

English: Bible Commentary for John

Formatted for Translators

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John 1 Commentary

1: 1-5

How did John use “word”?

[1:1]

John said that Jesus is the “word”(λόγος/g3056). All scholars think these first verses are about Jesus. However, John did not say Jesus’ name. When John wrote these things, people knew that the “word” was the thing that created plants, animals, and human beings. In the same way they understood “word,” John wanted his readers to understand that Jesus is this “word.” That is, Jesus holds everything in the universe together. He makes everything and give it permission to exist.

How is Jesus both with God and God himself?

John said that Jesus is both God and with God. This is because he is God. He is not partly God, but is fully or completely God. However, he is a different person from God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. God is three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), but they are only one God. That is, Jesus is different from God the Father and the Holy Spirit. John says he is “with”(μετά /g3326) God.

These verses show that Jesus is God. Jesus is God the Son, so he is fully God. John says that the “Word”(λόγος/g3056). That is, Jesus, created everything. Only God can do that.

Advice to Translators: In English, scholars talk about Jesus, the Father, and the Holy Spirit as being different “persons” of God. This is because there is not a good way to describe how Jesus, the Son of God, is different than God the Father or God the Holy Spirit. People cannot fully know how this is true. The Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are not people. When scholars say they are different “persons,” they mean they are distinct even though they always want the same things, they are equal to one another, and they cannot be separated. There is only one God. God is one, he is not three different gods. The Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are all one. They are all the same God, but not the same “person.” Jesus is completely God. But Jesus is not the Holy Spirit, and Jesus is not the Father. Also, the Father is completely God, but the Father is not Jesus or the Holy Spirit either. Jesus, the Father, and the Holy Spirit are not three smaller parts of one larger God. Also, God does not have three separate faces, that is, three separate sides. God also does not change into the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit at different times. God is always Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

See: Trinity; Jesus is God

Why does John use the metaphor of light?

[1:4, 1:5]

John said Jesus is light to tell his readers three things about Jesus:

Jesus is light because he makes all Christians live forever with God. That is, they will be lit by the light of Jesus in their life. Also, Jesus’ light makes it so that people can see things. That is, Jesus causes a Christian to truly know God. Scriptures often use light as a metaphor to talk about knowing true things about God. John wanted his readers to know that Jesus’ light makes people happy. That is, when people do good things, they are in the light and they are happy. So when John says that some people are in light, he means that Jesus makes them happy. Also, John wanted his readers to know Jesus’ light makes people act more like Jesus if they stay in his light.

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

Why does John use the metaphor of darkness?

[1:5]

In the same way John used the metaphor of light to talk about Jesus, John used the metaphor of darkness to talk about Satan and the things Satan does. That is, John wanted to say that Satan, people who sin and do evil, and evil things all happen because of sin.

John said darkness cannot stop the light from shining. John wanted people to know that nothing can stop Jesus from making those who believe in him live forever with God. Even Satan cannot stop him. John also wanted to say that Jesus will punish everyone who does not believe in him because they sin. They will be punished forever in hell.

Jesus is stronger than Satan and those who do not stop sinning. This is why John said that the darkness cannot stop the light from shining.

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor); Satan (The Devil); Sin; Hell

1:6-8

Who is John?

[1:6]

These verses talk about John the Baptist. John the Baptist told people that the Messiah was coming. That is, John got people ready for the Messiah to come (See: 1:23). He got the people ready to believe in the Messiah when the Messiah came. The prophets in the Old Testament told about this Messiah coming (See: Isaiah 40:3; Malachi 3:1).

John the Baptist and the author of this Gospel are not the same person. The apostle John wrote this book. He did not call himself “John” in his book. He called himself “the one whom Jesus loved” (See: 13:23).

See: Messiah (Christ); Faith (Believe in); Prophet; Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Apostle

1: 9-13

What does it mean to be born of God?

[1:13]

Those who believe in Jesus are born of God and become part of God's family. John calls these people children of God.

Before this, people were called "children of wrath" (See: Ephesians 2:3) and "children of the devil" (John 8:4; 1 John 3:10).

Believing in Jesus makes a person different than they were before. Scripture calls this a new or second birth from God. In English, this is called regeneration.

This section is a group of prophecies about the Messiah. John said that the world was going to reject Jesus. Even most of the Jews rejected him (See: Isaiah 40:3).

See: Born Again (New Life, Regeneration); Faith (Believe in); Children of God; Wrath; Satan (The Devil); Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Messiah (Christ)

1: 14-19

How did the Word become flesh?

[1:14]

John says that the "Word"(λόγος/g3056) became "flesh"(σῆμαίνω/g4591). That is, Jesus became a human.

When Jesus became a human, he continued to be God. So when people saw Jesus, they saw God. He was not just a man representing God in the same way a photograph represents a person. Also, they saw a real human, not something that only looked like a human.

This is why Christians know that Jesus is both God and a human.

See: Philippians 2:5-11

See: Incarnation; Jesus is God

What does "grace upon grace" mean?

[1:16]

John said "grace upon grace." Many scholars think that John wanted to say God sent two gifts of "grace"(χάρις/5484). First, God gave the gift of the Law of Moses. Later, he sent another gift. This second gift of grace was that he forgave the sins of those who believe in Jesus. This second gift of grace is a free gift. It showed humans who God truly is (see: 1: 14). God gave people this second gift through Jesus.

In ancient Israel, the Law of Moses showed the people of Israel their need of God's mercy. Also, the Law taught the people of God that they needed Jesus. The second gift was still to come. In ancient Israel, the Law of Moses helped people know how to please God and live their lives. After Jesus came, God's grace and mercy alone helped people to know how to live in a way that pleases God.

While some scholars think the new law replaced the old law, other scholars think that John wanted to say that God sent the second gift to combine it with the first gift, not to replace it. If this is what John meant, then Jesus brings to Christians the second gift in order to finish the work of the first gift. That is, the Law of Moses.

See: Grace; Law of Moses; Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Sin; Israel; Mercy

How did Jesus live with people who did not honor God?

[1:15]

John said Jesus "lived"(σκηνώω/g4637) with people who did not honor God. John wanted to say that when Jesus came to earth, he was where people did not think he was going to be. That is, he was with the sinners and people who did not honor God in the things that they lived.

The Old Testament says God "lived"(#g4637) with the people of Israel.

See: Leviticus 26:11-12; Ezekiel 37:27; Zechariah 2:10-11; Revelation 21:3

Who is the one and only God?

[1:18]

Many Greek manuscripts call Jesus "the one and only God." Not every Greek manuscript contains the same words in 1:18.

Both are good ways to talk about Jesus. However, scholars think John wrote "the one and only God." Fewer scholars think John wrote "one and only Son," but a few English translations use these words.

John thinks that his readers will understand that "one and only" means God the Son. He helps them understand that by adding the words, "who is at the side of Father."

1:19-23

Who were the Jews?

[1:19]

John called the Jewish religious leaders "the Jews." For John however, "The Jews" did not mean that John spoke about all Jews. Instead, he called the religious leaders "the Jews" because they represented all of the Jews.

How is John the Baptist the prophet Elijah?

[1:21]

Jesus said that John the Baptist was the prophet Elijah who the Old Testament said was to come before the Messiah. The

book of Malachi said that the prophet Elijah will return to earth immediately before the Messiah came (See: Malachi 4:5-6). Jesus told his disciples that this person was not actually be Elijah, but someone with his same prophetic power. Malachi said that he will make the way for the Messiah to come. It is for this reason that Malachi said that Elijah will come again. The Jews waited for the Messiah to come to them. But, they also thought the prophet Elijah was to come back to them from the dead before the Messiah came.

See: Matthew 11:14

See: Prophet; Messiah (Christ)

1:29-42

What are the different ways to baptize?

[1:31]

John said people are baptized in three ways:.

First, John the Baptist “baptized”(βαπτίζω/g0907) Jews. He baptized them to show that they repented for sinning. He did this to get the people ready for the Messiah. That is, ready to believe in him when he came. Second, John baptized Jesus. Jesus needed to be baptized before he began to serve and preach to the people. When John baptized Jesus, the Holy Spirit came down on Jesus. This showed that God chose him to do his work. Third, Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit. John said that Jesus will baptize those who believe in him with the Holy Spirit. Jesus does this to help Christians be obedient to God.

See: Baptize (Baptism); Repent (Repentance); Sin; Messiah (Christ); Holy Spirit

Why did John the Baptist call Jesus the Son of God?

[1:34]

John called Jesus the Son of God to show how God adopts all Christians into his family. That is, he makes them his sons and daughters. But, only Jesus is the “one and only or unique”(μονογενής/g3439) Son of God. Jesus is God. At the same time, he is the “one and only” or “unique”(μονογενής/g3439) Son of God (See: 1: 18).

See: Son of God; Adopt (Adoption); Children of God; Jesus is God

Why did John the Baptist call Jesus the Lamb of God?

[1:36]

See: Lamb of God

1:43-51

What did the Jews think about the town of Nazareth?

[1:46]

In ancient Israel, Nazareth was not a large town. It is not known why Nathaniel did not speak good about the town. Some scholars think Nathaniel did not like anyone who thought that the people of Nazareth did good things. Other scholars think that there was trouble between the people of Nazareth and the people of Cana. Nathaniel was from Cana. Also, it is possible that Nathaniel did not think that any great men came from a town so close to his own home. Later, people called Christians “people of Nazareth” to insult them. (See: Acts 24:5).

See Map: Nazareth

How did John show that the disciples began to believe in Jesus?

[1:49]

John said the disciples stopped what they did and followed Jesus. They did this even though they did not know very much about him. John showed later in his gospel that these men still misunderstood who Jesus really was. They began to believe in him, but not completely. It took time for them to truly know Jesus. But, they began to follow Jesus even though they did not fully understand what following him meant for them.

Why did John write that Jesus said, “Truly, truly I say to you”?

[1:51]

John said that Jesus said “‘Truly’(ἀμὴν/g0281), truly I say to you” thirty-five times in this book. Jesus used the word “truly” in order to strongly express certainty, belief, or faith. When Jesus said these words, he gave courage to those who heard him. He gave them courage to believe what he was saying.

Why did Jesus call himself the Son of Man?

[1:51]

See: Son of Man

John 2

2:1-12

Why was Mary worried about the wine running out?

[2:3]

In ancient Israel, if the food and wine ran out at a wedding, the man’s family was shamed or was embarrassed. In Israel, the man getting married and his family needed to make sure that everyone got plenty of food and drinks. His family gave a feast. These wedding feasts often lasted for several days. Because the man’s family was going to be shamed when the

wine ran out, Mary felt bad for the man and his family.

See: Wine (Winepress); Wedding

Why did Jesus say “My time has not yet come”?

[2:4]

John wrote the word “time”(ᾠρα/g5610)” when he wrote about someone doing something great. Here, Jesus said that he was not ready to show everyone that he was the Messiah.

See: Messiah (Christ)

Why did John write about Jesus turning water into wine at Cana?

[2:9]

Some scholars think John wrote about Jesus turning water into wine at Cana because he wanted to talk about the church. The Bible called the church the bride of Christ. That is, Jesus loves the church in the same way a man loves his bride. Also, a wedding feast was a metaphor for the people rejoicing with God forever.

Also, John said that this was Jesus’ first miracle.

See: John 2:4; 7:6, 8, 30; 8:20

See: Wine (Winepress); Church; Bride of Christ; Wedding; Miracle

See Map: Cana

What is a “sign”(σημεῖον/g4592)?

[2:11]

See: Sign

Who were Jesus’ brothers?

[2:12]

See: Family of Jesus

2:13-25

What is the Jewish Passover?

[2:13]

See: Passover

Why did John say Jesus went “up” to Jerusalem?

[2:13]

John said Jesus went “up” to Jerusalem because the city was on Mount Moriah. Mount Moriah is about 800 meters above sea level.

See Map: Jerusalem; Mount Moriah

Why were merchants selling animals and changing money in the temple?

[2:14]

Most people traveling to Jerusalem were not able to bring animals with them to sacrifice at the temple. Instead, they bought animals for their sacrifice in Jerusalem or at the temple. Merchants made a profit by selling animals at the temple. God commanded the Jewish priests to sacrifice an animal every morning and every evening at the temple. During some festivals, such as Passover, they sacrificed many more animals. Also, God commanded the Jewish people to sacrifice animals at the temple for many different reasons.

These merchants accepted only coins that the Jews made for their own country. When people brought other coins, they exchanged them for Jewish coins. The merchants made a profit when they changed money into Jewish coins. Therefore, they used the temple, a place to worship God, to make money.

See: Temple; Priest (Priesthood); Sacrifice; Worship

See Map: Jerusalem

Why did Jesus force the merchants to leave temple?

[2:15]

Jesus forced the merchants out of the temple because he was angry. He was angry because merchants were making money from people coming to worship God at the temple. Jesus told the people that the temple was for people to pray there. Also, it was for people to come there from all nations (see: Isaiah 56:7; Luke 19:46)

Advice to translators: In English, anger is used when talking about a strong emotion that dishonors God. Here, anger does not mean this. It is a strong emotion, but it does not dishonor God. Instead, it honors God because it is against something that God does not like.

See: Temple; Worship; Pray (Prayer)

Why did the Jewish leaders ask Jesus for a sign?

[2:18]

The Jewish leaders said that Jesus needed to give them a sign because they wanted to know that God gave him permission to do and say what he did and said. They did not think that God gave this permission to Jesus..

See: Sign

Which temple was Jesus talking about?

[2:19]

When Jesus said to destroy the temple and he was going to rebuild it in three days, he spoke about his body. Instead of giving the Jewish leaders a sign, Jesus made them a promise. They thought he spoke to them about the temple building. But, John said Jesus spoke about his own body. Jesus knew he was going to be crucified and three days later he was going to be alive again.

See: Temple; Sign; Crucify (Crucifixion)

Why was destroying the Jewish temple significant to the Jews?

[2:19, 2:20]

The Jews honored the temple in Jerusalem because the presence of God was in the temple. The presence of God was directly connected to the presence of the temple among his people. After a time of rebellion by the Jewish people, God punished the Jews and allowed the Babylonians to destroy the temple. The Persians later conquered the Babylonians. The Persians later allowed the temple to be rebuilt. The original temple was far bigger and more elaborate than the rebuilt temple. Herod the Great later enlarged the temple and made it more elaborate than the original temple. When Jesus spoke, the temple was very large.

After the Jews rejected Jesus, God punished the Jews by having the the Roman army destroy the temple. No one rebuilt the temple after this.

Advice to Translators: The “presence of God” in the temple means that God was in the temple in a special way. The Old Testament said that God lived in the temple. This is not the only place where God is. He is everywhere. Despite this, he was in the temple in a special way.

See: Presence of God; People of God; King Herod

Why did Jesus say the temple was going to be destroyed and rebuilt in three days?

[2:21, 2:22]

When Jesus spoke about the temple being destroyed and rebuilt in three days, he spoke about his body. He did not speak about the actual temple building. The Jews thought Jesus spoke about the huge temple building in Jerusalem where they were they sold and offered sacrifices. When Jesus said the temple was to be raised in three days after it was destroyed, Jesus was saying that his body was to be brought back to life again. Three days after Jesus died on a Roman cross, he resurrected from the dead.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Temple

Did Jesus know everything?

[2:24, 2:25]

Jesus knows everything. Jesus knows everything because he is God. He is not only part God. He is completely God. Jesus does not simply know about people, he knows them completely on the inside. That is, he knows their inner thoughts and knows why and how they do the things they do. He knows them better than they know themselves. He knew if the people around him truly believed in him or if his words and the things he did simply amazed them, and they followed him because they thought he was a great teacher and did miraculous things.

See: Jesus is God

John 3

3: 1-15

Did Nicodemus think Jesus to be God's Son?

[3:2]

Scholars do not know if Nicodemus thought Jesus to be God's son. However, the miraculous things Jesus did amazed Nicodemus. These things showed him Jesus came from God. Jesus' words greatly affected Nicodemus. Nicodemus spoke well of Jesus to the other Jewish leaders at the Festival of Shelters (see: John 7:40-52). He also helped Joseph of Arimathea bury Jesus' body after Jesus died (see: John 19:38-40). Some scholars think Nicodemus was a priest who became Christian (see: Acts 6:7). Other scholars do not think he really believed in Jesus.

If Nicodemus later believed in Jesus, it was not easy for him. That is, if he believed in Jesus, the Jews would have rejected him as a teacher. These scholars think that Nicodemus stopped thinking he entered heaven because of the good things he did. Nicodemus now understood that he needed to humble himself. He needed Jesus to forgive him for sinning. Perhaps this is why John wrote that Jesus' words amazed Nicodemus.

See: Priest (Priesthood); Festival of Shelters

How can someone be “born again”?

[3:3]

Jesus told Nicodemus that he needed to be “born again”(ἄνωθεν/g0509). That is, he needed to be born a second time from God. This is a metaphor for what happens to the life of a person when they believe in Jesus. God makes a Christian a new person in some way. This confused Nicodemus. He thought that Jesus was saying that his mother needed to give birth to him again. Nicodemus knew a woman was unable to do this. However, Jesus meant that people needed to be born a second time to be able to live with God forever. It is the Holy Spirit who does this. That is, without the Holy Spirit gives some a second birth, the person cannot live together with God forever in heaven. A sinner must be made into a new

person to be with God.

See: Born Again (New Life, Regeneration); Metaphor

How is one born from water and the Spirit?

[3:5]

To be born “from the Spirit” means to be born from above. That is, born from God through the Holy Spirit (see: 3:5).

When he does this, the Holy Spirit makes the sinner into a new person in some way.

There are different ways to understand what it means when someone is born from water.

Some scholars think being born from water means that someone is born again. Perhaps John thought that when this happens they are baptized with water. Or perhaps John thought that when this happens God makes them clean from sin. He washes away their sin (see: 1 John 1:7). God promised to clean Israel with clean water from their sins and idols (see: Ezekiel 3:25-27). He said that when this happened, he made people different in some way. He said he did this by putting his Spirit in them (see: Numbers 19:17; Psalm 51:9-10; Isaiah 32:15;44:3-5; Jeremiah 2:13;17:13; Joel 2:28-29. Other scholars think John was thinking about a baby born from his mother (see: 3:6). There is water in the mother’s womb around a baby before it is born. However, this was not a metaphor that was used very often.

See: Born Again (New Life, Regeneration); Baptize (Baptism); Clean and Unclean; Sin; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; Metaphor

Why did Jesus say Nicodemus did not understand the earthly things of which he spoke?

[3:10]

Jesus said Nicodemus did not understand “earthly(ἐπίγειος/g1919)” things because he did not understand Jesus’ metaphors of childbirth and the wind. If Nicodemus was unable to understand when Jesus used earthly metaphors, he was unable to understand if Jesus spoke to him about God. Jesus tried to help Nicodemus understand. He did this by comparing the new life Christians have with babies having life on earth because of their mothers. He also compared the Holy Spirit to the blowing wind. However, Nicodemus was still unable to understand.

See: Born Again (New Life, Regeneration); Metaphor; Holy Spirit

3:16-21

Why did John talk about the “world” κόσμος/g2889)?

[3:16]

Here, when John spoke about the “world(κόσμος/g2889)”, he was talking about all of the people living in the world. John talked about all of these people because it is all people whom God calls to believe in his Son Jesus. However, often when John wrote “the world,” he sometimes was talking about something different. In 1 John 2:15, he wrote “world” as a metaphor for how Satan does evil and how people sin. This is because Satan was given permission over everyone who sins. This is why God commands Christians not to love the evil things in this world. This is also why John says that God loved them by giving his only Son to die for them. He loves all people very, very much.

See: World; Faith (Believe in); Satan (The Devil); Sin

Did Jesus die for the sins of the whole world?

[3:16]

Some scholars think that Jesus died for all people. That is, those who believe in him and those who do not believe in him.

Here John calls all people “the world.” God caused Jesus to die. In this way, he caused Jesus to suffer for everyone who sins (see: 1 John 2:2). But, this does not save the people who reject Jesus.

Other scholars think that Jesus died only for the sins of the people who believe in him. That is, Jesus died for people all over the world. People who believe in him can come from any tribe of people and can speak any language.

3:17-21

Does Jesus judge the world?

[3:17]

According to John 5:22, God gave gave permission to Jesus to judge everything and everyone. In John 3:17-18, John wrote that God did not send Jesus into the world to judge people. When God sent Jesus to earth, it was not to condemn or judge people. Jesus came as the promised Messiah. That is, he came to save people from their sins. However, Jesus is coming again to judge the world. He will judge those who are not Christians. People who believe in Jesus is the Son of God are not judged. Their sins are forgiven. They are one of God’s children.

See: Judge (Judgment); Condemn (Condemnation); Messiah (Christ); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Children of God

Who is the light?

[2:19]

Jesus is the light. Light is often a metaphor in Scripture.

See: John 8:12

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

What is darkness?

[2:19]

Sin, evil, and everything that is against Jesus is spoke about as if it were darkness. This is a common metaphor in

Scripture. When people sin, they stay in the dark. They stay away from the light. That is they stay far from Jesus. They even hide from him. But those who live in a way that honors God are not afraid of God. They do not need to hide from him.

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

3: 22-30

Why did John baptize people?

[3:22]

John baptized people as a sign that they repented of their sins (see: Acts 19:4). Some Jews who wanted to honor God came to him to be baptized. They wanted to be clean from their sins. John did this to help make them ready for the coming of the Messiah.

See: Baptize (Baptism); Sign; Repent (Repentance); Sin; Clean and Unclean; Messiah (Christ)

What did God send John the Baptist to do?

[3:27, 3:28]

God sent John to tell the people about the Messiah. John showed the people who was the Messiah. That is, he showed them Jesus (see: John 1:29).

John used a metaphor to say how he was a friend to Jesus. In the same way the man getting married is greater than his friends at his wedding, so Jesus was greater than John. His friends help him and rejoice for him. In the same way, John helped Jesus and rejoiced because Jesus came. Also, John knew that he must soon stop working when Jesus began his own work.

See: Messiah (Christ); Metaphor

3: 31-36

How does someone disobey the son?

[3:36]

John talked about “disobeying”(ἀπειθέω/g0544) the son. John was talking about refusing to believe in Jesus. This is how they disobeyed the Jesus, the Son of God. They reject Jesus because they do not think he is who he says he is. Or they refuse to believe because they do not want to believe in him.

See: Son of God; Faith (Believe in)

Who speaks in John 3?

There are parts of John 3 where it is not clear who is speaking. These places are 3:16 and 3:31. In many languages, writers use quotation marks to show who is speaking. However, John did not originally do this.

Some scholars think that Jesus continued speaking in 3:16-21. But, other scholars think that it is John who spoke in these verses.

Some scholars think John the Baptist continued speaking in 3:31-36. But other scholars think that it is the Apostle John who spoke in this passage.

See: Apostle

John 4

4: 1-4

Who were the Samaritans?

[4:4]

The Samaritans were the people who lived in the region of Samaria. Long before this time, Israel was one nation and it was divided into two nations, the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. In the Old Testament, the northern kingdom, Israel, did not honor God. God punished them and they were conquered by Assyria. After this happened, the people of this Israel married gentiles. They were no longer true Israelites. The Jews who honored God hated the Samaritans. They knew that the Samaritans often married Gentile women, something that the Law of Moses did not allow them to do. They said they obeyed God, but they did not. They worshipped him in the wrong ways and they also worshipped idols and other gods. Therefore, God rejected the Samaritans and he did not consider them to be his people.

