent Me."* We are familiar with the words, "Verily, verily" in the King James. The HCSB had "I assure you" , but as John uses it here it carries the force of "Amen, amen, I assure you." When He says that, He wants to be sure He has their undivided attention. He is about to say something that is especially important: "The one who receives whomever I send receives Me" is indeed significant. Jesus sends His followers into the world (see The Great Commission) to share the Good New that Jesus is the one and only Savior, and He gives eternal life to all who believe in Him. Those who receive the Gospel message receive Jesus - not just the messenger who tells them about Him.

Many people who hear a believer share a word about Jesus turn a deaf ear to the messenger, and harden their hearts toward Jesus. How do we account for those who refuse to believe? That is the work of the devil, not the work of the Holy Spirit, whose ministry Jesus is about to explain to them in the Farewell Discourse (see especially, Chs. 14-16). Jesus leaves nothing to man's knowledge, wisdom, intuition, or discretion. We have the Word of God as our authority.

RECEIVES HIM. Jesus continues: "the one who receives Me receives Him who sent Me." In this Gospel, Jesus continues to remind the reader that He came from the Father, and He is going to return to the Father. In the Prologue, He is One with the Father. In 6:45, He says that everyone who listens to the Father comes to the Son. In 6:46, Jesus has seen the Father, and He comes from the Father.

And in Chapter 8, Jesus emphasizes over and over that He came from the Father, and the Father testifies about (affirms) His work and His message. The NAC offers the following summary for this section (13:12-20):

"In summary, therefore, this section presents Jesus as seeking to make evident to the disciples that he was fully aware of Judas's treachery.

In the present verse, which closes the inclusio, the evangelist completes his reflection on the disciples/servants of Jesus by developing further the model formula in the earlier twofold statement concerning 'believing' and 'seeing' not only 'me' but 'the one who sent me' from 12:44-45. Here Jesus expanded that formula by reference to the role of the disciples ('anyone I send') under the category of 'receiving.' Not only is Jesus an agent of God, therefore, but the disciples also are to become agents of Jesus. As pointed out in the earlier text, the formula is used in the Gospel both in negative and positive senses (cf. Luke 10:16; Matt 10:40; cf. also Mark 9:37; Luke

9:49). But the point is that the disciples as a community of faith are to be viewed as belonging to the intimate relationship of Jesus with the Father (cf. 15:20; 17:26)" [NAC].

Judas' Betrayal Is Predicted

13:21 - WHEN JESUS HAD SAID. *"When Jesus had said this, He was troubled in His spirit and testified, 'I assure you: One of you will betray Me!'"* Even though we may divide the chapter into segments, we must always remember to keep the Scripture in context. Jesus had just said, "The one who receives whomever I send receives Me." He said also, "and the one who receives Me receives Him who sent Me." This was a profound enough statement to cause Him to be "troubled in His spirit", but why, we may ask. Was it because He was looking ahead and thinking of the thousands, even millions who would be sent into the world with the Gospel message before He returned to earth? That might have been enough, but that does not seem to have been the reason He was troubled in His spirit. It possible that he looked at the twelve and thought how much they needed to grow before they would become effective messengers for Him? No, He knew that would not happen until the Holy Spirit came upon them to empower them to do the work He had given them. We shall see the reason.

BETRAY ME. "One of you", Jesus said, "will betray Me." Certainly, this knowledge would trouble Him in His spirit. He had known from the beginning that one of His disciples would betray Him, and as we have already seen, He knew it would be Judas. He had come to die and He must be betrayed, so why was He "troubled in His spirit?" Is it that Jesus loved Judas, knowing that he was a traitor and betrayer? Was it that someone who had followed Him for three years was going to spend eternity in hell? Was Jesus angry with Judas, or was He grieving for him? Is it not possible that He was grieving for Judas, but also provoked by the hypocrisy of a traitor who has pretended for so long to be a true disciple? One writer adds the note that, "Being human, Jesus was troubled over Judas' soon betrayal of His love and friendship. Being divine, Jesus knew in advance that it would happen. Jesus sensed the spiritual hardness and deadness which sin had produced in Judas" [BKC].

13:22 - LOOKING AT EACH OTHER. *"The disciples started looking at one another – uncertain which one He was speaking about."* It is amazing that Judas has traveled with the group for three years, serving as their treasurer, even stealing from the purse, without any other disciple knowing what he was doing. They would soon know, but at this point they didn't have a clue. Not only were the eleven faithful disciples looking around at each other, Judas was looking from one to another at his fellow disciples, as though he was trying to figure out which one of them would betray Jesus. That was enough to have caused Jesus to have been "troubled in His spirit" (vs. 21).

Pastors can be deceived by people who seem to be supporting them. It happens all the time. I mentioned an active church member to another church member once and my friend said, "He is not your friend. He has never been your friend!" I was surprised. A friend had accepted a new church, and before he preached the last sermon at the old church, he called me and told me that two members had given him fits for years. The other church members did not know how deceptive they had been, and he knew they would continue to work against pastors in the future. The church would never function as it should until those two men were exposed and the situation somehow remedied. He asked me, "Should I expose them in the last sermon before I move?" I suggested that he resist that temptation - and I knew the temptation might be great! I reminded him that the church as a whole loved him, but if he said something negative about those men on his way out, they might never again think of him in the same way. Instead, I suggested that he might ask two or three members he trusted to meet with him and explain the situation. Make them aware of the problem and let them see if they could find a solution. Many experienced pastors have experienced some form of persecution, and even betrayal, when there was very little he can do to defend himself. In a case like that he is especially blessed if there are some friends around him who have both the wisdom to discern the issues, and the courage to stand up for the Lord's anointed servant. I have been especially blessed with such friends of character and courage.

13:23 - THE ONE JESUS LOVED. *"One of His disciples, the one Jesus loved, was reclining close beside Jesus."* This is interesting, especially when we realize that the disciple Jesus loved is no doubt the human author of this material, none other than John himself. John and his brother James had sought preeminence within the group, as well as a position above the other disciples in the kingdom they believed Jesus would establish while on the earth. Now, more than half a century later, the elder John, could not bring himself to even include his name anywhere in the Gospel. He only identifies himself as the disciple Jesus loved (See John 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20). John identifies himself in John 21:24 as the author of the book "and necessarily one of the twelve because of the 'explicit' (Bernard) language of Mark (Mark 14:17; Luke 22:14)" [ATR].

RECLINING CLOSE TO JESUS. In that well known painting of the Last Supper, Jesus and His twelve disciples are all seated at a long Western type of table (all on one side and at the ends, as though posing for a photographer!). In reality, people in that day in the Middle East, would recline around food placed on the floor, or on a slightly raised platform. In the small crowded houses in which the average person lived in that day, a large table and 13 chairs would have left very little room for people. The room could be quickly cleared for sleeping or for visiting after the meal. Jesus and His disciples were reclining around the food which, Luke tells us, Jesus had sent Peter and John to prepare for them (Luke 22:8).

Jesus' position, as their Teacher and Lord (13:14), would be in the central location, with

everyone else completing the circle. John, who was perhaps the youngest of the disciples, reclined immediately to the right of Jesus in such a way that, when he looked back to Jesus' face, his head would have rested, or made contact with His chest. Robertson held that "The next place in rank was to the left of Jesus, held by Peter (Westcott) or by Judas (Bernard) which one doubts" [ATR].

At the time John was inspired to write this Gospel account of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, he had for many years been the lone surviving Apostle, the senior statesman of the church (kept alive for the Lord's purpose, as we shall see in the final chapter). **Think how many times John had given his personal testimony about this night.** Dare we wonder how many questions he had heard about even the smallest detail concerning the last days of Jesus on this earth? Now, let me go out on a limb and state that I feel very confident that John knew exactly which books made up the New Testament! Modern scholars tell us at which synod that was decided generations after John's death, but I don't believe a word of it. When he said, "Amen! Come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20), he must have known this closed the New Testament. One can imagine teachers twenty years after the death of John, saying, "I asked John about this and he said...." A generation later, teachers must have said, "My teacher sat at the feet of John, the disciple Jesus loved, and asked him...." I cannot prove this, but I am convinced that, instead of the church spending two hundred years gathering up fragments of letters and canonizing the material, the early church had an authoritative source, a "go to" person who knew the answers. I asked Dr. William R. Cooper of Middlesex, England if he agreed and this is his response:

"You're absolutely right, Johnny, about the NT canon being established (by God and not by any synod) before John went to be with Him. One of the earliest proofs that we have of the early date of the canon, is from - ironically, and our Lord loves irony, does He not? - one of the most dangerous enemies of the Word in those days, and that is Marcion. As early as AD 140, he tried to decimate the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments. But tellingly, the only books of the NT era that he attacked were those of the NT canon. At no time did he or his followers ever attack or even disparage one of the apocryphal books. Now that says something. In fact, it says a lot, because he did his nefarious work a full 250 years *before* the Council of Hippo where, modernists claim, the NT canon was decided upon! Now how could he possibly have known which books to attack if the NT canon was not fully established and recognised by his own time and from a long time before? Now Marcion was born at around the time that John went to be with the Lord, which tells us that the NT canon must certainly have been in place at the time John died. So you are absolutely right, my friend. Absolutely right (Used with Dr. Cooper's permission).

Bill Cooper, author of *AFTER THE FLOOD*, and *THE FLOOD*, reminded me that Polycarp was one of the well known disciples of John at the end of the First Century. What remains of his writings seems to indicate that he was familiar with the New Testament.

13:24 - SIMON PETER. *“Simon Peter motioned to him to find out who it was He was talking about.”* Peter asks the beloved disciple (John) to ask Jesus to identify the one who would betray Him. It would be interesting to know Peter’s position relative to that of John. If John had been to the right of Jesus and Peter to the left of Him (as Robertson claims), a motion to John, while not impossible, would have been awkward. In other passages Peter is paired with John; in others, Peter, James, and John seem to have been given leadership roles, which may have led the mother of James and John to infer that they would be given the top positions in His coming kingdom.

Peter and John prepared for the Last Supper (Luke 22). John outran Peter to the open tomb, and became the first to believe in the Resurrection (John 20:2-10). It was John who was the first to believe Jesus had risen, and he was the disciple who recognized the risen Lord and identified him for Peter after the miraculous catch of fish in Galilee (21:7). When Jesus told Peter what kind of death he faced, Peter indicated John and asked what about him (21:20-23). Jesus explained that each had his mission and it was Peter’s responsibility to follow Him. In 18:15-16, it was John who gained entry into the court of the high priest because he was known to the high priest. Peter apparently had to wait outside for John to get permission (which may have come from someone in authority who knew the high priest knew John). It would be interesting to know how the Caiaphas knew John, as well as how John received permission to enter his courtyard, especially with all the intrigue involving the illegal trials of Jesus. Some have observed that

“in all of the passages that refer to that other disciple, including what would seem to be his testimony at the cross (19:35-37), there is not even the hint of a rebuke concerning that disciple. The same, however, can hardly be said about Peter. In chaps. 1-11 Peter is mentioned briefly in two contexts (1:40-44 and 6:78; cf. also 6:8), and both are positive reflections. But beginning with the Farewell Cycle the situation shifts, and Peter is portrayed as a well-meaning but impetuous, misguided person who misunderstood the meaning of the foot washing and tried inappropriately to correct his error with Jesus (13:6-10). Then he misunderstood the meaning of Jesus’ departure and made a misinformed offer to follow him (13:36-38). Thereafter he made a daring but foolish attempt to save Jesus through violence (18:10-11) yet collapsed under the threefold questioning in the courtyard (18:17,25-27). And even though he vowed a strong threefold ‘love’ for Jesus, he seemed to be more concerned about how the call to Christian discipleship would affect that disciple

(John) when compared with his own call to death (21:20-22)" [NAC].

While it is true that James and John's desire for positions of honor in the Lord's coming kingdom had caused friction within the disciples at one point, John's simple faith in the end was a faith for believers to emulate, "while Peter becomes a kind of realistic picture of the many well-meaning but failure-prone persons who in general form the community of faith...But the portraits are also unique in that when taken together they epitomize the two sides of most followers of Jesus: the side that at times can model for others the life Jesus intended for his disciples and the side that struggles valiantly to overcome failure and well-meant misunderstanding" [NAC]. Wise believers can identify with that struggle.

13:25 - HE LEANED BACK. *"So he leaned back against Jesus and asked Him, 'Lord, who is it?'"*

It would be interesting to know if John would have asked Jesus to identify the one who would betray him if Peter had not asked him to do so. Clarke concludes that John may not have heard Jesus say that one of them would betray Him, but that is highly unlikely, considering their position at the table. Children may be observed trying to get one of their number to ask their teacher a question: one child says, "You ask her." The other child says, "No, you ask her!" Simon Peter did encourage John to ask the question and John did ask. In order to ask the question, John had to lean back against Jesus and ask, "Lord, who is it?" The KJV has "Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved", which helps to explain why some homosexuals have tried to claim that Jesus was homosexual. Interestingly, others have claimed that He was immoral because women traveled with them. Have they considered that His mother was one of the group of women who followed Him? There is no reason to assume any wrongful contact within the group, Contact, however would have been necessary, however, when one wanted to communicate with the one to that disciples' left. They were reclining at the table, each propped on his left elbow, which made it necessary for John to lean back against Jesus' chest to whisper to Him.

13:26 - JESUS REPLIED. *"Jesus replied, 'He's the one I give the piece of bread to after I have dipped it.' When He had dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas, Simon Iscariot's son."* It is exciting to know we will have all our questions answered after we are glorified, but today we can only ask and surmise. Would Jesus have identified the traitor if John had not asked? Did Jesus whisper the answer to John? If so, did John whisper the answer to Peter? Or, did Jesus speak aloud for all to hear Him? We shall see.

HE IS THE ONE. John here seems to imply that Jesus answered him privately rather than identifying the one who was plotting to betray Him before the entire group. He said, "He's the one I give the piece of bread to after I have dipped it," and then He dipped the bread in sauce (or olive oil) and handed it to Judas, 'Simon Iscariot's son.' 'Christ's disclosure to John involved a courtesy to the Satanically goaded traitor—the

honor of receiving the traditional sauce-soaked bread" [NCWB]. Vincent suggests that this act may "color" the word in Romans 12:20: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him." Jesus, knowing that Judas was plotting to betray Him, still dipped the bread in the sauce and handed it to him. Was Judas stricken in his conscience by this act of hospitality, or did Satan inspire him to believe this his plot was working better than he expected? Criminals always see themselves getting away with the crime, they do not see themselves getting caught.

13:27 - SATAN ENTERED HIM. *"After [Judas ate] the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Therefore Jesus told him, 'What you're doing, do quickly.'" This answers the above question. When Jesus gave him the bread first, Satan persuaded him that he was successfully covering up his demonic plot. No doubt, he was watching and listening to see if anyone was onto his traitorous plan. When Jesus handed him the bread first, "Satan entered him" to encourage him to go forward with this plan.*

WHAT YOU'RE DOING, DO QUICKLY. Robertson translates it, "Do more quickly what thou art doing" [ATR]. Luke shows how focused Jesus was on the cross: "But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how it consumes Me until it is finished!" (Luke 12:50).

13:28 - NONE OF THOSE. *"None of those reclining at the table knew why He told him this." From this we know that Jesus had answered John privately. Did he pass the word on to Peter? One may infer that Jesus dipped the bread and handed it to Judas before John could pass along the word to Peter. "So tactful was Christ's identification of Judas that all the disciples except John missed the significance of the act. Yet Judas, now indwelt by Satan, took Christ's courtesy as an immediate cue to betray the Son of God to the murderous Pharisees. What a chilling interplay of human avarice, Satanic hatred, and divine permission! Only God knows the eternal agonies that await these human and Satanic co-conspirators of betrayal (Matt. 26:20-24; Rev. 20:10)" [NCWB].*

13:29 - THE MONEY BAG. *"Since Judas kept the money-bag, some thought that Jesus was telling him, 'Buy what we need for the festival,' or that he should give something to the poor." Interestingly, not one of the disciples, other than John, suspected that Judas' mission was a satanic act of betrayal. Jesus was had never been deceived about Judas, and there is no doubt that He knew Judas had been stealing from the money bag all along. Some writers point to the statement about the need for food for the festival to mean that this could not have been the Passover supper because no purchases could be made in Jerusalem on the Passover. Others say such a conclusion is not necessary. Robertson explains that "The feast of unleavened bread beginning after the passover meal and lasting eight days. If this was twenty-four hours ahead of the passover meal, there was no hurry for next day would be in ample time" [ATR]. The other disciples may have simply assumed that Judas would go out and buy a Passover lamb and other things they would need for Passover.*

THE POOR. It seems that it was a practice on the eve of Passover to give gifts to the poor. "It is well known that our Lord and his disciples lived on public charity; and yet they gave alms out of what they had thus received. From this we learn that even those who live on charity themselves are expected to divide a little with those who are in deeper distress and want" [CLARKE]. J.C.Penney and William Colgate gave ninety per cent of everything they earned to the Lord. When he had to reveal his financial records, it was discovered that President Barak Obama had given just two per cent of his income to all charities over a period of several years, even though he was an active member of Jeremiah Wright's church for twenty years. When Jesus made the statement that we would always have the poor with us, He was not telling us to neglect the poor, nor was He saying that we should pass legislation to force others to do what we ourselves are not willing to do for them.

13:30 - HE WENT OUT. *"After receiving the piece of bread, he went out immediately. And it was night."* Judas knew what Jesus meant, even if the other disciples did not, so he received the piece of bread, ate it, and departed immediately. One would assume that he couldn't get out of there fast enough!

IT WAS NIGHT. Was it significant that it was night, or is John simply remembering that when Judas left the room it was already dark? John frequently adds a little personal information (there was plenty of green grass when Jesus fed the multitude). He may have simply added that note, but some believe that this may have simply been "a time notice, but in John's Gospel it probably also has symbolic significance. Judas was leaving the Light (8:12; 12:35, 46) and going out into the darkness of sin (3:19)" [BKC]. To this writer, it is sufficient to know that John often provides us with some minor detail that tells us he was there.

A New Commandment

13:31- JESUS SAID. *"When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him."* As soon as Judas had left the room, Jesus began speaking frankly to the eleven remaining disciples. He came into the world facing the cross; He had announced His coming death; He had announced that He was returning to the Father and that He would send the Counselor to minister to them. Now that Judas has left the room the cram session begins as Jesus presses home certain points these disciples would need to understand. One writer observes that without Judas in the room Jesus could speak more freely of His coming glory, but Jesus has spoken freely in his presence for three years without reaching him. Anything more would have been wasted on one whose heart had been filled by Satan. Furthermore, there is no way that Jesus was intimidated by the presence of Judas, but to include Judas in the discussion that follows would be like casting pearls before swine.

GLORIFIED. Jesus uses the familiar title, Son of Man, for Himself. He is identified both as the Son of Man and the Son of God. He now speaks more frankly to these eleven apostles about His coming glorification while Judas was going about the most vile betrayal in the history of mankind, so vile that the mere mention of his name brings to mind a traitor. Now Jesus speaks frankly to the eleven remaining apostles about what was about to happen. He is looking not only to the cross, but beyond the cross to His glorification in the Resurrection and Ascension.

Literally, it is *was* glorified. “The aorist points to the withdrawal of Judas. Jesus was glorified through death, and His fate was sealed (humanly speaking) by Judas’ going out. He speaks of the death and consequent glorification as already accomplished” [VINCENT].

Jesus’ Farewell Discourse actually begins here, rather than in 14:1 (as traditionally noted). His final discourse begins with His comments about His glorification.

“This glorification is the keystone of the following discourse. All that follows is built upon the fact that Jesus viewed his glorification, through death and resurrection, as accomplished. As a result of this glorification, Jesus in resurrection would acquire a spiritual form which would enable him to indwell his disciples and they him. In other words, the essential thing to keep in mind when reading John 14 (and the following chapters) is that most of the discourse is framed in terms of Christ’s anticipation of his resurrection and what that resurrection would generate in respect to his spiritual union with the disciples. Indeed, in John 15 the Lord envisions himself and the disciples already organically united as vine and branches, for he says, in the proleptic present tense, ‘I *am* the vine, you *are* the branches.’ This, of course, could not be realized until the Lord in resurrection, imparted his life to his believers (see 14:19)” [NCWB].

On the evening following His resurrection Jesus would come to his disciples and breathe the Spirit on (into?) them (20:22), and from then on He would live in them and they would live in Him. “All the references to his coming in chapters 14-16 are not to the second advent as such, but to his coming to them in resurrection. His absence from the disciples would be only for ‘a little while’ (16:16)” [NCWB]. On the third day, these disciples would see Jesus again and rejoice in His resurrection. However, they would appreciate the significance of all He would say to them more fully on the Day of Pentecost when they would be filled with, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Jesus is in all believers and all believers are in Him, yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

The author of the material in the NAC sees 13:31-38 as a summation of the introduction to the Farewell Address. He sees it in four parts: “(1) the glorification of Jesus (vv.

31-32), (2) the shortness of the time and the impossibility of following Jesus (v. 33), (3) the new commandment to the community (vv. 34-35), and (4) the post-Passover possibility of following and Peter's misunderstanding (vv. 36-38)" [NAC].

13:32 - IF GOD IS GLORIFIED. *"If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself and will glorify Him at once."* The words glory and glorified occur five times in verses 31 and 32. To glorify is to magnify, extol, and ascribe honor to another, especially to God (VINES). If God is glorified in the Son, He will "glorify Him in Himself" for the simple reason that He cannot glorify the Son without glorifying Himself.

GOD WILL ALSO GLORIFY. It seems that this is best understood to mean that God has revealed his glory in Jesus.

"The expansion of the idea of glorification in v. 32 may on first glance seem to be confusing double-talk. In fact, the conditional clause has been omitted in a number of important Greek manuscripts. Although the variant does smooth out the reading, it probably is not original and is due to a scribal copying problem (homoioteleuton). Nevertheless, the significance of the verse is that it presents the obverse side of the coin of v. 31. Not only is God glorified in the process but the Son is glorified in the Father's glorification, and that glorification is an immediate one" [NAC].

This verse tell us that Jesus does not have to wait for the end of time and the final victory to be glorified, or to glorify the Father. "The glorification idea employed here is directly related to the obedience of the Son in the crucifixion and the subsequent resurrection. To see God's act of glorification through the tragedy of the death of the Messiah and the victorious resurrection is a crucial aspect of the Gospel presentation. The drama of the divine reversal in history is the message of John and a basic summation thesis that is presented" [NAC].

13:33 - I AM WITH YOU. *"Children, I am with you a little while longer. You will look for Me, and just as I told the Jews, 'Where I am going you cannot come,' so now I tell you."* Jesus affectionately calls His disciples little children, and there is no way they misunderstood that this was a term of endearment. This is the only occurrence of this word for children in this Gospel, but the aged John would use it the First Epistle of John to denote believers to whom he ministered. Though these disciples would not understand the full implications of what He was saying for some time, Jesus knew they would later recall what He was saying to them. In fact, He will go on to tell them that when the Holy Spirit comes to indwell them, He will call to their remembrance the words He is speaking to them.

When Jesus said, "I am with you a little while", He means His death is now imminent,

just as he had told the Jews earlier (John 7:33). At that time the hostile Jews wondered if He would leave and to the Jews of the Diaspora, Jews dispersed among the nations (7:35), or if He might even be contemplating suicide (8:22). In 16:16-19, He will again state that His time with them is coming to an end.

WHERE I AM GOING. They would soon understand this. He would die on the cross and enter the realm of death, but then on the third day He would rise and appear to His disciples numerous times. What they could not comprehend now, they would understand very soon.

13:34 - A NEW COMMANDMENT. *"I give you a new commandment: love one another. Just as I have loved you, you must also love one another."* These 11 disciples would "survive in His absence by obeying His example of love. The command is new in that it is a special love for other believers based on the sacrificial love of Jesus: **As I have loved you, so you must love one another**" [BKC, bold in the original]. Possibly the first question that comes to mind here is just how can this be a new commandment, since it is given as an essential precept of the law (see Lev. 19:18), which Jesus quotes here. In what sense is it new?

"Our Lord answers this question, Even AS I have loved you. Now Christ more than fulfilled the Mosaic precept; he not only loved his neighbor AS himself, but he loved him MORE than himself, for he laid down his life for men. In this he calls upon the disciples to imitate him; to be ready on all occasions to lay down their lives for each other. This was, strictly, a new commandment: no system of morality ever prescribed any thing so pure and disinterested as this. Our blessed Lord has outdone all the moral systems in the universe in two words: 1. Love your enemies; 2. Lay down your lives for each other" [CLARKE].

13:35 - BY THIS ALL PEOPLE. *"By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."* God is love, and Jesus is the greatest expression of love the world has ever known (John 3:16). These disciples knew Jesus loved them, and they loved Him. He has been teaching them that which is important, and now he underscores that which is urgent: they must love one another. Their love for one another would help to sustain the believers, and it would be a testimony to non-believers. General Dutch Shoffner (retired three star) once sent me a paper in which he dealt with decisions made on the basis of what is important and what is urgent. Without a doubt, love for one another was important, but there must have been a sense of urgency in underscoring just how important this love is at this time. "Christians' love and support for one another enable them to survive in a hostile world. As Jesus was the embodiment of God's love, so now each disciple should embody Christ's love. This love is a sign to the world as well as to every believer (1 John 3:14)" [BKC].

Paul wrote to the church at Thessalonica to tell them that Timothy had brought a report of their love for one another (1. Thes.3:6). In his second letter to the church at Thessalonica, Paul wrote, "We must always thank God for you, brothers, which is fitting, since your faith is flourishing, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing" (2 Thess 1:3).

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

13:36 - SIMON SAID. *"Lord," Simon Peter said to Him, "where are You going?" Jesus answered, "Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you will follow later."* By now, if someone was going to question Jesus we would expect it to be Simon Peter, and he doesn't disappoint us. Has Peter walked with Jesus and heard Him tell them about His coming death and resurrection without understanding what Jesus meant? He was not the only one; none of them understood, possibly because they had never gotten beyond the idea that the Messiah would reestablish the kingdom of David.

JESUS ANSWERED. Jesus had been teaching His disciples for three years, and during the weeks leading up to this time, He had announced His coming death. They had not understood, possibly because this did not fit their own preconceived ideas about the Messiah. Jesus announced that they could not follow Him where He was going immediately, but they would follow later. In the final chapter, Jesus tells Peter what manner of death he would die. Tradition tells us that all eleven apostles died a martyr's death, with James being the first (A. D. 44), and John the last, near the end of the century.