See: John 4:22

See: Samaria; Israel (Northern Kingdom) ; Judah (Southern Kingdom); Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Punish (Punishment); Gentile; Law of Moses; Worship; Idolatry (Idol); False gods; People of God

Map: Samaria

Why did many Jews not travel through Samaria?

[4:4]

The land of Samaria was between Judea and Galilee. When Jews wanted to travel from Jerusalem to Galilee, the shortest way was to go through Samaria.

However, the Jews hated the Samaritans. Many Jews who wanted to honor God often went around Samaria, even though this took much longer because of their hate for these people. Perhaps they thought the people would make them unclean. But, most Jews traveled through it because that way took less time.

See: Samaria; Clean and Unclean

See Map: Samaria, Judea, Galilee

4:5-6

What was the city of Sychar in the Old Testament?

[4:5]

Some scholars think that the city of Sychar and Shechem in the Old Testament are the same city. Other scholars think these are two different cities. They think that Sychar is the town of Askar that exists today. Both of these places were near a well that Jacob dug and the place where the Joseph from the Old Testament was buried.

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

See Map: Sychar, Shechem, Askar

4: 7-12

What did Jesus say he was able to give to the Samaritan woman?

[4:10]

Jesus says he was able to give the Samaritan woman “the gift of God.” He wanted to say that God was able to allow her to live with God forever in heaven (see: Romans 6:23). The Jews were amazed when Jesus told her this. They thought the Samaritans rejected God and did not want to honor God.

The Samaritan woman married six times. Many Jews thought she was very sinful. This is because it was uncommon for the Jews to get married more than once. However, Jesus offered to forgive her.

John also speaks about “living” (ζῶω/g2198) water as a metaphor. “Living water” can mean running water or fresh water. It can also mean water that makes plants and people live. Jesus wanted to say that people were able to live forever with God if they believe in him.

See: Heaven; Samaria; Sin; Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Metaphor

4:13-21

How did the Samaritans try to honor God differently from the Jews?

[4:20]

The Jews worshiped God in the temple in Jerusalem, but the Samaritans worshiped God in a temple in Samaria on Mount Gerizim. Because God commanded the Jews to worship him in Jerusalem, the Samaritans sinned in their worship.

Also, the Samaritans only thought in part of the Old Testament was from God and rejected the rest of the Old Testament. They also possessed their own priests. These priests were not part of the tribe of Levi. The Law of Moses said that the priests must be from the tribe of Levi.

However, both the Samaritans and the Jews waited for God to send the Messiah to them.

See: Samaria; Worship; Temple; Sin; Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Priest (Priesthood); Tribes of Israel; Law of Moses

See Map: Jerusalem, Samaria, and Mount Gerizim

What future time did Jesus speak about to the woman?

[4:21]

When Jesus spoke with the woman, he thought about what was going to happen in the future. The Romans were going to destroy the Temple in Jerusalem. The Christians were going to worship God anywhere. They did not need to go to Jerusalem to worship anymore.

See: Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar); Temple; Worship

4:22-26

What does it mean that “salvation” is from the Jews?

[4:22]

Jesus said that “salvation” (σωτηρία/g4991) is from the Jews. Jesus taught the woman that God worked to save mankind, and that he did this through the Jews, not through the Samaritans. While Jesus did not agree with what the Samaritans thought about God, Jesus was kind to the woman. Jesus was the Messiah and he was a Jew and not a Samaritan.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Samaria; Messiah (Christ)

What does it mean for people to worship God in “Spirit” and in “truth”?

[4:24]

People worship God in “Spirit” (πνεῦμα/g4151) when they worship him anywhere, not only in the temple or other building (see: acts 17:24-26). That is, because they now worship him by the Holy Spirit’s power.

God gave Christians a new way to worship him. This new way is in “truth” (ἀλήθεια/g0225). That is, because they now know who God truly is, they can worship him in the right way. This also means that they know that Jesus is God. When they worship Jesus, they know that they are worshiping God (see: John 14:6). People who worship God in this way praise and honor him because they know the truth about him.

See: Worship; Temple; Holy Spirit

4:27-42

Why were the disciples shocked that Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman?

[4:27]

Some Jewish men never spoke with a woman unless she was his wife. They thought that it was wrong to speak to other women. Also, many Jews did not speak with Samaritans. Jews thought Samaritans were unclean.

But, Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman. He asked her for a drink of water. Usually, the Jews refused to drink or eat with Samaritans because they thought they were unclean.

See: Samaria; Clean and Unclean

Why did the disciples not ask Jesus why he talked with the woman?

[4:27]

The disciples never thought Jesus was going to speak to a Samaritan woman. They thought, in the same way most Jews did, that the Samaritans were unclean, and they were people whom God did not accept. They thought that Jesus, their teacher, did wrong by talking with the woman. They were too ashamed to ask him why he was talking with her.

See: Samaria; Clean and Unclean

What happened to the people of Sychar?

[4:29, 4:30]

Many of the people of Sychar began to believe that Jesus was the Messiah. They did this even though Jesus had told the woman that her people did not know God, whom they said they worshiped.

No one thought the Samaritans were going to believe in Jesus. But many did believe in Jesus. Also, the disciples thought that the Jews were going to accept their Messiah, but most of the Jews rejected him.

See: Messiah (Christ); Worship; Samaria; Disciple

See Map: Sychar

Can Samaritans live with God forever?

[4:29]

The Jews did not think the people of Sychar were going to call Jesus the “Savior of the world.” This means that they were still learning about Jesus, yet they believed in him. Later, Jesus commanded his disciples to be witnesses for him in Samaria (see: Acts 1:8).

The Samaritans did not worship God in the right way, and they only thought the first five books of the Old Testament were from God. They did not believe that God did anything for Israel after Moses died.

The title “the Savior of the world” is in the New Testament only here and in 1 John 4:14.

See: Savior; Disciple; Witness (Martyr); Samaria; Worship; Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

See Map: Sychar, Samaria

What does the metaphor about doing the harvest mean in the New Testament?

[4:35]

See: Harvest; Metaphor

4:43-45

Why did John have the proverb about a prophet in his hometown?

[4:44]

John said that Jesus left Sychar after only two days, because the people reject a prophet in the prophet’s hometown never. But, the people of Sychar believed in Jesus. Sychar was not Jesus’ hometown. Therefore, scholars do not agree about what John meant.

Some scholars think John meant that Galilee was Jesus’ home region. The people of Galilee did not believe Jesus when he arrived there (see: 4:45). Later, they rejected him (see: Mark 6:1-6).

Other scholars think that John meant that all Israel was Jesus’ home region, and that most of the Jews were going to reject him.

Still other scholars think that John was talking about Sychar. Many of the people of that town believed in Jesus, yet he left after only two days. John gives the proverb to explain why he left (see: 4:44). Jesus went to teach the Jews and the Samaritans. He never stayed for very long in one place. Perhaps John wanted to say that if Jesus stayed anywhere, this place became his hometown. If the people did not welcome him, Jesus kept on traveling.

See: Proverb; Prophet; Samaria

See Map: Sychar, Galilee

4:46-54

Why did the official’s whole family believe in Jesus?

[4:53]

The official’s whole family believed in Jesus. In many places, all of the people in a family or household usually think in the way in which the leader of that family thinks. The family of the official probably trusted him to think in the right ways. When he began to believe in Jesus, all his family also believed in Jesus..

In other places, people in families are more free to think in the way each person wishes to think. These people may not understand why the official’s family believed in Jesus at the same time.

Why did John count the number of “signs” that Jesus did in Galilee?

[4:54]

John called the miracle he did a “sign”(σημεῖον/g4592).” He also did this with the first miraculous thing he did, which was changing water into wine. He means that both of these things showed the people that God truly sent Jesus to them to be the Messiah he promised to send.

See: Sign; Miracle; Wine (Winepress)

John 5

5:1-9

Which feast did John talk about?

[5:1]

John did not say which feast was happening at this time. However, there were several Jewish feast in Jerusalem every year..

See: Passover; Festival of Shelters

What was the pool of Bethsaida?

[5:2]

The people thought the pool in Bethsaida healed people when the waters “stirred”(ταράσσω/g5015). Because of this, sick people and those with physical problems laid down by the pool and waited for the water to move. When the water moved, they tried to be the first person to get into the pool to be healed.

Some scholars think it is possible that an underground spring flowed into the pool of Bethsaida and sometimes caused the water in the pool to move. Other scholars think that the pool’s water contained minerals that healed the body.

See Map: Bethsaida

What did John originally write in 5:4?

[5:4]

The oldest and best copies of the Greek New Testament do not include verse 4. However, some translation may include verse 4. Although John probably did not write this verse, it describes what people thought about how the pool of Bethsaida healed people. Some people believed that an angel stirred the waters and then healed the first person who got into the pool. Perhaps, this verse was added by someone in order to explain this to people reading this chapter.

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible

Why was the man sick and why did he need help into the pool?

[5:7]

The sick man was probably paralyzed. He told Jesus that he needed another person to help him get into the pool because the man could not stand or walk. Jesus’ question about whether he wanted to be healed surprised the man. He laid by the pool for such a long time and no one ever helped him into the pool. He probably did not think that he was ever going to be healed. John does not say if the man believed in Jesus before Jesus healed him. Also, John does not say if the man ever believed in Jesus at any time.

Advice to Translators: Someone who is paralyzed cannot move their legs or cannot move their arms and legs.

5:10-15

Who were the Jews who questioned the man Jesus healed?

[5:10]

Some Jews asked the man Jesus healed certain questions. The Jews were Jewish leaders known as scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees.

See: Scribe; Pharisees; Sadducees

Why did the Jewish leaders not want Jesus to heal this man on the Sabbath day?

[5:10]

The Jewish leaders became angry when Jesus healed the man on a Sabbath day because their Law of Moses did not allow a person to do any work on the Sabbath day (see: Exodus 20:10; Jeremiah 17:21-22). These leaders thought that when someone healed another person, they were working. Also, the Jewish leaders thought that carrying a bed was work.

When the man picked up his bed and walked, they thought that he broke the Law of Moses and disobeyed God. However, they thought the wrong thing about the Law of Moses. Neither Jesus nor the man disobeyed the Law of Moses. The Jewish leaders cared more about obeying the things they believed about the Law of Moses than about doing good things on the Sabbath. They thought that Jesus did something evil by healing this man. Because of this, the Jewish leaders thought Jesus was a false teacher and began to persecute him (see: 5:16,18).

See: Sabbath; Law of Moses; Persecute (Persecution)

Why did Jesus tell the healed man to stop sinning?

[5:14]

Scholars give three reasons why Jesus told the healed man to stop sinning:

Jesus knew the healed man needed to believe in him. It is a sin to not believe in Jesus. John never says this healed man

believed in Jesus, even though Jesus healed him. The man told the Jews that it was Jesus who healed him on the Sabbath. Those who did not believe in Jesus often told the Pharisees what Jesus did. (see: John 11:44-46) Some scholars think that this man was paralyzed because he sinned. However, John does not say what was that sin. Sometimes sin may cause someone to be sick or have physical problems. Perhaps Jesus chose this man from the people waiting at the pool because of a specific sin in his life.

Advice to Translators: Someone who is paralyzed cannot move their legs or cannot move their arms and legs.

See: Sin; Sabbath; Pharisees

5:16-24

Why were the Jewish leaders angry with Jesus when he said that God is his father?

[5:17, 5:18]

The Jewish leaders became very angry with Jesus when he said that God is his father and that both he and his father continued working. The Jewish leaders opposed Jesus for working on the Sabbath day. Jesus said that his father is still working. That is, God rested on the seventh day from working to create the world, but he never stopped working to care for the world. When Jesus says that he is working with his father, the Jewish leaders knew he said that he was doing what only God did. So Jesus said he was God. According to the Law of Moses, if someone said they were God, they were to be punished. They needed to die. That is, they would be punished if they were not God.

See: God the Father; Sabbath; Jesus is God; Law of Moses

In what way is the Father “working even now”?

[5:17]

The Jewish teachers knew that God the Father not only created the world, he also sustains the world (see: Jeremiah 10:12-13). In the Book of Colossians, Paul spoke also about Jesus sustaining the world (see: Colossians 1:16-17). The writer of the Book of Hebrews spoke about Jesus sustaining all things by his word (see: Hebrews 1:3).

See: God the Father

How is God the Father Jesus’ father?

[5:19, 5:20]

See: God the Father; Son of God; Jesus is God; Trinity

Why did Jesus need to be able to do the things only God can do (raise and give life to the dead, pass judgment, receive the same honor)?

[5:21, 5:22, 5:23]

Jesus needed to be able to do the things only God can do because Jesus is God. Everything God the Father can do, Jesus, God the son can do also. God the Father raises the dead. Soon, the Father will raise the Son from the dead (see: John 20). Then the Son will also give life to whomever he wants to give life (see: 1 Corinthians 5). God the Father gave Jesus permission to judge everything. Jesus, God the Son, also receives the same honor that God the Father receives. If someone rejects Jesus, they also reject God the Father. Everyone who believes in Jesus will live together with God in heaven forever.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Jesus is God; Trinity; God the Father; Son of God; Born Again (New Life, Regeneration); Eternal Life; Heaven

In what ways did Jesus show that he was equal to the Father?

[5:23]

Jesus said God the Father “raises the dead” and Jesus also raised the dead (see: Luke 7:11-15; John 11:43-44). Although God the Father is the only one who can perfectly judge people, he gives Jesus permission to judge people because Jesus can also perfectly judge people (see: 5:22; Psalm 50:6). Jesus said that whatever he sees the Father doing, this is what he does also. This shows that Jesus and God the Father both want the same things to happen.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection) ; God the Father; Judge (Judgment)

5:25-30

What does it mean that the Father and the Son have life in themselves?

[5:26]

John said that God The Father and God the Son have life in themselves. That is, they live because they have always live and because they want to live. They do not need anyone or anything to live. The Father and the Son have always and will always live. Those who believe in Jesus are also given eternal life (see: 5:24; 1 John 1:1-3). That is, they will live together with God in heaven forever.

See: God the Father; Son of God; Eternal Life; Heaven

What judgment did the Father give the Son to carry out?

[5:27]

Scholars think God gave Jesus permission to judge people in future when Jesus returns to earth to begin his kingdom (see: Daniel 7:13-14). However, these scholars also think that Jesus began judging the world when he came to the earth before. Jesus judged men because they rejected Jesus. When John spoke about this he chose to speak using the metaphor of light and dark.

See: Day of Judgment; Jesus’ Return to Earth; Kingdom of God; Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

What is the “resurrection of life”?

[5:29]

Jesus resurrects all people. Those who loved the light, that is they believed in Jesus, will live together with God in heaven forever. Also, they will be given new bodies (see: 1 Corinthians 15:42-45).

See: Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Light and Darkness (Metaphor); Day of Judgment; Heaven

What is the “resurrection of judgment”?

[5:29]

Again, Jesus resurrects all people. But, those who loved the darkness, that is they rejected Jesus, will be punished forever (see: Revelation 14:9-11).

See: Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Light and Darkness (Metaphor); Day of Judgment; Hell

Why does Jesus judge people perfectly?

[5:30]

Jesus judges people perfectly because he listens to God. He judges in the same way God the Father judges.

See: Judge (Judgment); God the Father

5:31-38

Who is Jesus talking about when he says, “there is another who bears witness of me”?

[5:32] Jesus spoke about God the Father when he said, “there is another who bears witness of me.” Another time, Jesus said that he did not speak his own words. However, he only spoke what God the Father told him to speak (see: 12:49-50).

See: Witness (Martyr); God the Father

How did John the Baptist witness about Jesus?

[5:33]

John boldly spoke to the crowds that Jesus was the light that came into the world (see: 1:6-7). John said the Jewish leaders that there was one coming who was greater than himself (see: 1:19-28). Also, John told people that Jesus was the “Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (see: 1:29-34).

See: Witness (Martyr); Light and Darkness (Metaphor); Lamb of God; Sin

What is the testimony greater than John’s testimony?

[5:36]

Jesus said that the things he did were a greater witness than what John said about him. That is, they proved that he was God and the Messiah more than the things John said. This is because God the Father gave him these things to do (see: 5:19-21). Perhaps Jesus did the same things that God the Father did and this caused people to know that God sent Jesus.

See: Testify (Testimony); Witness (Martyr); Jesus is God; Messiah (Christ); God the Father

5:39-47

Why did the Jewish leaders not know Jesus was the one who gave them peace with God?

[5:39, 5:40]

The Jewish leaders studied the Old Testament because they believed that they had found about how to have peace with God. However, they did not believe the right things. They did not understand that the Old Testament talked about Jesus, the Messiah. Only by believing in Jesus can someone be at peace with God.

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Messiah (Christ)

Why did Jesus say he did not “receive praise from men”?

[5:41]

Jesus did many things and taught the disciples how to live as Christians in order to glorify God the Father. Jesus did none of these things so that people would honor him. There were people who honored Jesus for the things he did, but Jesus honored God.

See: Glory (Glorify); God the Father

How did the Jewish leaders show they did not truly love God?

[5:42]

The Jewish leaders showed they did not truly love God because they rejected Jesus. Although God sent Jesus, they did not believe in him. John said Jesus is the light that came into the world. However, the Jewish leaders rejected Jesus as the light and chose to love darkness. That is, they chose to love the things they believed instead of the things God taught. Jesus told the Jews they were going to listen to false teachers, and they were going to welcome those false teachers. Perhaps Jesus spoke these words to warn the Jewish leaders (see: Matthew 24:4-5).

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor); False Teacher

In what way did Moses write about Jesus?

[5:46]

Moses wrote in the Law about a prophet who was going to come in the future. This prophet was going to be greater than even Moses. The Jews put all their trust in Moses and the Law of Moses. Even though Moses wrote about a prophet to come, the Jews did not see Jesus as this promised prophet (see: Deuteronomy 18:15-19).

Jesus said the Jews did not believe the writings of Moses because they did not understand what Moses wrote (see: Luke

16:31).
See: Matthew 5:17-18
See: Law of Moses; Prophet

John 6

6:1-15

What is the Passover?

[6:4]

Passover is a feast that Jews celebrated. They held this feast in Jerusalem. John said that the feast of the Passover “neared”(ἐγγύς/g1451). He did not say when this would happen (see: 2:13).

See: Passover

Why did Jesus “test” Philip?

[6:5]

Some scholars think Jesus “tested”(πειράζω/g3985) Philip to teach him something. Jesus taught this way often. Other scholars think Jesus showed Philip that he was truly the Messiah.

See: Test; Messiah (Christ)

How did Philip and Andrew respond to Jesus’ question about buying bread?

[6:7]

Philip said 200 denarii was not enough money to buy bread for all the people. This was a very large crowd because this was a large amount of money. Usually, it would take someone about 200 days to make 200 denarii. Andrew said he found a boy with five loaves of bread and two fish. However, this was not enough to feed this large crowd.

See: Denarius

How many people were in this crowd?

[6:10]

John said 5000 men sat in the crowd of people. Perhaps, this was only the number of men. There were also women and children in the crowd (see: Matthew 14:21). Therefore, there were more than 5000 people in the crowd.

What did Jesus do with the bread and the fish?

[6:11]

John said that Jesus “gave thanks”(εὐχαριστέω/g2168). Some scholars think that Jesus “gave thanks” for the food. They think his giving thanks caused the miracle to happen. Other scholars think Jesus “gave thanks” to God, because God gave them the food. Jesus gave the food to the disciples for them to give to the people (see: Matthew 14:19).

See: Thanksgiving; Miracle

How did the crowds respond to Jesus’ miracle?

[6:14]

Because people saw the “sign”(σημεῖον/g4592) Jesus did for them, they said he was a prophet. The people thought a prophet was coming into the world (see: Deuteronomy 18:15-19). Jesus knew the crowds wanted to make him their king. Some scholars think Jesus knew this even though no one said this because he was God and knew what people thought. John said that Jesus went away from the crowds and went up the mountain (see: Matthew 14:22-23).

See: Miracle; Sign; Prophet; Jesus is God

6:16-25

Why did the disciples leave on a boat to Capernaum without Jesus?

[6:17]

The book of Matthew said that Jesus told his disciples to get into the boat and go to Capernaum without him (see: Matthew 14:22). The disciples did what Jesus told them to do.

See: Disciple

See Map: Capernaum

When did the disciples see Jesus again?

[6:19]

After the disciples went about five kilometers in the boat, Jesus came to the boat. Jesus walked on the water. Jesus told them not to be afraid because “it is I” because he frightened the disciples. Some scholars think Jesus simply told the disciples that it was just him who was walking on the water. Other scholars think Jesus declared that he is God. This is because “it is I” can also be translated as “I am.” This is the same thing God said when he told Moses his name (see: Exodus 3:14).

See: Disciple; Yahweh (I am)

How did they get to Capernaum?

[6:21]

When Jesus stepped into the disciple’s boat, John said they made it to where they were going immediately. Some scholars think this was another miracle. Other scholars think John meant that nothing stopped them from getting to the other side

of the lake.

See: Disciple; Miracle

See Map: Capernaum

What did the crowd call Jesus?

[6:25]

The crowd called Jesus “rabbi”(ῥαββί/g4461). People called a teacher who was qualified to speak about the Law of Moses and how to live by the Law of Moses a “Rabbi.”

See: Law of Moses

6:26-40

What is the food that endures to living forever?

[6:27]

John said that certain food endures to living forever. Scholars disagree about what John was thinking about when he said this.

Some scholars think John was thinking about Jesus. That is, Jesus allows people to live together with God in heaven forever. John also said Jesus was the bread who gave people life (see: 6: 50-51). Some scholars think John was speaking about doing the things God wanted them to do. Some scholars think John was speaking about living together with God in heaven forever.

See: Heaven

How does Jesus have the seal of God on him?

[6:27]

Some scholars think that the “seal of God” and the image of God are the same (see: Colossians 1:15). More scholars think that the “seal of God” is a metaphor for God saying that Jesus is the only one who has the power to give food that endures to living forever.

See: Seal; Image; Metaphor

How did Jesus describe the “work of God?”

[6:29]

Jesus said that the “work of God” is the same as to “believing (πιστεύω/g4100) in the person God sent to the world. That is, it is the same as believing in Jesus. This means that people need to trust Jesus as the one who gives people the ability to live together with God in heaven forever (see: 6:27; Acts 4:10-12).

See: Faith (Believe in); Heaven

What kind of sign did the people think was coming?

[6:30]

Because the people spoke about the miracle of “manna”(μάννα/g3131) in the wilderness, scholars think they looked for a “sign”(σημεῖον/g4592) far greater than the one given during the time of Moses.

See: Sign; Miracle; Manna

What did Jesus tell the people about the “true bread” from heaven?

[6:32]

Jesus said the Father gives the “true(ἀληθινός/g0228) bread” that comes from heaven. This bread gives life, but it is a certain type of life. It is living together with God in heaven forever. Also, Jesus told the people that God the Father gave the bread from heaven during the days of Moses. That bread was food that fed the people physically in the wilderness. Jesus used the phrase “true bread” to speak about himself. That is, he makes it so that people can live together with God in heaven forever. Jesus clearly said, “I Am the bread of life.” Jesus told the people that to have the bread of life, they needed to come to him and believe in him.

See: Heaven; God the Father; Wilderness

What is the “will of the Father?”

[6:40]

See: Will of God

6:41-65

How does God the Father “draw”(ἐλκύω/g1670) people to Jesus?

[6:44]

Some scholars think that all people are born rejecting God and not wanting to believe in Jesus. They think that someone cannot believe in Jesus without God first doing something. That is, they cannot believe in Jesus unless God uses the Holy Spirit to convince them or make them believe in Jesus. Other scholars think God “draws”(ἐλκύω/g1670) people by showing himself in the world he has made. They think the world shows God’s power and also his great love and concern for mankind. These scholars think God also showed people his love by dying for their sins. This draws people to believe in Jesus.

See: Elect (Election); Holy Spirit; Sin

How is Jesus the “bread of life?”

[6:51]

Jesus said he was the “bread of life.” He wanted to say that he would die so that people would live together with God in heaven forever. Some scholars think Jesus is saying that he not only makes it so that people can live together with God in heaven, he also makes things last forever. This is the opposite of the manna given in the wilderness. That is, this bread only gave life for a short time.

See: Heaven; Manna; Wilderness

How does a person eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man?

[6:53]

Jesus used the metaphor of eating his flesh and drinking his blood to show what a person must do to live together with God in heaven forever. When someone believes in Jesus, they do so “inside” of them, they make Jesus part of them in some way. When a person eats bread or drinks water, the food and drink becomes part of that person. It gives him energy for living. Jesus gave his actual flesh when he died on the cross. His blood was actually spilled out on the cross. When a person believes in Jesus, he is believing in the flesh and blood of Jesus being given as a sacrifice on the cross.

See: Metaphor; Heaven; Cross; Sacrifice; Blood

How did Jesus’ followers react when Jesus described himself as the “bread of life”?

[6:60]

Many disciples thought that the words of Jesus were difficult to understand. Perhaps they did not really understand what he was saying to them.

See: Disciple

How did Jesus explain the meaning of his words to the disciples?

[6:63]

Both the Jewish leaders and the disciples of Jesus did not understand the words Jesus spoke. Jesus explained that the things he said came from the Spirit of God, therefore they could only be understood by the Spirit. The Jewish leaders and the disciples were trying to understand the words of Jesus through their own wisdom.

See: Disciple; Holy Spirit; Wise (Wisdom, Fool)

What did the twelve disciples say about Jesus?

[6:68]

Peter spoke for the twelve disciples and said to Jesus, “you have the words of eternal life”(see: 6:67). They also knew that Jesus was the “Holy One”(ἅγιος/g0040) of God. This means they believed that Jesus was the Messiah that God promised from long ago.

See: Disciple; Eternal Life; Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); Messiah (Christ)

John 7

7:1-5

Which “Jews” wanted to kill Jesus?

[7:1]

John spoke about certain Jews who wanted to kill Jesus. When John said this, he was speaking about some of the Jewish leaders who wanted to kill Jesus at previous times (see: 5:18).

What is the Feast of Shelters?

[7:2]

The Festival of “Shelters”(σκηνοπηγία/g4634) was one of three great feasts for the people of Israel. Jews celebrated every year because of God’s command (see: Leviticus 23:33-43). The people built shelters from palm branches. This is what gave the festival its name. They lived in these shelters during the feast. This festival celebrated God’s faithfulness during Israel’s wandering in the wilderness (see: Exodus 12-40). During this time, Israel lived in temporary shelters. The festival celebrated the fall harvest and had seven days of sacrifices. On the eighth day, they rested and gave more offerings and all the people came together.

See: Festival of Shelters

7:6-9

What did Jesus mean by saying, “my time has not yet come”?

[7:6]

Some scholars think Jesus’ used the word “time”(καιρός/2540) to speak about the moment which Jesus revealed himself to be the messiah. Some scholars think Jesus was thinking that it was not yet time for him to die. Other scholars think Jesus was simply waiting for the best time to go to the festival. The best time was after the crowds gathered for the feast.

See: Messiah (Christ); Reveal (Revelation)

Why does the “world” hate Jesus?

[7:7]

When Jesus spoke about the “world”(κόσμος/2889), he spoke about all the things that opposed God in every way. That is, the world is opposed to God because God gave the Devil permission to rule the world. And the Devil hates that Jesus speaks the truth about God. The Jewish religious leaders also hated Jesus because he spoke the truth about God.

See: World; Satan (The Devil)

What did Jesus mean by saying, "I am not going up to the feast"?

[7:8]

Some ancient copies of the Bible said "I am not going up to this feast." This means that Jesus was not going to the feast at any time. Other ancient copies of the Bible said "I am not yet going up to the feast." This means that Jesus was going to the feast, but he was not going to the feast yet. They both mean that it was not the right time for Jesus to go up to the feast.

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible

7:10-13

Why did the people fear the Jewish leaders?

[7:13]

Though many of the people at the feast knew Jesus to be a good man and that he did many miracles, they feared speaking about Jesus because the Jewish leaders punished those who spoke well of Jesus. Perhaps the Jewish leaders believed Jesus did not speak the truth about God.

See: Miracle

7:14-15

Why did the Jewish leaders say Jesus never studied the scriptures?

[7:15]

Jesus taught the scriptures in a way the Jewish leaders did not know. People living in that time period only studied the scriptures when they were taught by a rabbi. When someone taught, the Jewish leaders knew which rabbi was their teacher. The Jewish leaders did not know who taught Jesus. Therefore, they said that Jesus never studied the scriptures.

See: Rabbi

7:16-18

How is a person willing to do what God wants?

[7:17]

When a person is "willing" (θέλω/g2309) to do what God wants, it means he makes a choice to learn what God wants him to do and wants to do the things God wants him to do. He can do this by going through and learning the scriptures to see what they say about God and the things God wants.

What are the benefits for the person who is willing to do what God wants?

[7:17. 7:18]

A person who is willing to do what God wants, will be able to know if someone is teaching the truth about God. That is, because a person learns about what God wants by reading and studying the scriptures, he will know what is the truth about God.

7:19-24

How did circumcision come from the fathers?

[7:22]

The Law of Moses told the Jews to circumcise their male children. God commanded Abraham to use circumcision. This was before the birth of Moses (see: Genesis 17:9-14). The Jews circumcised each male child eight days after birth. If the eighth day was a Sabbath, they circumcised the baby on the Sabbath.

See: Law of Moses; Circumcise (Circumcision); Sabbath

How did the Jewish leaders not observe the sabbath correctly?

[7:23]

The sabbath laws did not forbid people from doing good on the sabbath day. However, the Jewish leaders avoided doing any kind of work. This made it seem that they obeyed the sabbath laws in the Law of Moses. Jesus challenged the thinking of the Jewish leaders with doing good things on the sabbath (see: Matthew 12:11-12; Luke 13:14-17). Once again, Jesus told the Jewish leaders to judge by what is "right" (δίκαιος/g1342) and good.

See: Sabbath; Circumcise (Circumcision); Law of Moses

7:25-32

Why did some people in Jerusalem not believe Jesus was the Messiah?

[7:26, 7:27]

Some people thought that Jesus cannot be the Messiah. They knew Jesus grew up in Nazareth. They thought the Messiah came through a miracle and when no one thought he would come. Malachi said that the Lord will suddenly come to His temple (see: Malachi 3:1). Therefore, some people thought no one would know from where the Messiah comes.

See: Messiah (Christ); Miracle, Temple

Why did some people in Jerusalem believe Jesus was the Messiah?

[7:31]

These Jews believed Jesus was the messiah because they knew when the true messiah came to Israel, he was not going to

do more miraculous signs than Jesus already did.

See: Messiah (Christ); Miracle; Sign

Why were the Jewish leaders not able to arrest Jesus?

[7:30]

The Jewish leaders wanted to arrest Jesus, but it was not his “hour.” That is, it was not the time he knew that he would be killed and wanted to die so that people could have peace with God (see: 8:20; 12:23-27; 13:1; 17:1). Jesus was not able to be arrested until God allowed it to happen.

7:32-36

Where was Jesus going that others were unable to come?

[7:34]

Many scholars think Jesus spoke about going to the cross to die for sin, rising from the dead, and then going to the Father in heaven. The Jewish leaders did not know that Jesus spoke about returning to heaven. That is, from where he came.

They thought Jesus spoke about going to one of the Gentile nations.

See: Cross; Sin; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; God the Father; Heaven; Gentile

7:37-39

How do people come to Jesus to drink?

[7:37]

Many scholars think that in the same way God gave water from a rock in the wilderness to provide the physical needs of the people of Israel, “drinking” from Jesus provided their spiritual needs (see: Numbers 20:1-13). This was a metaphor.

People come to Jesus and drink by believing in him. The Bible speaks of this. Jesus said that for those people who believe in him, there will be living water flowing from them. The living water is a metaphor for the Spirit of God who comes to live in those who believe in Jesus Christ (see: Ephesians 1:13-14).

See: Wilderness; Spirit (Spiritual); Metaphor; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

7:40-52

Why did Jesus’ words divide the people?

[7:43]

John wrote five different ways the things Jesus said divided the people.

Some people thought Jesus was the Messiah. They even said this. Other people did not think he was the Messiah. They thought the Messiah to come from Bethlehem. They did not know that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. He moved to Galilee and grew up in that area. Some people wanted Jesus arrested because he made them angry. He confused many officials because they never heard anyone speak in the way he spoke. The Jewish leaders began to question whether any of the officials believed in Jesus. They set out to prove that no prophet came from Galilee.

See: Messiah (Christ); Prophet

See Map: Bethlehem, Galilee

John 8

8:1-6

Why is John 7:53-8:11 not inside of all Bibles?

[8:1]

Many ancient copies of the Greek New Testament do not have John 7:53-8:11. Many Bible translations do not have these verses because some scholars do not think John wrote these verses when he wrote this book. However, some Bible translations have the verses because other scholars think John wrote these words even though some old copies of the Greek New Testament are missing these verses. Some English bibles place these verses in brackets: []. The brackets tell the translators that scholars do not know whether John wrote these verses. Overall, the oldest copies of the Greek New Testament do not have these verses, but many old copies of the Greek New Testament have these verses.

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible

What is the Mount of Olives?

[8:1]

See: Mount of Olives

See Map: Mount of Olives

Where was the Jewish Temple?

[8:2]

See: Temple

See Map: Jerusalem

Why did the scribes and Pharisees bring a woman adultery before Jesus?

[8:4]

The Pharisees brought the adulterous woman to Jesus because they wanted to trap him with questions about the Law of

Moses. They asked Jesus whether he thought the woman needed to be killed. The Law of Moses said that adulterers were to be stoned to death (see: Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22). If Jesus told the Pharisees to kill the woman, this was against the law of the Roman Empire. That is, the law of the Roman Empire said that only the Roman government was able to put people to death for their crimes (see: 18:31). If Jesus told the Pharisees to let the woman go free, then he broke the Law of Moses.

See: Adultery; Scribe; Pharisees; Law of Moses; Scribe, Pharisees, Law of Moses; Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar)

Why did Jesus write on the ground with his finger?

[8:6]

Scholars do not know why Jesus wrote on the ground with his finger. Some scholars think that Jesus' bending down and writing on the ground meant that he ignored the Pharisees and that they accused the women. Other scholars think he did this to show that Jesus was not going to judge the woman. Still other scholars think Jesus drew a picture to show the message spoken by the prophet Jeremiah. That is, what happens to those who forsake God (see: Jeremiah 17:13).

See: Prophet

8:7-9

How did Jesus challenge the Scribes and Pharisees?

[8:7]

Jesus challenged the scribes and pharisees when he got the crowd to focus on the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees instead of the woman's sins. Some Pharisees thought they obeyed the Law of Moses. While they did obey some of the Law of Moses, they did not obey the whole Law of Moses. This is because they did not understand the Law of Moses. The Pharisees knew they sinned. They knew they could not judge the woman because they were sinners also.

See: Scribe; Pharisees; Hypocrisy (Hypocrite); Sin; Law of Moses

8:12

Why did Jesus call himself the "light of the world"?

[8:12]

Jesus said "I am the light of the world" so that people would know that he is God (see: 1 John 1:5; Isaiah 42:5-6). This is the second time Jesus said "I am" statement made by Jesus about which John has written (see: 6:35). Many scholars think Jesus said, "I am the light of the world" toward the end of the Festival of Shelters. Part of this celebration included the lighting of many oil lamps and candles within the temple. This feast is still celebrated by the Jewish people today around the world. However, they are no longer able to celebrate in the temple because it was destroyed. The lighting of the oil lamps reminded the people of how God appeared as a column of fire when he led the people of Israel through the wilderness (see: Exodus 13:18-22).

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor); Yahweh (I am); Festival of Shelters; Temple; Wilderness

8:13-20

How did Jesus respond when the Pharisees' accused the woman?

[8:14]

Jesus said the Pharisees were wrong to accuse the woman. The Law of Moses said they needed two witnesses to prove an accusation true (see: Deuteronomy 19:15). Jesus said he had two witnesses, God the Father and himself. Jesus explained why his witness was true. That is, he knew everything. The Pharisees did not know this because they only saw things and heard things. They did not know things about heaven (see: 7:27-28; 9:29). John the Baptist also said that Jesus was the light of the world (see: 1:8-9).

See: Pharisees; Law of Moses; Witness (Martyr); God the Father; Heaven; Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

Why did the Pharisees ask Jesus about his father?

[8:19]

Some scholars think the Pharisees knew Jesus spoke about God being his father. However, they did not allow a witness who could not be seen. Therefore, they asked where was his father.

See: Pharisees; God the Father

8:21-24

What did Jesus mean when he said, "I am going away"?

[8:21]

Jesus said, "I am going away." Perhaps Jesus spoke of going to God the Father. That is, he went to the cross to die, he resurrected, and then he went to God the Father in heaven (see: 7:33-36).

See: God the Father; Cross; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Heaven

Why did Jesus tell the Jews they were going to die in their sin?

[8:21]

Jesus told the Jews they were going to die in their sin because they did not believe God the Father sent Jesus to the earth. The Jews believed obeying the Law of Moses and doing good things gave them peace with God. However, scripture teaches that no one can be at peace with God because they do good things (see: Galatians 2:16). They needed to believe in

God and that God the Father sent Jesus to the earth.

See: Sin; God the Father; Law of Moses

8:25-30

Why did the Pharisees question Jesus about who he was?

[8:25]

Because Jesus said “I am” the Jews began to question Jesus. These were the words God used when he told Moses his name (see: Exodus 3:14). Therefore, the Jews knew when Jesus said “I am,” he was saying that he is God. Jews did not even say the name “I am” when talking about God. They feared they might not say it correctly. They thought saying God’s name wrong dishonored God. Therefore, the Jews did not want to listen to Jesus about who he said he was. They thought he dishonored God both by saying God’s name.

See: Yahweh (I am)

What does it mean that the Son of Man will be lifted up?

[8:28]

John said that the Son of Man will be lifted up. Some scholars think Jesus spoke about the time when he would be nailed to and lifted up on the cross to die. Other scholars think Jesus spoke about his being lifted up on the cross and being lifted up into heaven. That is, he went to heaven after he was resurrected.

See: Cross; Heaven; Resurrect (Resurrection)

What did Jesus mean by saying, “then you will know”?

[8:28]

Jesus said that “you will know.” Some scholars think Jesus spoke about the time that came after his resurrection when he showed proved to people that he is God. Other scholars think Jesus spoke about a time in the future when the temple was going to be destroyed in the same way Jesus prophesied. The Pharisees were going to know because of the words Jesus spoke, not because the Holy Spirit helped them to believe Jesus.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Temple; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Pharisees; Holy Spirit

8:31-41

How do Christians remain in Jesus’ words?

[8:31]

Some scholars think that to “remain”(μένω/g3306) in Jesus’ words is to continue following his teaching. That is, to obey the words he taught. Other scholars think Jesus was talking about Jesus’ words helping to change someone.

Jesus said that those who remain in his word will “know”(γινώσκω/g1097) the truth. That is, they will know that the things said in Scripture are true and that they will live in the right way. The truth rules the Christian’s life. Jesus said this truth set a person “free”(ἐλευθερώω/g1659). That is, Christians will know that sin no longer rules their lives.

See: Free (Freedom)

How did the people respond to Jesus’ statement about truth setting them free?

[8:32]

John wrote that the people responded “against him”(πρός/g4314; αὐτός/g0846) when he said the truth will set them free. Some scholars think these people were those that did believe the words of Jesus (see: 8:31) at one time. Other scholars think these people were the Jews that never believed Jesus’ words. The people against Jesus thought they were free because they were descendants of Abraham.

See: Free (Freedom); Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs)

How did Jesus respond to the Jews’ claim of Abraham as their father?

[8:41]

Jesus agreed the Jews were physical descendants of Abraham. However, Jesus told the Jews they followed a different father. That is, because they did not do the things that Abraham did, they were not his true descendants. Jesus told the Jews they did not receive his “word” (λόγος/g3056) because they followed a different father. But, the Jews then told Jesus that God was their father. Perhaps Jesus was saying that they were acting like another father, Satan (see: 1 John 3:10).

See: Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Satan (The Devil); Children of God

8:42-47

How did Jesus respond to the Jews’ claim of God being their father?

[8:42]

Jesus told the Jews if God was their father, then they needed to love Jesus. That is, Jesus is from God (see: 5:19-24; 1 John 5:1). And those who loved God their Father also loved God’s Son, Jesus. Jesus tells the Jews they belong to the devil. He said the devil was their father, not God. This is because the Jews did not understand the truth of Jesus’ words.

See: 1 John 3:10

See: God the Father; Son of God; Children of God; Satan (The Devil)

Why did the Jews not believe the words of Jesus?

[8:45, 8:46]

Jesus said “because”(ὅτι/g3754) he speaks the truth, the Jews did not believe him. What proved that a person was a child of God was that he loved the truth. Because Jesus is the truth, they were going to believe in him if they were really God’s children. The children of the devil did not accept the truth. The devil is the father of lies. That is, he was the first liar. Jesus told the Jews they did not “hear”(ἀκούω/g0191) the words of God because they did not truly belong to God.
See: Children of God; Satan (The Devil)

8:48-53

Why did the Jews say that Jesus was possessed by a demon?

[8:48]

Some scholars think because Jesus accused the Jews of following a different father than that of Abraham or even God, the Jews said Jesus was possessed by a demon. These scholars think the Jews thought Jesus’ claim to come from God was an insult to God. The Jews said that this proved that a demon possessed Jesus. They also called Jesus a Samaritan. The Jews hated Samaritans and thought they did not believe in the true God.

See: Demon; Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons); Samaria

In what way did the Jews dishonor Jesus?

[8:49]

The Jews dishonored Jesus by accusing him of many things that were not true. Not only did they accuse Jesus of having a demon, but they accused him of being a Samaritan. They also accused him of disobeying what the Law of Moses said about the sabbath (see: 5:18). They also dishonored Jesus because they did not believe in him when he said he was equal with God. Jesus said earlier in the Book of John that whoever did not honor the Son also did not honor the Father (see: 5:22-23). Jesus also honored the Father by stating he does not want the people to honor him.

See: Demon; Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons); Samaria; Law of Moses; Sabbath; Son of God; God the Father; Jesus is God

In what way will a person who keeps Jesus’ word never die?

[8:51]

When a person “keeps”(τηρέω/g5083) the word of Jesus, they obey the things Jesus told them to do. Then people know that Jesus has given him a new type of life and that he will live together with God in heaven. That is, he heard the things Jesus said to do and did the things Jesus said to do. Because this person believes in Jesus and does what honors him, John wanted to say that he will never be “die,” that is he will never be separated from God. This is what the scriptures call the “second death.” The Jews were only thinking about the first death by saying that Abraham died. They did not know who Jesus is. They did not understand the things that he said.

See: Born Again (New Life, Regeneration); Eternal Life; Heaven; Die (Death)

8:54-56

What did Jesus mean by saying “my glory is nothing?”

[8:54]

By saying “my glory is nothing” Jesus said that he completely obeyed God the Father. It is the Father who honors Jesus. Perhaps Jesus spoke about the glory that was going to follow his death his resurrection, and his return to God Father (see: 17:5).

See: Glory (Glorify); God the Father; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; God the Father

In what way did the Jews not know God?

[8:55]

Jesus told the Jews they did not “know”(γινώσκω/g1097) God because those who know God also do what he told them to do. Jesus said he knows God and does what God the Father tells him to do. The Jews did not know God because they did not honor God the Son whom God sent (see: 5:37-47).

See: God the Father; Son of God

In what way did Abraham see Jesus’ day?

[8:56]

Some scholars think Abraham saw Jesus’ day when his son Isaac was born. God promised Abraham a son, and he said he was going to bless the whole world through this son. Other scholars think Abraham saw Jesus’ day when Abraham walked up the mountain to sacrifice his son Isaac. There Abraham saw God give the “lamb” for the sacrifice. In place of Isaac, God sent a ram to be sacrificed to him. This ram was a symbol of Jesus coming to be sacrificed for people’s sins (See: Genesis 22; Exodus 12; John 1:29). He is the “lamb of God.” These scholars think when God gave the ram for the sacrifice, He showed Abraham about the Messiah’s coming.

See: Bless (Blessing); Lamb of God; Sacrifice; Symbol; Messiah (Christ)

8:57-59

Who did Jesus say he is?

[8:58]

Jesus told the Jews he is the “I Am.” Jesus was saying that he is God. This is how he knew Abraham. The Jews thought Jesus

insulted God by saying this. They began to pick up stones to throw at Jesus. The Law of Moses said to stone someone who insulted God (see: Leviticus 24:16).
See: Yahweh (I am); Law of Moses

John 9

9:1-5

Why did the disciples ask Jesus, “who sinned?”

[9:2]

Some Jews thought a parent’s sin caused their children to suffer or be ill. Here, Jesus said sin did not cause this man’s blindness. This man was born blind to serve God in some way. Because he was blind, this allowed God to work in a special way in the man’s life. That is, God used this man’s problem to tell people about God.

See: Sin; Serve

Why did Jesus say he needed to work “while it was day”?

[9:4]

Some scholars think Jesus said he needed to work while it was day to say he needed to do the work of God while he was on the earth with his disciples. Other scholars think when Jesus said work must be done while it is day, he spoke about the amount of time God allowed for the gospel to be preached.

See: Disciple; Gospel; Preach (Preacher)

Why did Jesus say, “Night is coming”?

[9:4]

Jesus said, “Night is coming.” Some scholars think Jesus was speaking about the disciples who were going to suffer after he died. Other scholars think Jesus spoke about when God will judge people. This is because night is dark. John also said that God is light. Perhaps John wanted to warn people that there will be a time when those who reject God will not be separated from God forever.

See: Disciple; Day of Judgment; Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

Why did Jesus say, “As long as I am in the world”?

[9:5]

Jesus said, “as long as I am in the world.” Some scholars think Jesus spoke about his time on earth before he died. He did not live for very long, therefore he needed to work quickly. Other scholars think Jesus said he will always be in the world, even after he died. Jesus continues to live on the earth in some way through the Holy Spirit even after Jesus died.

See: Holy Spirit

How is Jesus the light of the world?