13:37 - PETER ASKED. *"Lord," Peter asked, "why can't I follow You now? I will lay down my life for You!"* Peter is still missing the point, as we see in his question, "why can't I follow you now?" He had followed Jesus for three years, during which time there had been attempts made on His life, but Jesus had always walked away. Peter had no doubt that his love and courage were sufficient for any challenge, including death. I will lay down my life for You, he declared. "But Peter did not know himself as well as he thought, nor did he know the satanic power at work against him (cf. Luke 22:31-32). Jesus' prediction of Peter's defection (you will disown Me three times) must have completely shocked the other disciples. They may have wondered if Peter was the traitor (cf. John 13:21-25)" [BKC]. Peter, like the other disciples, had not yet grasped the idea of Jesus' death, "but, like Thomas (John 11:16), he is not afraid of danger. He had heard Christ's words about the good shepherd (John 10:11) and knew that such loyalty was the mark of a good disciple" [ATR].

13:38 - JESUS REPLIED. *"Jesus replied, 'Will you lay down your life for Me? I assure you: A rooster will not crow until you have denied Me three times.'" Peter must have been shocked*

by Jesus' words. He had just promised that he would die for Jesus, but Jesus had declared that before the rooster crowed Peter would deny him three times (see Matt. 26:34). This is one of the best known stories in the New Testament, and one of the saddest. It is also one that promises forgiveness and restoration to those who deny Jesus and then repent. Clarke offers the following commentary:

“Dr. Lightfoot has very properly remarked that we must not understand these words, as if the cock should not crow at all before Peter had thrice denied his Master; but we must understand them thus: **‘The cock shall not have finished his crowing before thou wilt thrice deny me.** When the time was near, the very night in which this was to happen, Christ said, This very night the cock shall not crow his second time, etc. But here, two days before that time, he says, the cock shall not crow; that is, shall not have done his crowing. The Jews, and some other nations, divided the cock-crowing into the first, the second, and the third times” [CLARKE, bold added by this writer].

Peter reminds me of the man who walked down the aisle during the invitation I extended as I closed my message one Sunday morning years ago. I had talked with him and someone told me other pastors had. There was something about the way he walked; not quite a swagger, but close. I looked at his face and there was something different about his expression. Now, as I look back, I would say he was wearing the expression of a man who was about to say, “Well, you finally talked me into it!” Instead as he stuck out his hand and smiling from ear to ear he swung his head from side to side, pumped my hand and said, “Well, I finally decided to come, and I want you to know you can count on me.” There were a few other words, and he responded the right way to my questions. Still, there was something about his attitude that bothered me. Part of it was the way he walked, and the way he pumped my hand. Part of it was the way he smiled, but part of it was something in his eyes that I could not read. He said, “You can count on me!” And I did, for about three months.

I invited him to make along trip with me to visit a patient in some treatment center. He took off work to go with me and by the time we returned I was feeling better about him. I enjoyed the fellowship and was amused at some of his stories. As I drove through one small town, he said, “Man, they close the café here so they can go home and eat lunch.” We laughed a lot, but I also talked seriously with him about the Lord, and began to trust him. Suddenly, he was gone.

Simon Peter was a lot like my friend at this point. He had not experience the indwelling of the Holy Spirit at this point. Peter was willing to die for Christ, and put his life on the line, but he would soon deny Him. Why? I preached a sermon about Peter's denial of Christ years ago. I concluded that Peter denied Jesus for the same reason many people deny Him today. It is the fear of ridicule. There are soldiers who have fought the enemies of their country in wars, men who have won medals for bravery in battle,

who come home and tremble at the thought of speaking to a twelve year old boy about their faith in Jesus Christ. Why did Peter deny His Lord? I believe it was for the same reason many people deny Him today when they should be professing Him: the fear of ridicule.

There are many men, and not a few women, who can face almost any obstacle except this one. Though they would deny it, the fear of ridicule by their peers turns their knees to Jello. Jesus had told His disciples that they were the salt of the earth, but in those days before they were filled with the Holy Spirit, they were little more than a pinch of salt. Recently, I looked at a box of crackers that has always carried the words, "Low Sodium" on the front of the box, only to discover a new design, and new words: "Hint of Salt". That was a marketing scheme, but the more I thought about it, the more convinced I was that those words describe what is wrong with the church in America today. Jesus expects us to be the salt of the earth, but most professing Christians are but a "Hint of Salt". I shared this conviction with a number of friends through the Internet, and receive an immediate response from some who fully agreed with me. I preached a sermon on the subject and found that it resonated with a number of people. Here is a copy of my e-mail message:

"When I had a heart attack over 13 years ago, I made a number of discoveries, some of which promised permanent changes in my life. One change would be in my diet. "Low sodium diet", whatever that meant. Then someone showed up in my room with breakfast and a little package of herbs that would take the place of salt on my eggs and grits. It not only took the place of salt, the aroma took my appetite.

For years, we have looked for chips and crackers with the label "Low Sodium" on the package or box. We also check frozen foods, canned good, and about anything we buy.

A few months ago I discovered that the Wheat Thins I have bought for several years no longer have the words "Low Sodium" on the front. It now reads, "Hint of Salt".

It dawned on me today that this has an application for the church today. Jesus said, "You are the salt of the earth." Salt preserves foods and adds flavor.

Dr. Mike Minnix asked me several years ago to send him a sample of the verse by verse commentaries I have written. After reading them he asked me to send him everything I had. He explained why he had asked for a sample: "I see a lot of fluff out there." HINT OF SALT?

An elderly lady said, "I have never had a pastor who taught me anything about the Bible." HINT OF SALT?

A teachers said, "Our worst behavior problems comes from students who are active in the popular youth groups at two area churches." HINT OF SALT?

A man at a new store in the area said to me this morning, "I have been busy with this store and another business. To be perfectly honest, I haven't been in church in three years." HINT OF SALT? Or, no salt?

A church member said, "The Smiths won't be in church Sunday. Girl Scout rally." HINT OF SALT? Or Salt Substitute?

A young man who was active in his church heard someone singing a well-known hymn (like Amazing Grace, or How Great Thou Art) on my car radio and asked, "What's that? I mean, what kind of music is that?" HINT OF SALT?

A pastor search committee admitted that they didn't know enough about Baptist doctrines to talk with a prospective pastor. HINT OF SALT?

A lot of church members who come to Sunday School and worship services on Sunday morning never show up on Sunday evening. HINT OF SALT?

A group of ladies talked with me about their favorite verses from the Bible. Their boss later said they also talk about their immorality! HINT OF SALT?

Some church members let their children watch questionable programs on TV. HINT OF SALT?

We hear about profession Christians who watch pornographic movies and view porn on the Internet. HINT OF SALT?

Arrogant evangelist, complacent pastor, apathetic members? HINT OF SALT! Or Salt Substitute.

Is it possible that the influence of the church in America is in decline because when the world looks at the church today they only see a hint of salt?

A pianist told my son Mark that she would only play one more song at a wedding if the family paid her another one hundred dollars. HINT O SALT?"

After Simon Peter had denied the Lord, he went out and wept the bitter tears of repentance, but even after that he showed that his battle with the fear of ridicule had not been won yet. He was willing to fight for Him in the Garden, but cowered in the courtyard before servants. He wavered before Jews from Jerusalem when they arrived in Antioch of Syria and saw him eating with Gentiles. However, when his testimony was needed at the Jerusalem Conference (Acts 15; Galatians 2), Peter stood strong. In time, Simon Peter became a powerful witness and a courageous martyr for Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 14

Jesus, The Way, the Truth, and the Life

For well over thirty years I have been writing verse by verse Bible studies on various books of the Bible and adding them to what I think of as The Bible Notebook. Some are well documented commentaries, while others need more work, both on content and documentation. Credit is given in many of the studies within the body of the work so that the reader will not have to leave the page he or she is reading on the screen in order to see to whom credit is given. In all the years I have put into this work, the one book I have held in the back of my mind is the Gospel According to John. I have often said that my favorite book in the Bible was probably the one on which I was working on at the time, but I must confess that this is my favorite book in the Bible (at least for now).

This is one of the four Gospels; the Evangelistic Gospel; it refutes paganism, skepticism, humanism, and all the other "isms". It contains the amazing I AM sayings of Jesus, as well as those incredible signs. Where do we find the clearest statement of God's provision for our salvation? In John 3:16. Where do we find the greatest assurance of our eternal security? John 10:28. Where do we find the greatest explanation of the ministry of the Holy Spirit? John 14-16.

When I began Chapter 3 in this series I noted that I had been anxious to get into that chapter from the beginning. Then, there was Chapter 10. I had my mind on Chapter 10 for months before I began working on it. While I loved working on Chapters 11-13, I must again admit that I have had Chapter 14 in mind as I worked through the earlier chapters. I have either read or quoted 14:1-6 in funeral sermons more often than any other passage, except for Psalm 23, and perhaps Revelation 21:1-6. I have preached

from this chapter many times, and now I approach the first verse with both a sense of awe, and a measure of apprehension. When I look at these words I feel that I should be worshipping instead of commenting.

14:1 - YOUR HEART MUST NOT BE TROUBLED. *"Your heart must not be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in Me."* The KJV has, "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God; believe also in Me." The very first thing we should do here is to remember to keep this in context. Jesus is delivering His Farewell Address to the eleven faithful disciples. They are the initial recipients of His words of comfort and assurance. Jesus has said some disturbing things to them, and while these were things they needed to hear, they were almost more than the mind could grasp. Their world is about to be turned upside down; they will be discouraged, disillusioned, and defeated. Jesus loved them and wanted to prepare them for that which awaited Him. They would see their Lord arrested, shamefully abused, brutally beaten, and finally crucified between two thieves. How would He prepare them for that which was about to happen. He began with the words, "Your hearts must not be troubled." Robertson includes a note from Vincent in commenting on this verse:

"Let not your heart be troubled (mê tarassesthô humôn hê kardia). Not here the physical organ of life (Luke 21:34), but the seat of spiritual life (pneuma, psuchê), the centre of feeling and faith (Rom 10:10), 'the focus of the religious life' (Vincent) as in Mat 22:37. See these words repeated in John 14:27. Jesus knew what it was to have a 'troubled' heart (John 11:33; John 13:31) where tarassô is used of him. Plainly the hearts of the disciples were tossed like waves in the wind by the words of Jesus in John 13:38" [ATR].

These words were spoken to eleven faithful disciples, but at this point they are disciples who are not yet fully equipped for what was coming.

APPLICATION: The first time I recall reading John 14:1-6, I knew there was message there that I needed. I never stopped to think that this was a message Jesus delivered to these eleven apostles to prepare them for His trials, torture, and crucifixion. I believed Jesus was speaking to my heart, and so He was. The Holy Spirit inspired John to record these words for the education, edification, comfort and assurance of all the saints who would read them until our Lord returns. These words were of no help to Judas, and they offer no hope to anyone who rejects Jesus Christ, from that day until Jesus returns for His church. Jesus spoke those words at a real time, in a real place, to real people, for a real purpose. This is history. The Holy Spirit inspired John to record them around A. D. 86., He has miraculously preserved every word He inspired; and He illuminates the heart of every believer who reads them in the Spirit. A lost person may read the Bible, remember the stories, and appreciate moral lessons, but no unsaved person can comprehend the deeper truths revealed only to those who have been indwelt by the

Holy Spirit. Jesus explains that in the Farewell Address, but it is sufficient here to remember that these words offer comfort for every believer, especially when his or her faith is put to the test.

BELIEVE IN GOD. Jesus said, (You) believe...believe also (pisteuete ... kai pisteuete). Robertson's notes may explain the difference in the HCSB and the more familiar KJV here:

“ So translated as present active indicative plural second person and present active imperative of pisteuô. The form is the same. Both may be indicative (ye believe ... and ye believe), both may be imperative (believe ... and believe or believe also), the first may be indicative (ye believe) and the second imperative (believe also), the first may be imperative (keep on believing) and the second indicative (and ye do believe, this less likely). **Probably both are imperatives** (Mark 11:22), ‘keep on believing in God and in me’ [ATR, following Vincent, bold added by this writer].

14:2 - IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE. *“In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if not, I would have told you. I am going away to prepare a place for you.”* The Authorized Version has “In My Father's house are many mansions”, an unfortunate translation, for the Greek word may mean to dwell, or a dwelling place. The KJV is about eighty-five per cent the Tyndale New Testament, and both the Tyndale Translation and the King James Version miss it here. The word simply means a dwelling place. In heaven there are many dwelling places. How many? Enough. My son showed his mother a house that is for sale and explained that it had been listed for \$600,000, but the owner had come down to \$400,000. The house “looks great, but it needs a lot of repairs.” Our dwelling place in heaven will never need repairs, it will never need any renovation, and no one will need an interior designer or decorator for his or her dwelling place in heaven.

There are some interesting arguments as to what Jesus means by “My Father's house.” One writer insists that the traditional exegesis has some serious problems.

“First of all, heaven is not mentioned in John 14. Second, the going away and coming again according to the context of John 14-16 would be but for “a little while’ (see 14:19, 20; 16:16-23), not two or more millennia! Indeed, 14:20 and 16:20-22 make it more than evident that ‘that day’ would be the day of Christ's resurrection, the day in which the disciples would realize that they had become united to the resurrected Christ. Third, John 14:4 and 6 indicate that Jesus was talking about the believers coming to the Father through him, the unique way. Surely this access to the Father is not reserved for the second advent or for the time of each saint's departure from this world. Jesus came to provide believers with a way to approach and indwell the Father here and now (see Eph. 2:18).

Fourth, John 14:2, 3 reveal that Jesus' intention was to bring the disciples to be with him 'where I am,' not 'where I will be.' Where was the Lord then and there? Jesus repeatedly indicated that he was in the Father (10:38; 14:10, 11), and he prayed in John 17 that the disciples would also be with him in the Father (17:21-24). Of course, the Lord also indicated that he was going to the Father (14:12; 16:28) and that that ascent would take him to heaven. As such, it could be inferred that he was going to heaven, and that was where he wanted to take his disciples. But this seems to miss the mark. The goal of Jesus' mission, according to the Gospel of John, was to express the Father to mankind and to bring the believers to the Father. John 14:6 says it so clearly: 'I am the way and the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me' [NCWB].

That writer goes on to explain various ways different commentators try to reconcile all of this. I am going to forgo those arguments and state here that I do believe **Jesus means the abode of the Father, which can only be heaven.** There are things I do not understand about Eschatology, but after reading on the subject for decades, there is one thing of which I am certain, and that is: **What God' is up to, I am going to be in on it!** The author above concludes that by "place" Jesus means Himself. The simple fact is that when we place our faith in Jesus Christ He is in us and we are in Him, and at that moment He reserves a place for us in heaven (1 Peter 1:3-5), where no reservation has ever been canceled.

I WOULD HAVE TOLD YOU. Jesus spent three years teaching His disciples, especially these apostles, what they needed to know. It is inconceivable that He would have misled them in any way. It is a fact, however, that they did not understand everything He had taught them. They never understood what He had told them about His coming betrayal, trials, torture, and death. They had not understood what He had taught them about serving one another, nor had they fully understood His Messiahship. They would soon understand, and in this discourse He would tell them how the Holy Spirit would affirm what He had taught them.

PREPARE A PLACE. Jesus said, "I am going away to prepare a place for you." This is not pie in the sky by and by, this is a real place, which is described in apocalyptic terms in the Revelation.

John, the disciple Jesus loved, and the author of this material, was the one to whom the Revelation was given and by his own words, he was overwhelmed.

"By his going is meant his death and ascent to heaven. The figure here is taken from one who is on a journey, who goes before his companions to provide a place to lodge in, and to make the necessary preparations for their entertainment. It evidently means that he, by the work he was yet to

perform in heaven, would secure their admission there, and obtain for them the blessings of eternal life. That work would consist mainly in his intercession, Heb 10:12 13 19-22 7:25-27 4:14 16" [BARNES].

14:3 - PREPARE A PLACE. *"If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come back and receive you to Myself, so that where I am you may be also."* In a sense, this is simple enough for a twelve year old child to understand, but deep enough to confuse scholars. In the first part of this verse, Jesus repeats what He has just said in the previous verse. He is going to "go away and prepare a place" for them. Scholars debate every aspect of these verses, but here it is assumed that Jesus going to die on the cross, be raised on the third day, appear numerous times, ascend to the Father, where we would make intercession for us until the time came for Him to return to take His church out of the world, as a prelude to all the end-time events of which the Scripture speaks, both in Revelation and other places in the New Testament.

RECEIVE YOU UNTO MYSELF. Does He mean that He would receive them into heaven when He returns at the end of the age, or does He mean that He will receive each individual believer upon their death. While some may debate this, we may remember what Jesus said to the thief on the cross who believed in Him: "Today you will be with Me in paradise" (Luke, 23:43).

I have often turned to Dr. Gene Jeffries when I needed that extra "something" I was not finding in my research - that little something extra I was not finding in the commentaries and theological studies. A few days ago, Dr. Jeffries sent me an article he had written some time ago and when I read it I knew I wanted to come back to this passage and include that article. I asked permission and he graciously assured me I could use any article he has written. Pay close attention to the part about the father knowing when the house would be ready for his son to move into it.

Jewish Marriage and the Second Coming

Gene L. Jeffries, Th.D.

"Marriage to the Jews of Jesus' day was a practical, legal matter. It was established by contract and carried through by exacting procedure. The young man would arrive at the chosen girl's house with a covenant (a true legal agreement) giving the terms by which he would propose marriage. The most important aspect was his willingness to pay for this bride.

"A clear parallel occurs between the marriage arrangements and the LORD Jesus Christ's coming to Earth; for He came bearing a New Testament of His love for all whom He had created. His Covenant, which binds His Bride, the Church, to Him for eternity, requires Her to forsake

sin and to embrace Him only as her object of love and trust.

“If the terms were suitable to the young Jewish couple, the prospective bride and groom would drink a cup of wine together as a seal of their mutual commitment. This cup was significant in that it demonstrated the bridegroom’s willingness to sacrifice in order to have this bride. Simultaneously, it demonstrated to him the bride’s willingness to marry. Then, the groom paid the price required to marry the girl of his choice.

“The mutual Commitment between Christ and His Church was sealed with the shedding of His blood upon the Cross of Calvary; and the ones believing receive His sacrifice as a once-for-all payment-in-full for their sins.

“Back at his father’s house, the young Jewish man would build a dwelling place where he and his bride were to enjoy life together. This construction usually took the better part of a year, and the father of the groom would decide when it was finished. If anyone asked the bridegroom when the wedding was to take place, he would answer, **“Only my father knows.”**

“The LORD Jesus arose from the dead and returned to His Father, stating, “I go to prepare a place for you...” (John 14:2b). He is now there and soon to return for His Bride, the Church –the time of which no one knows. For when asked, “What will be the sign of Your coming?” He said, “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of Heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone” (Mat 24:36).

“The young Jewish bride was obliged to do a lot of waiting. The Custom demanded that she have an oil lamp ready and be ready to depart at a moment’s notice should the bridegroom suddenly return for her. During this long period of waiting, which was referred to as having been “bought with a price.” The Scriptures say, “Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep...” (Mat 25:5).

“Finally, when the bridegroom’s father decided the bridal chamber was ready, the groom and his friends would start off to claim his bride. But, at midnight there was a shout, ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ Then all those virgins rose, and trimmed their lamps” (Mat 25:6-7). All Jewish brides were said to be “stolen.” It was thrilling to her to be “abducted” and carried off into the night, not by a stranger, but by one who loved her so much he had paid a supreme price to obtain her.

“The Apostle Paul tells us, “...the day of the Lord will come just like a

thief in the night" (I Thes. 5:2). And Jesus said, "'Then there shall be two men in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and one will be left. Therefore, be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming'" (Mat 24:40-42).

"Jewish decorum, however, declared that the bride receive at least a brief warning of her beloved's return; so a friend of the groom would give a shout as they neared the house. The bride only had time to light her lamp, grab her honeymoon attire and race to meet him!

"For the Lord Himself will descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord" (I Thes. 4:16-17).

"When the groom and his bride reached the house of the groom's father, the couple would go into the bridal chamber which the groom had prepared, and shut the door. The wedding guests would be assembled in the father's house to celebrate the marriage. The wedding actually took seven days; but the celebrating did not commence until the marriage had been consummated and was announced by the best man. Then the celebration began and continued for seven days!

"In like fashion, the Church will then be formally assembled at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Those who have not committed themselves to His Covenant by the preparedness through repentance and faith, will not be present. The Church, however, laden with previously unconfessed sin will there and then confess and be forgiven; it is there that true believers, comprising the Church, will be brought into doctrinal adjustment with the LORD; and it is there that true believers will be rewarded for their faithfulness.

"At the end of the week, the Jewish bride and groom appeared and joined the guests for the wedding supper. After the marriage supper, the bride and groom would leave the house of the groom's father and go to their own home.

"When our LORD Jesus Christ returns to this Earth for His Bride, all true believers, having committed themselves to Him, will be suddenly snatched away into the heavens to meet their LORD in the air; and thus shall they ever be with the LORD. As vital as it is that a man and a

woman prepare themselves for a life together by committing themselves to each other, nothing compares with the preparation of us all to meet our Coming LORD Jesus Christ" [DR. GENE JEFFRIES, bold added by this writer].

14:4 - YOU KNOW. *"You know the way where I am going."* These eleven apostles had followed Jesus for three years and He had taught them in the most unique school the world has ever seen. It is common today to say that someone provides services for their customers twenty-four/seven, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Jesus was with these men twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, teaching them by example, through commonplace illustrations (a seed sower), crisis (the widow's son at Nain), through parables, and intense biblical exegesis and application. The people who heard Him were amazed that He taught with authority, not as the Pharisees. Jesus was the only teacher in history who was perfect. He had perfect knowledge, He was perfect in every application of the Word of God, and the only way that could happen is for the Teacher to be the Word (John 1:1), the Son of God.

Human teachers should continually be doing research in order to grow as a teacher. I commented on a professor once to a long time friend, who was himself a professor in a different seminary. My friend said, "I have every note I took in his class and I can take you right now and show you that he is teaching right the opposite of what he taught us." I recalled two professors who taught most material with confidence, but when they came to certain subjects they would say, "Dr. So and So say this means....." Jesus never changed His position because He never had to do so, and there was no authority higher than Himself. He did not teach as the teachers of that day, who constantly quoted earlier rabbis to make their point.

This is the Teacher these men had followed for three years, the Teacher who had patiently answered their questions and fed their minds with new information. When Jesus said, "You know the way I am going," He knew what He had taught them, and He knew what they understood. Jesus was about to explain to them that they would only fully understand all He had taught them after they were filled with the Holy Spirit. I have known people who loved to read the Bible so they could either impress or humiliate Christians, but no one can possibly know the deeper truths of the Word of God except through the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "You know the way where I am going," and He will go on to explain to them that when they have seen the risen Lord and been filled with the Holy Spirit they will understand what they know.

14:5 - THOMAS SAID. *"Lord," Thomas said, "we don't know where You're going. How can we know the way?"* Thomas has been referred to down through the years as "Doubting Thomas", a designation with which I cannot completely agree. Who has not doubted some teaching or some fact until he has more information? When I first heard a friend

say that someone had uncovered evidence that suggested that the traditional site of Mt. Sinai could not be the real Mt. Sinai, and that evidence supported a different site for the crossing of the Red Sea, I not only doubted it, I tried to refute it. In time I learned that the mother of Constantine designated the commonly accepted site as the real Mt. Sinai. Larry Williams and Bob Cornuke have been to the area, and following the Scripture, retraced the steps of Moses and the Children of Israel. My good friend, J. D. Sagely, whose fellowship I often enjoyed when we served together on the board of trustees for LifeWay Christian Resources, sent me their book and a DVD in which they describe what they discovered. When I was chairman of the Broadman and Holman Committee and he was chairman of the committee that oversees the work of a different division we served on the executive committee together. I assured my friend I would read the book and watch the DVD. I watched the DVD several times, and then ordered a copy. I once was a doubter, but now I am a believer. Was Thomas a doubter when he offered to go to Jerusalem and die with Jesus? Was he a doubter when he asked Jesus this question, or was he stating what the others were wondering? Regardless of how we interpret this question, he affords Jesus and opportunity to state another of the great I AM sayings we love so much in this Gospel.

14:6 - I AM THE WAY. *“Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”* Both the I AM sayings of Jesus and the “signs” recorded by John claim the attention of every serious student of the Fourth Gospel. Consider the list:

1. I am the bread of life - 6:35
2. I am the light of the world - 8:12
3. I am the door of the sheep - 10:7
4. I am the good shepherd - 10:11
5. I am the resurrection and life - 11:25
6. I am the way, the truth, and the life - 14:6

At a time when many voices are proclaiming Jesus to be but one way to heaven, it is absolutely essential that we understand that Jesus Himself says, “I am the way.” He is not a way to the Father, He is **the** way. He is **the only way**. Peter would later proclaim, “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Thomas had said that the disciples did not know where He was going (vs. 5), and Jesus answers, “I am the way.” That Jesus is the one and only way to the Father, to heaven, to eternal life, is consistent with the authority of God as we see it in the Scripture. John 3:16 tells us that Jesus is God’s one and “only begotten Son” (KJV). (The Greek (*monogene*) denotes His unique Son, the only one of His kind). The HCSB has it “his one and only Son.”

Jesus also said that He is “the truth”. Jesus perfectly revealed the Father to the people of Palestine in the First Century, and He continues to reveal the truth about salvation to

millions of people today.

Jesus is absolute truth and there is no deception in Him. Vincent writes: "As being the perfect revelation of God the Father: combining in Himself and manifesting all divine *reality*, whether in the *being*, the *law*, or the *character* of God. He embodies what men ought to *know* and *believe* of God; what they should *do* as children of God, and what they should *be*" [VINCENT].

It is never enough to say that God says something because it is true: it is true because God says it. When God speaks eternal truth is established. It is impossible for Him to lie (Titus 1:2), therefore, when He speaks He cannot but speak the truth. If you want to know the truth about Creation see what God said in Genesis 1 and 2. If you want to know the truth about the Fall, see Genesis 3. If you want to know the truth about God's maintenance of all He created, see Psalms. If you want to see whether or not you are guilty of sin, see Romans 3:23. If you want to know the consequence of sin see Romans 6:23 and Revelation 21:8. If you want to know what heaven is like see Revelation 21:1-6. If you want to know the Father, look to the Son, who perfectly reveals Him.