[9:5]

John said that Jesus is the “light of the world.” This is a type of metaphor. One reason Jesus is the light of the world is because he is life. That is, he creates all people and makes them new and different after they believe in Jesus. John said Jesus is life, and the life was the “light of men” (see: 1:4-5). Jesus said that people who follow him will be given this light, that is, they will live forever with God in heaven (see: 8:12).

People can also see things because of light. Another reason Jesus is the light of the world is because he made the world in a way that everyone can see that there is a God who created the world (see: 1:9; Romans 1:19-20). Because God gave light for all people to know, it means all people are able to know and believe in God. But, many people did not believe (see: 1:10-11; Romans 1:18-23).

Jesus showed another reason he is the light of the world. He opened the eyes of a man born blind. Before Jesus, all the man could not see any light. Therefore, Jesus made it so that people could see light.

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor); Heaven

9:6-7

Why did Jesus rub mud over the man’s eyes?

[9:6]

Some scholars think Jesus rubbed mud over the man’s eyes to show that he could do certain things that only God could do. In the same way God created man from the dust on the ground, Jesus used dust to create eyes that were able to see (see: Genesis 2:7). Some scholars think the man did not possess eyes at all. Others scholars think he possessed eyes, but that he was blind. Whether he had eyes or not, Jesus healed the man.

Why did Jesus send the blind man to the pool of Siloam?

[9:7]

Jesus sent the blind man to the pool of “Siloam” because people thought its waters were sacred. The Siloam pool is still inside the wall of ancient Jerusalem. A spring flows into it through a long tunnel cut through rock during the lifetime of King Hezekiah (see: 2 Kings 20:20). Some scholars think Jesus sent the man to the pool of Siloam to tell them that in the same way the Jews rejected the waters of “Shiloah” in the Old Testament, so they rejected Jesus in the New Testament (see: Isaiah 8:6).

See: Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); Old Testament (Law and Prophets); New Testament

Map: Siloam

9:8-16

What did the man's neighbors say about him?

[9:8]

Some of the man's neighbors talked about how he was the man who used to sit and beg. Others said it must be a different man, someone who looked like the beggar. Scholars think the miracle performed on the man was so amazing, some of the people were unable to think it was the same beggar who was healed.

See: Miracle

Why was the man brought to the Pharisees after he was healed?

[9:13]

The man was brought to the Pharisees after he was healed. This is because no one ever saw a miracle of someone being given back their sight. The people brought the man to the Pharisees after he was healed so that they could hear how this kind of miracle happened.

See: Pharisees; Miracle

How did the Pharisees respond to the healing of the blind man?

[9:16]

Because Jesus healed the blind man on the Sabbath, some of the Pharisees thought God did not send Jesus. They thought it was wrong to heal someone on the sabbath. This is because they thought that it was work, which was against the Law of Moses. It was not against the Law of Moses. Other Pharisees thought Jesus was a sinner because of this, and they thought that no sinner ever healed a blind man before. This miracle caused a division between the members of the Pharisees.

See: Sabbath; Pharisees; Law of Moses; Miracle

9:17-18

Jesus healed a man. Who did he think Jesus was?

[9:17]

The healed man told the Pharisees that he thought that Jesus was a prophet. When the man's neighbors asked him about who healed him, he said, "the man called Jesus." Some scholars think when the man told the Pharisees that Jesus is a prophet, and he thought people should respect Jesus. However, some of the Pharisees refused to believe Jesus came from God. They thought Jesus was someone who sinned because he did not obey the Sabbath and the Law of Moses in the way they thought it needed to be obeyed.

See: Pharisees; Prophet; Sin; Sabbath; Law of Moses

Why did the Jews ask to speak with the parents of the man he healed?

[9:18]

After Jesus healed the man, the Jews wanted to speak to the man's parents because they did not believe he was born blind. Some scholars think the Jews did not believe the words of the man's neighbors. That is, that they did not think that the man was truly born blind. They also did not believe the witness of the healed man himself.

9:19-23

Why did the parents say their son was "of age"?

[9:21]

The parents said that their son was "of age." Some scholars think the parents simply said their son was no longer a child. That is, he was a man and he was able to answer the Jews' questions for himself. Other scholars think the parents said their son was of the certain age, according to the Jewish law, to give his own answers. According to Jewish laws, a person to give a testimony needed to be thirteen years old. In either case, the parents did not give a direct answer to the Jews who asked them questions.

Advice to Translators: Here, "Jewish law" does not refer to the Law of Moses. Instead, it refers to the laws the Jewish leaders made.

See: Testify (Testimony)

Why did John write that the parents "feared the Jews"?

[9:22]

The parents feared the Jews because they said that anyone who believes that Jesus is the Messiah was no longer able to go to the synagogue. By this time in the life of Jesus, the leaders of the Jews opposed him and the things he taught. These Jews scared the people in a way that the people did not say anything about Jesus, and they gave no answers to direct questions about Jesus (see: 7:13). This caused the parents to have the Jews question their son. The parents did not want to have the Jewish leadership against them.

See: Messiah (Christ); Synagogue

9:24-34

Why did the Pharisees tell the healed man to "give glory to God"?

[9:24]

The Pharisees told the man Jesus healed to “give glory to God” to tell the man that he needed to agree with them that Jesus was a sinner (see: Joshua 7:19). The Pharisees wanted to hear that Jesus was a sinner. They already decided that he was a sinner because he was against the false things they taught.

The man told the Pharisees he did not know if Jesus was a sinner. However, he did know that Jesus healed him, and he knew Jesus healed him.

See: Pharisees; Glory (Glorify); Sin

Why did the Pharisees continue asking the man about his healing?

[9:26]

Some scholars think the Pharisees continued asking the healed man about his healing because they wanted to find out that the man was lying. In this way, they wanted to say the healing and the fact that Jesus did the healing was not true. Some scholars think the man mocked the Pharisees with his answer because he asked them if they wanted to follow Jesus too.

See: Pharisees

How did the Pharisees respond to the man who was healed?

[9:28]

Scholars think an argument began between the Pharisees and the man Jesus healed. They argued about which prophet they followed. The Pharisees did not think that God spoke to Jesus. They chose only to believe in Moses. They did think God spoke to Moses. They said they did not know from where Jesus came.

See: Pharisees; Prophet

Why did the man Jesus healed think the Pharisees’ answer was amazing?

[9:30]

The man Jesus healed thought the question of the Pharisees was amazing because never before has anyone given sight to someone who was blind from birth. The man thought that being healed was enough proof that Jesus came from God. He also knew that God did not listen to sinners. But the Pharisees thought they were right about Jesus, because they that he was a sinner. They did not accept the truth about the man’s healing. The Pharisees mocked him. Then they sent him out from the synagogue. That is, the man was unable to be a part of the synagogue meetings and activities anymore. The Pharisees already decided they were going to remove anyone from the synagogue who said Jesus was the messiah.

See: Pharisees; Synagogue; Messiah (Christ)

9:35-38

Who did Jesus say he was to the man he healed?

[9:35, 9:37]

Jesus told the healed man that the “Son of Man” spoke to him at that time. The Gospel of John uses the phrase “Son of Man” many times when speaking about Jesus (see: 1:49-51; 3:13-14; 5:27; 8:28).

See: Daniel 7:13

See: Son of Man

9:39-41

What is the “judgment” for which Jesus came into the world?

[9:39]

Jesus spoke earlier about how judgment came into the world (see: 3:17-21). Those who do not believe in Jesus are judged already. Jesus brought good news from God to all people who believe in him. Some Jews believed that they could be at peace with God by following the Law of Moses, they rejected Jesus. The Law of Moses “judged already” those who did not believe in Jesus because the Law of Moses spoke about the coming of another prophet, the Messiah. By rejecting Jesus, they disobeyed the Law of Moses.(see: 5:46-47). Jesus told the Pharisees they were guilty because they following the Law of Moses and were sinners would be judged.

See: Judge (Judgment); Law of Moses; Prophet; Messiah (Christ); Pharisees; Guilty .

John 10

10:1-6

Why did Jesus teach about sheep and the sheep pen?

[10:1]

Jesus spoke about sheep and a sheep pen. Some scholars think Jesus was speaking about the leaders of the Jews, because they were supposed to be the shepherds of Israel (see: Ezekiel 34:1-10). They think Jesus was speaking about how the Jewish leaders treated the blind man who had been healed. They rejected the work of God through Jesus, and they rejected the things the man said and expelled him from the synagogue. Jesus spoke about the Jewish leaders being the thieves and robbers when he taught. In the same way sheep follow the shepherd when he spoke, so Christians follow the things Jesus said. When they did this, they obeyed God. In the same way the thief and robber avoided the door when they tried to get into the sheep pen, the Jewish leaders tried to get to God in some other way than by Jesus. John said Jesus is

the door in this passage.

In scripture, when someone does not understand, it is said that they cannot see. This is a type of metaphor. They pharisees did not understand the things Jesus taught, therefore John said they could not see (see: 9:40-41).

See: Shepherd; Synagogue; Metaphor; Pharisees

Advice to Translators: A pen is a place where animals live. In this passage, a door can also be translated as gate.

10:7-13

What did Jesus mean when he said, “I am the gate of the sheep”?

[10:7]

As the shepherd (see: 10:1-5), Jesus led his sheep out to pasture. As the gate of the sheep, scholars think Jesus spoke that he protected the sheep. John wanted to say that those who believe in Jesus will live together with God in heaven forever. This is the only way for someone to be at peace with God (see: 14:6).

Advice to Translators: In this passage, a gate is often translated door. A pasture is a field where animals eat.

See: Shepherd; Door (Metaphor); Heaven

Who were the thieves and robbers “who came before”?

[10:8]

Scholars think Jesus was speaking about false prophets and teachers who said that someone could be at peace with God by obeying the Law of Moses. The false teachers only served themselves, and they did not serve God (see: Luke 11:39-46). They rejected the things Jesus taught.

See: False Prophet; False Teacher; Law of Moses; Serve

Why did Jesus state “I am the gate” a second time?

[10:9]

Jesus was stating very clearly that he is the only way for his sheep to enter into a place of safety, and the only way they could go out to feed in the pastures. This was a metaphor. John wanted to say that Jesus was the only way that someone could be at peace with God and live with Jesus in heaven forever.

Advice to Translators: In this passage, a gate is often translated door. A pasture is a field where animals eat.

See: Door (Metaphor); Heaven

What did it mean to have life abundantly?

[10:10]

Jesus said that those who believe in Jesus have life abundantly. He wanted to say that those who believe in Jesus more than just that people will have safety and enough to eat and drink. They will also live together with God in heaven forever.

How was Jesus the “good shepherd”?

[10:11]

Some scholars think Jesus contrasted himself with people who were hired to care for the sheep. They think Jesus was saying the “good shepherd” loved the sheep in a different way than people hired to care for sheep. Those who were hired would run from danger, but the “good shepherd” stayed to defend and care for the sheep (see: 1 Samuel 17:34-36). Those who owned the sheep loved them, while those who worked for other people did not love the sheep.

Other scholars think Jesus was the “good shepherd” because he was the shepherd who had come from God. Jesus, the good shepherd died for his sheep. This was a metaphor about people who believe in Jesus getting to live together with God in heaven (see: 1 Peter 3:18; Hebrews 13:20).

See: Shepherd; Atonement (Atonement); Metaphor

10:14-18

Why did Jesus say, “I am the good shepherd” a second time?

[10:14]

When Jesus spoke of himself as the “good shepherd” the second time, he spoke about how close he was to his sheep. That is, Jesus was close to all those who believe in him and they know him (see: 17:9-10).

See: Shepherd

Who were the sheep that were from a different sheep pen?

[10:16]

Scholars think Jesus was telling the Jews that there were also sheep to be gathered from the Gentile nations (see: 11:51-52; Romans 1:16; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 2:11-22). People from all nations were to be gathered under one shepherd, Jesus.

See: Gentile; Shepherd

What did Jesus mean, when speaking about laying down his life, that he would “take it again”?

[10:17]

When Jesus said, “I lay down my life so that I may take it again” he was telling people that he would die. He also said that he would be resurrected. This was what he planned. He also said that the Holy Spirit would begin to do things in a new way (see: 7:37-39; 17:5; Acts 2:1-4).

Jesus also told people that God gave him permission to lay down his life and to take it up again. Everything that happened

to Jesus was part of God's plan. Even though Jesus was beaten and nailed to the cross by men, none of it happened outside of God's plan (see: Acts 2:22-24)

See: Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Holy Spirit; Cross; Will of God

10:19-21

Why were the Jewish leaders divided?

[10:19]

Some of the Jewish leaders decided to reject everything about Jesus and who he said he was. Other leaders were not so quick to reject him, because no one had ever done the miracles Jesus did. Those leaders could not accept that a man doing the kind of miracles Jesus performed could be possessed by a demon.

See: Miracle; Demon

10:22-30

What was the Festival of Dedication?

[10:22]

See: Festival of Dedication

Why did the Jews want Jesus to speak "openly" about who he is?

[10:24]

The Jews wanted Jesus to speak openly about who he is. Scholars think the Jewish leaders were attempting to trap Jesus into saying something for which they could accuse him, and therefore further reject him. Perhaps the Jewish leaders were afraid of losing their positions as religious leaders (see: 11:48).

What did Jesus mean when he told the Pharisees, "You are not among my sheep"?

[10:26]

When Jesus told the Pharisees they were not his sheep, he was saying that God had not chosen them to be Jesus' sheep, that is to be Christians (see: 6:44; 12:37). The sheep that belonged to Jesus showed that they belonged by obeying him. Most of the Jewish leaders only rejected Jesus, the things he taught, and that he was God.

See: Pharisees; Shepherd

What are the great promises Jesus gave to those who were his sheep?

[10:28]

Jesus promised something to those who were his sheep, that those who believe in Jesus. He promised that they would live together with God in heaven forever (see: 3:16; 17:3). He also told those who believed in him that no one could ever "snatch" (ἀρπάξω/g0726) them out of the Father's hand. This was a metaphor.

Some scholars think that he wanted to say that Christians did not need to fear being mocked or accused by the Jewish leaders because they believe in Jesus. Other scholars think that he wanted to say that once someone believes in Jesus, nothing can stop them from living together with God in heaven forever. This promise was certain and could not be changed (see: 6:37-40). Other scholars think John wanted to say that God protects people. They think the only thing that can stop a Christian from living together with God in heaven forever is a Christian choosing to reject God and not wanting to live with God forever.

When Jesus said this, everyone knew that Jesus taught people that he is God.

See: Shepherd; Heaven; Metaphor; Eternal Security

What did it mean that the Father and the Son are one?

[10:30]

God the Father and God the Son are the same. Some scholars think they are perfectly "one" in the sense that they do the same types of things. The things God the Father did, Jesus did too (see: 5:19). This did not mean that God the Father and God the Son were one person. Other scholars think John wanted to say that God the Father and Jesus wanted the same things to happen or that they were both perfectly good (see: 1:1-2).

See: God the Father; Son of God; Trinity; Jesus is God

10:31-39

Why did the Pharisees accuse Jesus of saying that he is God?

[10:33]

The Pharisees knew that Jesus was claiming to be God. Because they rejected Jesus, they accused him of blasphemy. According to the Law of Moses, when someone blasphemed, that person was to be punished and killed.

See: Pharisees; Blaspheme (Blasphemy); Law of Moses

Why did Jesus use the words from scripture which say, "you are gods"?

[10:34]

Jesus used the words from scripture which say, "you are gods" to show that human leaders, such as kings and judges, could be called gods (see: Psalm 82:1-8). They were not God, but perhaps John wanted to say that they did something that only God could do, judge people. Or perhaps they did things for God.

See: Judge (Judgment)

What did it mean that “scripture cannot be broken”?

[10:35]

John said that “scripture cannot be broken.” This was a type of metaphor. Some scholars think Jesus was saying the scriptures are always right because God wrote. Because of this, the scripture cannot be wrong or change. Jesus did not reject the Law of Moses (see: Matthew 5:17-18).

See: Metaphor; Law of Moses

Why did Jesus tell the Jewish leaders to “believe the works”?

[10:38]

Jesus did not expect the Jewish leaders to believe when he told them who he is. For this reason, Jesus told the leaders of the Jews to “believe the works.” That is, they should believe him because of the things he did. He did things that only God could do and he did things that honored God.

Why did Jesus leave the area and go back across the Jordan?

[10:40]

Jesus left and went back across the Jordan River. Perhaps he did this because people were trying to attack Jesus. Therefore, he went back across the Jordan River where John baptized people (see: 5:18; 8:37; 10:31).

See Map: Jordan River

See: Baptize (Baptism)

John 11

11:1-16

Who were Lazarus, Mary, and Martha?

[11:1]

Lazarus, Mary, and Martha were Jesus’ close friends. Both John and Luke wrote about their friendship (See: 11:1-12:11; Luke 10:38-42).

See Map: Bethany

Why did Jesus say, “This illness does not lead to death”?

[11:4]

Jesus said, “This illness does not lead to death.” Jesus was not saying that Lazarus will not die from his sickness. In fact, he did die. He was dead for four days. He meant that Lazarus would not remain dead. How did the death of Lazarus glorify God?

Scholars think Lazarus died so that God could show his glory to people. God made his power known to people by bringing Lazarus back to life after he died. God made his love and compassion known to people by doing this. God glorified Jesus through this miracle.

See: Glory (Glorify); Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Love; Miracle

Why did Jesus wait two days before travelling to visit Mary and Martha?

[11:6]

Jesus waited for two days before traveling to visit Mary and Martha for two reasons. Jesus wanted to give time for people to know Lazarus was dead. Perhaps Jesus wanted to make it known that he had the power to bring Lazarus back to life. He controlled what happens after people die. He wanted everyone to know that the miracle did not have any other possible reasons for occurring. Jesus wanted Mary and Martha to know he loved them very much. He wanted to help them to trust him.

See: Miracle

Why did Jesus use the metaphors of day and night?

[11:9, 11:10]

Many scholars think Jesus used the metaphor of the day to speak of his ministry on the earth. These scholars think Jesus told his disciples he was safe because he did the things his Father wanted him to do. John spoke about Jesus being the “light of the world” (see: 9:5). These scholars think Jesus used the metaphor of the night to speak of when Jesus returned to heaven.

See: Metaphor; Disciple; God the Father; Light and Darkness (Metaphor); Heaven

Why did Jesus say, “Lazarus has fallen asleep”?

[11:11]

The New Testament uses the metaphor of sleep to mean someone died (see: Matthew 9:24; Acts 7:60; 1 Thessalonians 4:13). This was a common metaphor during the time of the New Testament but not during the time of the Old Testament and for the Jewish people. This is why the disciples did not know Jesus said that Lazarus was dead when the disciple said he was sleeping.

See: New Testament; Metaphor; Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Disciple

Why did Thomas say, “that we may die with him”?

[11:16]

When Thomas said “let us also go that we may die with him,” people knew that he was being courageous and devoted to

Jesus. He knew the Jewish leaders wanted to kill Jesus. Perhaps Thomas thought the disciples would be killed with Jesus.
See: Disciple

11:17-37

Why does John say Lazarus was in the tomb for four days?

[11:17]

John said that Lazarus was in the tomb for four days so that people would know that Lazarus was dead and not just sick. At this time, the Jews thought the soul of a dead person remained near a grave for three days. It did this hoping to return to the body. The body began to decay after four days, and the soul no longer remained with the body. Some scholars think Jesus did not go immediately to Bethany because he wanted to bring more honor to God. They think Jesus wanted people to know that he could make the dead live and that he could stop decay and remove uncleanness.

See: Soul; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Clean and Unclean

Why did Martha say, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died”?

[11:21]

Martha said, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” She knew that Jesus could have saved her brother and she was very sad because he died. Martha’s also knew God would do whatever Jesus asked him to do. Perhaps she thought good things would happen because Lazarus died. Martha knew Lazarus would live again at the last day.

See: Day of Judgment; Resurrect (Resurrection)

Why did Jesus say, “I am the resurrection and the life”?

[11:25]

Jesus said “I am.” Jesus wanted people to know that they could not come back to life after they died without him. Only by believing in Jesus can someone be at peace with God and live together with God in heaven forever. Some scholars think Jesus spoke these words to Martha because he wanted her to trust him completely. They think Jesus spoke these things so that Martha would know that he had the ability to do these things.

See: Yahweh (I am); Resurrect (Resurrection)

Why did Martha say, “Yes, Lord”?

[11:27]

Martha said, “Yes, Lord” so that people would know that she knew Jesus was the messiah.

See: John 20:30-31; Matthew 16:16

See: Lord; Messiah (Christ)

Why was Jesus “deeply moved”?

[11:33]

When Jesus was “deeply moved”(ἐμβριμάομαι/g1690), he was angered. Some scholars think Jesus was angered because of the problems sin caused in the world. That is, it caused sickness, disease, and death which causes great sorrow. Other scholars think the people grieving caused Jesus to be angry because they did not have hope. They did not believe in Jesus because if they did, they would know that they would live together with God in heaven forever. They would have hope.

See: Sin; Hope; Heaven

In what way had “Jesus wept”?

[11:35]

John said that Jesus wept. Scholars think Jesus wept silently, but he was very sad. His tears made known his genuine sympathy. This was unlike certain people in ancient Israel who were paid to cry after people died. They think Jesus felt sympathy for both Mary and Martha for their great loss. The Jews at the tomb thought Jesus wept because of his great love for Lazarus.

Advice to Translators: Sympathy means that someone feels sorrow for someone else because something bad has happened to them.

11:38-44

How did Martha see the “glory of God”?

[11:40]

Martha saw the power of God when Jesus made Lazarus alive again. Scholars think whenever Jesus made known the power of God, it was to glorify God. Scholars also think that all those seeing Lazarus made alive again saw a miracle. Also, those who believed in Jesus saw the miracle in the same way as the glory of God was made known to them.

See: Glory (Glorify); Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Miracle

What did Jesus’ public prayer make known to the crowd?

[11:41, 11:42]

Scholars think that Jesus’ prayer made the crowd know that he was sent by God the Father and that he all the things that God the Father told him to do. They think Jesus’ wanted some of the crowd to see him pray and believe that God truly sent Jesus into the world.

See: Pray (Prayer); God the Father

How did Jesus make Lazarus alive again?

[11:43]

Jesus made Lazarus alive again by calling his name. He commanded Lazarus to come out of the tomb. Some scholars think the command of Jesus to Lazarus will be the same command given for all those who die believing in Jesus. Jesus will call their name and command them to come out of their graves on the last day (see: 1 Thessalonians 4:16).

See: Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Tomb; Day of Judgment; Jesus' Return to Earth

Why did Lazarus have clothes on his hands and feet?

[11:44]

In ancient Israel, a dead body was wrapped in a large sheet of cloth before being buried. They tied the feet together at the ankles with another cloth. And they tied the arms to the body with linen strips. These wrappings made it difficult for Lazarus to move and walk.

11:45-57

Why did John say that Caiaphas was high priest for “that year”?

[11:49]

When John said that Caiaphas was the high priest for “that year,” he meant that Caiaphas was high priest during this specific year. That is, the year of Jesus’ death and resurrection. It did not mean Caiaphas was high priest for only one year (see: 18:12-14).

See: High Priest; Resurrect (Resurrection)

How did Caiaphas prophecy that Jesus would die?

[11:50]

John wrote that Caiaphas said that one man should die for the nation was a prophecy. John meant that God gave Caiaphas those words to speak. Caiaphas did not know he prophesied about Jesus dying. They think Caiaphas was only worried that Jesus or his followers might threaten the Sadducees in some way. Caiaphas did not want this because he thought this would cause the nation to “perish”(ἀπόλλυμι/g0622). The Romans allowed the Jews to have the temple and worship God. However, the Jews could not cause any problems for the Romans. Caiaphas thought that Jesus or his followers might cause fighting among the Jews. This would cause problems for the Romans, and they would destroy the Jewish temple and nation for this.

See: Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Sadducees; Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar); Temple; Worship

What did the words, “the children of God who are scattered would be gathered together into one” mean?

[11:52]

At that time John wrote, there were many Jews who believed that Jesus was the messiah. The persecution of Christians caused them to go to other countries. God promised that he will bring them back together (see: Isaiah 43:5-7; Ezekiel 34:11-12). Some scholars think John also spoke about the Gentiles as well as the Jews (see: 12:32; Ephesians 2:11-18).

See: Children of God; Messiah (Christ); Persecute (Persecution) ; Gentile

Where was the town of Ephraim?

[11:54]

See map: Ephraim

What was the “Passover of the Jews”?

[11:55]

See: Passover

Why did John write that they needed “to purify themselves”?

[[11:55]

The Law of Moses has instructions for Jews who were unclean. It took seven days for someone to become clean. At the end of the seven days, the one who was unclean was pronounced clean. So, many Jews went up to Jerusalem early so they might be made clean before the Passover began (see: Numbers 9:6-12; 19:11-12).

See: Law of Moses; Clean and Unclean; Passover

John 12

12:1-11

Why did Lazarus, Martha, and Mary give this dinner for Jesus?

[12:2]

Lazarus, Martha, and Mary gave Jesus dinner at their home. Jesus made Lazarus alive again, so they wanted to honor him. Perhaps they also did this because Passover began in six days. This was Jesus’ final Passover while on earth. Scholars think this was the dinner Matthew, Mark and Luke about (See: Matthew 26:6-13, Mark 14:3-9, and Luke 7:36-38).

See: Passover

See Map: Bethany (showing how close it is to Jerusalem)

What perfume did Mary pour on Jesus?

[12:3]

Mary poured nard on Jesus. This was very expensive. It was a sweet smelling oil. It was made from the roots of a plant.

Mary used a "litra" of the perfume. That is, she used about half a litre. What did Jesus want his disciples to think about his being anointed (12:7-8)? Jesus wanted his disciples to think of how he was going to die soon. He knew he was going to die. But he also knew that his disciples did not know this.

Jesus told them not to sell the perfume. Jesus did not say this because he did not want his disciples to help the poor people. Instead, he wanted them to listen to him while he was still on earth. They could worship God in person while he was on the earth. This was not something everyone could do. They could help the poor after he was gone.

See: Disciple; Worship

Why did many Jewish leaders want to kill Lazarus?

[12:10, 12:11]

Many Jewish leaders wanted to kill Lazarus because of Jesus. Jesus made Lazarus alive again. This caused many people to follow Jesus. They believed he was the Messiah. But the Jewish leaders did not believe Jesus was the Messiah, and they did not want other people to believe in him. So they thought that if they killed Lazarus, people will stop believing in Jesus.

See: Messiah (Christ)

12:12-19

Did Matthew, Mark and Luke write about Jesus' "triumphal entry" into Jerusalem?

[12:12, 12:13]

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John all speak of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem before his crucifixion. He entered into the city in the same way a king would enter into a city after a great victory. Because all four of these men wrote about this happening, scholars think they really wanted people to know about it.

See: Matthew 21:1-11, Mark 11:1-11, and Luke 19:29-38

See: Crucify (Crucifixion)

Why did many people come to see Jesus ?

[12:18]

Many people came to see Jesus because they wanted to see his miracles. The people who saw Jesus make Lazarus alive again (See: 12:17) told other people that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem from Bethany. So, many people went to see him. They wanted to see the man who made Lazarus alive again. They wanted to hear what he said. They wanted to see if the Pharisees would arrest him.

Jesus was honored in Jerusalem in the same way a powerful man was honored. In ancient times, after a general or king defeated their enemies, they rode into their capital city. Their soldiers and the men they captured followed them to give them honor. Many people came to welcome them.

See: Miracle; Pharisees

Why did the people wave palm branches?

[12:13]

The people waved palm branches to honor Jesus. They did this while he entered the city. They cut these branches from date palm trees. These were on the side of the road leading to Jerusalem.

What did the people shout?

[12:13]

The people who came to greet Jesus shouted words that honored him. "Hosanna" is an Aramaic word. People used this to honor someone. They wanted to say "We praise you!" They also shouted words from Scripture to honor Jesus (See: Psalm 118:25-26). They called him a man coming to speak for God. They called him a king.

Why did Jesus ride into Jerusalem on a donkey?

[12:14]

Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey to fulfill a prophecy (See: Zechariah 9:9). In ancient Israel, leaders rode on horses when they fought against each other. However, they rode on donkeys when there was peace. Jesus rode on a donkey. He wanted the people to think of a gentle king.

See: Fulfill (Fulfillment); Prophecy (Prophecy)

Why did the Pharisees say, "the world has gone after him"?

[12:19]

The Pharisees said, "the world has gone after him" because all the people welcomed Jesus. This worried them. They worried that people might stop listening to them. Instead, they would listen to Jesus. This caused them to begin planning to kill Jesus.

See: Pharisees

12:20-50

Why did John write about the "Greeks"?

[12:20]

John wrote about "Greeks." These people were not Jewish. John was a Jew. When John was alive, Jewish people said "Greek" to speak of a non-Jewish person. That is, John wrote of Gentiles coming to the Passover festival.

See: Gentile; Passover

Why did John write that Philip was from Bethsaida in Galilee?

[12:21]

John wrote that Philip was from Bethsaida in Galilee. Many "Greeks" or Gentiles lived in this town. Therefore, Philip knew how to talk to them. Perhaps he knew some of the people who came to talk to him. He also knew Jesus. So, he was the person to tell these people about Jesus.

See: Gentile

See Map: Bethsaida and Galilee

Why did Philip talk to Andrew?

[12:22]

Philip talked to Andrew because Andrew was good at telling people about Jesus. Andrew was Peter's brother. He brought Peter to meet Jesus (See: 1:41). He also took Jesus to heal their mother (See: Mark 1:29-30). So, Philip wanted Andrew to help get Jesus to speak with these Gentiles.

See: Gentile

12:23-26

Why did Jesus say, "the hour has come"?

[12:23]

Jesus said "the hour has come." He wanted to make known that something was happening that they needed to pay attention to. He did not mean a specific time. Instead, he meant that people were ready for this thing to happen.

Why did Jesus say, "Son of Man"?

[12:23]

Jesus called himself "Son of Man." He wanted people to think about him in a special way. The Old Testament used the words "Son of Man" to speak of the messiah. Therefore, Jesus wanted people to know he was the messiah spoken of in the Old Testament.

See: Son of Man; Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Messiah (Christ)

Why did Jesus talk about wheat?

[12:24]

Jesus told a parable about wheat. This was a metaphor. He used it to talk about when he would die. He wanted people to know that he would be made alive again after he died. He wanted people to think about how one grain of wheat becomes a living plant after it is placed in the ground.

Also, he spoke of how one grain of wheat grows a plant that has many more grains of wheat on it. So, Jesus wanted to say that many people would believe in him after he died.

See: Parable; Metaphor; Resurrect (Resurrection)

12:27-29

Why did Jesus talk about the "hour"?

[12:27]

Jesus talked about the "hour." That is, he would soon suffer and die on the cross. He was not speaking about a certain time of the day. Instead, he wanted to say that something would soon happen. This was his crucifixion.

See: Crucify (Crucifixion); Cross

Why did Jesus say, "Father, glorify your name"?

[12:28]

Jesus said "Father, glorify your name." Jesus wanted to honor God when he died. Jesus died so that people could be at peace with God. This honored God.

See: God the Father; Glory (Glorify); Name

What was the voice that "came from heaven"?

[12:28]

God the Father was the voice that "came from heaven." The Father answered Jesus' prayer.

God said "I have glorified it and will glorify it again." He said that Jesus' death fulfilled the Father's plan for the world. He made it so that people could be at peace with God. By doing this, he honored God. God also said that Jesus' dying and being made alive again honored the Father in the present time and in a future time.

See: God the Father; Heaven; Pray (Prayer); Glory (Glorify); Resurrect (Resurrection)

Why did Jesus say, "judgment of this world" and "ruler of this world"?

[12:31]

Jesus wanted people to think of God and the wrong things they did when he said "judgment of this world." God will judge everyone because everyone does wrong things. He wanted people to think about Satan when he said "ruler of this world." God gave some permission to Satan to "rule" the world for a while. However, God will judge Satan. God will "throw him out" of the world forever (See: 1 Peter 5:8, Romans 16:20, Revelation 2:13, 12:9, 20:7-10).

See: Judge (Judgment); World; Satan (The Devil)

Why did Jesus say he would be "lifted up"?

[12:32]

Jesus said he would be "lifted up from the earth." That is, he would be crucified. People were tied and nailed to crosses during crucifixion. Then the cross was lifted up with the person on it. This was above the ground so people could see them. So Jesus was physically "lifted up" when he was crucified.

Normally, a crucified person was shamed. However, Jesus was not shamed, he was honored because he died for people. Jesus also wanted people to believe in him. He said people will believe in him after he died.

See: Crucify (Crucifixion); Shame (Ashamed); Atone (Atonement)

Why did the people ask Jesus about the "Son of Man"?

[12:34]

People did not understand Jesus when he spoke about the "Son of Man." So they asked him what this meant. The Jewish people thought the messiah was going to make Israel a great nation again. They thought he was going to live forever and rule them forever (See: Psalms 72:17, 89:35-37, Isaiah 9:7, and Ezekiel 37:25). "Son of Man" was a title for this messiah (See: Daniel 7:13-14).

Some of the people believed Jesus was the messiah. However, they did not understand him when he said he was going to die. They did not understand how the "Son of Man" could die. So they asked Jesus to make known what he was saying.

Advice to Translators: A title is a specific name someone is given because of a particular position they hold. For example, mother is a title given to a child's female parent. These titles always have special meaning. The title itself gives specific information about the person with the title. We know the title "mother" means that woman has at least one child. In the same way, "Son of Man" gives us specific information about the messiah and how he fulfilled prophecy.

See: Son of Man; Messiah (Christ)

Why did Jesus talk about the "light"?

[12:35, 12:36]

Jesus used the metaphor of light to speak of himself. He wanted to say that he was not merely a man. He is God. "Light" meant good and pure. God is the best and purest of all things. So Jesus used this metaphor to say he is God.

However, he also wanted people to know that he was not going to live on earth much longer. So he said they will only have the "light" for "a short amount of time." He also used the metaphor of walking. He wanted people to think about how they should believe in him and do the things that he did. He wanted them to believe and do the things he did while he was still on earth.

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor); Jesus is God; Walk

Why did some people not believe in Jesus?

[12:37, 12:39]

Many of the Jewish people did not believe in Jesus. The Jewish leaders taught them wrong things about the messiah. Also, many people did not understand the things taught in Scripture. Because of these things, they did not want to believe in Jesus. So, God "hardened their hearts." That is, he allowed them to not believe. He gave them what they wanted. The prophet Isaiah said this will happen (See: Isaiah 53:1, 6:10).

See: Messiah (Christ); Heart (Metaphor); Prophet

How did Isaiah see "the glory of Jesus"?

[12:41]

Isaiah saw "the glory of Jesus" in a vision from God (See: Isaiah 6: 1-4) Isaiah lived before Jesus was on earth. But Jesus is God. So Jesus was with God the Father in heaven before he was born. Jesus shares God's glory. Therefore, Isaiah saw Jesus when he saw the glory of God.

See: Glory (Glorify); Vision); Jesus is God; God the Father; Heaven

What did John want to say about some of the rulers?

[12:42]

John wrote "some of the rulers." because not all the Jewish leaders were against Jesus. Some of them believed in him. However, they did not tell others that they believed in him because they were afraid of the Pharisees. If they said they believed in Jesus, the Pharisees would not allow them to worship in the Jewish synagogues.

See: Pharisees; Worship; Synagogue

Why did Jesus "cry out"?

[12:44]

Jesus cried out to say several things:

He wanted to speak of "the one who sent me." That is, God the Father. He wanted to say that people needed to believe in him. He said that when people believe in him, they also believe in God. This is because Jesus and the Father are both God. He wanted to speak about himself in a metaphor of light (See: 12:34-36). He used the metaphor of darkness. He wanted people to think about their sins. He saves people in the same way that light shines and removes darkness. He wanted to say that God will judge people. He will punish people who do not believe in Jesus. He wanted to say that he only spoke the things God told him to speak. He wanted to say everyone who believe in Jesus will live together with God in heaven forever.

Advice to Translators: Crying out means to speak in a very loud voice.

See: God the Father; Jesus is God; Light and Darkness (Metaphor); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Judge (Judgment); Punish (Punishment); Heaven

John 13

13:1-17

Why did John write that Jesus "knew his hour had come"?

[13:1]

John wrote that Jesus "knew his hour had come." That is, Jesus knew he was going to die soon. The metaphor of an "hour" was about a certain time, which was the end of Jesus's life.

See: Metaphor

Why did John write that the devil "put it into the heart" of Judas Iscariot?

[13:2]

John wrote that the devil "put it into the heart" of Judas Iscariot. That is, Judas wanted to help the people who wanted to kill Jesus. John wrote that the devil gave Judas these thoughts. He wanted his readers to know this was an evil idea.

See: Satan (The Devil); Heart (Metaphor)

Why did John write, "the Father had given everything over into Jesus hands"?

[13:3]

John wrote, "the Father had given everything over into Jesus' hands." He wanted to say that God the Father gave Jesus power over everything that happened. Some scholars think God gave Jesus permission to choose when and how he would die. They think this because John also wrote that Jesus "had come from God and was going back to God" (13:3). Other scholars think God gave Jesus power over the whole world. They think this because many other verses talk about this (see: Mark 5:30, Acts 10:38, Romans 1:4, Colossians 1:15-18, 2 Peter 1:16). Other scholars think that John wanted to say both of these things.

See: God the Father

Why did Jesus wash his disciples' feet?

[13:5]

Jesus washed his disciples' feet for two reasons:

He did this to clean their feet. The roads in Palestine were made of dirt. People walked everywhere. So their feet had dirt on them. He did this so that they would know that they needed to serve other people (See: 13:14-16). Only servants or slaves washed people's feet. When Jesus lived, it was shameful to wash someone else's feet. But Jesus washed his disciples' feet. He is the Son of God and not a servant or slave. He rules over everything, yet he served others. He wanted people to serve other people.

See: Disciple; Serve; Shame (Ashamed); Son of God

What did Peter want to say to Jesus?

[13:6]

Peter told Jesus he did not want Jesus to wash his feet. He thought that washing feet was a shameful thing to do. First, he asked this as a question. Then, he said, "Lord, you will never wash my feet." But Jesus said he must wash him. Then, Peter wanted Jesus to wash his hands and head. He wanted to have Jesus wash all of him. Some scholars think Peter thought this was less shameful than washing only Peter's feet. Other scholars think Peter was saying that he really wanted to follow Jesus.

See: Shame (Ashamed)

What did Jesus want to say to Peter?

[13:7, 13:10]

Jesus wanted to say that it honors God when Christians help other people. This is true even when someone serves others by doing something others think is shameful. Jesus wanted his disciples to honor God. So he wanted them to help other people (See: 13:14-15). He wanted them to do things that help other people, even if they feel shame while they are doing it.

See: Serve; Shame (Ashamed); Disciple

13:18-30

Who was Jesus speaking of in 13:18?

[13:18]

Jesus spoke of Judas Iscariot in 13:18. Jesus knew Judas was going to help the Jewish leaders to find Jesus. Jesus wanted his other disciples to know that this was something that must happen.

Jesus also spoke of his other disciples. He wanted them to know that all of them except Judas were loyal disciples. They trusted Jesus and he trusted them. He also wanted them to know that God forgave their sins. So he called them "clean" (see: 13:10) and "chosen" (see: 13:18).

See: Disciple; Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Clean and Unclean; Elect (Election)

Who did Jesus talk about in 13:19-20?

[13:19, 13:20]

Jesus talked about himself in 13:19-20. He wanted to say that he is God. God gave himself the name "I am" (see: Exodus 3:14). He did this when he spoke to Moses. Jesus used the same words "I am" (see: John 8:58). He wanted people to know that he is God.

Jesus also talked about "him who sent me." He wanted to say that he spoke for God because God sent him to earth.

See: Yahweh (I am); Jesus is God

13:23-30

Why did John write, "one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved"?

[13:23]

John wrote "one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved" in 13:23. Scholars think this was because John wrote about himself. John did not write his name in his gospel. Instead, he wrote "one whom Jesus loved" (see: John 19:26, John 20:2, John 21:7; John 21:20).

See: Disciple; Love; Gospel

Why did John write "lying down at the table against Jesus' side"?

[13:23]

John wrote "lying down at the table against Jesus' side." This was how people ate meals. At that time, people ate meals lying down around a table. They laid on their left arm with their feet pointing away from the table. They used their right hand to eat. Each person was near the persons lying next to them. So John was "at Jesus' side." Because he was near Jesus, he could easily lean against Jesus's side and ask him a question (see: 13:25).

Why did Jesus dip bread and give it to Judas Iscariot?

[13:26]

Jesus dipped bread and gave it to Judas Iscariot. He knew that Judas would betray him. Normally, dipping bread and giving it to someone gave that person great honor. However, Jesus knew Judas was going to give him to the Jewish leaders to be killed. Instead of honoring Judas, Judas was shamed.

See: Shame (Ashamed)

Why did John write about Judas and Satan in 13:27?

[13:27]

John wrote that Satan went into Judas to make known that Judas was doing what Satan wanted him to do. Some scholars think Satan controlled what Judas did. Judas was one of Jesus' disciples. However, Judas did not agree with what Jesus said and did. Therefore, he planned with Jesus' enemies. Because of this, he allowed Satan to "enter" him and take control of him. He wanted to do the things that Satan wanted him to do.

Other scholars think Satan only tempted Judas. The longer Judas did what Satan wanted him to do, the more he was doing what Satan wanted him to do. So in this way, Satan was doing what he wanted through Judas.

See: Satan (The Devil); Disciple; Tempt (Temptation)

13:31-38

Why did Jesus talk about being "glorified"?

[13:31]

Jesus talked about his being "glorified" in 13:31-32. He wanted his disciples to think about how God sent Jesus to earth. He wanted them to know that he did what God said to do. This would honor God. Also, God would greatly honor Jesus for this.

Jesus spoke about himself when he said "Son of Man."

When Jesus said he would be glorified immediately, he spoke of how would be killed and made alive again very soon (see: 13:32).

See: Glory (Glorify); Disciple; Son of Man

Why did Jesus say "you cannot follow me now, but you will follow later"?

[13:36]

Jesus told Peter "you cannot follow me now, but you will follow later" (13:36). Jesus was speaking about how Peter would die. He used "follow" as a metaphor to talk about being killed in the same way Jesus was killed. The Romans crucified Jesus the next day. Jesus knew Peter would be crucified for believing in Jesus. But this did not happen for many years. So Jesus said it would happen "later."

See: Metaphor; Crucify (Crucifixion)

John 14

14:1-7

Where were Jesus and his disciples?

Jesus and his disciples were still in the upstairs room. They stayed in this room while Jesus taught them.

See: Disciple

Why did Jesus talk about his "Father's house"?

[14:2]

Jesus used a metaphor when he talked about his Father's house. His father's house is heaven. It is the place where God lives.

See: Metaphor; Heaven; God the Father

What are the "many rooms" Jesus talked about?

[14:2]

Jesus talked about "many rooms" in his "Father's house." This was a metaphor. There are many places in heaven. These are places where people can live with God. God wants to have many people with him. Scholars think Jesus wanted the disciples to think about some buildings the Romans built. These buildings were large and meant for many people to live inside together.

See: Metaphor; Heaven; Disciple; God the Father

Why did Jesus say that he would "come again"?

[14:3]

Jesus said he would "come again." Some scholars think Jesus was speaking about when he would return to the earth again. This will happen at the time of the end of the world. Other scholars think he also wanted his disciples to know he would come back after he died.

See: Jesus' Return to Earth; Disciple

Why did Jesus say that he will "receive you to myself"?

[14:3]

Jesus said that he will "receive you to myself." He was saying that he will take the people who believe in him to be with God forever.

What was the "way" Jesus talked about?

[14:4]

Jesus used the metaphor of a "way" to talk about how people believe in him and do the things he wants them to do. Some scholars think he was talking about how God saves a person can be at peace with God because they believe in Jesus. Other scholars think Jesus was also talking about how Christians obey God.

See: Metaphor; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

Why did Jesus say "I am"?

[14:6]

See: John 6:35

See: Yahweh (I am)

Why did Jesus say he is "the way, the truth, and the life"?

[14:6]

Jesus said he is "the way, the truth, and the life." This is used a metaphor. He talked about how he made it possible for people to do the things that honor God. He did this when he died. He wanted to say that God will save people from their sinning only if they believe in Jesus.

See: Metaphor; Atonement (Atonement)

Why did Jesus say "if you had known me, you would have known the Father"?

[14:7]

Jesus said "if you had known me, you would have known the Father." He was saying that he is God. So, if someone knows Jesus, that person also knows God. Jesus often said "the Father" when he wanted to talk about God.

See: Trinity; God the Father; Jesus is God

14:9-11

What did Jesus say in 14:9-11?

[14:9]

In 14:9-11, Jesus said more about what he said in 14:7. That is, he told Philip and the other disciples again that he is God. When he said "I am in the Father and the Father is in me" (14:10a, 14:11), he wanted his disciples to know that he is God. He was not saying that he was inside of God.

When he said "the Father living in me is doing his work" (14:10b), he wanted his disciples to know that God did the things that Jesus did. So when people saw Jesus do something, that was the same as seeing God do it.

See: Disciple; Jesus is God; Trinity; God the Father

Why did Jesus say that people need to believe in him?

[14:11]

Jesus said people need to believe in him because he is God. However, Jesus knew it is hard for people to know how he and the Father are in each other. So he told his disciples that there is another reason to believe in him.

He told his disciples they need to believe in him because of the miracles he did. He knew he had done many things so that people would know his great power. He did things that only God could do. So Jesus told his disciples that these miracles allowed them to know that he is God.

See: Jesus is God; God the Father; Disciple; Miracle

14:12-17

Who is the "comforter" or "advocate" about which Jesus spoke?

[14:16]

The "comforter" that Jesus spoke about is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comforts and encourages Christians. Also, the Holy Spirit speaks for Christians when they are unable to speak (See: Romans 8:26). Therefore, the Holy Spirit is called a "comforter."

Advice to Translators: Use the same word in your language that is used in the Bible in your language for 4:16 to mean comforter or advocate.

See: 14:26

See: Holy Spirit

Why did Jesus say the Holy Spirit "lives with you and will be in you"?

[14:17]

Jesus said the Holy Spirit "lives with" and "will be in" Christians. The Holy Spirit comes into a person in some way when the person believes in Jesus. While Jesus was on earth, the Holy Spirit was in him. When he returned to heaven, the Holy Spirit went inside of every person who believes in Jesus.