Jesus is also "the life." Jesus is **the** Life. He is not one way among many to life, He is life. In John 11:25, Jesus announces that He is the resurrection and life." In the Prologue, the Scripture says, "Life was in Him, and that life was the light of men" (John 1:4). Jesus is the source of life, the Author of life, and the purpose of life.

"Not only life in the *future* world. He is "the principle and source of life in its temporal development and future consummation, so that whoever has not received Him into himself by faith, has become a prey to spiritual and eternal death" (Meyer). "He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life."

"I am the way, the truth, and the life. Without the way there is no going; without the truth there is no knowing; without the life there is no living. I am the way which thou shouldst pursue; the truth which thou shouldst believe; the life which thou shouldst hope for" (Thomas a Kempis, 'Imitation of Christ,' iii., 56)" [VINCENT].

Jesus is the one and only way to be saved. He is the perfect revelation of divine truth, the truth about man's need for the Savior, the truth about salvation. He is the source of eternal life

The Son Reveals the Father

14:7 - IF YOU KNOW ME. "If you know Me, you will also know My Father. From now on you do know Him and have seen Him." The Greek word John uses (ginosko) is the past

perfect indicative, which means to know experientially (by personal experience) and it is the condition of second class “as is made plain by the conclusion (an êidete) where oida, not ginôskô is used” [ATR]. Thomas, and the other apostles, thought they knew Jesus, but He says they had not really come to know Him, no matter how much they loved Him, no matter how much they thought they knew Him.

They would really know Him only after the resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit to reveal Him more fully. Just look at the immature, fearful Simon Peter before the resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit, and then look at Simon Peter delivering the first sermon in the power of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

YOU WILL ALSO KNOW. They were just beginning to know the Father, but they would soon know Him more fully, which of course was the case. In John 14: 1-6, Jesus has revealed the great truth that he is the only way to the Father. “In 14:7 and following, he will begin to unveil that he is the visible manifestation of the Father. If the disciples were to realize that coming to dwell in the Son was equivalent to coming to dwell in the Father, they would have had to realize that the Son was the Father revealed, the manifestation of the Father (see John 1:18; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3). If they had come to know the Son, they should have perceived the Father also” [NCWB].

FROM NOW ON. “From now on you do know Him and have seen Him.” “Another manuscript reading yields a translation like the one in TEV: “Now that you have known me, . . . you will know my father also.” However, “the entire context of this portion seems to assert the opposite. It is not that the disciples *will* come to know the Father as they have known the Son, but that they should have already known the Father as manifest in the Son. The Lord was reproving them, not promising them some future knowledge of the Father. If he was making a promise, how could the Lord say in the very next sentence: **And from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him**” [NCWB, bold in the original].

14:8 - SHOW US. “*Lord,*” said Philip, “*show us the Father, and that’s enough for us.*” The focus now quite naturally changes from Thomas to Philip with this question. We were introduced to him in 1:43-45, where we learn that he was from Bethsaida and that he was responsible for bringing Nathaniel to Jesus. Next, we see him in 6:5-7, where he calculated the cost of feeding the great multitude would amount to more than half a year’s wages. We next see Philip at the entry into the city of Jerusalem as he seeks to assist the Greeks who want to see Jesus (12:20-22). “Practical Philip in the present context is portrayed as trying to make sense out of what must have seemed to him as Jesus’ ethereal talk about himself and God. So he asked Jesus to get practical and show the disciples the Father. If Jesus did that, they could dispense with any further discussion on the subject” [NAC].

Verses 1-6 do not justify calling Thomas “doubting Thomas” and this question does not

set Philip apart as one who knew less than the other disciples, any more that Peter's denial should be the character flaw by which he should be identified down through the ages. Jesus had not been crucified, He had not been raised from the dead, He had not revealed Himself to them, He had not ascended back to the Father, and He had not sent the Holy Spirit to reveal Him in His fullness. Philip's request here is not so hard to understand because it represents

“the general human longing to gain a firsthand personal and practical confirmation of theological ideas and assertions. The problem is that he did not realize what he was asking. He asked to see the Father, to see God. In several places the Old Testament indicates that people saw God, such as in Gen 24:9-11, where Moses, Aaron, and the leaders of Israel beheld God and ate and drank (cf. also texts like Isa 33:20); but for the most part Israel took seriously the dictum that “man shall not see me and live” (Exod 33:20). Accordingly, Gideon was quite convinced that he was in great danger because he had seen the angel of the Lord (who was identified with God), and he begged the angel not to leave him until he had prepared the appropriate offering (Judg 6:18). Likewise, Isaiah was sure he was in desperate straits of woe because in the Temple he had seen a vision merely of God's trailing gown (Isa 6:1-5) [NAC].

This author mistakenly noted that it was in Genesis 24:9-11 that we read about Moses and Aaron seeing God. That reference, of course is Exodus 24:9-11.

There was a time when I would read this and be amazed at the ignorance of these disciples who had followed Jesus for three years and still remained so ignorant of His relationship with the Father. Now, I read it and mourn over the ignorance of the average church member today, if not most who profess to be Christians. A lady I have known for many years recently told me that her son was not in church the previous Sunday because his son had a ball game. He plays travel ball. Only a week or two before that conversation I spoke with a family that has been close to my family for years. I asked a teenager, “Where are you going to church?” Her response seemed rehearsed: “We are visiting around right now, trying to find a church we like.” I knew she played travel softball on Sundays. I thought of another youth whose family followed him from place to place every Sunday to watch him play travel ball. At one time, they were concerned that another matter might keep their son out of church, but when he received the special honor of playing travel ball, they forgot about worship service, or keeping the Lord's Day holy. All this tells me someone does not really know Jesus or the Father, no matter how loudly they profess to know Him. How can anyone really know God and violate His name, His holy day, or His church?

My granddaughter Abigail is 9 years old and recently her soccer coach announced that they would practice on Monday and Wednesday evenings. Her father said, “We will be

there Monday evenings, but we will be in church on Wednesday evenings. " The coach said, "Oh", and went on to something else. The same thing happened with her softball a few months earlier, when she was 8 years old. My son, a local attorney, said, "There is no way I am going to see one of my children go to hell over a ball game." He realizes that Abigail may not become as good at softball or soccer as some of her teammates, but the joy he sees in her eyes and hears in her voice when he mentions Sunday School, AWANA'S, or Music and Mission (Wednesday evenings) is far more important.

Is it possible that other people might gauge our knowledge of Jesus Christ by what it takes to make us miss worship services, or withhold our tithes from Him? Is our Bible study and prayer life a true indication of how well we know Jesus? There are people who do well in Bible trivia who still show little of the character and nature of Jesus in their daily life. Philip and Thomas had never seen a copy of the New Testament! They had not been filled with the Holy Spirit at this time. They soon would be and they would both go on to become martyrs for their Lord.

14:9 - JESUS SAID. *"Jesus said to him, "Have I been among you all this time without your knowing Me, Philip? The one who has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"* Jesus responds to Philip's question, but His question was one that might have been asked by any of the apostles at that time. "According to Philip's concept, the Father was another 'person' besides Jesus, a person who could perhaps show up in the room if Jesus called upon him to do so" [NCWB]. The Father is a Person, the Son is a Person, and the Holy Spirit is a Person (the Trinity): one is essence, three in Person. What Jesus is saying here is that "the Son and Father are essentially inseparable; thus, it is impossible to show the Father outside of the Son—for the Son has always been his unique expression" [NCWB]. Based on what we now know, we might conclude that Philip and the disciples "should have come to know and recognize that the One in their midst was the very expression of God the Father" [NCWB]. They should have.

"**Philip** expressed a universal desire of mankind: to see God (cf. Ex. 33:18). In a perverted form this desire leads to idolatry. Philip was probably longing for a theophany (cf. Ex. 24:9-10; Isa. 6:1) or some visible display of God's glory. Jesus' statement, **Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father** (cf. John 12:45), is one of the most staggering claims He ever made. The Father is in Jesus and Jesus perfectly reveals Him (1:18). Hence no theophany was necessary, for by seeing Jesus they **were** seeing **the Father!**" [BKC, bold in the original].

14:10 - I AM IN THE FATHER. *"Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words I speak to you I do not speak on My own. The Father who lives in Me does His works."* When Jesus asked, "Don't you believe", was he probing for Philip's perception of His relationship to the Father, or was He simply expressing incredulity in

light of the fact that Philip, after following Him for three years, would ask this question? During this period of intense training, Jesus have taught Philip and the other Apostles many things that are not recorded in the Gospels. John tells us that "Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of His disciples that are not written in this book" (John 20:30).

Much of what is recorded was something Jesus either taught the masses, or something He said to the rulers of the Jews. He had taught that the Father had sent Him (John 5:37); that He had come in the Father's name (5:43); and "Everyone the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will never cast out" (6:37). Those are only a few of the statements Jesus had made in Philip's presence. When Jesus said, "I am in the Father and the Father is in Me", He revealed a relationship that does not exist among men. In marriage, two become one, but since there are no perfect people there can be no perfect unions. The Bible, without using the word, reveals the Trinity, a trinitary view of God. God is one in essence, three in Person: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

THE WORDS I SPEAK. The words Jesus had spoken, as well as the words He is speaking to them now, are words spoken on the authority of the Father. He had stressed that in earlier chapters in His debate with the rulers of the Jews. There was not one word that Jesus taught them that was not taught under the authority of the Father. There has never been a conflict between the Father and the Son.

THE FATHER WHO LIVES IN ME. Jesus has said this so many times during His public ministry that one wonders why He is having to repeat it now. The simple fact is that we are judging those disciples by our knowledge today. One often hears foolish questions in spite of the fact that we have the New Testament to inform us, and believers have the Holy Spirit to call the Scripture to our remembrance and to help us understand it.

14:11 - BELIEVE ME. *"Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me. Otherwise, believe because of the works themselves."* At first glance one may think Jesus is making a last minute appeal to His disciples to believe in Him. In reality, this is the present active imperative of the word to believe (pisteuo), just as it is in 14:1. They believed in Him enough to have followed Him for three years. He now tells His disciples to believe "that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me."

BECAUSE OF THE WORKS. There were two grounds on which they might believe in Him: His testimony and His works. To the hostile Jews, Jesus had said, "But if I am doing them and you don't believe Me, believe the works. This way you will know and understand that the Father is in Me and I in the Father" (John 10:38). Now, He tells His disciples to believe on Him for the same two reasons: His testimony and His works.

Pray in Jesus' Name

14:12 - I ASSURE YOU. *"I assure you: The one who believes in Me will also do the works that I do. And he will do even greater works than these, because I am going to the Father."* The KJV has, "Verily, verily", whereas the NASB has "Truly, truly." This is the double "amen" we have come to expect in John. Jesus is about to make a profound statement and we should not miss the significance of it. What Jesus is about to say should have a dramatic impact on every believer who reads these verses.

THE ONE WHO BELIEVES. Our Lord's statement here obviously focuses the attention of the disciples to the post-resurrection period. For the moment, they are confused; in a short time they will be discouraged and disheartened, but in a little while they will be doing the works they had witnessed Jesus doing. "Even though the disciples here may have been overwhelmed by sorrow (cf. 16:20), they are called to focus on the future rather than the present because most of the verbs are in the future tense in this section" [NAC].

There is another point that we should not miss here. "The one who believes" may carry the force of "anyone who believes", which would imply all believers, not just the apostles or the immediate disciples of the Lord. Certainly, this power would not be limited to the eleven loyal apostles. At the same time, one must be careful not to be misled by every tel-evangelist who proclaims himself a miracle worker or a "faith healer". There were, during the apostolic age, many faithful disciples who did mighty works, including Peter, John, and Paul.

EVEN GREATER WORKS. It would be amazing enough if Jesus had simply said that those who believe in Him would do works that were similar to those they had seen Him do, but He didn't stop there. He said, "And he will do even greater works than these, because I am going to the Father." Does this mean that future believers would do works greater than changing water to wine (2:7-11); walking on water (6:19), feeding thousands with a child's lunch (6:9-14), or the raising of Lazarus from the dead (11:43-44)? No one has ever done greater works than those, so the reader must dig a little deeper. One writer asserts that the meaning of this statement

"must therefore arise out of the context of the discussion involving the fact that Jesus is speaking of his departure to the Father, namely, his death and resurrection. If that is the case, then, the basis for the 'greater' is rooted in the expansive implications of Jesus' mission in light of his 'glorification' (cf. 17:1-2). Jesus' departure is in effect the work of the 'Lamb of God' in taking away the 'sin of the world' (1:29) or the fact that he is the 'Savior of the World' (4:42). Accordingly, his death and

subsequent resurrection are to be seen as drawing all people to himself (12:32). But strategically this work would also require the work of those who believe because their task would be to communicate to the world the forgiveness of sins (20:23)" [NAC].

That being the case, the greater works done by those who believe in Jesus would involve the post-resurrection mission of the church, as spelled out in Acts 1:8, and documented by the entire Book of Acts. Luke tells us that he was writing about all Jesus began to do, and what He taught until his exaltation to heaven (Acts 1:1-2). The implication of the statement in Acts is not that Jesus ceased to work, but that He continued to work through His church. When Peter healed Aeneas, he said, "Jesus Christ heals you" (Acts 9:34). There are many other examples, but we shall see more in the following verses.

BECAUSE I AM GOING TO THE FATHER. How would Jesus' departure enable the disciples to do greater works than He had done? It would seem that His departure would leave them weaker, if not totally powerless. The following verses will answer that question. Jesus would return to the Father, but He would send the Holy Spirit to indwell, empower, and guide them in all they would do in His name.

14:13 - ASK IN MY NAME. *"Whatever you ask in My name, I will do it so that the Father may be glorified in the Son."* Because Jesus is returning to the Father, His disciples would be doing a greater work than they had seen Him do during His earthly ministry (vs. 12). How can that be? The human Jesus was limited only because He emptied Himself of the glory He had in Heaven and took on the image of a slave in order to pay the price for our sins (Phil. 2:7). He returned to Heaven and took His rightful position at the right hand of the Father, where once again He is omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient. In addition, when He returned He sent the Holy Spirit to indwell and empower His saints (Acts 1:8). Today, we pray to the Father, we pray in the name of the Son, and we pray in the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus promises that "whatever you ask in My name, I will do it." Who but the Lord could seriously make such a promise. He knew He had the power to fulfill that promise, He knew how He would do it, and He knew why He would do it. His resurrection, ascension, and assumption of His position of power at the right hand of the Father justifies the promise. Jesus would be in the right position to fulfill that promise.

The prayer Jesus has promised to answer is the pray that is prayed in His name. I believe very strongly that we must pray, "in Jesus' name, Amen." This, however, is not a magic formula or in the common vernacular, (and I hate using the word) a "mantra". In the Bible a person's name denoted the person, so when we pray in Jesus' name, we are praying in His person, in Him. That is, we are praying in the nature, character, and power of the risen Lord, and He responds in the fullness of His heavenly glory.

At times well-meaning preachers declare, "God answers all prayers: He either says yes, no, or wait a while." I would respond that we must not think we can paint God into a corner by attaching the words, "in Jesus' name, Amen", onto a prayer that we fervently raise to Him. God told Jeremiah to tell the rebellious people of Judah, "Therefore, this is what the Lord says: I am about to bring on them disaster that they cannot escape. **They will cry out to Me, but I will not hear them**" (Jer. 11:11, bold added by this writer). If we are not praying in keeping with the character, nature, and purpose of Jesus, we are not praying in His name. When we pray in His name mountains, He promises, will move (Matt.21:21). With this understanding, Jesus invites us to pray to the Father in His name. "The disciples will have at their disposal the whole power of the risen and ascended Christ, the inspiration and illumination of the Spirit (cf. V. 20). The Christian church is not promised '**tasks equal to its power, but power equal to its tasks**'" [STRAHN, p. 283, bold added by this writer].

14:14 - IF YOU ASK. *"If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it."* That this is a conditional sentence is clear in the HCSB and the NKJV. It is the condition of the third class (not yet determined), which means that one may ask in His name or he may not. The answer is conditioned upon our response to His invitation to pray in His name. Robertson explains that this is the "Condition of third class with ean and first aorist active subjunctive of aiteô. The use of me (me) here is supported by Aleph B 33 Vulgate Syriac Peshitta. Just this phrase does not occur elsewhere in John and seems awkward, but see John 16:23. If it is genuine, as seems likely, here is direct prayer to Jesus taught as we see it practiced by Stephen in Acts 7:59; and in Rev 22:20" [ATR]. We are taught to pray to the Father, but no one is discouraged from praying, "Lord Jesus, have mercy on me."

QUESTION: Do we pray to Jesus, or do we pray to the Father in the name of Jesus? As stated elsewhere, I believe we pray to the Father, in the name of the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Then does that mean there a problem with addressing Jesus in our prayers? Absolutely not. The author of the material in the NAC writes:

"What is most intriguing is that the most likely reading of the Greek text here would have the prayer addressed not to the Father but to Jesus.

"In dealing with this anomaly of praying to Jesus, some manuscripts simply omit the entire verse whether purposefully or accidentally. If it were accidental, it would be a variant of sight whereby the scribe's eye moved accidentally from ean ('if') of v. 14 to ean of v. 15. If it were purposeful, the copyist may have considered the verse to be either inconsistent with the focus of asking in v. 14 or theologically inconsistent with a church tradition concerning the one to whom prayer should be addressed. The other variant in 14:14 is merely the deleting of the Greek me ('me'), which would deal with the theological idea of praying to Jesus and assume the

praying is to God. Both these variants, however, are suspect. **The most likely reading of the text** here that can explain the presence of the other readings and has the weight of the strongest manuscript history would be **'if you ask me for anything in my name, I will do it.'** Although such a translation seems to be both a little clumsy and at variance with the way systematic theologians might wish to discuss prayer from a theocentric perspective, the style is a typical Semitic redundancy that here has been applied to asking me in my name. Such a writing style of asking God for the sake of his name is found elsewhere in the Bible (cf. Pss 25:11; 31:3), and it agrees with the Johannine idea that the Holy Spirit will be sent in the name of Jesus (cf. 14:26).

"This meaning of the expression here of asking me in my name, as H. Bietenhard has suggested, probably means praying both 'according to his will' and 'with the invocation of his name' [NAC, bold added by this writer]."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary also deals with whether or not prayer should be directed to the Father or to the Son.

"**In My name** (vv. 13-14) is not a magical formula of invocation. But the prayers of believers, as Christ's representatives doing His business, will be answered. John expanded this teaching in his first epistle. He wrote, 'If we ask anything according to His will... we have what we asked of Him' (1 John 5:14-15). To **ask Me for anything in My name** means to ask according to His will (cf. 'in My name' in John 15:16; 16:23-24, 26). The word 'Me' is omitted in some Greek manuscripts but it is probably correct here. Prayers in the New Testament are usually addressed to God the Father, but prayer addressed to **the Son** is proper also (e.g., Stephen's prayer to the 'Lord Jesus' [Acts 7:59]). The goal of answered prayers is to **bring glory to the Father**. Also bearing fruit glorifies the Father (John 15:8)" [BKC, bold in original].

Another Counselor Promised

14:15 - IF YOU LOVE ME. *"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."* This is the condition of the third class: you may or you may not. Technically, this is the "Future active of *têreô*, not aorist imperative *têrêsate* (keep) as some MSS. have. For this phrase see also John 8:51; John 14:23, 24; John 14:20; 1Jn 2:5. Continued love prevents disobedience" [ATR]. We must not lose sight of the fact that this is our Lord's Farewell Discourse, so He is telling His loyal disciples, "Do not show your love by grief at my departure merely, or by profession, but by obedience" [BARNES].

Another older commentary adds, "Do not be afflicted at the thought of my being separated from you: the most solid proof ye can give of your attachment to and affection for me is to keep my commandments. This I shall receive as a greater proof of your affection than your tears" [CLARKE]. Obedience is proof of discipleship. It is not surprising that John would remind the early church that Jesus said: "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."

Jesus has just promised that if His followers ask anything in His name He will grant it (vs. 14). Now, He amplifies that promise, even as He reveals who His true disciples really are. Anyone can say they love the Lord, but the ones who really love the Lord show it by keeping His commandments. "True love is obedient love (cf. 14:21), and this kind of love is rewarded with intimate spiritual blessings which the world at large can never know (14:15-17, 21)" [NCWB].

14:16 - I WILL ASK THE FATHER. "*And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever.*" Jesus now turns from answering Philip to focus on the general theme of His imminent departure from His disciples. When He returns to the Father He will make a request of Him.

ANOTHER COUNSELOR. The Greek (*allon parakleton*) means another of same kind, not a different kind. Jesus would request that the Father send another Paraclete, meaning besides Jesus, who is our Paraclete or Advocate with the Father (1John 2:1; Rom 8:26). Translators use either Comforter or Counselor to translate the Greek word *parakletos*, a word that usually means one called to stand along side another as an advisor, advocate, mediator, or intercessor. Tenney reminds us that in First John it applies to Jesus' present ministry as "the one who speaks to the Father in our defense (1 John 2:1). The Spirit's function is to represent God to the believer as Jesus did in His incarnate state" [Tenney, Merrill; THE EXPOSITOR'S BIBLE COMMENTARY, Vol 9; Zondervan, 1981, Frank Gaebelin, General Editor, p. 146, after this, TENNEY]. Robertson adds, "So the Christian has Christ as his Paraclete with the Father, the Holy Spirit as the Father's Paraclete with us (John 14:16, 26; John 15:26; John 16:7; 1Jn 2:1). For ever (*eis ton aiōna*). This the purpose (*hina*) in view and thus Jesus is to be with his people here forever (Mat 28:20)" [ATR].

There can be no doubt that Jesus is speaking of the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father would send on the Day of Pentecost to indwell believers in order to guide and empower them for the work to which He has commissioned them. This writer could not agree more with Tenney when he states that "The concept of the Holy Spirit was not new, for the Spirit of God was the active agent in creation (Gen. 1:2) [TENNEY]. I am absolutely convinced that creation was the work of the Trinity. The Father said, "Let there be"; the Son was the Agent of creation (John 1:1f); and "the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters (Gen. 1:2). Does that mean that the Holy Spirit hovered over the deep to energize it? Tenney adds that the ministry of the Holy Spirit

in the Old Testament included “Remonstrating with men who were sinners against God (Gen. 6:3). He called and empowered men to do unusual deeds (Judg. 3:10; 13:24-25; 14:6, 19; 15:14) and to prophecy (Zech. 7:12). John the Baptist predicted that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33). In His discussion of the new birth, Jesus had already spoken to Nicodemus of the work of the Holy Spirit (John 3:5)” [TENNEY, P. 146].

One of my favorite writers was Major W. Ian Thomas, whose book, *THE SAVING LIFE OF CHRIST*, Zondervan, 1961, packs more truths to ponder in 143 pages than most writers can work into a series of books. For some twenty-five years, my good friend, the late Dr. Jan Mercer, directed my study in creation, often dismantling evolutionary theories as she pointed me to the authors she trusted. Dr. Jimmy Draper once told me that when he preached on creation or evolution he would take his sermon to Dr. Mercer and ask her to check it to see if he had his facts straight. She and her husband Andy were close friends to Dr. Draper, who was their pastor before becoming the president of LifeWay Christian Resources. Andy Mercer is still a deacon at First Baptist, Euless, Texas. Andy and Jan Mercer introduced me to Major Thomas, whom they had heard in person. To set the stage for the his comments it will help to understand how he treats Egypt, the wilderness, and Canaan. Egypt was a place of suffering, bondage, and death, thus it becomes a symbol of the spiritual bondage and death to which every individual is a subject until his or her redemption. The wilderness was a fruitless, frustrating place of conflict, trials, temptation, and unfulfilled dreams. The Israelites spent forty years in the wilderness; forty meaningless, frustrating, rebellious years. Canaan was the land “flowing with milk and honey.” The Lord delivered Israel from Egypt by His mighty hand, not for them to flounder in the wilderness for forty years, but for them to live in Canaan. He never intended for them to eat manna 40 years: about 38 years of that time they should have been living on milk and honey in Canaan. To Major Ian Thomas, Egypt represented bondage and death; the wilderness represented the life in the flesh; Canaan represented the spirit filled life.

God intended for His Chosen People to enjoy the blessings of the Promise Land. He said, “You are not to do as we are doing here today; everyone [is doing] whatever seems right in his own eyes” (Deut 12:8). In the wilderness, people were not obeying the Lord, they were doing what they considered right in their own eyes. Thomas asks:

“What have you been doing since your redemption? Still what is right in your own eyes? Are you sold out for Jesus Christ? Do you still claim the right to choose your own career? You do not have that right! Do you still claim the right to choose the wife or husband you will marry? You do not have that right! Do you still claim the right to use your leisure hours as you please? You do not have that right! Do you still claim the right to spend your money as you please? You do not have that right! Do you still claim the right to choose where you will spend your vacation? You do not

have that right! Except in the wilderness! [THOMAS, 47, 48].

A few of Major Thomas' notes on Numbers 11:4-8 should justify my appreciation for his work (he used the KJV but I am using the HCSB).

"Contemptible people among them had a strong craving [for other food] . The Israelites cried again and said, "Who will feed us meat? (5) We remember the free fish we ate in Egypt, along with the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic. (6) But now our appetite is gone; there's nothing to look at but this manna!"

(7) The manna resembled coriander seed, and its appearance was like that of bdellium. (8) The people walked around and gathered [it] . They ground [it] on a pair of grinding stones or crushed [it] in a mortar, then boiled [it] in a cooking pot and shaped it into cakes. **It tasted like a pastry cooked with the finest oil"** (Num 11:4-8, bold added by this writer).

"Oil in the Bible is a beautiful picture of the Holy Spirit and, as we shall see more fully in a later chapter, the daily manna demonstrated constantly, supernaturally, the unrelenting presence of the living God in the midst of His redeemed people, but they got bored with it.

"Nothing but manna! Manna for breakfast, manna for lunch, manna for supper, and manna for breakfast again - it gets a bit tedious after a bit, doesn't it? "Manna, manna, manna," they said, "seven days a week, fifty-two weeks in the year; manna, manna - we are sick and tired of manna!" But God never intended them to eat manna for forty years. God had prepared Canaan for them, but they stayed in the wilderness and dreamed of Egypt" [THOMAS, P. 49, bold added by this writer].

SPECIAL NOTE: The NCWB offers the following comments on this section:

"The first part of John 14 focuses on God as man's habitation; the second part (beginning with verse 16) centers on man's becoming God's habitation. In the first part of the chapter, Jesus revealed his relationship with the Father because the disciples needed to see that their union with the Son meant union with the Father—for the two are one. In the second part Jesus revealed his relationship with the Spirit because his union with the Spirit is the Son's way of indwelling the believers. Jesus himself provides man with the way to access to God, and the Spirit gives God a way of access to man. Therefore, indwelling the Son equals indwelling the Father, and being indwelt by the Spirit equals being indwelt by the Son. In 14:16 Jesus said that the Father would give the disciples **another**

Comforter. The expression another Comforter (Gk., *allon parakle-ton*) means “another comforter of the same kind as the first.” This, of course, implies that Jesus was the first Comforter (see 1 John 2:1), and the Spirit would be the same kind of Comforter. Although it is difficult to reproduce in English the Greek word *parakle-tos*, it fundamentally denotes the office of one who comes to the aid of a person in need (lit., ‘one who comes to [our] side when called upon’ –from *para* [by the side] and *kle-tos* [called]). Properly speaking, this is the office of an Advocate; but this title hardly suits the context of John 14 (cf. 1 John 2:1, where the title Advocate is very fitting). Titles like Comforter, Helper, Counselor, or Consoler fit the context of John 14; but neither one by itself seems to be adequate because a Paraclete does more than comfort, help, counsel, and console—he also advocates, exhorts, and teaches” [NCWB].

14:17 - SPIRIT OF TRUTH. “*He is the Spirit of truth. The world is unable to receive Him because it doesn’t see Him or know Him. But you do know Him, because He remains with you and will be in you.*” The Holy Spirit is the “Spirit of Truth.” What a fitting title!

“A most exquisite title,” says Bengel. The Spirit, who has the truth, reveals it, by knowledge in the understanding; confers it by practical proof and taste in the will; testifies of it to others also through those to whom He has revealed it; and defends that truth, of which 1:17 speaks, *grace and truth....* The truth makes all our virtues true. Otherwise there is a kind of false knowledge, false faith, false hope, false love; but there is no such thing as false truth” [VINCENT].

Among the many attributes of Jesus is that He is the truth and when He speaks He speaks the truth (1:14,17; 8:30,45-46; 14:6). His disciples should follow the truth (4:23-24; 8:32; 18:37; 1 John 3:18-19; Rev 14:5). Satan is the father of liar and he is at war against the truth (John 8:44), which is reason enough for believers to reject liars and cling to the truth (8:55; 1 John 1:10; 2:4, 22; 5:10; Rev. 21:8, 27). Since the Counselor is the Third Person of the Trinity, He shares the attributes of the Father and the Son. Therefore, He must be “the Spirit of truth.” This is a glorious title for the Counselor.

THE WORLD. The Counselor is the truth, but “The world is unable to receive Him because it doesn’t see Him or know Him.” The ministry of the Holy Spirit...” would be directed primarily to the disciples. He would direct their decisions, counsel them continually, and remain with them forever. He would be invisible to all and unapprehended by the world at large since the world would not recognize Him” [TENNEY, p. 146].

Throughout history, there was a cure for many of the diseases which inflicted pain and

suffering and killed countless millions of people but no one knew what the cure was until the discovery of penicillin. There was a way to prevent polio but no one knew it until Jonas Salk discovered a serum that would prevent it. That the world does not receive the Paraclete is not surprising, since the world does not know Him.

The world here is the fallen world which rejects the Father, denies the Son, and defies the Holy Spirit. The fallen, rebellious world cannot see or hear the Paraclete because it is dead in sin. "Without a radio, radio waves go unnoticed. The Holy Spirit is unnoticed by the unsaved who have no spiritual life. The disciples had some experience with the Spirit (doubtless in preaching and miracle-working) but now His working would be much more intimate" [BKC].

YOU KNOW HIM. Jesus was speaking to His eleven faithful disciples when He said, "But you do know Him, because He remains with you and will be in you." "Why did Jesus say that the Holy Spirit will be (fut. tense) in them? Because in Old Testament times the Spirit came on some believers for special enablement, but after Pentecost He indwells every believer permanently (Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 12:13)" [BKC]. The world cannot know the Counselor, but true disciples know Him intimately.

WITH YOU...IN YOU. Jesus taught His followers that the Counselor "remains **with you** and will be **in you**." "The presence of the familiar Greek verb menein ('to remain or abide') signals a sense of a relationship that is not merely transitory. For example, in the core section of this Farewell Cycle the disciples are instructed emphatically to abide or stay in Jesus, the true Vine (15:4,5,7), as the basis for effective living" [NAC]. Here, however, it is the Counselor (the Holy Spirit) who abides in the disciples of the Lord.

SPECIAL NOTE: Not only does the world not know the Paraclete, the church has often been confused about His existence, His identity, His ministry, His gifts, and the time and condition under which one may be indwelt by Him. For that reason I will include a lengthy quote from a well written commentary on this Gospel:

"(T)here is confusion among some Christians concerning the statement that the Paraclete is 'with you and shall be in you' (KJV). The Greek prepositions for 'with' and 'in' at this point are para and en, and they suggest a solution to the problem of the unfortunate individualistic interpretation that is frequently espoused in Evangelical, Charismatic, and other Protestant circles. The primary meaning of para is 'alongside of,' which suggests that someone has been alongside of the disciples as a group. **The one who has been alongside of the disciples must in the context here mean Jesus**, as Westcott many years ago argued. Jesus had been their Paraclete, and in him, John states, the Spirit lived (cf. 3:14). Indeed, in Jesus the Spirit existed fully (not in measure). What, then, was to happen when Jesus departed? The Spirit was to dwell personally in the

disciples and become their guide (16:13). **This text is not about two ways the Spirit dwells 'with' and 'in' Christians like a two-stage salvation process**, interpreted in an individualistic way of thinking as some well-meaning people have proposed.

"Today the comparison between para and en might be likened to people who have experienced a living testimony by Christians or in Christian communities and have thus experienced the presence of God's Spirit alongside of them since the Spirit is in those Christians. But when they become Christians, they discover and recognize firsthand that presence of God in themselves and in their corporate Christian communities. The reason for the change is that they are no longer on the outside of the Christian reality, but they are now inside the reality of the community because the reality of the Spirit is now in them.

"Jesus' promise to the disciples was that when he departed the Spirit of Truth would come to abide in them. What a great promise! And what a great fulfillment of that promise was experienced by the early Christians and continues to be a mark of genuine Christians today (cf. 1 John 3:2,13)" [NAC, bold added by this writer].

14:18 - AS ORPHANS. *"I will not leave you as orphans; I am coming to you."* The Greek word (orphos) denotes children without parents. "In John 13:33 Jesus called the disciples teknia (little children), and so naturally the word means 'orphans' here, but the meaning may be 'helpless' (without the other Paraclete, the Holy Spirit). The only other N.T. example is in Jas 1:27 where it means 'fatherless.' I come (erchomai). Futuristic present as in verse John 14:3" [ATR]. Jesus is saying that He would show them the compassion of a parent, and, even though He was going away, He would provide for them in the future. "And even while he was absent, yet they would sustain to him still the relation of children. Though he was to die, yet he would live again; though absent in body, yet he would be present with them by his Spirit; though he was to go away to heaven, yet he would return again to them. See John 14:3" [BARNES].

Jesus knew His disciples would need this assurance. He had not redeemed them and taught them for three years to abandon them and leave them as orphans now. Sadly, following His death and burial, they behaved as orphans who had no place to turn. Following His resurrection, they would begin to understand, and on the Day of Pentecost they would understand more fully.

The Father, the Son, and the Spirit

14:19 - IN A LITTLE WHILE. *"In a little while the world will see Me no longer, but you will*

see Me. Because I live, you will live too." What does He mean by "a little while"? Some see any promise concerning the future as eschatological, and it is true that all believers will see Jesus, both during His end-time activities, and forever in Heaven. However, the context here has led some to believe He has in mind His resurrection appearances. "This coming would be but in **a little while**, during which time he would be crucified, buried, and resurrected. The world would never see him again, but they would see him in his resurrection appearances (see 20:20, 26; 21:1, 14). John 16:16-23 makes it more than clear that **the little while** indicates the span of time between Christ's death and resurrection. In resurrection, the living One would become the disciples' life because they would become united to him like branches in the vine" [NCWB, bold in the original]. What did the Lord mean when He said, **I will come to you**? Was He referring to:

"(1) His resurrection, (2) the Rapture, (3) the death of a believer, (4) a mystical experience, or (5) the Holy Spirit's coming at Pentecost? Views 1 and 5 seem best. Verse 19 favors view 1 since the disciples did see Him after His resurrection. His resurrection is also the pledge of their resurrection (**Because I live, you also will live**; cf. 1 Cor. 15:20-21) and the foundation of a new life" [BKC].

YOU WILL SEE ME. "This may also be rendered, *and ye shall live*, explaining the former statement, *ye behold me*. So Rev., in margin. This is better. John is not arguing for the dependence of their life on Christ's, but for fellowship with Christ as the ground of spiritual vision" [VINCENT].

These eleven disciples did indeed see Jesus following His resurrection, and they were not the only ones to see Him alive.

BECAUSE I LIVE. In a very short time, Jesus would be taken away from them, but they would see Him again and, He adds, "Because I live, you will live too." The greatest hope of eternal life is found in His victory over death. "This is our blessed guarantee of immortal, eternal life, the continued living of Jesus. He is the surety of a better covenant (Heb 7:22), the Risen Christ Jesus. He had said it before (John 6:57)" [ATR].

14:20 - IN THAT DAY. "In that day you will know that I am in My Father, you are in Me, and I am in you." Since Jesus does not tell us here what "day" He has in mind, the reader must trust the Holy Spirit to provide the illumination needed to discern that. Does He have in mind the day of His resurrection [NCWB]; or does He mean the day of Pentecost [BKC]? Some may infer from this either the new birth when we come to know Jesus as Savior; death when we will taken away to heaven; or to the Rapture. It is possible that Jesus has in mind both His resurrection, when they would see the risen Lord and the Day of Pentecost when they would be filled with the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity, who would affirm Him as Savior and Lord. Robertson

agrees: "The New Dispensation of the Holy Spirit, beginning with Christ's Resurrection and the Coming of the Holy Spirit at pentecost" [ATR]. After the resurrection, they saw Him and knew He was alive, but something happened on the Day of Pentecost that transformed the lives of Jesus' disciples.

"The coming of the Holy Spirit to indwell believers would bring the realization that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are united in purpose and operation and that there would be a new intimate relationship between them and believers. Furthermore, the Spirit's coming would be a confirmation of Jesus' exaltation to the Father's right hand to begin His present ministry as Advocate and Intercessor (John 15:26; Acts 2:33; 5:31-32)" [TENNEY].

YOU WILL KNOW. All one hundred, twenty believers who were praying and waiting in the upper room knew Jesus had been raised from the dead, but they were still cloistered in that room, waiting for the fulfillment of the promise Jesus had made. Following Pentecost, they broke out of that upper room, empowered to honor the Lord's commission to go into all the world and make disciples.

Peter was prepared to go back to his life as a fisherman on the Sea of Galilee before the Holy Spirit came upon him and empowered him to preach the first sermon ever preached in the full power of the Holy Spirit. The miracles of the Day of Pentecost confirmed Jesus' promises and affirmed the life and ministry of His disciples. (See this writer's comments on Chapter 2, Volume 1 in his eight volume series on Acts). Following the resurrection they would know He was alive. In fact, the disciple who wrote this was the first to believe Jesus had risen from the dead (John 20:8). Not only did they have the knowledge that Jesus was alive and that He had a mission for them, they were sufficiently empowered to carry out their mission.

I AM IN THE FATHER. Note the mutual indwelling: "I am in the Father, you are in Me, and I am in you." This is not religious double-speak, this is the reality. It is as though He is saying, after my resurrection, you "shall be more fully convinced of this important truth, that I and the Father are ONE; for I will live in you by the energy of my Spirit, and ye shall live in me by faith, love, and obedience" [CLARKE]. Every person who has a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ knows that Jesus was sent by the Father to die for our sins (John 3:16), that He returned to the Father, and that He is in the Father. When we believe in Jesus as our Savior, we are in Christ and He is in us. We may then spend the rest of our lives trying to understand the full significance of that relationship.

14:21 - THE ONE WHO HAS MY COMMANDS. *"The one who has My commands and keeps them is the one who loves Me. And the one who loves Me will be loved by My Father. I also will love him and will reveal Myself to him."* The test of the believer's relationship with

Jesus Christ is obedience to Him. It is not baptism, communion, affiliation with one particular church or denomination, charitable work, or even a claim of spiritual gifts. The test of a relationship with Him is not merely the possessing of, or committing to memory a list of rules, but obedience to His commands. The love Jesus commands is manifested when the believer obeys the His words (cf. vv. 15, 23). “The rewards of loving Him are great: (a) the Father will show His love to him (cf. v. 23), and (b) the Son will love him and show Himself to him. This passage does not teach a “works’ religion, but rather that one who believes and obeys Christ’s Word is loved by the Lord. Saving faith results in obedience (cf. ‘the obedience that comes from faith,’ Rom. 1:5)” [BKC]. Salvation is not simply a matter of mental assent.

A personal relationship with Christ demands obedience to Him, as we see in 14:15. The true believer is not one who can quote a list of commands, but the one whose obedience is rooted in his love for the Savior. To have His commands, “as Barrett states, means ‘to grasp fully with the mind.’ I would suggest that the two verbs taken together mean that the commands or the expectations of Jesus for his disciples are **fully integrated into the way those disciples live**. It is not a matter of following a few rules. It is a way of life. That is the reason the reference to ‘commands’ here is tied so closely to loving Jesus” [NAC, bold added by this writer].

THE ONE WHO LOVES ME. Robertson provides technical help that captures the deeper meaning of our Lord’s words “that He it is that loveth me (ekeinos estin ho agapôn me). Emphatic demonstrative pronoun ekeinos: ‘that is the one who loves me.’ And will manifest myself unto him (kai emphanisô autôi emauton). Future active of emphanizô, old verb from emphanês (Acts 10:40; Rom 10:20). The Unseen and Risen Christ will be a real and spiritual Presence to the obedient and loving believer” [ATR]. I must confess that when I enrolled at Mississippi College I discovered that there were a few students who caused me a certain amount of concern. If asked why they said or did something, the response I came to anticipate was, “I just love Jesus!” I stress that there were a “few” (not many) students who would say that, but that was enough to make others want to ask ourselves why we didn’t “feel” what they claimed to feel.

There were a few other students who seemed to have adopted a “God said it, I believe it, and that settles it” philosophy. In time, I discovered that those who so often declared, “I just love Jesus”, may not have loved Him any more than those who spent time with Him in prayer, studied His Word, and sought to apply it in their life and in relationships with others. I also concluded that when God says something it is settled whether I believe it or not. The only question is whether or not I am going to “get in on what He is up to.” Does the college student who attends a youth rally on Saturday night but feels no desire to be in Sunday School and worship service Sunday morning love Jesus more than the one who feels compelled to worship Him on the Lord’s Day? Does the church member who dramatically proclaims his love for the Lord on Sunday morning, but tells off-color jokes Monday, love Jesus more than the farmer or secretary

who seeks to know the Word of God so that they can obey the God of the Word more sincerely? The true test of love for Christ is obedience to Christ.

LOVED BY THE FATHER. Does this seem like a lot of repetition? It is, but it is more than that.

We cannot separate the Persons of the Trinity. To Love Jesus is to Love the Father. We come to the Father, through the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit. There is an interrelationship here that all true believers should want to comprehend, experience, and enjoy daily. Jesus said, "And the one who loves Me will be loved by My Father." The one who loves Jesus will be loved by the Father. In John 3:16 we discover the Father's love motivated Him to send His only begotten Son to die for our sins, so that we might have eternal life. The one who loves the Son obeys Him, and is loved by the Father. However, we must never understand that to mean a works based salvation. No one earns eternal life by obeying commandments.

"Because love is a mark of the relationship of the Father to the Son (3:35, etc.), it also means that a loving relationship of the believer to the Son naturally implies a loving relationship of the believer with the Father. Similarly, as the Son served and obeyed the Father (5:19; 8:28-29, etc.), the disciple's life is expected to be one of service and obedience to the Son, whose commands in turn are from the Father" [NAC].

I WILL LOVE HIM. Jesus makes this promise to all who love and obey Him: "I also will love him and will reveal Myself to him." He not only loves the obedient disciple, **He promises to reveal Himself to those who love and obey Him.** Moses asked God to show Himself to him (Exodus 33, 13, 18), and now Jesus is offering to reveal Himself to those who love Him and obey Him. "The Old Testament is replete with theophanies, but normally they are accompanied by a sense of fear, as in cases such as Gideon and Isaiah (cf. Judg 6:22; Isa 6:5). Although there is nothing mentioned concerning fear at this point, the context here is one of distress for the disciples. Also in the context of the resurrection appearance of Jesus at 20:19-23, the disciples were already in a state of terror for their lives (20:19). The presence of Jesus in these cases, therefore, is intended to calm their fears and not to raise their anxieties about encountering the power of God" [NAC].

14:22 - JUDAS (NOT ISCARIOT). "*Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, 'Lord, how is it You're going to reveal Yourself to us and not to the world?'*" Judas Iscariot had already left Jesus and the other disciples (John 13:30), and John makes a point of distinguishing this Judas from Judas Iscariot. It was a common enough name at the time, but from this time forward, no believer would want to be identified with the one who betrayed Jesus. Two apostles were named James, one of whom was John's brother. This Judas is also called Thaddaeus or Lebbaeus (Mark 3:17; Mat 10:3) and the brother (or son) of James (John 6:15; Acts 1:13). "This is the fourth interruption of the talk of Jesus (by Peter, John

13:36; by Thomas, John 14:5; by Philip, John 14:8; by Judas, John 14:22" [ATR].

14:23 - IF ANYONE LOVES ME. *Jesus answered, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word. My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him."* The hour is late and the subject is critical, so Jesus is teaching these eleven apostles something they will not fully understand until after His Resurrection, and after the coming of the Holy Spirit to bring all these things to their remembrance. While Jesus is concerned about these apostles, what He says here concerns not only them, but all who will believe in Him and love Him through their witness and through the testimony of future believers. True believers of every age will keep His word.

KEEP MY WORD. To keep His word is to obey Him. All who believe in Jesus will love Him and all who love Him will obey Him. This applied to those eleven followers who were with Him in the upper room, and it applies to every true believer of every age. From time to time, one hears that polls reveal that eighty percent of the people in America think of themselves as Christians. Most of those people have no idea what it means to be a Christian. They simply know that they live in what they consider a Christian culture. On October 12, Sean Hannity interviewed a well known news personality, a gracious lady who had written a book which Mr. Hannity appreciated. Hannity is a conservative Roman Catholic who openly states that a relationship with Jesus Christ is important to him. The author, a well known television personality, is deeply concerned that our society is becoming less civil than it was a few years back.

Hannity pointed out that there was a time when people fought duels, and the author said that today we kill each other with our words on the Internet. She mentioned the harsh names and profanity one hears today, and Hannity asked, "Do you ever use profanity?" She said, "Of course. And if anyone says they don't, I suspect that they are not telling the truth." I thought, "This is pathetic." Does she not realize that there are millions of Christians in America who love Him and obey Him. I fall short of the glory of God (Rom.3:23) every day and need to confess my sins and seek His forgiveness (1 John 1:9), but profanity is not even a temptation to me. Abstinence from profanity, vulgarity, and alcohol is not something for which I should pat myself on the back, especially since they are not a temptation. Where I am tempted is when someone deliberately misrepresents something I have said, or criticizes someone I love. I sin when I do not acknowledge my sins and confess them. True believers love Jesus Christ and obey Him. When they fail, they confess their sin and look to the Holy Spirit to give them a victory over that temptation in the future.

MAKE OUR HOME WITH HIM. This is a powerful promise and it is made, not only to these eleven men, but to all believers of every age. God loves the world enough to send His only begotten Son to die for us so that we might not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16), but here Jesus is not speaking of a general love for all those who are created in His image, but a personal relationship between the Father and all

believers. Jesus said, "My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him." Clarke summarizes it like this:

"My Father will love him - Call him his child; support, defend, and preserve him as such.

"And we will come unto him - God the Father, through his Son, will continue to pour out his choicest blessings upon his head and upon his heart:

And make our abode with him.- Will make his heart our temple, where God, the Father, Son, and Spirit, shall rest, receive homage, and dwell to eternity. Thus will I manifest myself to the believing, loving, obedient disciple, and not to the world, who will not receive the Spirit of the truth" [CLARKE].

14:24 - DOESN'T LOVE ME. *"The one who doesn't love Me will not keep My words. The word that you hear is not Mine but is from the Father who sent Me."* This is the "present active articular participle of agapaō with negative mê" [ATR]. The one who does not keep on not loving Jesus will not keep on obeying His words. Jesus is delivering His Farewell Address to His eleven faithful apostles, just before His arrest, trials, and crucifixion. He had no Teleprompter as He spoke; there were no television cameras to capture His message to His followers; and there was no recording device to record His words so that future believers might hear them. He had a better plan: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit would indwell each believer to offer protection, provisions, and a relationship. This is His message to the world, but a fallen, depraved world had rather listen to the prince of this world, Satan, than to the Son of God.

In a dark, smoke filled room, in Brussels, in 1847, another man stood before a group of followers, and after presenting his plans for a one world government, he declared, "We shall take the world!" Of course, that man was Karl Marx, and his plan called for conquest by ruthless revolution, with no regard for human life. Marx envisioned a godless, classless, stateless society which would operate under the slogan, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need." **Whereas Marx gave his followers revolution, Jesus gave His followers a revelation.** Marx gave his followers propaganda, Jesus gave His followers truth. Marx offers chaos, Jesus offers peace; Marx offers disunity, Jesus unity; Marx offers fear, Jesus offers peace that passes all understanding. Marxism offers ultimate failure, Jesus offers eternal victory.

Islam may have replaced Communism as the greatest threat to the world today, but Islam is destined to fail, and Jesus has promised to return one day to destroy all enemies. Muslims need to understand that they are the enemies of God and they will ultimately be cast into hell, without any question as to whether they are radical

Muslims or peaceful Muslims.

MY WORDS. The plural may denote “The constituent parts of the one *word*” [VINCENT]. See verse 23. “Being obedient to Jesus’ words extends beyond keeping the charges He personally delivered. Jesus equated His charges with the Father’s will. Thus, loving Jesus is demonstrated by one’s obedience to the revealed will of God, the Bible” [TENNEY]. From this, we know that the person who does not obey the Lord’s words does not love Him, “ and the Spirit of this truth has said, He who loves not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed, 1Cor. 16:22” [CLARKE].

14:25 - THESE THINGS. *“I have spoken these things to you while I remain with you.* Jesus is still responding to the question asked by Judas (not Iscariot; see vs. 22). By “these things” John means the things Jesus said during His Farewell Discourse. “While I remain with you” is, according to Vincent, strong or emphatic: “while yet remaining.” What He says to them now, and what He had been teaching them for the past three years was only partially understood by His followers, including these eleven apostles.

14:26 - THE COUNSELOR. *“But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit – the Father will send Him in My name – will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have told you.”* Why does Jesus use the word Counselor here? What is the work of a counselor. If my brother Mike or son John are in court the judge may look at him and address him as “Counselor”. Those present understand that Mike is there representing a client, or John may be there representing the state. Mike stands before the court in the place of the accused. He may do any number of things on behalf of his client, whether that client is a private individual or a major firm that is being sued. The Holy Spirit assumes the role of Counselor for those who love Jesus and obey the Father. Robertson offers the following:

“Grammatical neuter, but ‘whom’ is (the) correct translation. The Father will send the Holy Spirit (John 14:16; Luke 24:49; Acts 2:33), but so will the Son (John 15:26; John 16:7) as Jesus breathes the Holy Spirit upon the disciples (John 20:22). There is no contradiction in this relation of the Persons in the Trinity (the Procession of the Holy Spirit). Here the Holy Spirit (full title as in Mark 3:29; Mat 12:32; Luke 12:10) is identified with the Paraclete” [ATR].

TEACH YOU. If you listen to some people talk about the Holy Spirit (and it should not be translated Holy Ghost), you might expect Jesus to promise that He would give every Spirit-filled believer charismatic gifts. To some, glossalia (speaking in tongues) is proof that one is filled with the Holy Spirit. What does Jesus say the Holy Spirit would do? He will “teach you all things and remind you of everything I have told you.” He is speaking first to the eleven apostles, because there were things He had taught them which they would not understand until after the Holy Spirit came to teach them and

remind them of what Jesus had taught them while He was with them. An old and respected commentary carries the note that Jesus is saying: "If in the things which I have already spoken to you, there appear to you any obscurity, the Holy Spirit, the Advocate, Counsellor, and Instructor, will take away all your doubts, free you from all embarrassment, and give you a perfect understanding in all things: and this Spirit ye shall shortly receive" [CLARKE].

Jesus will not leave these eleven apostles without knowledge, hope, comfort, or direction. He is about to be betrayed by one of His apostles, subjected to religious trials that violate the heart of the Law (but fulfill prophecy), and civil trials that prove Roman justice could be bought or influenced by the right pressure. He was about to be brutally beaten in such a way to recall the Suffering Servant passage of Isaiah 52:12-53), and then He would die an excruciatingly painful death on the cross. In His last message to his disciples He offers hope and comfort by bringing together the Persons of the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The late Dr. H. Leo Eddleman was President of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary when I was a student there. We became good friends, in part because he and my pastor were friends. Dr. Eddleman's father had been pastor of my home church at some time in the past. Also, Dr. Eddleman and I were often in the gym together, some times playing basketball or volley ball with others, but at times just the two of us shooting baskets. He preached two revivals for me in the seventies. I would question Dr. Eddleman and then listen as the most brilliant man I knew addressed theological issues. One day he told me that there was a time when a well known pastor and highly respected preacher and writer was attending a convention when he saw a liberal professor, who invited him to visit in his hotel room. I had heard this man speak in chapel and read a number of his doctrinal books and articles, so I was surprised when Dr. Eddleman told me that the man "went into that room holding a trinitary view of God and came out subscribing to a unitary view of God."