Jesus wanted Christians to know that he does not leave them alone after they believe in him. Instead, in some way the Holy Spirit will live in them. He does not force them to do things. Demons do this when they possess a person. Instead, the Holy Spirit helps people. He guides them. He comforts them. He encourages them. He teaches them. The Holy Spirit is God. So Jesus said this to say that in some way God lives with a person after they believe in Jesus.

See: Indwelling of the Holy Spirit, Heaven; Sin; Demon; Holy Spirit

14:18-21

How did Jesus not leave his disciples alone?

[14:18]

Jesus did not leave his disciples alone because he went back to them after God made him alive again. The disciples continued to see and speak with Jesus during the 40 days after he died and was resurrected. Jesus came back to them to prove he was no longer dead. So, this fulfilled the promise he made to them here.

Jesus also did not leave his disciples alone because he sent his Spirit to live in them (See: John 14:15-17; Acts 2). Jesus' spirit and the Holy Spirit are the same person.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Disciple

What is "that day" about which Jesus spoke?

[14:20]

"That day" (14:20) was the day Jesus was made alive again. He knew that when his disciples saw that he was alive again, they would be able to understand what he told them at the Passover supper. They would understand that he is God.

Scholars think Jesus also spoke about the time when he would return to earth, that is the last days. He will return at the ending of the world. He used words that Jewish people sometimes used when they wanted to speak about the ending of the world.

See: Passover; Jesus is God; Last Days; Jesus' Return to Earth

Who is the "Father" about which Jesus spoke?

[14:20]

When Jesus spoke about the "Father," he wanted his disciples to think about God.

See: Trinity; God the Father; Disciple

Why did Jesus say he is "in" his Father, and we are "in" him, and he is "in" us?

[14:20]

When Jesus said he is "in" his Father, he said that he is God. He did not say that he was inside of God.

He also said that Christians are in some way joined to him when they believe in him. However, Christians are not God.

That is, Jesus is "in" the Father in a different way than Christians are "in" Jesus.

See: Trinity; God the Father; Jesus is God; In Christ

14:28-31

Why did Jesus say the Father is "greater" than Jesus?

[14:28]

Jesus said the Father is "greater" than Jesus (see: 14:28) because he obeyed the Father. The Father made a plan before he created the world. He planned how people's sins could be forgiven. Jesus obeyed that plan when he died on the cross.

In the same way a son obeys his father because the son is ruled by the father, so Jesus obeys God the Father. However, Jesus is God (See: John 5:18).

See: Trinity; God the Father; Will of God; Sin; Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Cross; Jesus is God

Who is the "ruler of this world"?

[14:30]

The "ruler of this world" is Satan (See: John 12:31, Ephesians 2:2, and 2 Corinthians 4:4). God is the ruler of Satan and the world. However, God gave Satan permission to rule in some way.

Satan wanted to kill Jesus. Jesus said Satan could not force Jesus to do anything. So Satan was not given permission to kill Jesus. However, Jesus gave people permission to crucify him when Satan tempted them. Jesus did this to obey God the father's plan. Therefore, Satan did not kill Jesus. Instead, Jesus gave his life for people's sins.

See: Satan (The Devil); Crucify (Crucifixion); Tempt (Temptation); God the Father; Atone (Atonement)

John 15

15:1-8

Where are Jesus and his eleven disciples in John 15?

Some scholars think Jesus and his eleven disciples walked to the Garden of Gethsemane in John 15-17. At the end of John 14 (see: John 14:31) Jesus told the disciples they must leave the upstairs room. These scholars think Jesus continued to teach the disciples while they walked to the Garden of Gethsemane. Fewer scholars think Jesus and his disciples went to the temple on the way to Gethsemane. These scholars think that Jesus and the disciples did not arrive in the garden of Gethsemane until John 18:1.

See: Disciple

See Map: Jerusalem and Surrounding Area (during Jesus' lifetime) (including Temple, Kidron Valley, Mount of Olives, Garden of Gethsemane, Bethphage, Bethany)

What is a "vine"?

[15:1]

A vine is a kind of plant that grows grapes. In these verses, when Jesus talked about "fruit," he wanted his listeners to think about grapes. Someone needs to carefully care for a vine so it will make as many grapes as possible. Fruit is a metaphor used many times in the Bible.

See: Vine (Vineyard); Metaphor; Fruit (Metaphor)

Why did Jesus say "I am"?

[15:1]

Jesus said "I am" in 15:1 to say that he is God. This is because Jesus and God have the same name. In 8:58, Jesus said "before Abraham was, I am." Jesus said this so the people would think about Exodus 3:14. In Exodus 3:14, Moses saw God in a burning bush. In that verse, God told Moses that God's name is "I am." So, in John 15:1, Jesus said "I am" to tell the disciples that he is God.

There are several other places in the gospel of John where Jesus said "I am" to say that he is God (See: 4:26, 6:36, 41, 48, 7:28-29, 8:23-24, 9:5, 10:7-14, 10:36, 11:25, 14:6, 14:10-12).

See: Disciple; Yahweh (I am); Trinity

Why did Jesus call himself the "true vine"?

[15:1]

Jesus called himself the "true vine." This was a metaphor. He said this to speak about how people need to follow God. People need to believe in Jesus if they want God to save them from the punishment for their sinning. Grapevines grow in a vineyard. So Jesus spoke about people growing in God's kingdom. This happens when people believe in Jesus. So Jesus is the "true vine."

Jesus said that Israel was not the "true vine." That is, the people of Israel believed they followed God. So they thought they were God's true vine (see: Psalm 80:7-9). But they stopped doing the things that honor God (see: Isaiah 5:1-2). So they were no longer the "true vine." Jesus is now God's "true vine." People who want to honor God must believe in Jesus.

See: Metaphor; Sin; Kingdom of God; Vine (Vineyard); Messiah (Christ)

What is a "gardener"?

[15:1, 15:2]

A "gardener" is a person who grows plants in a garden. In these verses, Jesus talked about a person who grows vines in a vineyard. A vineyard is a kind of garden where people grow vines that produce grapes.

See: Vine (Vineyard)

Why did Jesus say "my Father is the gardener"?

[15:1, 15:2]

Jesus said "my Father is the gardener." This was a metaphor. Jesus used this metaphor to talk about God. Jesus often "Father" when he wanted to talk about God. In 15:1, he said that God is the "gardener" to say that God cares for people who believe in Jesus.

In a vineyard, the gardener removes vine branches that do not grow. But the gardener carefully trims vine branches that do grow. He trims away things that will harm the branches. This helps the vine to grow more grapes. So Jesus wanted his disciples to think about how God helps people who believe in Jesus. God helps them the way the gardener helps branches that are growing.

See: Metaphor; God the Father; Vine (Vineyard)

Why did Jesus say "bear fruit"?

[15:2, 15:4, 15:5, 15:8]

When Jesus said "bear fruit," he continued to use the metaphor of a vine. He wanted his disciples to think about all they could do to honor God. Branches in a vineyard grow grapes. In the same way, Christians that grow will do things that honor God. Jesus called this "fruit."

See: Metaphor; Fruit (Metaphor); Vine (Vineyard)

Who bears "no fruit"?

[15:2]

When Jesus said some people bear "no fruit" (15:2), he wanted his disciples to think about people who do not honor God. Some scholars think he spoke about Christians who do not do the things that Jesus taught. That is, they say they believe in Jesus, but they do not do the things that he taught them to do. Other scholars think Jesus spoke about people who do not believe in him. Because they do not believe in him, they cannot honor God.

See: Fruit (Metaphor)

Why did Jesus say his disciples were "already clean"?

[15:3]

Jesus said his disciples were "already clean." He said this to say they were already at peace with God. They did not need to do anything new to be at peace with God. In John 13:10, Jesus said his disciples were clean, except for Judas Iscariot. He said that his disciples (except Judas Iscariot) believed in Jesus. So God forgave them from the punishment of sinning because they believed in Jesus. Because God forgave their sins, they were "clean." They did not need to have their sins forgiven again.

See: Metaphor; Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Clean and Unclean; Disciple; Sin

Why did Jesus say "remain in me"?

[15:4]

See: Abide

Why did Jesus speak about branches being burned?

[15:6]

When Jesus spoke about branches being burned (15:6), he wanted his disciples to think about Christians who do not remain in him (see 15:4). He continued to use the metaphor of a vine. In a vineyard, branches that did not make grapes were cut off and burned. This is because they were useless to the owner of the vineyard.

These burned branches were a metaphor for Christians who do not remain in Jesus. They are useless branches. They are not connected to the vine. That is, they are not connected to Jesus. Anyone not connected to Jesus will be thrown away and burned in the same way a dead branch is thrown away and burned.

Sometimes, the word burning is used in the Bible to talk about hell. However, scholars think when Jesus spoke about burning branches in 15:6 he did not want to speak about hell.

See: Disciple; Abide; Metaphor; Vine (Vineyard); Hell

Why did Jesus say "ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you"?

[15:7]

When Jesus said "ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you", he wanted his disciples to know they needed to do the things that God wanted them to do. When a person believes in Jesus, people need to obey Jesus. They should do the things Jesus wants them to do. So when a Christian prays, they should pray for God's will. That is, he will ask God what it is God wants him to do. This kind of prayer honors God. So God will honor the person who prays this way by answering his prayers.

Jesus did not want to say that God will do anything a person wants him to do. Sometimes Christians think about and pray about things that do not honor God. God will not give people the things that do not honor him.

See: Will of God

Who is the "Father" that Jesus spoke about which Jesus spoke?

[15:8]

When Jesus spoke about the "Father," he wanted his disciples to think about God. Jesus often spoke about the "Father" when he wanted to speak about God.

See: Disciple; God the Father

15:9-17

Why did Jesus say "my joy will be in you" and "your joy will be complete"?

[15:11]

When Jesus said "my joy will be in you" and "your joy will be complete," he wanted his disciples to know that people can have true joy only if they believe in Jesus and obey him.

See: Rejoice (Joy, Joyful)

Why did Jesus say a person who believes in Jesus needs to "lay down his life"?

[15:13]

Jesus said a person that believes in him needs to be ready to "lay down his life" for another person. That is, they need to

serve other people and perhaps even be willing to die for other people. He said this because he wanted the people who believe in him to "love one another." This is how they are to love one another.

Jesus did not want to say that all Christians need to be killed. He said this to talk about how some Christians will die so other people will know how much they love Jesus. He wanted to say that they would choose to do this. That is, they will choose to obey Jesus instead of not being killed

What did Jesus want to say in 15:14-15?

[15:14, 15:15]

In 15:14-15, Jesus spoke about how much he loves Christians. He told his disciples they were his "friends." In 15:10-13, he spoke about how his disciples must obey him. They do this in the same way a friend does what their friend tells them to do because they love him. So, Jesus spoke about his disciples as "friends" to say that he wanted them to obey him because they loved him.

See: Disciple

15:18-27

Why did Jesus speak about "hate"?

[15:18]

When Jesus spoke about "hate" in 15:18-21, he wanted his disciples to know that if they believed in him, then other people will persecute them. This is because they do not believe in Jesus.

Jesus said that people would persecute him. The Romans persecuted him by killing him. So, he wanted his disciples to know that people will persecute them for believing in him.

See: Persecute (Persecution)

Why did Jesus say "of the world"?

[15:19]

When Jesus spoke about people who are "of the world," he wanted his disciples to think about people who do not believe in him. They do things that do not honor God.

See: World

Why did Jesus say "because of my name"?

[15:21]

Jesus said "because of my name" to speak about people who believed in him. That is, people who are "Christians" (see: Acts 11:26).

See: Name

Why did Jesus say "him who sent me"?

[15:21]

When Jesus spoke about "him who sent me," he wanted his disciples to think about God. God the Father sent God the Son into the world to be the messiah.

See: Disciple; Trinity; God the Father; Son of God; Messiah (Christ)

Why did Jesus say "now they have no excuse for their sin"?

[15:22]

When Jesus said "now they have no excuse for their sin," he wanted to speak about how people needed to believe in him. God sent Jesus to tell people about God. He did this so they would believe in him and he would forgive them from the punishment of sinning. But when people do not believe in Jesus, they reject God. This is because Jesus is God.

Some scholars think Jesus spoke only about the Jewish people who did not believe in him. These people had the Romans kill Jesus. That was the sin for which they had no excuse. Other scholars think Jesus spoke about anyone who did not believe in Jesus after they have heard the gospel. Still other scholars think Jesus spoke about both these groups of people. Advice to translators: When someone does something bad, they often make an excuse. They do this so they will not be punished for doing something bad. They defend themselves by saying an excuse. Someone makes an excuse by saying that they had a good reason for doing the bad thing they did. An excuse is them saying to people why they did something. Here, the words "they have no excuse" are being used to say that there is nothing they can say to explain why they rejected Jesus.

See: Sin; Jesus is God; Gospel

Who is the "Comforter" (or "Advocate") about which Jesus spoke?

[15:26]

The "comforter" or "advocate" about which Jesus spoke is the Holy Spirit. One of the things the Holy Spirit does for Christians is to comfort and encourage them. Another thing the Holy Spirit does is to ask God the Father to do good things for them.

Advice to Translators: Use the same word in your language that is used in your Bible for comforter or advocate in 4:16.

See: 14:16,26

See: Holy Spirit; God the Father

John 16

16:1-4

Where were Jesus and his eleven disciples in John 16?

In John 16, Jesus and his eleven disciples continued to walk to Gethsemane. At the end of John 14 (see: John 14:31), Jesus told the disciples they needed to leave the upstairs room. Some scholars think Jesus and his eleven disciples walked to the Garden of Gethsemane in John 15-17. Jesus continued to teach them while they walked to the Garden of Gethsemane. They did not arrive in the Garden of Gethsemane until John 18:1.

Fewer scholars think that in John 16, Jesus and his disciples were at the temple on the way to Gethsemane.

See: Disciple; Temple

See Map: Jerusalem and Surrounding Area (during Jesus' lifetime) (including Temple, Kidron Valley, Mount of Olives, Garden of Gethsemane, Bethphage, Bethany)

What did Jesus want to say in 16:1-4?

[16:1, 16:2, 16:3, 16:4]

Jesus said things in 16:1-4 to tell his disciples they would be persecuted soon. He wanted them to be ready for this. If they were ready, they would not stop trusting Jesus when other people persecuted them (16:1). Jesus protected his disciples from persecution while he was with them (16:4). However, other people would persecute his followers after he died.

Disciple; Persecute (Persecution)

Who was "you"?

[16:1]

Jesus was talking to the eleven disciples when he said "you." However, Jesus also wanted all Christians to know what he said. There were only eleven disciples because Judas left them (see: John 13:27-30). Judas went to betray Jesus.

See: Disciple

What are "these things"?

[16:1]

Jesus wanted the disciples to remember what he told them in chapter 15 when he said "these things." He wanted them to "remain" in him (15:4). He wanted them to be ready when other people hated and persecuted them (15:20-21).

See: Disciple; Abide; Persecute (Persecution)

How does a person "fall away"?

[16:1]

Jesus spoke about falling away. This was a metaphor. He wanted to talk about how someone can stop believing or trusting in Jesus in some way. He wanted to warn the disciples so they would not stop trusting him.

Some scholars think Jesus wanted to speak about a Christian rejecting him completely and permanently. If they did this, they would not live together with him in heaven. Other scholars think Jesus spoke about a Christian not following him for only a short period of time. They will still live together with Jesus in heaven forever.

See: Fall (Fall Away, Stand); Metaphor; Disciple; Eternal Security; Heaven

Why did Jesus say "the hour" and "their hour"?

[16:2, 16:4]

Jesus used the metaphor "the hour" because he wanted to talk about some time soon. Soon, Jesus' enemies would start to persecute his followers. He was not speaking about a certain time of day. Instead, he wanted to speak again about when his enemies would persecute his followers when he said "their hour."

See: Persecute (Persecution) ; Metaphor

Why did Jesus say "throw you out of the synagogues"?

[16:2]

Jesus warned his disciples that Jewish leaders would keep them from worshipping with other Jews when he said "throw you out of the synagogues." Synagogues were buildings where Jewish people worshipped God. "Throw out" is a metaphor for not allowing a person to enter a place anymore. It was very bad for Jews when the Jews threw someone out of the synagogue. That person's Jewish friends did not talk to him anymore. He could not worship with other Jews.

See: Disciple; Synagogue; Metaphor; Persecute (Persecution) : Worship

Who is the "Father"?

[16:3]

The "Father" is God. Jesus often spoke about the "Father" when he wanted to speak about God.

See: God the Father; Trinity

16:5-15

Why did Jesus say "him who sent me"?

[16:5]

Jesus wanted his followers to think about God the Father when he said "him who sent me."

See: God the Father; Trinity

Why did Jesus say none of his disciples asked him where he was going?

[16:5]

Jesus wanted to say that none of his disciples asked him where he was going at the time he spoke these words in 16:5. Earlier Peter (see: John 13:36) and Thomas (see: John 14:5) asked Jesus where he was going. However, they did not ask him where he was going later in 16:5.

See: Disciple

Why did Jesus say he would "go away"?

[16:7]

Jesus said he would "go away" because he wanted his disciples to know he had to die. He used "go away" as a metaphor for his crucifixion. He was crucified to save people from sin. So, he could not remain with the disciples.

See: Disciple; Metaphor; Crucify (Crucifixion); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins).

Why was it "better" for Jesus' followers that he go away?

[16:7]

Jesus wanted his disciples to know that there was something better than having him with them when he said it was "better." He wanted to tell them about the Holy Spirit. Jesus had to be crucified for the Holy Spirit to be able to enter into those who believe in Jesus. He lives in them forever. This was "better" than simply having Jesus on earth to teach a few followers.

See: Disciple; Holy Spirit; Crucify (Crucifixion); Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

Why did Jesus speak about the "Comforter"?

[16:7, 16:8]

Jesus spoke about the Holy Spirit when he spoke about the "Comforter" (παράκλητος #g3875). The Holy Spirit comforts, protects, and helps people who believe in Jesus.

Advice to translators: Use the word in your language that is in the Bible text. The Greek word παράκλητος can also be translated into English as "Helper" or "Advocate." It is the word for a person who comes alongside someone else to help him.

See: Holy Spirit

Why did Jesus say "the world"?

[16:8]

Jesus wanted to speak about all people and all the things people do that do not honor God when he said "the world."

See: World

Why did Jesus say the Holy Spirit will "prove the world to be wrong"?

[16:8]

Jesus wanted people to think about how sinning is wrong when he said the Holy Spirit will "prove the world to be wrong." That is, people who sin do wrong. The Holy Spirit will make them know how they dishonor God when they sin. He will make them know how they need God to forgive their sins.

He will also make them know that they do not know how to be at peace with God. They can only be at peace with God by believing in Jesus.

He will also make them know that God will judge them for sinning, unless they repent. God will judge them for sinning the same way he judges Satan. Jesus wanted his disciples to think about Satan when he spoke about the "ruler of this world" in 16:11.

See: Holy Spirit; World; Sin; Satan (The Devil); Judge (Judgment); Repent (Repentance); Disciple

Who is the "ruler of this world"?

[16:11]

Jesus wanted his disciples to think about Satan when he spoke about the "ruler of this world." God gives Satan permission to rule the world in some way, but this will only happen for a short time (see: John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11, Ephesians 2:2, 6:12).

See: Disciple; Satan (The Devil)

Who is the "Spirit of Truth"?

[16:13]

Jesus was speaking about the Holy Spirit when he spoke about the "Spirit of Truth." The Holy Spirit speaks to people. He tells them only what is true. Therefore, he is called the "Spirit of Truth."

See: Holy Spirit

Why did Jesus say "he will not speak from himself" and "he will say whatever he hears"?

[16:13]

Jesus said "he will not speak from himself" and "he will say whatever he hears." He wanted to say that the Holy Spirit will tell people what God the Father wants people to know. The Holy Spirit is God, but he is not God the Father. So Jesus said that when the Holy Spirit speaks to someone, he speaks what the Father wants the person to know.

See: Holy Spirit; God the Father; Trinity

Why did Jesus say "he will take from what is mine"?

[16:14]

Jesus wanted to speak about the things only God knows when he said "he will take from what is mine." Jesus knows these

things because he is God. The Holy Spirit also knows these things because he is also God. The Holy Spirit helps Christians to know God when he tells them these things. He helps them to know what they need to know to do the things that honor God.

See: Trinity; Holy Spirit

16:16-24

Why did Jesus tell the disciples "in a short amount of time, you will no longer see me"?

[16:16]

Jesus wanted to tell the disciples that he would die when he said "you will no longer see me," He wanted them to know this would happen soon when he said "in a short amount of time." Jesus was crucified the next day.

See: Disciple; Crucify (Crucifixion) Crucify (Crucifixion)

Why did Jesus say "after another short amount of time, you will see me"?

[16:16]

Jesus wanted to speak about when he would come back to life when he said "you will see me." He wanted them to know this would happen soon after he died when he said "after another short amount of time." Jesus was resurrected three days later.

Jesus knew the disciples would not know what he meant. Therefore, he repeated it three times (16:16, 17, 19).

See: Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Disciple

Why did Jesus say "the world will be glad"?

[16:20]

When Jesus said "the world will be glad." He wanted his disciples to know that people who did not believe in him would be happy when he was killed. His disciples would be sad. But people who did not like what he taught would be glad because he was dead. They thought other people would stop believing in him.

See: Disciple

Why did Jesus speak about a woman giving birth in 16:21-22?

[16:21]

Jesus spoke about a woman giving birth in 16:21-22. This was a metaphor. He used this to tell the disciples about the different way they would think about Jesus dying after he was crucified. They would have pain when he was crucified in the same way a woman giving birth will have pain. Jesus knew that he would be made alive again. So in the same way a woman is happy and forgets her pain after the baby is born, they would be happy and forget their pain when Jesus was made alive again.

See: Metaphor; Crucify (Crucifixion); Resurrect (Resurrection)

Why did Jesus say "I will see you again"?

[16:22]

Jesus wanted to say he would return to the disciples when he said "I will see you again." This happened after he was resurrected. The disciples and many other people saw Jesus many times for 40 days. Then he returned to heaven.

See: Disciple; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Heaven

What is "joy"?

[16:22]

See: Rejoice (Joy, Joyful)

Rejoice (Joy, Joyful)

Why did Jesus say "no one will be able to take away your joy from you"?

[16:22]

Jesus wanted the disciples to know that things would change after he was resurrected when he said "no one will be able to take away your joy from you." The disciples were happy because they were with him while he was alive. They would have joy even though he would stop being on earth (see: Acts 13:52). Nobody could do anything to make this joy be gone (see: 1 Peter 1:8).

See: Disciple; Rejoice (Joy, Joyful); Resurrect (Resurrection)

Why did Jesus say "you will not ask me anything" and "if you ask anything of the Father in my name"?

[16:23]

Jesus wanted to say that the disciples would not need to ask him for any more information when he said, "you will not ask me anything." This is because they would understand what he told them. Also he wanted them to know that they could pray directly to God the Father when he said "if you ask anything of the Father in my name." They could pray in Jesus' name, and God would answer.

Some scholars think Jesus spoke about prayer when he said both things. They think he wanted to say that while he was on earth, the disciples prayed to Jesus. But he wanted them to know that after he was resurrected they could pray directly to God the Father.