Those who hold a unitary view of God offer interesting illustrations to support their position. They may say that God was playing the role of the Father in the Old Testament, the Son during the earthly ministry of Jesus, and the Holy Spirit from Pentecost forward. They may say, "I am the son of my father, the husband of my wife, and the father of my son. I am one person, but I relate to my family in these three ways." Or, they may point to water (H₂O), and say, "You drop the temperature below 32 degrees and you have ice. You raise the temperature to above 32 degrees and you have water. You heat it to 212 degrees and you have steam." That all sounds good, but it simply does not explain the Trinity.

Here in this one verse, Jesus mentions each Person of the Trinity: "But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit—the Father will send Him in My name..." There we have it: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Jesus does not misrepresent the truth, nor is there any deceit in Him. When He withdrew to pray to the Father, if there was no Person to whom He was

praying, Jesus was a liar, deceiving all who followed Him then, as well as all who follow Him today. God is one in essence, three in Person, and the Muslims and liberal Christians are both wrong when they accuse us of being polytheistic. The Bible reveals one God in three Persons (Blessed Trinity).

“Three things were needed for the apostles to understand Jesus’ person and mission: (1) His death had to occur. (2) He had to rise again to vindicate His claim and demonstrate His victory. (3) The **Spirit** had to come (He would be sent by **the Father... in My name**, i.e., in Jesus’ place and for Him) and interpret the meanings of Jesus’ words and deeds. The Spirit, Jesus said, **will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you**. This verse is addressed to the apostles. The context limits the ‘all things’ to the interpretation and significance of His person and work. The Spirit worked in their minds, reminding them of His teaching and giving them insight into its meaning (cf. 2:22; 7:39; 20:9)” [BKC].

Jesus, the Prince of Peace

14:27 - PEACE I LEAVE. *“Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Your heart must not be troubled or fearful.”* In the Eighth Century B. C., the Lord had revealed that one of the titles for the coming Messiah was the Prince of Peace (Is. 9:6). Jesus was certainly aware of that title, just as He was aware of the fact that He is the only One who can provide eternal peace. Vines tell us that the Greek word for peace (*eirene*) is found in every book in the New Testament except for 1 John. It was the typical greeting among the Hebrew people (Hebrew, *shalom*), as it is today.

“It describes (a) harmonious relationships between men, Matt. 10:34; Rom. 14:19; (b) between nations, Luke 14:32; Acts 12:20; Rev. 6:4; (c) friendliness, Acts 15:33; 1Cor. 16:11; Heb. 11:31; (d) freedom from molestation, Luke 11:21; Luke 19:42; Acts 9:31 (RV, ‘peace,’ AV, ‘rest’); Acts 16:36; (e) order, in the State, Acts 24:2 (RV, ‘peace,’ AV, ‘quietness’); in the churches, 1Cor. 14:33; (f) the harmonized relationships between God and man, accomplished through the gospel, Acts 10:36; Eph. 2:17” [VINES].

It was not only a word they used to greet each other, **it was their common word for good-bye**. Jesus is bidding His disciples good-bye, because He would be separated from them for only a brief period of time. “In His death Jesus provided a legacy for His disciples: **My peace I give you**. They would have ‘peace with God’ (Rom. 5:1) because their sins were forgiven and the ‘peace of God’ (Phil. 4:7) would guard their lives. **The world** is unable to **give** this kind of peace. Fear of death (Heb. 2:14-15) and fear of the

future are removed as Jesus' followers trust in Him. Thus they need not **be troubled** (cf. John 11:33; 13:21; 14:1)" [BKC, bold in the original].

THE WORLD. Jesus offers a peace the world cannot comprehend, let alone provide. All one needs to do to understand this is to study the work of the United Nations. The president of a South American country stands before delegates from the world to condemn America. The president of Iran denies that the Holocaust ever occurred, and calls for the death of all Jews. However, in 2009 he still had an audience when he addresses the UN general assembly. Some representatives did not attend, and others walked out while he was speaking. The next day, Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu, stood and thanked those who did not attend, as well as those who walked out while the president of Iran was speaking. He then addressed those who had stayed and listened to the Iranian president: "**Shame on you! Have you no shame?**" He was addressing those statements to people who hate Israel and seek to destroy all Jews. This is coming from the world's greatest attempt to provide peace in the world. That is not the kind of peace Jesus offers. He offers eternal peace, a peace that truly passes all understanding.

The world can say good-bye, but only Jesus can offer eternal peace. Only He can remove the sin that alienates sinners from the Father.

"Christ bestowed this precious gift of peace on his disciples *before* his death and resurrection rather than after it so that they would have no cause to become unduly discouraged during the difficult hours that lay ahead. Though the faith of the disciples faltered during Christ's ordeal of suffering and death (Matt. 26:56, 69-75; Luke 24:11; John 20:24, 25), his divine gift of peace sustained them in a truly supernatural way during the ensuing years of post-resurrection persecution (Acts 4:5-35; 5:26-42; 1 Pet. 1:2-8)" [NCWB].

TROUBLED OR FEARFUL. Many Bible students are more familiar with the KJV, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid", whereas the HCSB has, "Your heart must not be troubled or fearful." This is added to the prohibition in John 14:1. Jesus does not want His followers to be crippled by fear that robs one of the peace He gives.

14:28 - I AM GOING. "*You have heard Me tell you, 'I am going away and I am coming to you.'* If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I." Jesus had tried to prepare His disciples for His death, burial, and resurrection before this night ("You have heard Me tell you"), but now, in His Farewell Discourse, He seeks again to prepare them for what was about to happen. Here, he adds, "If you loved me you would have rejoiced that I am going to the Father." If those disciples had been "more mature in their love for Jesus, they would have been glad for His departure. But their love was still selfish at this point. Jesus was in His humiliation on earth, but by going back to the Father He would be exalted in glory (cf. 13:31-32)

and He will come back (cf. 14:3)" [NCWB].

THE FATHER IS GREATER THAN I. In time, the Holy Spirit would remind them of what He had taught them before this night: "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all" (John 10:29). How, we may ask, can the Father be greater than the Son without violating what we are taught about the Trinity? "Arians and Jehovah's Witnesses argue from the statement, **The Father is greater than I**, that Jesus is a lesser god. But this would make Jesus a created being or would lead to polytheism, both of which are clearly unbiblical. The Father and the Son share the same essence (cf. 1:1-2; 14:9; 20:28). The Father and the Son are 'One' in purpose and essence (10:30). **Thus the Father is greater in office or glory than the Son was in His humiliation**" [NCWB, bold added by this writer].

4:29 - I HAVE TOLD YOU. *"I have told you now before it happens so that when it does happen you may believe."* It is not enough to say that Jesus leaves nothing to chance; Jesus leaves nothing to human reason, intuition, or exploration. He reveals divine truth, and even though this may not be the primary lesson many would glean from this verse, the thoughtful student may infer it. Beyond this passage, true believers are aware of the importance of God's revelation of Himself within us and before us: in the mind and heart, through the Scripture, and through creation (Romans 1). The Holy Spirit enables us to believe as He reveals the Father through the Son.

THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE. For those eleven disciples with whom Jesus spoke, He is being very careful to inform them of His coming death, and resurrection, as well as the coming of the Holy Spirit. "Fulfilled prophecy is a great comfort and support to believers (cf. Isa. 46:8-10). Jesus had predicted His death and resurrection many times (e.g., Mark 8:31-32; 9:31). When this came to pass, after their initial shock, it would greatly help their faith" [BKC]. He did not want His death to be a stumbling-block to them. He had spoken of his death before this, but now that the time has come, He seeks to prepare them so that when it happened they may believe, "that as I could predict it so clearly, and so circumstantially, so all the good which I have promised shall be the result may be confidently expected by you; and that your sorrow, if not entirely removed, may at least be much mitigated" [CLARKE].

14:30 - MUCH LONGER. *"I will not talk with you much longer, because the ruler of the world is coming. He has no power over Me."* He had very little time left to talk with them, since His death would occur the next day. College and university students understand what it means to cram for an examination, and often stay up half the night, or even all night, to cram for the test. Jesus is speaking with His disciples, not in a sense of urgency or panic, but in total control of his faculties, knowing the human mind as only He could know it. They would recall these words and know in the future that He had faithfully prepared them. Even then, they would not understand what He is saying until the Holy Spirit came to help them recall these words and to the right application of them.

THE RULER OF THE WORLD. The ruler of this world is Satan, who is seen here as “approaching him to try him in his sufferings, and it is commonly supposed that no small part of the pain endured in the garden of Gethsemane was from some dreadful conflict with the great enemy of man. See Luke 22:53: ‘This is your hour and the power of darkness” [BKC]. The ruler (prince in the KJV) is a real person who harbors intense hatred for Jesus and will do everything in his power to keep Jesus from accomplishing His mission. Satan has supernatural power, but his power is limited and when Jesus died on the cross, He delivered a death blow to the devil (He crushed the head of the serpent, Gen. 3). Satan roams the world, seeking those whom he might seduce in order to keep them from trusting Jesus, but once an individual has received Jesus as Savior and Lord, the worst Satan can do is to try to destroy their testimony, tempt them to compromise so that they lose the joy of their salvation and never come to understand the importance of sanctification (which is enough to make one’s life miserable).

It helps to know that Jesus did not fear Satan. He had no reason to fear him. The cross, which Satan must have thought was his final victory, was his greatest defeat. Jesus would be raised from the dead on the third day and Satan’s hopes would be dashed on the Rock that is Christ. Satan knew these facts intellectually, but the experiential knowledge necessary for salvation is totally beyond him. Satan could quote Scripture to Jesus, and perhaps because of the His incarnation, he thought he could keep Him from accomplishing His mission. Satan was pulling out all stops in His efforts to prevent Jesus from accomplishing His purpose, because for Him to accomplish His purpose would mean that the Seed of the woman would grind into the dust of the earth the head of the serpent (Gen. 3). “And yet Satan had **no hold on** Jesus. Sin leads to death (Rom. 5:12, 21a; 6:16), and sin and death give Satan a hold over people (cf. Heb. 2:14-15; Rev. 12:10). But since Jesus is sinless, Satan cannot claim Him for his kingdom of darkness. Satan thought Jesus’ death was a victory for him, but actually it was Jesus’ victory over Satan (John 16:11; Col. 2:15)” [BKC].

“There is in me no principle or feeling that accords with his, and nothing, therefore, by which he can prevail. Temptation has only power because there are some principles in us which accord with the designs of the tempter, and which may be excited by presenting corresponding objects till our virtue be overcome. Where there is no such propensity, temptation has no power. As the principles of Jesus were wholly on the side of virtue, the meaning here may be that, though he had the natural appetites of man, his virtue was so supreme that Satan ‘had nothing in him’ which could constitute any danger that he would be led into sin, and that there was no fear of the result of the conflict before him” [BARNES].

14:31 - ON THE CONTRARY. *“On the contrary, [I am going away] so that the world may know that I love the Father. Just as the Father commanded Me, so I do. ‘Get up; let’s leave this*

place." Satan had tried from the beginning to destroy the human Jesus, and having failed both in Jesus' birth, His life, and His teaching, he would now use the cross to try to prevent Jesus from accomplishing His purpose. However, in His death and resurrection, Jesus was about accomplish the greatest victory the world has ever seen.

THAT THE WORLD MAY KNOW. As Robertson notes, this is a purpose clause ("so that the world may know that I love the Father." The reason Jesus was so sure of victory was because He loves the Father, and because He did exactly what the Father commanded Him to do (see John 10:18; 12:49-50). This obedience included His being "obedient to death" (Phil. 2:8).

LET'S LEAVE. Jesus suddenly says, "Get up; let's leave this place" He and His disciples had eaten the last supper together in the Upper Room. He is now ready to go to the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives. Some believe Jesus spoke the words we find in John 15-17 while they were still in the Upper Room [BKC]. Robertson disagrees: "Apparently the group arose and walked out into the night and the rest of the talk (chs. 15 and 16) and prayer (ch. 17) was in the shadows on the way to Gethsemane" [ATR]. When we read Chapters 15 and 16 it seems logical to conclude that Jesus was speaking to them on the way the Gethsemane. Clarke agrees:

"Calmet supposes that Christ, having rendered thanks to God, and sung the usual hymn, Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26; rose from the table, left the city, and went towards the garden of Olives, or garden of Gethsemane, on the road to which, a part of the following discourse was delivered. It was now about midnight, and the moon was almost full, it being the 14th day of her age, about the time in which the Jewish passover was to be slain" [CLARKE].

SUMMARY STATE TO CHAPTER 14: The author of the material in the NAC offers this summary at the end of this chapter:

"As this section draws to a close, the foretelling power of Jesus is once again evidenced as it was in 13:19. In both cases the purpose of Jesus' foreknowledge is identified as a means to aid the disciples in believing. In the earlier case it was to help the disciples believe that Jesus was really the ego eimi, the self-designation of God. Here there was no need to add that objective because the entire section had been focused on the identity of Jesus in his relationship to the Father and to the Spirit/Paraclete.

"So now that the farewell shalom had been issued with the promise of a new peace from Jesus and the time for speaking with them, as Jesus indicated, was coming to a conclusion, there still remained a matter that needed to be addressed. That matter involved the enemy, 'the prince of

this world.' He was the Satan, the adversary, the dragon, the devil (Rev 20:2), the one who had been behind the death plot against Jesus and who had gained control of Judas Iscariot when Jesus gave Judas the so-called sop or bread crust of freedom (John 13:21,26-27,30). This prince of the world, Satan, would inspire the persecution of Christians (Rev 2:13) and instigate false belief patterns (1 Tim 5:15). But he is also the same one concerning whom Jesus had earlier announced that he would be defeated by the arrival of that dirge like beckoning hour of the crucifixion (John 12:23,31).

"Being prince of the world, the world was bound to follow him in crucifying Jesus. But as Paul in his incisive critique of the Corinthian partisan Christians commented, if the servant rulers of the world would have realized what they were doing, they would never have crucified Jesus, 'the Lord of glory' (1 Cor 2:8)" [NAC].

The same writer draws on his own background as an attorney and offers the following explanation for the closing comments in this chapter:

"As a former lawyer, I would be tempted to say that the case argument stood complete except that John needed to reassert the mission rationale for this entire discussion. That rationale involved the fundamental reason for the coming of Jesus. Clearly the great Johannine theme is that God loved the world (3:16), and here it is once again indicated that the world was Jesus' missiological concern. Even though he was one with God in making the world and in spite of the fact that it did not recognize him, he nevertheless came to enlighten that same world (1:9-10). Accordingly, for the people of the world to understand his mission, they would have to realize the servant love that the Son has for the Father. Not only are Father and Son united in the acts of creation but they also are fully united in the work of redemption and in sending the Paraclete to be the companion of those who know the great love of God. 'So the argument of the case is complete'" [NAC].

We might add that this part of the Farewell Address is finished. Now we may turn to a new section as Jesus says, "Get up; let's leave this place." That statement tells us that Jesus continued to speak to His disciples after leaving the upper room. Some have suggested that He might have used an object lesson to teach His disciples the message He delivered to them in Chapter 15. There would have been sufficient object lessons throughout the land to use as He proclaimed Himself to be the true vine, and His disciples to be fruit producing branches.

CHAPTER 15

The Vine and the Branches

The author of the material in THE NEW AMERICAN COMMENTARY provides us with an introduction to this chapter that merits attention.

“As I indicated in the opening statement to the Farewell Cycle, this section forms the core of the literary bull’s-eye that contains the crucial center of the third cycle of the Gospel. This core section is composed of three parts: (1) a mashal portraying Jesus as the Vine and the disciples as branches (15:1-11); (2) a set of thesis statements concerning the primary responsibility that the friends/disciples of Jesus have, all wrapped in an inclusio of the love command (15:12-17); and (3) another significant Johannine saddle or linking text dealing with the reaction of the world to Jesus and the disciples (15:18-25; cf. other such saddle texts at 2:12,23-25; 5:30; 6:14-15; 10:40-42; and see on the subject my introduction to chap. 12, which also functions as a saddle). The saddle in this section (15:18-25) links the Vine mashal and the love inclusio on discipleship (15:1-17) with the next major section on the Paraclete (15:26-16:15) by providing the framework of suffering and persecution, which required God’s divine resource of the Holy Spirit for the disciples” [NAC].

15:1 - THE TRUE VINE. *“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vineyard keeper.”* No serious Bible student can miss the significance of the I Am sayings of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel. I will list them again here, even though the first six are listed in comments on 14:6:

1. I am the bread of life - 6:35
2. I am the light of the world - 8:12
3. I am the door of the sheep - 10:7
4. I am the good shepherd - 10:11
5. I am the resurrection and life - 11:25
6. I am the way, the truth, and the life - 14:6
7. I am the true vine - 15:1

By “true vine” Jesus means He is the genuine vine. He is not a vine, He is **the** vine. He may have meant that He is the true vine, in contrast to Israel which had become a degenerate vine. It is doubtful that, at a time like this, Jesus would have been comparing Himself to a literal grape vine they may have passed on the way to the Mount of Olives, unless He knew that these disciples would have understood the

metaphor. The Lord told Jeremiah to proclaim to the Chosen People, "I planted you, a choice vine from the very best seed. How then could you turn into a degenerate, foreign vine?" (Jer 2:21). In contrast to the degenerate vine what was Israel, Jesus is the true (genuine) vine. "Israel was God's choice vine on which he lavished care and attention (Ps. 80:8; Isa. 5:1-7; Jer. 2:21; 6:9; Ezek. 15; 17:5-10; 19:10-14; Hosea 10:1; 14:8). He longed for fruit, but the vine (Israel) became degenerate and produced rotten fruit. Therefore Jesus, as 'the true Vine,' fulfills what God had intended for Israel [NCWB].

Since they had just eaten the Last Supper, the metaphor of the vine is especially fitting. As Robertson notes, "Jesus uses various metaphors to illustrate himself and his work (the light, John 8:12; the door, John 10:7; the shepherd, John 10:11; the vine, John 15:1). The vine was common in Palestine. See Ps 80:8. 'On the Maccabean coinage Israel was represented by a vine' (Dods). Jesus is the genuine Messianic vine" [ATR]. Barnes notes that

"Some have supposed that this discourse was delivered in the room where the Lord's Supper was instituted, and that, as they had made use of wine, Jesus took occasion from that to say that he was the true vine, and to intimate that his blood was the real wine that was to give strength to the soul. Others have supposed that it was delivered in the temple, the entrance to which was adorned with a golden vine (Josephus), and that Jesus took occasion thence to say that he was the true vine; but it is most probable that it was spoken while they were going from the paschal supper to the Mount of Olives. Whether it was suggested by the sight of vines by the way, or by the wine of which they had just partaken, cannot now be determined. The comparison was frequent among Jews, for Palestine abounded in vineyards, and the illustration was very striking. Thus the Jewish people are compared to a vine which God had planted, Isa 5:1-7 Ps 80:8-16 Joe 1:7 Jer 2:21 Eze 19:10. When Jesus says he was the true vine, perhaps allusion is had to Jer 2:21. The word true, here, is used in the sense of real, genuine. He really and truly gives what is emblematically represented by a vine. The point of the comparison or the meaning of the figure is this: A vine yields proper juice and nourishment to all the branches, whether these are large or small. All the nourishment of each branch and tendril passes through the main stalk, or the vine, that springs from the earth. So Jesus is the source of all real strength and grace to his disciples. He is their leader and teacher, and imparts to them, as they need, grace and strength to bear the fruits of holiness" [BARNES].

MY FATHER. Jesus is the true (genuine) vine, His Father is the "vineyard keeper." The farmer, or owner of the vineyard, is called the husbandman, vineyard keeper, or vine dresser. His work was vital to the harvest and to the health and productivity of the vines. The Father's work is essential to the fulfillment of the ministry of Jesus, the true

vine.

Jesus has spent a lot of time instructing His disciples as to His relationship to the Father. He continues that theme here. "In fulfillment of Psalm 80, the Son of man and of God's right hand is the vine planted by the Father. The whole race of Israel sprang from the patriarch Israel; the new race of God's people is here viewed as originating from Christ, organically united to him, as branches emanating from the vine—the entire economy being under the care of the Father, the Vine dresser. The union between the vine and the branches is characterized by the expressions 'in me' and 'in you' [BKC].

15:2 - EVERY BRANCH. *"Every branch in Me that does not produce fruit He removes, and He prunes every branch that produces fruit so that it will produce more fruit."* The vine dresser carefully examines every branch to be sure it is healthy and productive. Any branch that is not producing fruit is still taking nourishment from the primary vine, so it must be removed to allow productive branches to receive the nutrients that will enable them to produce more fruit and better fruit. The vine dresser labored diligently, giving his full attention to the vines and to the branches. If some branches were producing grapes of less quality than other branches they would be removed along with those branches that were not producing any fruit. The vine dresser wanted his vines to produce an abundance of fruit and he wanted those grapes to be of the highest quality.

That the Father (the vineyard keeper, vs. 1) desires fruit is mentioned eight times in this chapter (see verses 2, 4, 5, 8, 16).

"A progression is seen: **fruit** (v. 2), **more fruitful** (v. 2), and **'much fruit'** (vv. 5, 8). The fruit which God desired from Israel was loving obedience, righteousness, and justice (Isa. 5:1-7). **Every branch in Me that** does not bear fruit **He cuts off**. The phrase 'in Me' does not mean the same thing as Paul's words 'in Christ.' Here it is part of the metaphor of the Vine and seems to mean, *'every person who professes to be My disciple (a 'branch') is not necessarily a true follower.'* A branch **that bears no** fruit is obviously dead. Therefore, like Judas, it is cut off... Every year in Palestine gardeners prune their vines. They cut off the dead wood which has no life in it and trim the living branches so that their yield will be greater" [NCWB, bold in the original, italics added by this writer].

The modern peach grower will go through his orchard and inspect the young peaches. He will pull off any peach that does not appear to be developing as it should. He pulls off diseased peaches, malformed peaches, and undersized peaches. He doesn't stop there. He also pulls off some peaches when there is overcrowding. Everything is done to assure a bountiful harvest. Every winter pecan growers prune limbs that are broken, diseased, or appear to him to be less productive than others. The vine dresser inspected

his vines carefully to maintain a healthy vineyard and fruitful vines. Any branch that is not productive is removed from the vine, and every branch that is productive is pruned of suckers and undersized grapes so that there will be a better harvest. Some times, more is not better. Late grapes may be undersized when harvested if the vine dresser does remove some of them in order to let others develop into large, sweet, juicy grapes.

15:3 - YOU ARE ALREADY CLEAN. *"You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you."* Jesus' disciples, except for Judas, were already clean, and Judas had been pruned, or cut off from the rest. He does not say that His disciples were perfect, but that they are clean. They have been redeemed. Every born-again believer is "clean" in that he or she has been cleansed by the blood of Christ, but every true Christian needs to confess sin and receive forgiveness (cleansing) everyday. John would soon be inspired to write that if we confess our sins, He will "forgive our sins and cleans us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Paul wrote, "For all have sinned (past tense), and come (present tense) short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23).

BECAUSE OF THE WORD. The disciples are clean, Jesus says, "because of the word I have spoken to you." Jesus seems to have "moved to a different level of abstraction. Purging, like pruning, is a spiritual cleansing, a taking away of the filth. Verse 3 indicates that the disciples were already clean (*katharoi*) on account of the Lord's word; this purging serves as a pruning, and pruning will cause fruit-bearing" [NCWB].

15:4 - REMAIN IN ME. *"Remain in Me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in Me."* The Greek construction rendered, "Remain in me" is the aorist active imperative of *meno*. We are commanded to remain in Christ. "The only way to continue 'clean' (pruned) and to bear fruit is to maintain vital spiritual connexion with Christ (the vine). Judas is gone and Satan will sift the rest of them like wheat (Luke 22:31). Blind complacency is a peril to the preacher" [ATR]. Jesus tells the disciples to remain in Him, and He would remain in them. The metaphor is consistent throughout this section, but we must remember that those who are cleansed or redeemed remain in Him, not through their own strength or persistence, but by his mighty hand (John 10:28-30).

A BRANCH. Jesus states the obvious: "a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine." I grew up on a cotton farm in the Mississippi Delta, and while in college and seminary I worked part time for the U. S. Department of Agriculture. I had an opportunity to observe both fruit trees and nut producing trees (including pecans and walnuts), as well as cotton and soybean plants. I have seen limbs with fruit, or nuts that had been broken off the tree, but I have never seen a branch reattach itself to the tree, and I have never seen a branch that had been broken off produce fruit. The same principle applies to cotton and soybean (row crops). I have seen limbs with mature fruit broken from a plant when the fruit did ripen, but the fruit had been produced while attached to the body of the tree.

Each one of these disciples is a branch who has been grafted into the true vine, and as such, they were “charged to *remain* in union with Christ, not to *attain* this union. The Greek for ‘abide’ is an imperative (*meinate*). Here it is constative; it encompasses the entire act of abiding and views it as a single event (Robertson). Then, in the following sentences, the Lord constantly uses present tense verbs to describe the continual activity involved in maintaining an organic union with Christ” [NCWB].

REMAIN IN ME. As a branch cannot produce fruit unless it remains attached to the vine, Jesus says, “so neither can you unless you remain in Me.” This metaphor has an application that is easy to follow. Our fruitfulness is the result of the life of Christ being reproduced in us. Our part is to remain in Him. The word remain is an important word in John’s theology, occurring 11 times in this chapter, 40 times in the entire Gospel, and 27 times in John’s epistles. So, what does it mean to remain? “It can mean, first, to accept Jesus as Savior (cf. :54, 56). Second, it can mean to continue or persevere in believing (8:31 [‘hold’ is remain]; 1 John 2:19, 24). Third, it can also mean believing, loving obedience (John 15:9-10). Without faith, no life of God will come to anyone. Without the life of God, no real fruit can be produced: Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in Me” [BKC].

15:5 - I AM THE VINE. *“I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in Me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without Me.”* If the Lord’s words seem redundant here (15:1, 5), let us remind ourselves of the repetition we see elsewhere in the Gospel (The Good Shepherd passage in Chapter 10, for one example; and the emphasis on the relationship between the Father and the Son for another). Jesus was obviously not as concerned about redundancy as He was in communicating divine truth to His disciples. The primary point is that Jesus is the vine, His disciples are the branches, and the branches are totally dependent upon the vine for both life and fruit.

REMAINS IN ME. As long as the branches remain in Jesus and He in them, they will produce much fruit. In the previous verse, the branches produce fruit, here they produce “much fruit.” Jesus now explains **the relationship** between the vine and the branches which produces “much fruit”. It is **the relationship in which the one who remains in Him, and He in them**, produces an abundant harvest. When I was doing part-time work with the USDA (Statistical Reporting Service) years ago, we were instructed to not to use the word “surplus”. In its place, we were instructed to say “abundant harvest.” Surplus sounds like waste and the government can’t have that!

The term “abundant harvest” seems appropriate here, but it cannot apply to branches that are cut off intentionally, or broken off accidentally. Those branches are gathered up and burned. How do we know we will not fall off the vine, or be broken from it? How do we know we will not accidentally fall from the vine? How do we know no one else will remove us? Jesus has already answered those questions for us. He said, “I give

them eternal life, and they will never perish—ever! No one will snatch them out of My hand” (John 10:28). Once we are in Jesus we cannot lose our relationship accidentally or intentionally, nor can any other force remove us. We are secure in Him. Remember that a metaphor is not intended to cover all arguments. Many people who are secure in Him are not bearing fruit for Him - but those immediate disciples to whom He was speaking did produce “much fruit”, and all who walk with Him in the Spirit will produce an abundant harvest.

Those who choose to walk in the flesh bear very little fruit. Those who think they are in Him when they are not, as well as those who pretend to be in Him when they know they are not bear no fruit at all. Paul wrote, “... For Satan himself is disguised as an angel of light” (2 Cor 11:14). If Satan, the prince of this world, masquerades as “an angel of light” we must expect those who are of the world to do the same. The New World “Translation” of the Bible (the “version” produced by the Jehovah’s Witnesses) states in the Prologue to John that the Word is “a” god! The harvest the bear is of the devil. The Mormons advertise that they will give the King James Version of the Bible to anyone who calls the number they provide. They are looking for names and addresses. Be sure two young men will show up at your door, riding bicycles and wearing a dress shirt and tie. They have do not understand the King James Version (or any translation) of the Bible, or they would no longer be Mormons! There are countless members of mainline churches who cannot explain to you how they became a born again Christian. Those who have never been born again by grace, through faith, plus nothing, are not in the True Vine, nor have they ever been.

One other thought should be considered here. Is it possible for us to infer here that our being in Jesus hints at salvation, and Christ in us at sanctification? That is not clearly taught here, but this does not contradict that idea. The fruitful individual is one who had been regenerated and is being conformed to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29f), as the Lord intends. Is that the object of sanctification?

YOU CAN DO NOTHING. Because of the repetition in these verses we may fail to stop and reflect on the significance of some very important statements. When Jesus says “you can do nothing without Me”, He is setting down a principle that cannot be altered by religious performance, ceremony, ritual, or denominational confession. One may make a great show of religion, demonstrate administrative skills, speak eloquently, manage a program, and build buildings, and still not bear genuine fruit. It is Christ in you who produces fruit. I once heard a very well known pastor say, “I have to go. I have souls to save!” I found that statement disturbing, but then I realized that the man knew that he did not save souls, he was only the messenger. I would never use that expression because I know that only Jesus can save any soul. I once read that Dwight L. Moody was walking down a street when a drunk in a gutter called out to him, “I am one of your converts.” Moody, if in fact it was Moody, said, “You look like something I converted.”

Anyone should understand that it is impossible for a branch that is cut off from the vine to bear fruit. It should be just as obvious to the true believer that it is just as impossible for the individual who is cut off from the Lord to bear spiritual fruit. Jesus seems to be determined to see that true disciples understand a central issue of discipleship, which point

“is an age-old issue of identity that goes back to the story of the Garden of Eden, wherein the humans were tempted by the desire to become like God (Gen 3:5). The evangelist obviously did not want there to be any confusion over the issue of identity. The branches were not to be confused with the Vine, and the Vine was to be regarded as very different from the branches. The use of the Greek ego eimi (‘I am’) is undoubtedly purposeful here and is certainly to be contrasted with the pronoun hymeis (‘you,’ pl.). **Jesus, the one who at 20:28 will be confessed as Lord and God, is clearly to be considered as very different in essence from the disciples who are here being addressed.** This identity contrast is often overlooked by commentators and preachers” [NAC, bold added by this writer].

The point Jesus is making is that “Each branch that continues to remain in the vine will keep on bearing fruit. Some commentators say the fruit is new converts (cf. 15:6), and others, ‘the fruit of the Spirit’ (Gal. 5:22). Andrew Murray said, “The essential idea of fruit is that it is the silent, natural, restful produce of our inner life.’ The fruit is the practical expression of the indwelling divine life. This expression in our lives should attract people to Christ and thus make them new members of God’s vine” [NCWB]. Sadly, some evangelists have confused nickels and noses with that “restful produce of our inner life” of which Andrew Murray spoke.

Any believer who has spent much time with Andrew Murray’s book, WITH CHRIST IN THE SCHOOL OF PRAYER, senses that pastors, as well as college and seminary professors need to take a break and ask the Lord to teach us what He had taught Andrew Murray. That relationship is available to every believer, but may well be reserved for those in whom the Beatitudes have become a reality. A friend once joked, “I used to have a problem with pride, but now I’m the most humble person I know.” Another asked, “Have you heard about my new book? I call it, My Humility and How I Obtained It.” Andrew Murray actually did write a book on humility. His was a fruitful life, and his work is still bearing today.

15:6 - REMAIN IN ME. *“If anyone does not remain in Me, he is thrown aside like a branch and he withers. They gather them, throw them into the fire, and they are burned.”* Jesus is the true vine and needless to say, any branch that is attached to a counterfeit vine will bear no fruit. Any branch that is not attached to the true vine will wither and die, and a

dead branch produces no fruit, and the green branch that is cut away by the vine dresser will wither and die. The vine dresser throws all those dead branches on a brush pile and burns them. They are fruitless and barren, and thus fit for nothing. Those who are a part of some cult that identifies itself as Christian may see growth in numbers, build buildings, advertise on television, and enjoy what the world calls success. Sadly, they do not bear fruit, but they do not even know it.

When former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney was running for the office of president of the United States, another candidate, former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee, asked if anyone had questioned him about what the Mormon church taught about the relationship between Jesus and Satan in eternity past. That question led many in the media to condemn Governor Huckabee, and it may have cost him the election. Governor Romney is one of the most impressive men I have seen in interviews. He is brilliant, he has a great family, he is a moral man, he is articulate, and well informed, until it comes to his church. He was convinced that Mormonism is simply another Christian denomination. If Mormons spent enough time reading the King James Version of the Bible which they keep offering to anyone who calls their toll free number it would be the end of the Mormon church.

Jesus has said, "I am the vine; you are the branches." He then said, "The one who remains in Me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without Me." For months, General Dutch Shoffner (retired three star) and I have discussed this chapter, both in person and via e-mail. In one of his earlier notes on the subject He wrote:

"I find the 15th chapter of John so powerful and crystal clear, that it would be hard for someone to not realize the consequences if they are not connected to the stump of Jesus. From my limited perspective with what little study I have made, it does not get much clearer than John 15. And it is presented matter-of-factly without being prejudicial." Observing the vintners in Germany was an interesting experience for a boy who grew up in Oklahoma. Some of the stumps in the vineyards were hundreds of years old. The new stock was grafted into the old stump. It was the stump that gave the life to the branches and character to the wine. We do not have sufficient history in the US of A to really appreciate how clear the illustration is in John 15. Some of the vineyards I saw in Germany were over 750 years old. The message is very clear to a vintner."

More recently, General Shoffner has sent excerpts from his research that is of interest to me. It is believed that early nomads used green limbs in the walls or sides of their homes, and some trees that are easy to root actually crossed with other branches to produce new trees. The pruning of grape vines probably goes back to the days of Noah, but according to some studies, the Greeks and Romans began the grafting of branches

to a vine (to the rootstock) as early as 500 B. C. Some believe ancient Jews did not graft branches from one vine to another. Their authority, it is claimed, is found in Leviticus 19:19: "You are to keep My statutes. You must not crossbreed two different kinds of your livestock, sow your fields with two kinds of seed, or put on a garment made of two kinds of material" (Lev 19:19). It is said that some scribes claimed that if this law applied to livestock it would apply to plants.

According to a Wikipedia article on the History of Grafting, the Mishna related grafting to marriage. They said that you would not marry a scholar to one who was illiterate. I infer from what I have read that the orthodox Jewish tradition holds that marriage to anyone who was not a Jew would have violated this restriction. That article claims that the Talmud looked at Psalm 128:3: "Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house, your sons, like young olive trees around your table", and concluded that a note from the Talmud renders this, "Just like olive trees around your table, that are never grafted, so your offspring will be flawless."

The same article tells us that in the late 1800s there was an infestation of insects that threatened to wipe out the vineyards and the wine business of France. In time, they discovered that the insects did not have the same effect on the rootstock in vineyards in eastern part of America. The French, however, believed their grapes were superior to those grown in America, so they brought in the rootstock and then grafted their favorite vines to the rootstock they imported from this country. The rootstock provided the nutrients and protection against disease, but the vine that was grafted into it determined the fruit.

If we remain in Jesus Christ we will bear fruit for Him. The word rendered "remain" may be, and often is translated "abide", or dwell. This does not teach that one may remain in Him only so long as it serves his purpose (as John 10:28 clearly reveals), but that those who are at home in Jesus Christ bear fruit as a result of that union.

15:7 - IF YOU REMAIN. *"If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you want and it will be done for you."* Jesus follows a negative statement with a positive statement as He continues the theme of remaining (dwelling) in Him, only now He adds something new: "ask whatever you want and it will be done for you." This is one of the most powerful statements in the Bible on the Lord's promise to answer the prayers of those who abide in Him. He makes the same promise in 14:13-14; 15:16; and 16:23-24. "The way of stating the 'asking' is phrased differently in the previous chapter, but the actual implications are quite similar. Here it is unnecessary for a repetition of the discussion on asking 'in my name' because if one is abiding in Jesus, it would be virtually impossible to pray in any other way than that of representing the nature of Jesus" [NAC].

ASK...IT WILL BE DONE. All true prayer is based on faith in Jesus Christ and on His words remaining (abiding) in believer. "Christ's words condition and control such a

believer's mind so that his prayers conform to the Father's will. Since his prayer is in accord with God's will, the results are certain—it will be given you (cf. 1 John 5:14-15)" [BKC]. This is a strong promise and we can only embrace it by faith. One may pray a prayer and then look for results without seeing any visible sign that the prayer has been answered. Praying in Jesus' name is trusting Him to respond in a manner that honors Him and serves His purpose. It is not my will but His will that counts. When that is the desired of the heart the believer trusts that Jesus will answer in a way that serves His purpose. Andrew Murray stressed that the proof that you have worked a math problem correctly is in the result, and proof that you have prayed aright is in the answer. The secret to answered prayer is not in a magic formula, "in Jesus' Name", but in our remaining in Him and in His remaining in us."

Previously, Jesus has given the condition that prayer that the Father answers is prayer in the name of the Son. Here, the condition is that we remain or dwell in Him. There is no conflict in this, and no inconsistency. One's name in the Bible denotes one's nature and character, hence the person. The one who dwells in Jesus prays in keeping with His nature and character, thus, in Him.

15:8 - MY FATHER IS GLORIFIED. *"My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be My disciples."* Fulfilled prayers "bring glory to the Father because, like Jesus, His disciples are doing the heavenly Father's will (cf. 'Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth' ([Matt. 6:10])" [BKC]." To glorify The Father is to give honor to Him. "It is the honor of the husbandman to have good, strong, vigorous vines, plentifully laden with fruit: so it is the honor of God to have strong, vigorous, holy children, entirely freed from sin, and perfectly filled with his love" [CLARKE].

PRODUCE MUCH FRUIT. The branch that does not produce fruit is pruned from the vine (vs. 1). Those who remain in Him produce "much fruit" (vs. 5), and here we read that those who remain in Him, and His Word remains in them (vs. 7) will bear "much fruit." What, however, does He mean by fruit? Some evangelists enthusiastically proclaim, "The fruit of a Christian is another Christian." Paul wrote, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law" (Gal 5:22-23). There is no contradiction here. The one who bears the fruit of the Spirit is the one who bears quality fruit and an abundance of fruit. The fruitful Christian is the "soul conscious" Christian, the one who seeks the salvation of the lost. A lost person may observe a Christian who is bearing the fruit of the Spirit and desire a similar life, but no one is attracted to Christ by hypocrisy, pride, arrogance, or self-righteousness.

It is when we obey the Great Commission in humble obedience to Jesus Christ, manifesting the spirit and character of our Lord that people will be attracted to Him. I heard one highly respected denominational leader at a state convention deal with the problem of the termination of a lot of pastors by their church. He said, "I had a gift for

reaching **men** for Lord, and in seven years if you reach men, it will be your church, and you won't have to worry about that (that meaning termination)." That may well be true, but that should not be one's primary motive in reaching men, women, or young people for the Lord.

PROVE TO BE MY DISCIPLES. The proof of the pudding is in the tasting, and the proof that we abide in Him is the production of fruit. It is a godly life, a spirit-filled life. Some polls show that as many as eighty percent of the people in American think of themselves as Christians, but Jesus has stated clearly that many are called but few are chosen. He also said that the way to heaven is straight and narrow, and few find it. So proof of discipleship is more than a profession of faith. It is a profession of faith supported by a Christ-like life. The Christian life is a holy life.

"It is worthy of remark that the Saviour says that those who bear MUCH fruit are they who are his disciples. The design and tendency of his religion is to excite men to do much good, and to call forth all their strength, and time, and talents in the work for which the Saviour laid down his life. Nor should anyone take comfort in the belief that he is a Christian who does not aim to do much good, and who does not devote to God all that he has in an honest effort to glorify his name, and to benefit a dying world. The apostles obeyed this command of the Saviour, and went forth preaching the gospel everywhere, and aiming to bring all men to the knowledge of the truth; and it is this spirit only, manifested in a proper manner, which can constitute any certain evidence of piety" [BARNES].

QUESTION: Why is it that some Christians may scratch their head and wonder when and how their prayers are answered. They pray for guidance in business and the business fails. They pray for guidance in an investment and lose money. They pray for their children and get a call from the principal's office. They pray for their church and it splits over the carpet. They pray for America and see the bills introduced that would use their tax money to fund abortions in states where "same sex" marriages are legal. They pray for health and have a heart attack. We pray for victory in the war against Islamic terrorists and elect a president whose answer is to change the term, "war on terror" to "man made disaster." How can we explain that?

I have prayed similar prayers and wondered about the results. What do we do when that happens? For one thing, we adopt the attitude of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego faced with the fiery furnace: "Nebuchadnezzar, we don't need to give you an answer to this question. If the God we serve exists, then He can rescue us from the furnace of blazing fire, and He can rescue us from the power of you, the king. But even if He does not rescue us, we want you as king to know that we will not serve your gods or worship the gold statue you set up" (Dan 3:16-18). I don't usually look for "catchy" titles for sermons, but the last time I preached on this passage I jokingly announced that

I had chosen the title, "How to Be Cool in a Fiery Furnace". In all things we must adopt the attitude of the "three Hebrew children": However the Lord answers our prayer we will continue to call on Him.

On November 18, 2009, I had a thought that led me to begin making notes, something one would expect of a pastor. As I began thinking about that thought I realized that the Lord was leading to expand my notes. It was then that realized that I wanted to share it with some friends, so I copied it to a new e-mail message and sent it out. I have never received a more favorable response from a message I have sent to a similar number of friends, both from pastors and lay persons. Here is the message I sent:

"When I had a heart attack over 13 years ago, I made a number of discoveries, some of which promised permanent changes in my life. One change would be in my diet. "Low sodium diet", whatever that meant. Then someone showed up in my room with breakfast and a little package of herbs that would take the place of salt on my eggs and grits. It not only took the place of salt, the aroma took my appetite.

For years, we have looked for chips and crackers with the label **Low Sodium** on the package or box. We also check frozen foods, canned good, and about anything we buy.

A few months ago I discovered that the Wheat Thins I have bought for several years no longer have the words **Low Sodium** on the front. It now reads, **Hint of Salt**.

It dawned on me today that this has an application for the church today. Jesus said, 'You are the salt of the earth.' Salt preserves foods and adds flavor.

"Dr. Mike Minnix asked me several years ago to send him a sample of the verse by verse commentaries I have written. After reading them he asked me to send him everything I had. He explained why he had asked for a sample: 'I see a lot of fluff out there.' HINT OF SALT?

An elderly lady said, 'I have never had a pastor who taught me anything about the Bible.' HINT OF SALT?

A teachers said, 'Our worst behavior problems comes from students who are active in the popular youth groups at two area churches.' HINT OF SALT?

A man at a new store in the area said to me this morning, 'I have been busy with this store and I another business. To be perfectly honest, I haven't been in church in three years.' HINT OF SALT?

A church member said, 'The Smiths won't be in church Sunday. Girl Scout rally.' HINT OF SALT?

A young man heard someone singing a well-known hymn (like Amazing Grace, or How Great Thou Art) on my car radio and asked, "What's that? I mean, what kind of music is that?" HINT OF SALT - or salt substitute?

A pastor search committee admitted that they didn't know enough about Baptist doctrines to talk with a prospective pastor. HINT OF SALT?

A lot of church members who come to Sunday School and worship services on Sunday morning never show up on Sunday evening. HINT OF SALT.

A group of ladies talked with me about their favorite verses from the Bible. Their boss later said they talked about their immorality when you left! Hint of Salt.

Some church members let their children watch questionable programs on TV. HINT OF SALT?

We hear about professing Christians who watch pornographic movies and view porn on the Internet. HINT OF SALT?

Arrogant evangelist, complacent pastor, apathetic members? HINT OF SALT! Or Salt Substitute.

Is it possible that the influence of the church in America is in decline because when the world looks at the church today they only see a hint of salt?

A pianist told my son Mark that she would only play one more song at a wedding if the family paid her another one hundred dollars. HINT OF SALT?"

More to the point, what does the Lord see when He looks at His church today? HINT OF SALT? Or does He see a pure and holy church? With a HINT OF SALT we celebrate Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter much like our unsaved neighbors, but if we are

the salt of the earth we reach out to our neighbors as He commands in the Great Commission.

Revealing His Love

15:9 - AS THE FATHER. *“As the Father has loved me, I have also loved you. Remain in My love.”* The Father has demonstrated His love for us by sending His only begotten Son to die for us (John 3:16). The Son has demonstrated His love for the Father through His obedience to the will of the Father. Here, He equates His love for His disciples to that of the Father. To tie this section to 17:1-8, and to the following section, one writer points to the “intimate fruit-bearing relationship between the Father, the Son, and the believer (15:1-8) is based on a continuum of loving trust (15:9-15). If we as Christians love Christ the way the Father and the Son love each other, we will experience the daily joy of obedience to our Lord (15:9-11)” [NCWB].

REMAIN IN MY LOVE. The Greek word (*meinate*) is the first aorist active imperative of *meno*, which means that this is a command, not a suggestion or an invitation. Vincent notes that this is “literally, *in the love, that which is mine*. Not only the love of the disciple for Christ, nor the love of Christ for the disciple, but the *Christ-principle* of love which includes both. See the same form of expression in *the joy that is mine*, v. 11; 3:29; 17:13; *the judgment* (5:30; 8:16); *the commandments* (14:15); *peace*, 14:27” [VINCENT]. The genuine disciple should take note of what Jesus is saying in this passage. First, He is the true vine; second, His disciple are branches; and third, the disciple is commanded to remain in His love. Does this mean that the disciple decides whether or not he will maintain a relationship with Christ? Does this mean that a disciple may decide to sever his relationship with Jesus Christ? After all, a literal branch may be broken or become diseased, which might lead the vine dresser to cut it off and burn it. Does this imply that it possible for a true Christian to lose his salvation?

Any time this question comes to mind, remember that Jesus has declared, “I give them eternal life, and **they will never perish—ever! No one will snatch them out of My hand.** My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all. No one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. The Father and I are one” (John 10:28-30, bold added by this writer). No true believer can lose his salvation unintentionally, intentionally, or otherwise. One may fall away from sound doctrine, and instead of growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18) a genuine disciple may see his faith and his love for the Lord atrophy, either because of a sin of commission or a sin of omission.

To fail to make a firm commitment to remain in a fruitful relationship with Jesus is a sin of omission. Jesus commands His disciples to remain in Him, but how does one do that? Does this imply that the believer is the one who determines the ultimate outcome

of his relationship with the Lord? No, Jesus has answered that question in John 10:28. There are many children in this world who love their earthly parents, but tend to neglect them from time to time. When I was a young pastor someone called to tell me that an active member had lost her husband. When I arrived at the home I saw the wife and her sons. I noticed that one son, a heavy weight amateur boxer, was grieving deeply. I made an effort to speak with him about his father, but instead of showing simple grief his guilt betrayed him. He said, "I didn't have a good relationship with my father."

Now, as I look back, I remember when it dawned on me that there are times when the ones who weep uncontrollably at a parent's funeral may well be the one who has neglected his or her parent most. When help was needed to care for parents, the wayward son or daughter may have abandoned them to the care of siblings, but now they are acutely aware of their relationship. What, then, is Jesus commanding here? He is commanding us to remain in a fruitful relationship with Him. As far as our security is concerned, He does all the saving and He does all the keeping, but we have some relational decisions to make. In Pauline terms, some walk in the Spirit while others walk in the flesh.

SUMMARY: The New American Commentary offers the following comments on this verse:

"In this verse the focus turns again so that the theme of abiding merges into the crucial Johannine theme of love. Here some of the elements of the circle of love are enunciated. They are as follows: the Father loves the Son (cf. 3:35; 17:23), and the Son obediently loves the Father (cf. 10:17; 14:31); the Son loves his followers, and they are to love and obey him (cf. 13:34; 14:15,23); loving and obeying the Son means being loved by the Father (cf. 14:21,23; 17:23); being loved by the Son also implies loving one another (cf. 13:34; 15:12,17); God not only loves the disciples but loves the world and gave his Son for its people (cf. 3:16); but many in the world love darkness and do not do the will of God (cf. 3:19; 14:24). In his first epistle John carries the theme of love further and insists that the disciple must not love in words only but in actual deeds of love (cf. 1 John 3:18) and that hating one's brother is actually an indication of not loving God (cf. 3:15) because love is the sign of knowing God (cf. 4:7). Bearing fruit therefore means loving others as God loves them and giving witness to the world. Such fruit bearing is possible only by abiding in Jesus, the Vine" [NAC].

15:10 - KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS. *"If you keep My commands you will remain in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commands and remain in His love."* First, let us consider the technical (grammatical) details in this verse. "If you keep My commandments" is the conclusion of the third class condition: you may or you may not. Those who do

keep His commandments, He says, “will remain in My love.” Remain is the future tense. Those who remain in His love are those who have made a commitment to keep His commandments. Jesus sets Himself before us as the supreme example by keeping the Father’s commandments and remaining in His love. The Lord is returning now to the important theme of loving Him and obeying Him. In 14:15 it was said that

“loving Jesus would result in obeying or keeping (terese) his commands (entolas, cf. 14:21; and ‘word,’ logos, 14:23). But in the present text the order is completely reversed. Accordingly, here obeying/keeping his commands results in abiding in Jesus’ love. The only natural conclusion from these virtually reversible statements, therefore, is **that they are so interrelated and inseparable that you cannot have one without the other**. Moreover, once again the relationship of the disciple to Jesus in terms of obedience and love is modeled on the relationship of the Son to the Father” [NAC, bold added by this writer].

Jesus represents Himself as the supreme example for us: “just as I have kept My Father’s commands and remain in His love.” I infer from this verse that Jesus anticipates the sanctification of all born again believer who are filled with the Holy Spirit, Whom He promised to send to indwell and empower His saints. How, some may ask, can that have anything to do with sanctification? Paul wrote to the Philippians, “Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5, KJV). When we begin to think like Jesus we will begin to act like Jesus. In his letter to the Romans, Paul wrote, “For those He foreknew He also predestined **to be conformed to the image of His Son**,” (Rom. 8:29, bold added by this writer). There are many other verses that deal with sanctification, but where is there a better explanation of sanctification than this: being “conformed to the image” of Jesus Christ?

I heard of one preacher who was trying to explain what he meant by sanctification. He pointed out that some people think of sanctification only in terms of speaking in tongues, ecstatic experiences, and emotional expression. This preacher said, “Sanctification doesn’t have as much to do with how high you jump as it does with how straight you walk when you come back down.” I value the intellectual, emotional, and volitional aspects of sanctification, but I still like the way that old preacher explained it.

15:11 - MY JOY MAY BE IN YOU. *“I have spoken these things to you so that My joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.”* When I was having my commentary on Philippians, *UNDEFEATED: Finding Peace in a World Full of Trouble*, published, I had wanted the subtitle to be, *The Epistle of Joy*, but when I mentioned that to the publisher he said, “Joy is a woman’s word. Men won’t buy it.” I decided to go with the word “Peace” rather than “Joy”, but while I believe the publisher may be right, I find that a little sad. If the use of the word joy has become a gender issue, both sexes may be the losers. For

years I was more comfortable using the word “happy”, but would have been uncomfortable saying, “Your little girl is such a JOY!” I had reversed the working definitions of the two words. The word “happy” has its roots in the old English idea of happenstance, hence, one’s circumstances may determine whether or not he or she is happy at any given moment. We are happy when our team wins the ball game, but become irritable upon leaving the stadium when we get stuck in the traffic, or when someone cuts in front of us. Joy is deep and abiding. Jesus offers His disciples a joy that cannot be taken away by illness, injury, loss of a parent or child, or the loss of a job.

I watched my mother suffer for eight years after she lost her voice while teaching her Sunday School class, and was soon diagnosed with a brain tumor. She listened to Adrian Rogers on Television, prayed for friends, witnessed to lost people, and when asked about her health she would smile and say, “I’m fine.” At the visitation the night before her funeral, my young son Mark was standing by her casket when a woman walked up and stood there for some time, looking into the casket. After a few minutes, he heard her say, “She loved me when I was good and she love me when I was bad.”

I was pastor of a mission church for a while when I was in seminary. I received a call from someone who told me that Emerson and Martha Strode were at the hospital with their little four year old son Paul, who had gone in for a tonsillectomy. Following the surgery they were never able to revive Paul. When I arrived at the hospital with Becky, to whom I was engaged at the time, I wondered what I would say. As we walked toward them in the hall of the clinic, they looked at me and smiled. Emerson Strode said, “We prayed for a son and God gave us one. He didn’t tell us how long we could keep him. We are going to thank Him for the time we had with Paul.” I have never forgotten that moment. I was looking into the eyes of parents whose joy in the Lord could not be shaken by even the most trying of circumstances. Two years earlier, I had visited a man in another town whose four year old son had been killed when he ran in front of a car. He refused to go back to church because, “God could have saved him if He had wanted to.” That man was bereft of both joy and happiness.