See: 16:26-27

See: Disciple; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; God the Father

16:25-33

Who is the "Father"?

[16:25]

See: God the Father

What is a "figure of speech"?

[16:25, 16:29]

Here the words "figure of speech" refer to the proverbs and parables Jesus used to teach his disciples. That is, Jesus sometimes said things in a way that made it difficult to understand exactly what he meant. Jesus said he had spoken to the disciples in a way that was hard for them to understand. However, soon he would talk to them in a way that they could understand.

See: Proverb; Parable

Why did Jesus say "the hour is coming"?

[16:25]

Jesus wanted to speak about the time after he was resurrected when he said "the hour is coming" in 16:25. He used the metaphor of "hour" to talk about a time in the future.

See: Metaphor; Resurrect (Resurrection)

Why did Jesus say "the hour is coming"?

[16:32]

Jesus wanted to speak about the time when he was crucified when he said "the hour is coming" in 16:32. He used the metaphor of "hour" to talk about a time in the future. He did not mean a literal time on the clock. This was not the same "hour" as in 16:25.

See: Metaphor; Crucify (Crucifixion)

Why did Jesus say "you will have peace in me"?

[16:33]

Jesus wanted his disciples to remember what he told them when he said "you will have peace in me." They would not have to fear what might happen after he was crucified. The things Jesus said to them would give them peace and courage.

See: Disciple; Crucify (Crucifixion)

Why did Jesus say "I have conquered the world"?

[16:33]

Jesus said "I have conquered the world." He used two metaphors. He wanted to speak about everyone and everything that does not honor God when he said "the world." (see: 16:8). When he said he "conquered," this was not a military victory. Instead, he died and was resurrected so that God could forgive people's sins. He wanted to say he saved people from the power of sin. In this way, he "conquered" the "world."

See: World; Metaphor; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Sin; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

John 17

Where are Jesus and his disciples in John 17?

Some scholars think Jesus and the disciples were at the Jerusalem temple in John 17. These scholars think they were also at this temple in John 15 and 16. Other scholars think the disciples continued to walk from the temple toward the Garden of Gethsemane. Still other scholars think they were still in the upstairs room where they were in John 14.

See Map: Jerusalem and Surrounding Area (during Jesus' lifetime) (including Temple, Kidron Valley, Mount of Olives, Garden of Gethsemane, Bethphage, Bethany)

See: Disciple; Temple

What did Jesus do during John 17?

Jesus prays to God the Father in John 17.

See: Trinity; God the Father

1:1-5

Why did Jesus "lift up his eyes to the heavens"?

[17:1]

John wrote that Jesus "lifted up his eyes to the heavens" because he wanted readers to know that Jesus began to pray. He wanted to say that Jesus prayed to God the Father.

When the Jews prayed, they looked up. They looked up to look toward God. They thought God was in heaven. They thought heaven was above the sky. So they looked up at the sky to pray to God.

See: Heaven; God the Father; Trinity

Why did Jesus say "the hour has come"?

[17:1]

Jesus said "the hour has come." That is, it was about the time for Jesus to die and be resurrected. He knew that he would die soon. Jesus knew that God would make Jesus alive again after Jesus died. He used the metaphor of "hour" to say that it

was ready to happen. He did not mean an actual time on the clock. He wanted his disciples to know that he would die soon when he said "the hour."

See: Metaphor; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Disciple

What did Jesus want his disciples to think about when he spoke about "glorifying"?

[17:1, 17:4, 17:5]

Jesus wanted his disciples to think about how to honor God when he spoke about "glorifying." He also wanted to say that God honors people when they honor Jesus. So Jesus asked God to honor him (17:1) because Jesus honored God.

Jesus also spoke about his being "glorified" in 13:31-32. He wanted his disciples to think about how God sent Jesus to earth. Jesus obeyed all God the Father told him to do. He also died to obey the Father.

Jesus wanted to return to God the Father in heaven. However, he knew he needed to die and be resurrected in order to do this. Then Jesus again had God the Father's honor and power completely.

Jesus made it possible for people to have peace with God the Father by his death and resurrection. God also greatly honored Jesus for this. Jesus spoke about this again in chapter 17.

Jesus said the words glorify and glory nine times in John 17. He really wanted his disciples to honor God.

See: John 13:31-32, 17:10,22,24

See: Disciple; Glory (Glorify); Heaven; God the Father; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Trinity

Why did Jesus say "your Son" and "the Son"?

[17:1]

Jesus said "your Son" and "the Son" to speak about himself. Jesus is the Son of God. That is, he is the person of God called "the Son."

See: Trinity; Son of God

Why did Jesus say "all flesh"?

[17:2]

Jesus used a metaphor to speak about all people when he said "all flesh." He wanted to say that God the Father gave him permission to rule over all people.

See: Metaphor; Flesh; God the Father

Why did Jesus say "eternal life"?

[17:3]

Jesus said "eternal life" because he wanted his disciples to think about two things.

Jesus said "eternal life" because he wanted his disciples to think about living forever. He wanted them to think about living with God forever. Jesus said eternal life comes from "knowing" God and Jesus.

See: Eternal Life; Disciple

How did Jesus have "glory" with God the Father before the world was created?

[17:5]

Jesus had "glory" with God the Father before the world was created because he is God. Because he is God, Jesus had the same power and honor as God the Father before the world was created. Jesus created the world with God the Father (see: John 1:1-3). Later, Jesus became a man. When he did this, he removed some of his power and honor (see: Philippians 2:5-11). Here, Jesus asked God the Father to return him to all of Jesus' power and honor. This happened when Jesus was resurrected.

See: 17:24

See: Trinity; Glory (Glorify); Incarnation; Resurrect (Resurrection); God the Father; Son of God

1:6-19

Why did Jesus say he "revealed" God's "name" to other people?

[17:6]

Jesus said he "revealed" God's "name" to other people because he wanted them to know that he is God. When Jesus lived, people thought that the name of a person was the person himself. That is, when you spoke about someone's name, you were speaking about that person. So, God's name in some way made people think about all that God is and the things he does. When Jesus said he "revealed" God's name, he wanted to say that in some way people who saw and heard him saw and heard God. He also wanted his disciples to know that when they believe in Jesus, they are believing in God too.

See: 17:26

See: Reveal (Revelation); Name; Disciple

Who were "the people whom you gave me"?

[17:6]

"The people whom you gave me" were Jesus' disciples. When he said that God the Father "gave" the disciples to him, he used a metaphor. He wanted to say that in some way God guided him when he chose his disciples. So, in some way God chose the disciples before Jesus did.

See: Disciple; God the Father; Metaphor

Why did Jesus say "I have given them all the words that you gave me"?

[17:8]

Jesus said "I have given them all the words that you gave me." That is, he told his disciples everything God wanted him to say. He wanted them to think about everything he taught them while he was alive. So, he said "all the words."

See: Disciple

Why did Jesus ask God the Father to "keep" his disciples?

[17:11, 17:15]

Jesus asked God the Father to protect his disciples when he asked God to "keep" them. Some scholars think he wanted them to keep believing in Jesus. He knew other people would try to get them to stop believing in Jesus. Those people would try to hurt them or kill them. So he asked God to protect them from this. Other scholars think Jesus wanted them to remain united with one another and not fight with one another.

This happened after Jesus was resurrected and returned to heaven (see: Acts 1). Jesus protected his disciples while he was alive (see: 17:12). That is, he stopped other people from hurting them. However, he knew he was going to die. So he could not do this for them anymore. So, he asked the Father to do this.

See: God the Father; Disciple; Heaven

Who was the "son of destruction"?

[17:12]

Jesus spoke about the "son of destruction." He was speaking about Judas Iscariot. Jesus called him this because Judas betrayed Jesus. That is, he told the people who wanted to kill him where he Jesus was located.

Jesus said this was "to fulfill Scripture" because he wanted his disciples to think about prophecies in the Old Testament.

Scholars think he spoke about Psalm 41:4-9.

See: Fulfill (Fulfillment); Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

Why did Jesus speak about "the world"?

[17:13, 17:15, 17:16]

Jesus spoke about "the world" in 17:13 and 17:15 because he wanted his disciples to think about everyone on the earth.

Jesus spoke about "the world" in 17:14 and 17:16 because he wanted his disciples to think about people who do not believe in God. They do not worship or obey God. Instead, they do things that "the evil one" (17:15) wants. The "evil one" is Satan.

See: World; Disciple; Worship; Satan (The Devil)

Why did Jesus say he and his followers are not "of" the world?

[17:14, 17:16]

Jesus said he and his followers are not "of" the world because he wanted to say that they are "of" God. That is, they belong to God. This is because they believe in God. They follow God. They do things to honor God. So they do not belong to "the world." That is, they do not do the evil things "the world" does.

Advice to translators: The word "of" in these verses means "to belong to" or "to be like or similar in some way." Jesus did not want to say his followers are God. But they belong to God.

See: World

Why did Jesus say "set apart"?

[17:17, 17:19]

Jesus said "set apart" to ask God to help Jesus' disciples. Some scholars think he wanted them to continue to believe in Jesus. When people believe in Jesus, this makes them different from other people. They are different because they worship and obey God. Jesus wanted to say that being different in this way is good. He also wanted to ask God to help his followers to keep believing in him. Other scholars think Jesus asked this because he wants them to continue to be different from people who do not believe in Jesus.

See: Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); Disciple

17:20-26

Who did Jesus pray for in 17:20-26?

[17:20]

Jesus prayed for everyone who will believe in him in the future. In 17:13-20, Jesus prayed for the disciples who followed him while he was alive.

See: Pray (Prayer); Disciple

Why did Jesus say "in me", "in you", "in us", and "in them"?

[17:21, 17:23, 17:26]

Jesus said "in me" and "in you" because he wanted his followers to know that he is God.

Jesus said "in us" and "in them" because he also wanted his followers to know that he loved them. This is because they believe in him. He used "in" as a metaphor to speak about being loving friends. He did not want to say that his followers are literally "in" his body. He also did not want to say that his followers are God.

Advice to translators: Jesus used the word "in" for two different reasons in this verse.

When he said "in me" and "in you", he wanted to say "the same." That is, Jesus and God are the same. So Jesus is God.

When he said "in us" and "in them," he wanted to speak of people believing in and following someone. This makes them almost like that person in some way. But they are not the same as the person in which they believe. If your language has different words for these ideas, use those words. If your language has one word that can mean both these things, use that word.

See: Metaphor

John 18

18:1-11

Where did Jesus and his disciples go at the beginning of John 18?

[18:1]

In John 18, Jesus and his disciples walked to the Garden of Gethsemane (see: Mark 14:32).

See: Disciple

See Map: Jerusalem and Surrounding Area (during Jesus' lifetime) (including Temple, Kidron Valley, Mount of Olives, Garden of Gethsemane, Bethphage, Bethany)

Who is Jesus?

[18:5, 18:7]

Jesus said he is God. The soldiers said they looked for Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus did not disagree that he was Jesus of Nazareth. However, Jesus said "I am." He did not mean "I am Jesus." Instead, "I am" was the name God spoke to Moses (see: Exodus 3:14).

See: John 8:58

See: Jesus is God; Yahweh (I am)

See Map: Nazareth

Why did the soldiers go backward?

[18:6]

The soldiers went backward because of what Jesus said. The soldiers were forced backwards and fell down when Jesus told the soldiers who is he. John does not write why these soldiers fell backwards. Some scholars think the words Jesus said were so powerful that the soldiers were amazed and fell backwards. Other scholars think Jesus said "I am" very loudly, with great power. That is what knocked them down.

Why did Peter cut off the servant's ear?

[18:10]

Peter cut off the servant's ear because he wanted to protect Jesus. Peter fought to stop the soldiers arresting Jesus. Peter did not understand that God's plan was for Jesus to die on the cross for the sins of the world. Peter had a short sword with him. He drew his sword and cut off the right ear of Malchus. He was a servant of the high priest.

See: Cross; Crucify (Crucifixion); Sin; High Priest; Atonement (Atonement)

What is "the cup" Jesus said he must drink?

[18:11]

The "cup" Jesus said he must drink was his crucifixion. Jesus used a metaphor to say that he must die on the cross for the sins of everyone (see: Matthew 26:36-46, Mark 14:32-42, and Luke 22:39-46). "Cup" is a metaphor here for something that must be done.

See: Metaphor; Crucify (Crucifixion); Cross; Sin; Atonement (Atonement)

18:12-14

Why did the soldiers take Jesus to Annas after they arrested him?

[18:13]

The soldiers took Jesus to Annas because they needed someone to tell them what to do with Jesus. Jesus was a wise Jewish man. Many people followed him. They might be very angry if they thought Jesus was not being treated in the right way. So the soldiers needed a powerful Jewish person to tell them what to do with Jesus. Annas was old and experienced. However, Annas was not the actual high priest when Jesus was arrested. He was the father-in-law of the high priest, Caiaphas. Annas was high priest from when Jesus was young. After Annas was the high priest asked, the high priest after him asked him for advice. Therefore, the soldiers took Jesus to Annas so he could help Caiaphas know what to do with Jesus.

See: High Priest

18:15-24

Who was the other disciple?

[18:15]

John wrote about "another disciple," but he did not write this man's name. Scholars think John wrote about himself. In his gospel, John wrote about himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved," instead of writing his own name (see: John 13:23, 19:26-27, 20:2, 21:7, and 21:20). So here, John used another name instead of his name. He called himself, "another disciple."

See: Disciple; Gospel

Why did the officer hit Jesus?

[18:22]

The officer hit Jesus because he thought Jesus had insulted Annas. The officer called Annas "the high priest" because Annas had been high priest. So the officer expected everyone to honor Annas. He thought Jesus did not do that. So he thought Jesus needed to be punished for that.

See: High Priest

18:25-32

Why did John write "immediately the rooster crowed"?

[18:27]

John wrote "immediately the rooster crowed" so people would think about what Jesus told Peter in 13:38. Jesus told Peter that Peter would say he did not know Jesus three times before the rooster crowed. That is to say, Peter would say that he did not know Jesus three times that night. Peter said he did not know Jesus in 18:17, 25, 27. When the rooster crowed, it confirmed that Jesus was right about this. Jesus knew what was going to happen.

Where did they take Jesus after they left Caiaphas' home?

[18:28]

The soldiers took Jesus from Caiaphas' home to the place where the Roman governor Pilate lived. John called this the "government headquarters." This is because this was where most government decisions were made.

See: Palace

Why did the soldiers not enter?

[18:28]

The soldiers would not enter Pilate's home because Pilate was not a Jew. These soldiers were Jews. If a Jew entered the home of a Gentile that Jew became unclean. He could not eat any of the special Passover meals until a month later (see: Numbers 9:6-13).

Pilate knew the Jews believed this. So Pilate came outside to speak to the Jews about Jesus.

See: Clean and Unclean; Gentile; Passover

Why did Pilate not want to judge Jesus?

[18:31]

Pilate did not want to judge Jesus because he did not think Jesus had done anything wrong. The Jews said Jesus did evil things.

Scholars think Pilate really did not want the Jews to be angry with him. He knew large crowds followed Jesus. He was afraid the crowds might become very angry and cause trouble for him if he judged Jesus. So, he told the Jewish people there to judge him according to the Jewish laws. That way Jesus' followers could not say Pilate had done anything wrong. Why did the Jewish people at Pilate's palace say they could not kill anyone?

[18:31]

The Jewish people at Pilate's palace said they could not kill anyone because only the Romans could legally kill a criminal. The Jews who were there wanted to kill Jesus. However, they could not kill anyone without permission from the Roman governor. The Romans often crucified criminals. However, they did give permission to do this to people they ruled.

See: Palace; Crucify (Crucifixion)

18:33-40

Why did Pilate speak to Jesus in private?

[18:33]

Pilate took Jesus into his palace to talk to him about why the Jews wanted to kill him. He wanted to do this without the Jews listening.

Some Jews accused Jesus of saying he was their king (see: Luke 23:2). In the Roman Empire, it was illegal for anyone except the leader of the Roman Empire to say they were a king. So if Jesus said this, he did something wrong and Pilate could judge him.

However, many other Jews wanted Jesus as their king (see: John 1:49, 6:15, 12:13, and 12:19). They might have started a rebellion against Rome. Because of this, Pilate needed to know if Jesus said he was a king.

See: Palace; Rebel (Rebellion)

Why did Jesus say what he said in 18:36?

[18:36]

Jesus said what he said in 18:36 to tell Pilate two things:

Jesus is a king. Jesus is not a king in the way the Roman emperor was a king. Jesus said "my kingdom is not of this world" because he wanted Pilate to think about God's kingdom. He wanted to say that his kingdom was not going to stop the Roman kingdom.

See: Kingdom of God

What was "the truth" Jesus spoke about?

[18:37]

Jesus called his teaching of forgiveness and eternal life "the truth." Jesus said that all those who belong to "the truth" listen to him. Pilate asked Jesus, "What is truth?" (18:38). Pilate said this to say that he did not believe in any certain "truth."

See: Eternal Life

What was the "custom" about which Pilate spoke?

[18:39]

The "custom" about which Pilate spoke was a special thing the Romans did for the Jews at Passover. The Roman governor would release one man from prison. It would be someone the Jews asked to be released.

Here, Pilate told them Jesus was not guilty of anything. Then Pilate offered to release Jesus. This was because he did not think Jesus needed to be killed.

See: Passover

Who was Barabbas?

[18:40]

Barabbas was a criminal who was in prison. John wrote that he was a "robber." Scholars think he was also a violent person who fought against the Roman empire. They think the Jewish people asked for Barabbas to be freed because Barabbas was a hero to some of them. He was a hero because he tried to free Israel from Roman rule.

John 19

19:1-16

Why did John write Pilate whipped Jesus?

[19:1]

John wrote Pilate whipped Jesus because he wanted people to know that Pilate ordered it. Pilate did not do it himself. However, he ordered the Roman soldiers to do it. They had to obey Pilate.

Why did Pilate have Jesus whipped?

[19:1]

Pilate had Jesus whipped so the people would know that Pilate punished criminals. Pilate was the Roman governor in Judea. He wanted Judea to have peace. Therefore, he did not want people to think that criminals were not punished.

Although Jesus was not a criminal, people thought he was a criminal.

When Jesus was whipped, it was not as severe as when the soldiers flogged Jesus just before he was crucified (see: 19:16).

See Map: Roman provinces including Judea

Why did the Roman soldiers put a "crown of thorns" and a purple robe on Jesus?

[19:2, 19:5]

The soldiers put a "crown of thorns" and a purple robe on Jesus to hurt him and mock him. This was part of the way the Romans crucified him.

The crown he wore have very long thorns. It had sharp ends stuck out of it. So, these thorns went into Jesus' head and caused bleeding.

Purple was the color of clothes that kings wore. The soldiers dressed Jesus like this to say that they thought he was not a true king.

The soldiers did this because Pilate called Jesus "King of the Jews." However, they did not believe Jesus was the king of the Jews. They wanted to mock and humiliate Jesus. They wanted people to think that even if Jesus was a king, he was not very powerful.

See: Crucify (Crucifixion); Crown; Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar)

Why did Pilate tell the Jewish leaders again that Jesus was not guilty?

[19:4, 19:6]

Pilate did not agree with what the Jews said Jesus had done. Because of this, he again told the Jewish leaders that Jesus was not guilty. That is, he did not do anything wrong or break the law.

Why did Pilate go back inside the government headquarters?

[19:9]

Pilate went back inside the government headquarters to think about what to do. He was afraid (19:8) of what might happen. He was afraid that the Jews might begin to cause trouble for him if he did the wrong thing. The Roman emperor could have Pilate killed if the Jews began to make trouble for Rome.

The Jews said Jesus did something that was not to be done according to the Law of Moses (see: Leviticus 24:16). They said he needed to die because of this. However, Pilate was not a Jew. He did not have to follow the Law of Moses. However, he did have to keep anyone from causing trouble for the Roman empire. So he needed time to think about how to control the Jewish people.

See: Law of Moses; Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar)

Why did Jesus say, "You do not have any power over me except for what has been given to you from above"?

[19:11]

Jesus said, "You do not have any power over me except for what has been given to you from above" to make Pilate and

other people think about God. Pilate thought he had power over Jesus. Pilate could release Jesus or have him crucified because he was the governor.

Jesus said that Pilate could only do these things because God allowed Pilate to do these things. He said Pilate was given his power "from above." That is, God gave Pilate permission to do these things.

Jesus said the person who sent Jesus to Pilate was more responsible for his death than Pilate. Some scholars think Jesus spoke about the high priest Caiaphas. Caiaphas was responsible for the Jewish religious leaders' efforts to kill Jesus (see: John 11:45-53). Other scholars think Jesus spoke about Judas Iscariot. Judas gave Jesus to Caiaphas by telling the soldiers where they could find Jesus.

See: Crucify (Crucifixion); High Priest

Who was "Caesar"?

[19:15]

"Caesar" was the Roman emperor. It was the title people used when they wanted to speak about the emperor.

19:17-27

Why did Jesus carry his own cross?

[19:17]

Jesus carried his own cross because the Romans made him do this. They made him do this so the crowds would see it. They wanted the people to be afraid of them. So they forced criminals to carry their crosses through the streets. Scholars think Jesus only carried part of the cross. The entire cross was too heavy for one person to carry, especially if that person had just been whipped. Because of this, Jesus only carried it a short distance. Then the soldiers forced someone else to carry the cross for Jesus. This person was Simon of Cyrene (see: Luke 23:26).

See: Cross

How was a person crucified?

[19:18]

See: Crucify (Crucifixion)

Where was Jesus crucified?

[19:17, 19:18]

Jesus was crucified at a place called "the Place of a Skull." This was a small hill just outside of Jerusalem. The Romans often crucified criminals there. The Aramaic word for this place was "Golgotha." The English word for this place is "Calvary".

See: Languages in the New Testament

See Map: Golgotha

Why did Pilate put a sign on Jesus' cross in three languages?

[19:20]

Pilate put a sign on Jesus' cross in three languages. He wanted everyone who saw it to be able to read it. The Romans put signs on crosses to tell people the criminal's name and the crime they had done. The sign on Jesus' cross was written in the three languages spoken in Jerusalem. That is, the message was written in Aramaic, Latin, and Greek. Pilate thought that most people could read one of these languages. Some translations use the word "Hebrew" instead of Aramaic. Aramaic was the language spoken by the Hebrew people, that is, the Jews. However, there was another language called Hebrew that only the priests could speak. It was the language the Jewish people spoke before the spoke Aramaic. Scholars think Pilate wrote "the King of the Jews" on Jesus' sign to mock the Jews. The Jewish religious leaders hated Jesus and wanted him crucified. However, Pilate hated the Jews. He wanted to release Jesus, but the Jews made Pilate crucify Jesus. So, Pilate mocked them because they hated Jesus. He did this by writing Jesus was the King of the Jews.

See: Cross; Crucify (Crucifixion); Languages in the New Testament

Why did the chief priests ask Pilate to change the sign?

[19:21]

The chief priests asked Pilate to change the sign because they did not want the people to read what Pilate wrote. They were afraid the people would think that Jesus really was their king. So they asked Pilate to change it to Jesus said that he was the king of the Jews.

See: Chief Priest

Why did Pilate say "what I have written, I have written"?

[19:22]

Pilate said, "what I have written, I have written" to tell the Jewish leaders he would not change the sign.

Why did the soldiers "cast lots" for Jesus' tunic?