YOUR JOY MAY BECOME COMPLETE. What Jesus offers to His disciples is a “permanent absolute joy” [ATR]. He places His joy in believers without measure, and “those who love Him and obey Him (15:9-10) will be filled with abiding joy. He is using a metaphor ‘taken from a vessel, into which water or any other thing is poured, till it is full to the brim. The religion of Christ expels all misery from the hearts of those who receive it in its fullness. It was to drive wretchedness out of the world that Jesus came into it” [CLARKE].

15:12 - MY COMMAND. “*This is My command: love one another as I have loved you.*” Jesus has already said, “I give you a new commandment: love one another. Just as I have loved you, you must also love one another” (John 13:34). He repeats that command here. Let me quote Robertson here to be sure we understand exactly what it is that Jesus

commands: "That ye love one another (*hina agapâte allélous*). Non-final use of *hina*, introducing a subject clause in apposition with *entolê* (commandment) and the present active subjunctive of *agapaô*, 'that ye keep on loving one another' [ATR]. Let us understand that Jesus is not suggesting that we love one another, He is commanding it! How, we may ask, can anyone command one to love another person? That is a good question because those who translate the from Greek to English must translate four different Greek words with our word "love". There is a Greek word for romantic love, and you had better not try to command this kind of love! If you tell a teenage boy he must love a certain young lady and you can be sure that is that last girl he will want to love. Try telling a teenage girl to fall in love with the boy next door and see what happens.

There is another word for love within the family. Filial love (love for son or daughter, or family love) should not require a commanded. However, there are many people who do not love their family members as they should. Sometimes love for family members may wane because of fear, jealousy, envy, neglect, or greed. I was able to lead a man in his seventies to accept Jesus Christ as his Savior a number of years ago. He told me his brother was on staff at the state headquarters for a major denomination, but when their parents became ill and needed care, the brother left all the work and cost to him. For some, it seems a lot easier to thank the brother or sister who cares for their parents than it is to become personally involved with their care. Some siblings accept responsibility for their parents without resenting those who are not involved. Others resent those who do not "do their part". Command them to love those siblings and see what happens.

Another kind of love in the New Testament is *phileo*, which we might think of as brotherly love. Philadelphia is the City of Brotherly Love. This kind of love is cultivated between friends. Imagine a new family coming into a worship service and a deacon commands, "You will be best friends with that family right over there. Their best friends recently moved away and you are going to take their place." They meet the family and find that they have nothing in common with them. In fact, the more they are around them, the less they want to be around them. Instead, they begin to develop a close relationship with another family. You cannot command this kind of love.

The kind of love Jesus commands is *agapao* (*agape*). Vines explains that "Christian love, whether exercised toward the brethren, or toward men generally, is not an impulse from the feelings, it does not always run with the natural inclinations, nor does it spend itself only upon those for whom some affinity is discovered. Love seeks the welfare of all, Rom. 15:2, and works no ill to any, Rom. 13:8-10; love seeks opportunity to do good to 'all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith,' Gal. 6:10. See further 1Cor. 13 and Col. 3:12-14" [VINES].

You may not command romantic love, family love, or neighborly love, but Jesus can and does command the *agapao* kind of love. How is that possible? It is because *agapao*

is a mental attitude kind of love. It is not primarily emotional. It can be commanded because it can be directed with the mind and the will. Ideally, the Christian will come to love others intellectually, volitionally, and emotionally, but agapao is not driven by feelings. One may not seek to help a drunk because they enjoy dealing with drunks, but they do so because the Holy Spirit convicts him or her that they should offer their help and support. As they work with that person, compassion may replace the initial repulsion. The agapao kind of love is not foolish, and the believer should not be easily deceived by everyone who asks for help. We must focus on those whose needs are genuine, but there is no reason to continually support those who are obviously trying to con others out of their hard earned money.

AS I HAVE LOVED YOU. His immediate disciples had walked with him for three years. He had come to them, walking on the surface of a raging sea, He has calmed the waters when the disciples feared they would drown in a storm on the Sea of Galilee. He had taught them and loved them. He is our example in everything we do, including loving one another. He is specifically talking of loving fellow believers here. We should love lost people, but we should have a special love for other believers that transcends race, denominational differences, class, and gender. A word of warning is in order any time Christian men and women begin working together. You must clearly distinguish between the agapao kind of love and an attraction to a member of the opposite sex. Godly love does not lead to lust, but it will help avoid temptation.

15:13 - GREATER LOVE. *"No one has greater love than this, that someone would lay down his life for his friends."* This is one of the most profound statements ever made on the subject of loving one another. "For the phrase see John 10:11 of the good shepherd. Cf. 1Jn 3:16; Rom 5:7. For his friends (*huper tôn philôn autou*). 'In behalf of his friends' and so 'in place of his friends.' 'Self-sacrifice is the high-water mark of love' (Dods)" [ATR]. Jesus has already commanded His disciples, those present and all who would follow Him in the future to love one another. The First Great Commandment is to love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. The Second Great Commandment is to love your neighbor as yourself.

When I was a young pastor, I invited an older pastor I had known and loved for a number of years to preach a revival in the church I served. One evening, my friend asked how a Christian can love someone whose behavior you abhor. His answer was, "You can't, but Christ in you can." I was disturbed by his answer. I knew this pastor loved others, served others, and preached sound doctrine. He was an outstanding preacher and this statement seemed out of character for him. No doubt, there are others who might agree with his answer, but Jesus did not say, "let me love the people you don't like." He commanded us to love our neighbors, and adds here that there is no greater love than the love which leads one to lay down his life for his friends. Jesus enables us to love those people as He loves them, but he never absolves us of the responsibility to love them.

I looked Tommy in the face at the Mississippi State Penitentiary and saw a child of God who was telling me he wanted to serve God when he got out. He was serving a life sentence for brutally beating a young pregnant woman to death while in a drunken stupor. Tommy deserved his life sentence, but the Tommy who wanted to serve the Lord was not the same Tommy who had killed that young woman. He was where he should have been. He owed a debt to society, but I looked him in the eye and knew he loved me and I loved him. It had been my privilege to witness to Tommy and see him ask the Lord for forgiveness. He had receive Jesus Christ as Savior. I still have letters he sent to me.

Tommy had committed second degree murder and received life. Billy had married a woman, taken out a life insurance policy on her and murdered two weeks later. It was a cold blooded, premeditated murder. I saw Billy ask for forgiveness and receive Jesus Christ as His Savior in the Hinds County Jail in Jackson, Mississippi, and months later I preached at his camp at Parchman, not knowing that he would be in that camp. He filed by me as the prisoners left the mess hall and asked, "Were you in Jackson last May?" I told him I had been. He asked, "Did you come to the Hinds County Jail?" I assured him I did, every Thursday afternoon. He held up his new testament so I could see where I had written a note in it before giving it to him in the Hinds County Jail. He said, "I couldn't see you, but I remember your voice." Billy's eyes and smile revealed a joy within that still amazes me. I was able to go into the outer cell to talk with Tommy, but had to talk to Billy through a fine wire mesh. I could see the love Billy had for the Lord, and for me. He deserved to pay the price for his crime, but Jesus had set him free for eternity. I talked with Billy's brother a few years later and learned that they let him spent ten days every Christmas with his brother and his family.

Jesus did not tell me to let Him love Tommy and Billy, He told me to love them. However, if I had not been indwelt by His Spirit I don't see how I could have loved those men enough to sincerely seek their salvation. How can we love someone who behavior and attitude you hate? How can the Lord command us to love them? It helps to remember that agape' is not an emotional love, it is a mental attitude love that can be directed with the mind and the will. If you obey the Lord with the mind and volition He will take care of the emotions.

The greatest expression, and the greatest example of love for others is, and will forever be that of Jesus, who was about to lay down His life for those eleven disciples in a matter of hours. He was also giving His life for me. On September 29, 2006, "Navy Petty Officer, PO2 (Petty Officer, Second Class) EOD2 (Explosive Ordnance Disposal, Second Class) Mike Monsoor, was Awarded The Congressional Medal Of Honor posthumously for giving his life in Iraq, "As he jumped on, and covered with his body, a live hand grenade, that was accidentally dropped by a Navy Seal, saving the lives of a large group of Navy Seals that was passing by!" The military trains and motivates

men and women to make such decisions, and those who make the supreme sacrifice may not even be Christians. That Jesus would train Christians soldiers to love one another should be expected.

Jesus says here that the greatest expression of love is to lay one's life down for others. Most Christians are not called on to die for others, but all born-again believers are expected to give themselves to, and for others. What motivates a missionary to commit himself and his family to live in some remote part of the world in order to share the Gospel with people who do not know Him? What motivates a pastor to faithfully serve a church that does not appreciate him, or a church in which there are people who are constantly working against him? What motivates Christians to continue for years to reach out to neighbors whose behavior is reprehensible? It is the love Jesus commands, a love we can express, not because of emotions, but because the Lord commands it and enables us to express it. If we are not willing to obey Him in everyday matters we are not likely to love anyone enough to lay down our life for another person.

15:14 - MY FRIENDS. *"You are My friends if you do what I command you."* What Christian is there who does not want Jesus as a friend? Perhaps you know someone who boasts of having friends in high places. Every born again believer is given permission to call his Creator, "Father", and he or she is given the privilege of calling the One who stands at the right hand of the Father, "friend". It doesn't get any better than this!

The person who does not desire friends needs counseling. I was walking with my little eight year old granddaughter Abigail from the softball field when she stopped and said, I need to tell my friend something. The little girl was with family members and hardly noticed Abigail. She never mentioned the incident but it was obvious that she desired the teammate's friendship. Later, at a Sunday School picnic she met two little girls her age and my son told me it was interesting to watch all three of them reaching out to each other to see if they had made new friends.

One must not expect too much of friends, for even close friends may let us down at times. Jesus has never let down a friend. He has never betrayed a friend. He has never neglected a friend. Joseph Scriven understood that when he wrote the words to the hymn, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus".

IF YOU DO WHAT I COMMAND YOU. Vincent writes, "Of several words for *command* in the New Testament, this one is always used of giving a *specific injunction* or *precept*. The kindred noun..., means *an order, a charge, a precept* and hence is used of a separate precept of the law as distinguished from the law as a whole. See Matthew 22:36, 38. It is, however, **sometimes used of the whole body of the moral precepts of Christianity**" [VINCENT, bold added by this writer].

Those who place their faith and trust in Jesus will know Him as Savior. Those who

meet the condition set down here can sing, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus". This is the condition of the third class and it is the present active subjunctive, which carries the force of "If you keep on doing what I command you", you will be My friend. The one who only obeys Jesus when the mood hits him is not a true friend to Him. Jesus has never been deceived by anyone, saved or lost. The true friend of Jesus is the person who consistently seeks to honor Him and makes every effort to obey His commands. This is "Just a different way of saying what is in verse John 15:10. Obedience to Christ's commands is a prerequisite to discipleship and fellowship (spiritual friendship with Christ). He repeats it in the Great Commission (Mat 28:20, eneteilamên, I commanded) with the very word used here (entellomai, I command)" [ATR].

15:15 - SLAVES. *"I do not call you slaves anymore, because a slave doesn't know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have heard from My Father."* Jesus had previously called them slaves ("A slave is not greater than his master", John 13:16). He had said, "You call Me Teacher and Lord. This is well said, for I am" (John 13:13). Paul speaks of believers as slaves (doulos is translated "slave" in the HCSB, while some prefer servant or bond servant). As I have mentioned in elsewhere, when I was elected to the board of trustees for LifeWay Christian Resources I assigned to the Broadman and Holman Committee. Dr. Ed Blum, the General Editor for the HCSB had flown in from Dallas to meet with out committee. We voted to complete the translation and publish it. At lunch that day, Dr. Jimmy Draper brought Dr. Blum to my table to answer a question a trustee from Miami had asked. The man wanted to know why they translated the word "slave" instead of "servant". Dr. Blum explained that the HCSB is a word for word translation and the Greek word doulos means slave.

There were slaves everywhere throughout the Roman Empire. There were bond-servants among the Israelites, and had been throughout their history, as there were bond-servants in America. One pastor tried to explain to me that the word bond-servant means that we serve Jesus voluntarily, but that is not the case. Dr. Blum explained to the trustee, "When you are saved you belong to Jesus Christ. You are bought with a price." That price is the blood of our Savior. So Paul is right in using the word slave, a metaphor anyone in the Roman Empire could appreciate. There were slaves who were given responsible positions with a family. Some were highly respected because they were obedient and loyal to their master. No true Christian should resent being called a slave to Christ.

A SLAVE DOESN'T KNOW. A master didn't consult with his slaves before making decisions. He made the decision and gave the slave his orders. I grew up in the Mississippi Delta where many farms had renters, share-croppers, and/or hired hands. The renter rented so many acres and as long as he paid his rent he made the decisions as to what crop he would plant, when he would plant it, and when he would begin to harvest that crop, which was mostly cotton at the time. The share-cropper would agree

up front to plant a certain acreage to cotton, but he might reserve some land for corn or pasture. He paid the land owner a percentage of his crop rather than a given dollar figure. The field hand showed up for work and the owner assigned him his responsibilities for the day, or he might tell him that he would be cultivating the cotton in a certain field with a tractor, but when he finished plowing that field, he should take a hoe and go “chop” cotton. The field hand did as he was told. If he did not like the arrangement he could look for another job, as many did when they moved to places like Detroit to look for better paying jobs.

I HAVE CALLED YOU FRIENDS. The verb is the perfect active indicative, denoting a permanent state on honor and dignity. He explains, “I have made known to you everything I have heard from My Father.” Until now, he had not made know everything to them. Now He can use the title “friends” because He is making these things known to them. Paul, who wrote 13 of the epistles (some would add Hebrews), and in those epistles he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to call believers slaves of Jesus Christ. We are His slaves in that we belong to Him and obey His commands, but we also enjoy a much more honored position with our Lord. He calls us His friends.

15:16 - YOU DID NOT CHOOSE ME. *“You did not choose Me, but I chose you. I appointed you that you should go out and produce fruit and that your fruit should remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He will give you.”* Vincent stresses that the pronoun here is emphatic: “You” did not choose Me.” No one chooses Jesus Christ. One may choose to worship some false god, but no one chooses Jesus. He chooses us, but not against our will (whosoever will, let him come”). The Greek word may be translated choose or elect. The meaning is the same. “Jesus then reminded them that contrary to the common practice of disciples picking a teacher, Jesus had chosen them (cf. John 15:19)” [BKC].

“Though in a subordinate sense human choice is involved in conversion (John 1:12, 13, 47-49; 2:11, 23; 3:15-18, 33-36; 4:42, 50; 5:24, 40; Rev. 22:17; etc.), in the final analysis it is Christ (as well as the Father and the Holy Spirit) who chose us (cf. John 1:43; 6:37, 40, 44-46, 65, 70; 2 Thess. 2:13; etc.). We were chosen not merely to escape hell, but to bear the beautiful fruit of Christian character and witness (cf. 15:8; Mark 4:20; Gal. 5:22, 23). If we fulfill this Christ-abiding and fruit-bearing destiny to which we were called, we will enjoy the special blessing of regularly answered prayer (cf. 15:7; John 14:13, 14; 16:23, 24; 1 John 5:14, 15)” [NCWB].

I CHOSE YOU. A business man and his partner own a number of health services, including nursing homes and other health services. His partner was surprised when he told some Muslim doctors who worked for them that they should become Christians, especially during the Christmas season. Otherwise, he reasoned with them, “It is not fair to your children.” That story is amusing until you realize that they worship a false

god, while he worships no god at all. One may choose to follow a false god, or one may choose to follow no god, but no one becomes a Christian because he chooses Jesus. He chooses us.

If brilliant and gifted scholars have not settled the election debate by now, I certainly do not fool myself into thinking that I can settle it here. Many years ago a Bible professor said that here on earth election and human responsibility hang before us like two ropes, but in heaven we will see that they are woven into one strand. It is sufficient for me to know that I did not choose Christ, He chose me. When I was lying flat on my back for two weeks following a major heart attack, there were many times when I was alone with my Savior, and during one of those times I had experienced the most profound realization that I did not choose Him, He chose me. Others will explain that He regenerated me so I would know I needed to repent. For now, I will let John 3:16 settle it for me, but the following comments from the NAC may help:

“The disciples’ acquisition of this knowledge from the Father, however, is not based on earning the right to such understanding. Obedience to Jesus by his friends is expected (15:14), but they were not the authors or initiators of this discipleship to Jesus. They did not choose him. He both ‘chose’ and ‘appointed’/set apart them for a purpose. It is absolutely crucial whenever one discusses the subject of election to realize that **election is not about privilege but purpose**. ‘As early as the summons of Abram to leave his home and receive the blessing of God, to receive a new name and become a great nation, that blessing was accompanied by a divine purpose--to be a blessing to all the people of the earth (Gen 12:2-3). Similarly, the promise of the presence of Jesus in the conclusion of Matthew is intimately united with the command/commission to go and disciple the world (Matt 28:18-20). Likewise, in the Johannine imparting of the Spirit by Jesus there is a purposeful task assigned to the disciples--namely, communicating the forgiveness of sins (John 20:22-23). So here also the ‘choosing’ and ‘appointing’ of the disciples is not merely for some privilege of being selected to an elite group but for the specific purpose of bearing fruit” [NAC, bold added by this writer].

Let us be sure we understand what Jesus is saying here. He said, “I chose you.” No one “finds” God. Any god you can find, is not worth having! No one discovers god; no one discerns god, and no one will, through some mystical experience, discover that he is a god. Satan would like for everyone to believe that. Jesus will explain in Chapter 16 the role of the Holy Spirit in convicting us of sin and convincing us of the righteousness that is available to us in Jesus Christ.

I APPOINTED YOU. Jesus had chosen them as His disciples, and, He adds, He “appointed them that you should go out and produce fruit.” What does He mean by

producing fruit? I have heard some evangelists say, “The fruit of a Christian is another Christian.” But is that what Jesus says? Soul winning is the work of a Christian, and no one is obedient to the Lord if he does not actively seek to reach the lost with the Gospel of Christ. Soul winning must never be minimized, but is that what Jesus means here by producing fruit? The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to identify the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit:

“Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, moral impurity, promiscuity, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambitions, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and anything similar, about which I tell you in advance—as I told you before—that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal 5:19-21).

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (Gal 5:22-24).

Nothing dishonors Jesus Christ more than an arrogant evangelist, an envious or complacent pastor, or a church member who spawns dissensions. An acquaintance once told me that the young lady who rededicated her life to the Lord and witnessing to neighbors every year when the church had its annual revival, had been seen in a situation that left no doubt in his mind that she was immoral. He insisted that he was one of the witnesses. The professing Christian who does the works of the flesh does not honor the Lord. The committed Christian who produces the fruit of the Spirit will certainly be a more effective soul winner than the one who does not bear fruit for the Lord. There is no conflict between bearing the fruit of the Spirit and doing the work of an evangelist. There is no true evangelist who does not produce the fruit of the Spirit.

THAT YOUR FRUIT SHOULD REMAIN. Robertson explains that there are “three present active subjunctives with *hina* (purpose clause) to emphasize continuance (*hupagête*, keep on going, *pherête*, keep on bearing fruit, *menêi*, keep on abiding), not a mere spurt, but permanent growth and fruit-bearing” [ATR].

WHATEVER YOU ASK. The purpose of His choosing was so that they might produce “fruit that remains”, lasting fruit. Friendship with Christ involves the obligation to love one another. “Whatever you ask” may be a challenge to the person who has prayed for years for a son to be delivered from bondage to alcohol or drugs, or for a daughter to be delivered from cancer. The family facing financial ruin may pray without seeing immediate relief. What exactly is Jesus promising here? Is it possible that within this context He is saying that if we ask for whatever is needed to carry out His command

will be provided so we will be equipped to serve Him? He has promised to provide for His followers and instructs us to pray for our daily bread, but we should never take our eyes off the mission to which He has appointed us.

A distant relative once told me that she didn't believe God answered all prayer "because I have prayed for years that God would show me the face of the man who killed my brother." She never explained that to me, but since I had never known her to harbor ill will toward others I wondered if she did accept the identity of the man who was accused of causing the accident that claimed her brother's life. I can understand why the Lord would not answer a prayer that would kindle hate, however.

IN MY NAME. Jesus promised, "whatever you ask the Father in My name, He will give you." In the Bible, one's name stood for the person. To pray in Jesus' name means to pray in Jesus Himself, to pray a prayer that honors His name, His nature, and His character. I would recommend the book, *WITH CHRIST IN THE SCHOOL OF PRAYER*, by Andrew Murray, to anyone who would pursue this subject. I believe it was in that book that he taught that the proof that one has worked a math problem correctly is shown by the answer, and proof that we have prayed aright is seen in the answer. The answer may not be what we expect at times, but we need to be spiritually alert to His answers when we pray.

15:17 - LOVE ONE ANOTHER. *"This is what I command you: love one another."* This is not the first time these disciples have heard this (see John 13:34; 15:12). Had they honored this command? No. In fact, "This very night the disciples had been guilty of jealousy and wrangling (Luke 22:24; John 13:5, 15)" [ATR]. There is limited space in the Bible and the Holy Spirit is the One who determined what would be included in it. Therefore, when we see Jesus repeating Himself as He does in this command, we should take it seriously. Furthermore, this command was given, not only for those eleven men, but for all believers of all ages.

SUMMARY: The author of the material in the NAC offers this comment on this section:

"This section concludes with a restatement of the love command and thus forms an inclusio with 15:12. As such it reenunciates the thesis that loving one another is the mark of Christian discipleship (cf. 13:34-35). It is always important when discussing such inclusions to recognize their encompassing nature. The opening and concluding statements are intended to be bookends that hold together the statements between them so that they are not treated as isolated verses. In other words, this section must be seen as **part of a unit of crucial theological thesis statements** at the heart of the Johannine Farewell Cycle" [NAC, bold added by this writer].

Theology is the study of God. It is the study of the Person, nature, character, power, presence, wisdom, and work of God. It is also the study of the holiness of God, with all of the blessings and judgments necessarily associated with Him. It is the study of commands of God, and the consequences of obedience or disobedience to Him. The command to love one another requires character, commitment, and compassion beyond the reach of fallen man. It is only when one is born from above and filled with the Holy Spirit that he or she can possibly appreciate the life Jesus has in mind for His disciples.

“To summarize, authentic discipleship in this bull’s-eye segment is evidenced and encapsulated in love for one another (15:12,17) that has been epitomized by Jesus, who died for frail human beings (15:13). This model of self-sacrifice is recognized by those whom Jesus called his friends, for they do what he commands (15:14). But their obedience is not the result of some sort of slavery, since as his friends they have learned from Jesus about the will of God (15:15). This knowledge did not result from their own capabilities. It was given to them because they were chosen and appointed to bear fruit or spread the wonderful Gospel to others as their mission (15:16). They were given the resource of prayer because to accomplish God’s will one needs God’s resources (15:16). And finally, God’s will is exemplified in a living community of disciples who love one another (15:17). But the world does not easily accept such a community or its theses commitments. Therefore in the next section the world’s reaction is discussed” [BKC].

Jesus Promises Persecution

1518 - IF THE WORLD HATES YOU. *“If the world hates you, understand that it hated Me before it hated you.”* When I saw the word “if” here, the first thing that came to mind was whether or not this is the condition of the first class (assumed to be true). I checked and it is. The world does hate you. Many people who profess to be Christians have never experienced the hatred of the world because they are either lost or they are walking in the flesh. Millions of Americans think of themselves as Christians because this country once had a Christian culture, and we are still enjoying the benefits of the commitment made by Christians of the past. Those who profess to be Christians but never manifest the presence of Christ in their lives do not have to worry about the world. They fit in very nicely. However, A true follower of Jesus Christ (slave of the Lord) will generate opposition from the world. The more like the world you are the less problem you will have with the world. The more like Christ you are the more the world will hate you.

When George W. Bush was running for the office of President of the United States, the liberal media and liberal politicians attacked him viciously, and while many attacks were purely political, they also attacked him because of his profession of faith in Jesus

Christ. Some in the media insisted on calling him a drunk because when he was a student at a prestigious Ivy League university twenty-five years earlier, he did drink alcoholic beverages, but certainly no more than a prominent senator who had never stopped, but whose drinking was seldom mentioned. When the news got out that he and the president of one European country had prayed in the Oval Office the liberal media began crying, "that violates the principle of separation of church and state!" Perhaps the only person who has been persecuted more viciously has been former Alaskan Governor Sarah Palin, who was viciously attacked after she was named as Senator John McCain's running mate in his bid for the presidency. This lady has had to face attacks like very few people in American history, both because of her faith in Jesus Christ and her charismatic personality. The media is not overly offended if one is only "a person of faith", but if the object of that faith is Jesus Christ, and if that Christian is an obedient follower of the Lord, he or she can expect to generate opposition.

Sarah Palin wrote a new book, which was released November 13, 2009, but pre-publication sales had already made it a bestseller. Attacks continued even after John McCain lost the race. David Letterman, on his late night show, viciously attacked Gov. Palin, her child with a birth defect, her daughter, who gave birth to a baby out of wedlock, even while joking about his own immorality. Interestingly, some who profess to be "a person of faith" are not hated. In fact, if they keep Jesus out of it they may be praised.

The message is clear: compromise and the world loves your religion. Stand firm and the world will hate you. Tell your daughter's softball coach she will be in church on Wednesday night and cannot practice. Tell your son's baseball coach he cannot play on Sunday. My son had to quit a job when he was at Mississippi College after the State of Mississippi appealed the Blue Laws and the malls began staying open on Sunday. He was working in a mall in Jackson and asked if they could work out a schedule so he would not have to work on Sunday. They refused and he had to resign. Because he had worked during high school and saved money, which was invested in CDs, he did not qualify for work on campus until he used up all his savings. He had planned to use one CD per semester until the money was exhausted, but since the school processed federal student loans he was penalized.

Hatred of sincere Christians seems to be increasing. A murderous Muslim terrorist and traitor, Major Nidal Malik Hasan, opened fire on a group of unarmed people at Fort Hood in November, 2009, and since that time we have learned that he FBI had investigated the man's ties to a radical Muslim cleric, his e-mail messages, and his power point presentations which showed that he sympathized with radical Muslims who kill Americans rather than America in whose army he served.

Research had shown this to be true. Col. Ralph Peters (Retired) asked on the Bill O'Reilly show, "Has anyone ever heard of a Southern Baptist jihad?" Many in the media as well as many Internet bloggers hate George Bush and Sarah Palin, but blame

the military for Major Hasan's stress. Hasan regularly visited a local mosque and a local "strip joint", but the media downplays that.

As soon as Sarah Palin's book was released, the Associated Press assigned eleven staff members the task of searching the book for errors. They found six, but none that would destroy her message. When has the AP ever done anything like that before? Did they investigate former Vice President Al Gore's book on global warming? A judge in England ruled that his book contained errors and that a note to that effect must be included before the book could be used in schools in England.

IT HATED ME. Jesus said, "understand that it hated Me before it hated you." The world did indeed hate Jesus, but who hated Him the most? Religious leaders among the Chosen People, Israel, were the ones most determined to see Him killed for His teachings and His actions. Why did the world hate the Prince of Peace? Because the prince of this world hates Jesus. We first see his hatred for God in the Garden of Eden, but it did not end there. Every attack on Christianity has been inspired by Satan. The world, especially religious leaders who were deceiving the people, viciously attacked Jesus and plotted His death. In fact, at that very moment the religious leaders of Israel were busy with their satanic plan to have the Romans to crucify Jesus.

15:19 - IF YOU WERE. *"If you were of the world, the world would love [you as] its own. However, because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of it, the world hates you."* This is the conclusion of the second class condition: assumed to be false. They were not of the world, but if they were of the world, the world would love them. If there is anything the world loves more than one who is completely identified with it, it is the professing Christian who embraces the mind-set of the world, and lives a worldly life. The world is not offended when some immodestly dressed entertainer sings songs that glorify alcohol and immorality, announces, "I got my start singing in church."

The world is not offended by some popular preacher who is careful not to condemn the sins of the world. One of the reasons I started watching Fox News was that Franklin Graham was a frequent guest at the time. I found it especially refreshing that Franklin Graham always stated that every person must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ to be saved. His message resonates only with those who are born again believers. It offends Muslims, it offends the ACLU, it offends Marxists, it offends those whose religion centers on works, rituals, and ceremonies, rather than a vital relationship with Jesus Christ. After some period of time they stopped inviting this dynamic witness to be on the program. There are some born again Christians on Fox News, so this is in no way a condemnation of all who work for that network.

Opra Winfrey is one of the most popular people in the world. The world loves her. However, I saw a film clip in which she announced on her program that she was launching an Internet religious program to teach people about her faith. One lady in the

audience asked, "But what about Jesus?" The popular TV star seemed exasperated when she declared, "Jesus can't possibly be the only way!"

Yet, the Bible states, "There is no other name known among men whereby you must be saved" (Acts, 4:12, NKJV).

HOWEVER. The world loves worldly people, but since Jesus has called His followers out of the world, the world hates them. That was true in the First Century and it is true in the Twenty-first Century. Jesus expects His followers to be the "salt of the earth" and a "light to the world", therefore the world can no more overlook a true believer than a ship's captain can miss the lighthouse on the shore. The lighthouse is there for a purpose, and the Christian is left in the world after he or she is saved for a purpose. The true believer is a beacon for Christ. Jesus explains that the world must hate His followers because they are a reproach to the world. By their life and their testimony they condemn the world.

Dr. Gene Jeffries shared a personal experience with me that illustrates how the world responds to Jesus' Name:

I was asked in my senior year at university to pray during a "religious emphasis" week. I did so, and prayed "in Jesus' Name." Wow! Did I get the flack. There was a Jewish Rabbi, who shared the platform with me, and while he himself made no response, others were "offended" on his behalf. Not really "on his behalf," I believe; but, offended by the mere mention of the Name of the One whom the offended were offending through their own decadent lifestyles. The week was a farce! A Swami participated, although there was but one acknowledged student on a campus of thousands, who adhered to his religious nonsense. And all of that occurred in 1957, 52 years ago!!!! --Gene.

I wrote back and told Dr. Jeffries that "I was working on these verses around 4:30 this very morning", before opening his very timely e-mail message.

15:20 - REMEMBER. *"Remember the word I spoke to you: 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will also keep yours."* Until the New Testament was completed (and circulated, which would have to wait for the invention of the printing press!), believers would have to remember a lot that Jesus taught them. Paul requested that manuscripts be brought to him when he was in prison in Rome. Churches would copy Scripture and then sent epistles on to the next church, so it is not that the Scripture was unknown. Dr. Bill Cooper of Middlesex, England and I have shared with each other our conviction that the New Testament was completed much earlier than some historians believe. It is my opinion that before the end of the First Century if anyone had wanted to know what books were included in the New Testament canon, all they had to do was ask John, the man who

was inspired to write this

Gospel account, three epistles which bear his name, and the Revelation. He had apostolic authority, he was the last Scripture writer, and he trained some notable Bible scholars (Dr. Cooper is convinced that Polycarp was one of them). There is no doubt in my mind that John knew the Revelation was to be the final book in the Bible. Until the New Testament was available to the masses, they would have to remember the words of the Lord when they had no access to a manuscript. Jesus taught His disciples that the Holy Spirit will call things Jesus said to their remembrance (and help them understand and apply His message).

SLAVE. Jesus stressed that since “a slave is not greater than his master” they must understand that “If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will also keep yours.” That is a logical statement, but these men are apostles! Why is He calling them slaves? What was He teaching them when He washed their feet (13:16)?

IF THEY PERSECUTED ME. This is the condition of the first class, assumed to be true. The Greek word normally translated “persecute” originally meant to pursue with hostile intent [VINCENT]. What did Jesus tell these eleven disciples to remember? They are to remember how the world persecuted Him, and know that it will hate them because they are like Him and they proclaim His message. The world persecuted Him and it would persecute them.

Luke records the warning of Jesus for His disciples: “But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you. They will hand you over to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of My name” (Luke 21:12). This is amazing. Jesus recruits followers and then tells them they will be persecuted for following Him! Paul’s epistles tell us that Jesus’ predictions did come true in his experience; and early church history affirms that the persecution would only come more intense after his death. Tradition tells us that every single one of these apostles died a martyr’s death, including John, who was the last of them to die for His Lord. His brother James had been the first when he was put to death by Herod in A. D. 44.

IF THEY KEPT MY WORD. If the world persecuted Him it would persecute His disciples, but the alternative is also true (as stated by the condition of the first class), “they will also keep yours” (your word). How do we explain the fact that the world scoffs at the Word of God today? Robertson suggests that “The world does praise the word of Jesus, but dreads to follow it” [ATR], but does that really explain His prediction here?

“One possible solution could be to apply the facticity of the statement to the minority, who did obey, and thus to separate them in our thinking

from the majority, who did not obey. This option emphasizes the potentiality of the disciples' teaching being accepted in the same manner as happened with Jesus. Such a solution seems close to Carson's view. But Dodd merely comments that such a view of the condition was 'impossible!' Lagrange followed a similar line of thought when he distinguished between the potentiality of the world obeying and the actual sad reality of the situation. The NIV here seems to favor the first solution, but the NLT seems to move a little closer to the second perspective when it has 'if they had listened to me, they would listen to you.' The rendering of the NLT is to be preferred because it does not deny the viability of the mission perspective here. It also recognizes the reality of the situation and is certainly in line with the following verse. The related idea in 1 John 4:6 offers a more positive perspective about obedience to God, but both texts make it clear that the world is not waiting with baited breath to follow God's will" [NAC].

15:21 - ON ACCOUNT OF MY NAME. *"But they will do all these things to you on account of My name, because they don't know the One who sent Me."* This verse answers our questions about the words of Jesus in the previous verse. The world will not honor Jesus and it will not accept our message. Jesus explains that the world persecuted Him, and it persecutes His disciples "because they don't know the One who sent Me." No doubt, the world would be taken aback by these words, assuming that they would ever read them. "This statement is technically and linguistically correct; but in the Western world, where ignorance is basically understood in mental, informational categories, ignorance, like knowledge in John, is not merely a matter of the head. It involves the whole person. **To know God is to know God with one's whole being.** Likewise, not to know God is akin to disobedience, as is suggested by the next verse" [NAC, bold added by this writer].

Jesus is preparing His followers for that which was about to happen. He will be arrested, condemned on false charges made by those who professed that they were serving the Father, tortured, and crucified. These apostles would soon be persecuted, as the Scripture reveals (Acts 5:41; Phil. 1:29; 1Peter 4:14). As to the world's ignorance of God, we may turn to Luke 23:34; Acts 3:17; or John 16:3.

Back in the nineteen seventies, when pastors went to conventions and evangelism conferences they often heard well known preachers speak out against secular humanism. I seldom, if ever, heard those speakers connect evolution with the "secular humanism," nor did they explain why they felt compelled to call it "secular" when the word itself suggests humanism. During the eighties and early nineties, we began hearing a lot about New Age beliefs. I bought a book about New Age religious beliefs by Tex Marrs in a book store in Dallas and read it. After that, I began reading a lot of other books on the subject. My brother-in-law, Jimmy Furr, began working with North

American Mission Board (Southern Baptist Convention), and for twelve years, he spoke to spoke on New Age movements, cults, and the occult all over America. I had him to lead conferences for me, and often asked him about various movements that fell under the New Age umbrella. Sadly, the average pastor never learned much about New Age movements. Then, somewhere around the mid-nineties, one stopped hearing the term New Age, and many assumed that it was just a “fad” that was passing away. The new term we heard at the conferences was “post modern” (or postmodernism).

The conference speakers, and those who heard them, seemed to have assumed that New Age philosophies faded away with New Age music. One very well educated pastor asked me if I knew anything about New Age, and added, “I have heard about it but I don’t really know anything about it.” What the average person who talked about “secular humanism” failed to understand was that while humanists were declaring, “There is no God”, and spouting their gospel of evolution, many people were not buy it. Francis Schaeffer explained that while America was never a theocracy, people in the latter half of the Twentieth Century had a Christian “memory”. They had parents or grandparents who were Christians, and they lived in a country that was founded on Christian principles, so they rejected any claim that there is no God. Around 1990, polls claimed that more Americans professed a belief in God, so naturally, the conference speakers insisted, “We are reaching American for God. We are about to see a modern day Great Awakening!” We didn’t. What happened? The polls asked, “Do you believe in God, or a god-like force?” The “force” was popularized in the Star Wars movies at that time, so many responded that they did believe in “God or god-like force.”

What Christians in general, including pastors and denominational workers, did not understand was that New Age injected “secular humanism” with just enough religion to persuade them that people America were beginning to “turn to God.” Humanists had declared, “There is no god,” but New Age movements began to argued, “There is a god. There are many gods. In fact, you are your own god, or you can become a god if you let us tell you how it is done.” Their religious philosophy was monistic (all is one and one is all). In his book, SAVIORS OF THE EARTH?, Michael Koffman stated that this movement had the greatest impact on America of anything since the Civil War. Most people would have rejected that claim. They do not understand that New Age philosophies have been carried over into the post-modern “Green Movement” today.

For anyone who doubts that the world is at war with God, a careful study of the success of evolutionists over the past one hundred years should be convincing. Biblical creation was replaced with godless humanistic evolution, with only the most committed Christians objecting. Evolutionists are often vicious in their attacks on those who would like to see Creation taught as an alternative to evolution. They see Creation as so much hocus pocus. Creation demands a Creator, just as a watch demands a watchmaker. The world hates God and it will hate anyone who begins to impact the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

15:22 - IF I HAD NOT COME. *"If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin. Now they have no excuse for their sin."* This is the conclusion of the second class condition, assumed to be false: if He had not come, but He did come, and He did speak to them. Have you ever stopped to ask, what would have happened if Jesus had not come? He answers that question here: "They would not have sin." "No small part of the gospel of John consists of arguments used by the Saviour to convince the Jews that he came from God. He here says if he had not used these arguments, and proved to them his divine mission, they had not had sin" [BARNES].

NO SIN. Since the Scripture clearly teaches that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23) this can hardly mean that those who lived in Old Testament times had never sinned. "This is evidently to be understood of the particular sin of persecuting and rejecting him. Of this he was speaking; and though, if he had not come, they would have been guilty of many other sins, yet of this, their great crowning sin, they would not have been guilty" [BARNES].

NO EXCUSE. Jesus did come, and He did proclaim the message of salvation. We must understand, however, that Jesus is not absolving the heathen who do not hear the Word of God proclaimed to them in their own language, as the Scripture plainly teaches in Romans 1. "This verse does not teach that the unevangelized heathen are totally guiltless in the sight of God (cf. Rom. 1:18-2:16) but simply that they are *relatively* guiltless—that is, **less** guilty than the full-enlightened rejectors of Christ (Rom. 2:25-27)" [NCWB, bold in the original].

15:23 - HATES ME. *"The one who hates Me also hates My Father."* Jesus cannot easily be misunderstood here. Those who rant and rave against Him do so because they hate the Father. "Because Christ reveals God (John 14:9) and to dishonour Christ is to dishonour God (John 5:23). The coming of Christ has revealed the weight of sin on those who reject him" [ATR].

I found myself in an unscheduled debate with a professor from a nearby university when I walked into a health club in Greenville, Mississippi a number of years ago. There was a heated argument going on as I entered the facility, and one man looked up and saw me and said, "Here's a preacher, ask him!" The professor was having the time of his life. He was laughing at them. He was enjoying watching these men squirm and try to come up with answers. He charged that Muslims have no way of knowing Jesus ever lived, and that no historian of the First Century ever mentioned Jesus. Both charges are ludicrous, but these men didn't know that. I frustrated the professor when I refused to let him reject the Gospel writers as a legitimate historians. He would say, "Name one!" I would answer, "Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John." The professor would say, "Those are gospel writers, they are not historians. Can you name one historian who ever mentioned Christ?" I would say, "Yes", and he would again demand, "Name

one!" I would say "Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John." After repeating this exchange a few time, I said, "I know exactly what you are trying to say, but I will not concede this point. Luke's credentials as an historian have been refutably established."

Luke tells us he carefully researched everything he wrote, when he wrote the Gospel that bears his name and the Book of Acts (the book of history in the New Testament). Finally, I did tell the professor that two Roman historians (Tacitus and Suetonius) did mention Christ. It was over "one Christos", they wrote, that Jews were forced to leave Rome during the reign of Nero. The professor, who had been educated in a northern university, was laughing at those who believed in Jesus. Another professor has written cynical letters to the editor of a local newspaper for years in an effort to convince people that there is no basis for believing in God. On another occasion, that professor was gloating over convincing his history class that Soviet style Socialism offered citizens advantages not found in a democracy. In other words, to him socialism was superior to capitalism.

The professor could not have been expected to admit that he hated God. He would probably have insisted that that one could not hate someone who does not exist. However, if a person sets his mind and heart against God as vociferously as this professor had, and persists in his rejection of God and His Word over a long period of time, he or she may lose the capacity to believe in Him. When one deliberately blinds himself to the Light of the World, He may well find God cooperating with him by blinding him to the point that he cannot see. A person like that may well be ignorant of his own hatred for God, but it is evident whenever His name or His works are mentioned is mentioned.

Someone told me about a person who insisted that there is no god, and if there was a god he wouldn't concern himself with man. I said, "When you hear something like that you are tempted to say to a person like that, "I know what you think of God. Now let me tell you what God thinks about you: "The fool says in his heart, 'God does not exist'" (Ps. 53:1). In reality, if the person is not totally blind to the existence of God, such a response might only further alienate him, so I would be very hesitant to say that. The person who rejects God may not realize his hatred for Him, and he may well cover it up when speaking to a Christian, but it is the source of his strong opposition to Him

15:24 - IF I HAD NOT DONE. *"If I had not done the works among them that no one else has done, they would not have sin. Now they have seen and hated both Me and My Father."* Jesus had performed more and greater works than Moses, Elijah, or Elisha, and He had done many of them in the presence of the Jewish religious leaders who had entered a conspiracy to have Him killed. John introduces this Gospel with the declaration that in the beginning the Word (Jesus) was with God, and the Word was God. None of these religious rulers were there to witness His part in creation, but He goes on to say that "All things were created through Him, and apart from Him not one thing was created

that has been created” (John 1:3). They didn’t see the creation and they didn’t believe Jesus could have been the Creator, or the Agent of Creation.

There was irrefutable testimony that Jesus had walked on water, fed a multitude with a child’s lunch, calmed a storm, raised the dead, given sight to the blind, raised the lame, and delivered people who were possessed by demons. But, His greatest miracle would shock the nation three days after these religious leaders had thought they had washed their hands of Him. Barnes points out that **the miracles of Jesus surpassed those of Moses and the prophets-**

“1st. In their number. He healed great multitudes, and no small part of his life was occupied in doing good by miraculous power.

2nd. In their nature. They involved a greater exertion of power. He healed all forms of disease. He showed that his power was superior to all kinds of pain. He raised Lazarus after he had been four days dead. He probably refers also to the fact that he had performed miracles of a different kind from all the prophets.

3rd. He did all this by his own power; Moses and the prophets by the invoked power of God.

“Jesus spake and it was done, showing that he had power of himself to do more than all the ancient prophets had done. It may be added that his miracles were done in a short time. They were constant, rapid, continued, in all places. Wherever he was, he showed that he had this power, and in the short space of three years and a half it is probable that he wrought more miracles than are recorded of Moses and Elijah, and all the prophets put together” [BARNES].

HATED BOTH ME AND MY FATHER. How could those who had spent their lives preparing for and serving as religious rulers of the Chosen People, hate the God they professed to serve? How could the most highly trained people in the Law despise the One who gave the Law? How could scribes who all but swore by Moses hate the One who spoke to Moses from the burning bush? How could those rabbis who taught the Law hate the Law Giver? How could those who taught the Book of Isaiah hate the One who fulfilled all those Eighth Century B. C. Prophecies about the One would be born of a virgin, the Prince of Peace, the Suffering Servant? The fact is, they did. They would never have admitted it because they fanatically served their re-invention of Yahweh to suit their purpose, just as they had replaced the Levitical Law with their narrow-minded code of ethics.

We may wonder if it possible for religious people today to hate God. A friend has told me that he sits up at night and listens to Israeli radio in the Hebrew. There are times when one of the commentators will mention Christians, and sometimes they laugh at

them. Sadly, there are still Jews who hate Christ so much, I am told, that they have left Isaiah 53 out of some editions of their Scripture. My father-in-law once told me that a Jewish friend who had become a Christian asked him to attend his funeral service in Greenwood, Mississippi. His family had declared him dead.

A long time Jewish friend had a daughter who was a Christian and he told me about going to her home for a Christmas meal. As he was telling me about the experience, he suddenly stopped and said, "Why do they always have to talk about Jesus?" His frustration was real. I had tried for many years to witness to my friend but he had his blinders firmly in place. Once, he told me that he had attended funeral services for a funeral, and later he saw his rabbi and asked him, "Why to they always have to talk about Jesus at a funeral?" He turned to me and said, "Jews hate...." He caught himself and said no more. A few months later my friend called me over to where he was sitting at the health club and asked me, "Do you play poker?" When I told him I didn't, he said, "My rabbi is retiring and moving to New Jersey and I was going to invite you to take his place in our weekly poker game." To him, this was not only an expression of friendship, it was an honor. I think I told him that I lost a marble when I was in the fourth grade and I am still irritated over it. As a nine year old boy, I didn't even know we were playing "for keeps", but I decided that I had rather lose one marble than to confess my ignorance.

There may well be professing Christians who would never admit hating God, who still hold His Gospel in contempt. There are those who have a problem accepting those who "are not our kind of people", either because of their physical appearance, their ignorance (or brilliance), or their poverty (or wealth). There are a lot of people who profess their faith in God, unless His Holy Word, or His Holy Day interferes with a ball game, hunting trip, or a shopping spree.

In Samuel's day, God's Chosen People went to the highly respected prophet (and judge) and demand that he petition God to give them a king like the Philistines and other enemy nations had. God had declared Himself to be their King, but their history proved that they did not want Him to reign over them. More than a dozen times during the period of the Judges, they had gone through the same cycle of rebellion, retribution, repentance, redemption, and righteous rule under the judge Yahweh had raised up to deliver them. When that judge died they began the cycle again, and idolatry was always at the heart of their rebellion against Him. Finally, they demanded a king like the pagan people around them, and Samuel understood all too well what they were saying: they did not want God to reign over them, because if He was their King they would have to be obedient to Him.

15:25 - LAW MIGHT BE FULFILLED. *"But [this happened] so that the statement written in their law might be fulfilled: They hated Me for no reason."* Verses 24 and 25 amplify the thought expressed in verses 22 and 23.

J'esus' miracles were so distinctive that their import was unmistakable. The Jewish nation should have honestly confessed, 'No one could perform the miraculous signs You are doing if God were not with Him' (3:2). But the nation as a whole rejected both Jesus and the Father because in their sins they loved darkness rather than light (3:19). The nation thought it was serving God in rejecting Jesus (16:2-3) but in reality it was serving Satan (8:44). Sin is basically irrational. Their hatred of Jesus was without any rational cause which also fits the pattern of hatred for righteous people, as seen in those who hated David (Pss. 35:19; 69:4; 109:3)" [BKC].

Testimony of the Sprit

15:26 - WHEN THE COUNSELOR COMES. *"When the Counselor comes, the One I will send to you from the Father – the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father – He will testify about Me"* In John 14:16 and 26, Jesus promised that He would ask the Father to send the Counselor (Comforter), in Jesus' Name. Here the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, is called "the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father." The Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity, has all the attributes of the Father and the Son. No one can dissect the members of the Trinity, so as to receive the Father without the Son, or the Son without the Spirit. A correct translation of Acts 19:2 stresses that one receives the Holy Spirit at the point of salvation ("believing, did you receive..."). As Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, so is the Counselor the "Spirit of truth".

PROCEEDS FROM THE FATHER. Jesus promised that when He returned to the Father, He would ask Him to send the Holy Spirit to indwell, illuminate, and empower believers (see Acts 1:8).

The Holy Spirit so inspired those who wrote Scripture that we have an inerrant Word of God (the original manuscripts were inerrant, not translations). His work did not stop with Inspiration. He has miraculously preserved the Word of God in the face of a hostile world whose prince, Satan, would destroy it. He also illuminates the hearts and minds of believers so that they may understand the Scripture and apply it. So, we have divine Inspiration, divine preservation, and divine illumination.

HE WILL TESTIFY OF ME. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is to lead people to the Father, through Jesus Christ. His focus is never on Himself. When we pray, we pray to the Father, through the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit. The NEW COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE offers this summary:

"Just as the Son had come in the Father's name (i.e., the Son, as the very embodiment of the Father, came to express the Father), so the Spirit

would come in the Son's name, as the embodiment of the Son, to make the Son real in the believers' experience. Perhaps this is why the Spirit in NT writings has taken on the name "Lord" ("the Spirit of the Lord," 2 Cor. 3:17, 18), "Jesus" ("the Spirit of Jesus," Acts 16:7), "Christ" ("the Spirit of Christ," Rom. 8:9; 1 Pet. 1:11), and "Jesus Christ" ("the Spirit of Jesus Christ," Phil. 1:19). In 14:26 it is said that the Father would send the Holy Spirit in Jesus' name; in this verse it is stated that the Son would send the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, from the Father. Who sent the Spirit? The Father (14:26) or the Son (15:26)? There is actually no contradiction, for the Lord says that he would send the Spirit from the Father. In fact, the Lord emphasizes that the Spirit proceeds out from the Father. Both 14:26 and 15:26 designated the Father as the source whence the Spirit would be sent. Chapter 15 adds an extra detail: the Son would also send the Spirit. Thus, the Father and Son together would send the Spirit" [NCWB].

15:27 - YOU ALSO WILL TESTIFY. *"You also will testify, because you have been with Me from the beginning."* "You also" means that His disciples will testify of Him once they are "filled with and taught by the Holy Spirit the things concerning Jesus. It is here that Christians fail most" [ATR]. The NAC put this in perspective:

"Now comes the climax of the argument. If the issue is the great divide between humans and God, the natural question is, How does one bridge the gap? The good news answer is that Jesus, himself God's agent, is the bridge across the chasm. The indication that he serves as the bridge is to be found in the theme of his 'works.' This theme was offered repeatedly in the earlier **Festival Cycle** that emphasized the hostility of the Jews to Jesus. They rejected his words and refused to recognize the connection between his words and his works as being from the Father (5:36; 6:29; 7:3-5; 10:24-25,32-33,38; etc.). But even the disciples in this present **Farewell Cycle** had difficulty connecting words and works (14:10-11). The works are signs for the world to see that in Jesus divine glory was vested (2:11; cf. 1:14)" [NAC, bold added by this writer].

The same writer, after discussing other matters, adds that at the time John was writing these words, it was almost as though he was saying, "Case closed!" The constructional logic in this Gospel is impressive. Although this logic may not convince those who stoutheartedly refuse to be convinced, the Gospel makes a sound case for the Good News in Jesus on behalf of those who believe while they live and seek to bear fruit among those who are opposed to the wonderful message of life (20:31)" [NAC].

"The core or the bull's-eye of discipleship in the Farewell Cycle is thus complete. It has involved the fascinating mashal, which sets forth the necessity of abiding in the Vine, Jesus, in order to be authentic

fruit-bearing disciples. It then clarifies that love is the encompassing mark of the obedient friends of Jesus, who have been ordered to go and bear the fruit of discipleship. And it concludes by detailing for the faithful disciples the nature of the hostile world in which they live and are called to follow their master.

“Having thus finished the core, attention is turned to moving back out through the rings of the bull’s-eye and first turning to Part II of the discussion on the role of the Spirit, or Paraclete” [NAC].

SPECIAL NOTE: This study will be continued in Volume 6 of this writer’s study of the Gospel According to John, in what I think of as The Bible Notebook. On the PastorLife.Com web site, these studies are listed under Commentaries. In this case, I had to make a decision as to where I would divide these chapters. In hard copy or book form, one would try to limit a study like this to one or two volumes. However, in the electronic media, it seems to work for me to limit this commentary to about three chapters for each volume. For one thing, friends ask me to send them various volumes and some cannot open certain attachments, so I can copy and paste each volume in a new message and send it without a problem.

In this case, there is a break in the Farewell Cycle with which I am not comfortable. I tried to include more, but if I included Chapter 16, there would have been the temptation to also include Chapter 17. Finally, I elected to divide the study at this point and continue with the Farewell Discourse in Volume 6.