[19:24]

The soldiers "cast lots" for Jesus' tunic to decide which of them would take it.

The Romans stripped criminals before they crucified them. That is, the criminals did not have any clothes on them when they were crucified. The soldiers got the clothes of the criminal. Jesus' tunic was worth more than the rest of his clothes. They decided to cast lots to determine which soldier would get Jesus' tunic.

Advice to Translators: A tunic was an outer robe that people wore over other clothes.

See: Cast Lots; Crucify (Crucifixion)

Who were the women John named?

[19:25]

John named four women who watched Jesus' crucifixion.

Jesus' mother, Mary. Jesus' mother's sister. Mary, the wife of Clopas. Mary Magdalene.

Some scholars think John wanted to say that Jesus' mother's sister was Mary wife of Clopas. That is, he only named three women.

See: Crucify (Crucifixion))

Why did Jesus say "Woman, see your son!" and "See your mother"?

[19:26, 19:27]

Jesus said "Woman, see your son!" and "See your mother" because he wanted John to care for his mother Mary after he died. That is, he told them to treat each other in the same way they treated their mother and their son.

Some scholars think John was Jesus' cousin. They think he chose John to care for Mary because of this. That is, he said it because John and Mary were already family.

19:28-37

Why did John write "everything was now completed"?

[19:28]

John wrote that Jesus knew "everything was now completed" because he wanted his readers to think about how God the Father gave Jesus a great task to finish. He gave Jesus this task before he sent him to earth. Now, Jesus knew he completed everything this task needed to be done.

See: God the Father

Why did Jesus say "I am thirsty"?

[19:28]

Jesus said "I am thirsty" because he needed something to drink. He had not had anything to drink for many hours.

Scholars think Jesus also wanted his followers to think about Psalm 22:15.

Why did Jesus say "It is finished"?

[19:30]

Scholars disagree about why Jesus said, "It is finished."

Some scholars think Jesus said this because he finished his life as a human. Other scholars think Jesus was finished the work God the Father sent him to do on earth. Other scholars think Jesus finished dying for the sins of every person (see: 1 John 2:2). Other scholars think Jesus finished what was needed for God to save people from their sins (see: Ephesians 2:8-10).

Scholars often think Jesus wanted to say more than one of these things.

See: God the Father; Sin; Atonement (Atonement); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

Why did John write that Jesus "gave up his spirit"?

[19:30]

John wrote that Jesus "gave up his spirit" because he wanted his readers to know two things.

Jesus died at that time. John used a metaphor about people's bodies and spirits to write about when a person died. Jesus controlled when he died. That is, Jesus died at that moment because he wanted to die at that moment.

See: Metaphor; Spirit (Spiritual)

What is the "day of preparation"?

[19:31]

The "day of preparation" is the day before the Sabbath. According to the Law of Moses, Jews cannot work on the Sabbath. Therefore, they must do certain things the day before the Sabbath.

Also, this day of preparation was the day before Passover. So, the Jews had to do extra things to prepare for the Passover.

See: Law of Moses; Sabbath; Passover

Why did the Jews not want Jesus' body to remain on the cross during the Sabbath?

[19:31]

The Jews did not want Jesus' body to remain on the cross during the Sabbath because the Law of Moses required dead bodies to be buried before Sabbath began (see: Deuteronomy 21:23). For the Jews, each day begins at sunset. This meant that the Sabbath began that evening. Therefore, Jesus' body needed to be buried before sunset.

See: Cross; Sabbath; Law of Moses

Advice to translators: Sunset is the time at the end of the day when one can no longer see the sun. This is not because it is behind a cloud.

Why did John write "that Sabbath was especially important"?

[19:31]

John wrote "that Sabbath was especially important" because it was the Sabbath of Passover. Passover was a festival for

Jewish people, but it was not always celebrated on the Sabbath. So having Passover on the Sabbath was special.

See: Sabbath; Passover

Why did the soldiers break the legs of the two criminals but not Jesus' legs?

[19:31, 19:32, 19:33]

The soldiers broke the legs of the two criminals to make them die more quickly. They did not break Jesus' legs because he was already dead.

Crucifixion was a form of execution. So, victims had to die. Victims normally died because the weight of their bodies on the cross stopped them from breathing. However, sometimes crucified men survived several days on crosses before they died. They could do this by using their legs to push their bodies up. Then they could keep breathing. So, if the Romans wanted someone to die faster, they would break the person's legs. This kept the person from pushing up to breathe.

In this case, the Jews did not want dead bodies hanging on crosses on the Sabbath. Each new day for Jews began at sundown. The Jews had to remove the dead bodies off their crosses and bury them before sundown.

However, when the soldiers came to break Jesus' legs, Jesus was already dead. So the soldiers did not break Jesus' legs.

See: Exodus 12:46; Numbers 9:12; Psalm 34:20

See: Crucify (Crucifixion); Cross; Sabbath

Why did a soldier stab Jesus' side with a spear?

[19:34]

The soldier stabbed Jesus' side with a spear so he would know Jesus was dead. Blood and water came out, but Jesus did not react to the spear. So the soldiers knew he was dead. Scholars think the water was from the fluid that is near the heart. Therefore, they stabbed Jesus in the heart.

Who was "the one who saw this"?

[19:35]

John himself was "the one who saw this." So he was able to write that "his testimony is true."

See: Testify (Testimony)

19:38-42

Who was Joseph of Arimathea?

[19:38]

Joseph of Arimathea was a member of the Sanhedrin (see: Mark 15:43; Luke 23:50). Scholars think he was also a Pharisee. He was wealthy.

He was also a follower of Jesus. However, most people did not know this (see: Matthew 12:23-24). Joseph asked Pilate to let him remove Jesus' body from the cross. This was so he could bury it.

Most rich men had large tombs carved into rocky hillsides. These tombs had places carved out of the rock walls inside the tomb. They could place the bodies of their family members in those places. Jesus' body was the first body buried in Joseph's tomb because it was a new tomb.

See: Jewish Council (Sanhedrin); Pharisees; Cross; Tomb

Who was Nicodemus?

[19:39]

Nicodemus was a Pharisee. He might have been a member of the Sanhedrin (see: John 3:1). Nicodemus respected Jesus. He defended Jesus against other Pharisees (see: John 7:46-52). Now Nicodemus helped Joseph of Arimathea to care for Jesus' body.

See: Jewish Council (Sanhedrin); Pharisees

Why did Nicodemus bring myrrh and aloes?

[19:39]

Nicodemus brought myrrh and aloes to anoint Jesus' body. Myrrh and aloes were expensive spices. Ancient people used spices like these to prepare bodies for burial. So Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus wrapped these spices in linen burial cloths. Then they wrapped those around Jesus' body.

Scholars think Nicodemus paid for these large amounts of expensive burial spices himself. "One hundred litras" was about 35 kilograms.

See: Anoint (Anointing)

Why did John write what he wrote in 19:42?

[19:42]

John wrote what he wrote in 19:42 to tell his readers that Joseph and Nicodemus had to bury Jesus quickly.

John 20

20:1-10

What was the "first day of the week"?

[20:1]

The "first day of the week" was Sunday. The Jews said that the Sabbath was the last day of the week. The Sabbath was on

Saturday.

See: Sabbath

Who was Mary Magdalene?

[20:1]

Mary Magdalene was a woman named Mary who came from Magdala. Magdala was a town on the Sea of Galilee six kilometers north of Tiberias (see: Matthew 15:39). She followed and served Jesus and his disciples in Galilee. Several other women also did this. She was there when Jesus was crucified and saw him die (see: Mark 15:37-41; Matthew 27:55-61).

Mary was one of the first people to see Jesus after he was resurrected (see: 20:1-18, Matthew 28:1, Mark 16:1-8, and Luke 24:1-12).

See: Disciple; Crucify (Crucifixion); Resurrect (Resurrection)

See Map: Galilee; Magdala; Tiberias

Who did Mary speak about when she said "they"?

[20:2]

When Mary spoke about "they," she spoke about someone she thought moved Jesus' body. She thought Pilate or the Sanhedrin may have sent soldiers to roll away the stone and move Jesus' body. Mary continued to think this until Jesus spoke to her (see: John 20:16).

See: Jewish Council (Sanhedrin)

Who was the "other disciple" John wrote about?

[20:3]

When John wrote about the "other disciple," he wanted his readers to think about himself. John often wrote about himself by writing "other disciple" or "disciple whom Jesus loved" (See: John 13:23, John 18:15-16, John 21:7, 20, 23). Scholars think John wrote this because he wanted to be humble.

See: Disciple

Why did John have to bend down to look into the tomb?

[20:5]

John had to bend down to look into the tomb because the tomb's entrance was lower than where he stood. Scholars think Jesus' tomb had a stairway that went down into the ground. These tombs were often carved out of the rock in the side of a hill. The entrance could go down a few steps into a room. So to see inside the tomb without entering it, John had to bend down to see under the top of the entrance.

See: Tomb

Why did John not go inside the tomb?

[20:5]

Scholars disagree about why John did not go inside the tomb. Some scholars think he wanted to allow Peter to enter first. Other scholars think John may have been afraid to go in.

See: Tomb

What did the disciples see in the tomb?

[20:5, 20:6, 20:7]

The two disciples saw Jesus' linen burial cloths lying inside the tomb. Linen was expensive. In ancient times, people used linen to wrap dead bodies before they buried them. The linen cloths protected the air from the decaying body. The spices Nicodemus brought (see: 19:39-40) were wrapped inside the layers of linen to reduce the odor of the decaying body.

Because the linen cloths lay on the ground, the disciples knew someone had unwrapped the cloths from Jesus' body. They understood that Jesus had come back to life, unwrapped himself, and left the linen cloths in the tomb.

Advice to translators: When someone died, their body decayed. That is, it broke down and was destroyed.

See: Disciple; Tomb; Resurrect (Resurrection)

What did John believe after he entered the tomb?

[20:8]

After John entered the tomb and did not see Jesus' body, John believed that Jesus was resurrected. He believed that Jesus had come back to life in the cloth he was buried in. However, Jesus unwrapped himself. He left the burial wrappings in the tomb, and he left the tomb. According to the other gospels, an angel rolled the stone away (see: Matthew 28:2).

See: Tomb; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Gospel; Angel

20:11-18

Why did John write that the angels were "in white"?

[20:12]

When John wrote that the angels were "in white", he wanted his readers to think that the angels wore white clothes.

These clothes were very bright.

See: Angel; White (symbol)

Why did Mary "not know that it was Jesus"?

[20:14]

Mary did "not know that it was Jesus" because it was dark (see: 20:1). It was too dark for her to see him clearly. Also, she was surprised. She did not expect to see Jesus again after he died and was buried. So she thought the man she saw was the gardener. Mary did not recognize Jesus until he spoke to her. Then she recognized his voice.

Why did Mary say "Rabboni"?

[20:16]

Mary said "Rabboni" because she recognized the man in the garden with her was Jesus. Jesus' followers called him "Rabboni" (the Hebrew word for "teacher"). So now Mary said "Rabboni" to say that she knew it was Jesus.

Why did Jesus say "my brothers"?

[20:17]

Jesus said "my brothers" to speak about his disciples. He wanted to say that he felt that they were close friends.

See: Disciple; Family of God

Why did Jesus say "my Father and your Father, and my God and your God"?

[20:17]

When Jesus said "my Father and your Father, and my God and your God," he wanted to speak about God. That is, "my Father", "your Father", "my God", and "your God" all are ways to speak about the same God. Jesus spoke this way to get Mary to think that in some way God the Father was her "Father" and her "God."

See: God the Father; Children of God

20:19-23

Why were Jesus' disciples hiding "for fear of the Jews"?

[20:19]

Jesus' disciples were hiding because they were afraid the Jews or Romans might arrest and kill them, like they had done to Jesus. Many times the Romans did this with people who followed leaders the Romans executed. Many people knew who followed Jesus. It would be easy for Jewish leaders to tell the Romans about them. So, the disciples hid to keep this from happening.

See: Disciple; Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar)

How did Jesus "come" and "stand in the middle of them" when the doors were locked?

[20:19]

Scholars do not know exactly how Jesus "came" and "stood in the middle of them" when the doors were locked. In some way, after he was resurrected, he could move differently than when he was alive. He was able to come into the room without opening the door.

See: 20:26

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

Why did Jesus show the disciples his hands and side?

[20:20]

Jesus showed the disciples his hands and side to prove he was alive. They knew he was crucified. They knew that this left holes in his hands where he was nailed to the cross. They knew a soldier stabbed him with a spear in his side. So Jesus showed them the scars to show it was really him and he was really alive again.

See: Disciple; Crucify (Crucifixion); Cross; Resurrect (Resurrection)

What did Jesus give to the disciples?

[20:21, 20:22]

Jesus gave the disciples three things:

Jesus gave them peace. He gave them his peace and helped them when people opposed them and persecuted them. The first time Jesus said "peace to you" (20:19), this was a way the Jews greeted one another. But the second time (20:21), he said it to speak about this power. Jesus wanted them to do something. God the Father sent Jesus into the world to serve him a certain way. He wanted Jesus to die so people could have their sins forgiven. It was also to teach people how to worship and serve God. Now, Jesus told his disciples to people how to worship and serve God. Jesus gave them the Holy Spirit. After this, the Spirit of God lived in Christians in some way.

See: Disciple; Persecute (Persecution) ; God the Father; Atone (Atonement); Sin; Holy Spirit; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

How could Jesus' disciples forgive sins and not forgive sins?

[20:23]

Jesus' disciples could forgive sins because they served Jesus and Jesus gave them permission to do this. However, they did not have the power to do this. Only Jesus could forgive sins. However, Jesus gave them permission to tell people whether their sins were forgiven.

See: Disciple; Sin; Atone (Atonement)

20:24-29

Who were "the twelve"?

[20:24]

John wrote about "the twelve" to make his readers think about Jesus' closest disciples. Jesus chose twelve men to follow

him closely (see: Luke 6:13). Now, because Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus and killed himself (see: 13:21-30; Acts 1:18), only eleven of them were left. However, John still used the words "the twelve" to write about the ones who were left.

See: Disciple

Why did Thomas say what he said when the other disciples told him Jesus appeared to them?

[20:25]

When the other disciples told Thomas that Jesus appeared to them, Thomas said what he did to tell them that he did not believe what they told him. Thomas was not with the disciples when Jesus appeared and showed them the scars on his body. So it was difficult for him to believe them. So, he said he would have to see the scars himself before he would believe Jesus was resurrected.

See: Disciple; Resurrect (Resurrection)

How did Jesus "come" and "stand among them" when the doors were closed?

[20:26]

See: John 20:19

Why did Jesus tell Thomas to touch his hands and side?

[20:27]

Jesus told Thomas to touch the scars on his hands and side, to help Thomas believe that he was really alive again.

Why did Thomas say "my Lord and my God"?

[20:28] Thomas said "my Lord and my God" because now he believed Jesus was resurrected. He also believed that Jesus is God. When Thomas said "my Lord", he used the same word that the Old Testament uses to speak about God.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Jesus is God

Who are "those who have not seen, and believed"?

[20:29]

When Jesus said "those who have not seen, and believed," he spoke about all Christians. That is to say, he knew the disciples who saw him after he was resurrected believed in him because they saw him again. However, he also knew that many people would believe in him without seeing him. Jesus told Thomas that God blesses people who believe in him, even when they do not see him with their eyes.

See: Disciple; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Bless (Blessing)

20:30-31

What are "signs"?

[20:30]

"Signs" are special things that Jesus did. He did these signs to show he is God. He did them to get people to believe in him. John wrote that in his gospel, he wrote down some of the signs Jesus did, but not all of them. This is because Jesus did so many signs.

See: Sign; Jesus is God; Gospel

Why did John write "so that you would believe"?

[20:31]

John wrote that he wrote down some of the signs Jesus did so that his readers would believe in Jesus.

Some scholars think John wanted to help people who do not yet believe in Jesus, to believe in him. Fewer scholars think John wanted to help Christians to trust in Jesus more.

See: Sign

John 21

21:1-14

Where is the "Sea of Tiberias"?

[21:1]

The Sea of Tiberias is another name for the Sea of Galilee. Some people called it this to honor the Roman Emperor Tiberius.

See Map: Sea of Galilee

See: Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar)

Who were the disciples to whom Jesus appeared?

[21:2]

Jesus appeared to seven disciples by the Sea of Galilee:

Simon, who Jesus named Peter (see: Matthew 4:18-22, Mark 1:16-18, Luke 5:1-11, and John 1:35-51). Thomas, who was also called Didymus (see: John 11:16, John 14:5, and John 20:24-21:1). Nathaniel from Cana in Galilee, who was also named Bartholomew (see: John 1:43-51). The sons of Zebedee, James and John (see: Matthew 20:20-28, Mark 1:19-20, and Mark 3:17). Two disciples whose names John did not write.

See: Disciple

Why did Peter and some other disciples go fishing?

[21:3]

Scholars disagree about why Peter and the other disciples went fishing.

Some scholars believe Peter and these disciples returned to their old job of fishing. Jesus had appeared a few times, but most of the time people could not see him. So these scholars think the disciples did not believe Jesus was going to do anything more.

Other scholars think these disciples were fishing because they needed food. They also needed to earn some money by selling fish. They were waiting for Jesus to tell them what he wanted them to do.

See: Disciple

Why did the disciples "not know it was Jesus"?

[21:4]

The disciples "did not know it was Jesus" because they were too far away. Also, it was early morning. So they could not see who it was.

Who is "the disciple whom Jesus loved"?

[21:7]

When John wrote about the "disciple whom Jesus loved", he wanted his readers to think about himself. John often wrote about himself by writing "other disciple" or "disciple whom Jesus loved" (See: John 13:23, John 18:15-16, John 20:3-8).

Scholars think John wrote this way because he wanted to be humble.

Why did the disciple whom Jesus loved call Jesus "the Lord"?

[21:7]

The disciple whom Jesus loved called Jesus "the Lord" to honor him. This disciple was John. He first recognized the man was Jesus. He said to Peter the man was "the Lord." John that understood Jesus is God. So he used a word that many people used to honor God.

The Greek word that is translated as "the Lord" is the same word that the Jews used when speaking about God. Therefore, whenever Jesus is called this, the Jews would have thought about God. They would have thought that people were saying that Jesus is God.

See: Lord; Jesus is God; Disciple

Was Peter naked while he fished?

[21:7]

Peter was not naked while he fished. But he wore only a robe as an outer garment. So, Peter tied his robe around him before he jumped into the water.

Why did Peter "throw himself into the sea"?

[21:7]

Peter "threw himself into the sea" to swim to shore to see Jesus. He was excited that Jesus had come. So he wanted to get to shore as fast as he could. He also needed to go to the shore to pull the net full of fish onto the shore (see: 21:11). To throw oneself into the sea is to jump out of the boat and into the water.

How far is "two hundred cubits"?

[21:8]

Two hundred cubits is about 90 metres.

How did John know there were 153 fish?

[21:11]

John does not say how he knew there were 153 fish. Some scholars think God wanted to say something special about the number of fish. But most scholars think John knew they caught exactly 153 fish. Fishermen like to count their fish.

Why did John write that this was "the third time Jesus showed himself to the disciples after he had risen from the dead"?

[21:14]

John wrote that this was "the third time Jesus showed himself to the disciples after he had risen from the dead" so his readers would think about the first two times that John wrote about when Jesus appeared to the disciples. The first appearance was when Jesus appeared to all of the disciples except Thomas. This happened on Sunday after the crucifixion (see: John 20:19-23). He appeared again to all the disciples a week later (see: John 20:24-29). This is the third time he appeared to seven disciples that Jesus was writing about.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Disciple; Crucify (Crucifixion)

21:15-25

Why did Jesus call Peter "Simon Peter" and "Simon son of John"?

[21:15]

When Jesus called Peter "Simon Peter" and "Simon son of John", he used different names for Peter. Simon was the name his parents gave him when he was born. Jesus had named him Peter, so he was often called Simon Peter after that (see: Matthew 16:16, Luke 22:31-34, and John 18:10). Peter was also called the son of John because his father's name was John (see: Matthew 16:17).

Who did Jesus speak about when he said "more than these"?

[21:15]

When Jesus said "more than these", he wanted Peter to think about the other disciples. Jesus asked Peter if Peter loved him more than the other disciples loved him.

See: Disciple

Who are the "lambs" and "sheep" that Jesus spoke about?

[21:15, 21:16, 21:17]

When Jesus spoke about "lambs" and "sheep", he used a metaphor for new Christians. He wanted to say that they had a lot to learn about God and Jesus. Peter had to teach them these things. So Jesus used a metaphor about feeding sheep to speak about this teaching.

See: Metaphor; Shepherd

Why did Peter say that Jesus "knew all things"?

[21:17]

Peter said that Jesus "knew all things" because he had followed Jesus long enough to know that Jesus was very wise. In fact, he knew that Jesus is God. So, because God knows all things, Jesus must know all things. Jesus knows all things (see: Matthew 12:25, Matthew 22:18, Mark 2:8, Luke 6:8, Luke 11:17, Luke 16:15, and John 2:25).

See: Jesus is God

What did Jesus want Peter to think when he spoke what he spoke in 21:18?

[21:18]

When Jesus spoke what he spoke in 21:18, he wanted Peter to think about how Peter would die. He wanted to say that Peter would be crucified. In the Roman world, speaking about "stretching out" the hands was a way to speak about crucifixion.

Nobody wanted to die by being crucified. So Jesus said Peter would have to go where he would not want to go.

Scholars think Peter was crucified in Rome during the rule of the Roman Emperor Nero. This was about 30 years after Jesus said these words.

See: Crucify (Crucifixion)

Why did Jesus tell Peter to "follow me"?

[21:19]

Jesus told Peter to "follow" him because he knew Peter was not certain if Jesus still wanted Peter as a disciple. Peter had denied Jesus three times before Jesus was crucified (see: John 18:17-27). So Peter did not know if Jesus still wanted him. Peter did not know what he should do now. Jesus answered this question Peter thought about but did not ask. Jesus made it very clear to Peter what he should do. Peter should continue to follow Jesus.

See: Disciple

Who was the other disciple Peter asked about?

[21:20]

The other disciple Peter asked about was John. Peter wanted to know about John's life and death. Jesus told Peter to focus on his own life and death, not John's. Peter needed to obey what God wanted him to do, and John needed to obey what God wanted him to do. Each Christian must follow Jesus by obeying him and doing the things he wants them to do.

See: Disciple

Why did John write 21:23?

[21:23]

John wrote 21:23 to make clear what Jesus said. Some people thought Jesus told Peter that John would not die until Jesus returns to earth. However, Jesus did not want Peter to think about this. Peter must follow Jesus, and John must follow Jesus. They should not compare themselves to each other. Each disciple must obey Jesus and do the things he wants them to do.

See: Jesus' Return to Earth

Who is the disciple who wrote this book?

[21:24]

John is the disciple who wrote this book. John never called himself by his name in this gospel. He did not want to take any attention away from Jesus. John wanted the readers of this gospel to remember Jesus, not John.

See: Disciple; Gospel; Savior; Messiah (Christ)

Why did John write?

[21:25]

John explained in 21:25 that Jesus did many other things. John did not write all these things in his gospel. These other things were amazing things. They were amazing because Jesus did them. But there were so many of them that John could not write all of them down.

See: Gospel
