

1. INTRODUCTION:

- a. Author – John the brother of James is the ‘Beloved Disciple’ and eyewitness to Jesus’ ministry, death and resurrection. There is little credible evidence that would suggest that anyone other than the Beloved Disciple is the author. The early church fathers held that John authored the Gospel. Internal support also lends credibility to John as the author. Zondervan’s Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible says of the Apostle John:
- i. The character and temperament of the Apostle John as seen in his writings is one who maintained a high Christology in stressing Jesus as the Son of God. He was thoroughly familiar with the Old Testament and with Jewish culture in general, as seen in the synoptic gospels and Acts. His spiritual insight and maturity led to his inclusion into Jesus’ inner circle along with his brother James and Peter. This is consistent with the picture in the fourth gospel as one for whom Jesus had a special affection.
 - ii. John is seen to be one who quickly acquired an acute understanding of the Hellenistic mind as indicated by his Greek vocabulary that demonstrated an ability to communicate to the sophisticated as well as to the simple.
 - iii. John tended to see things in simple terms of black and white, good and evil; there were few median shades of gray in his perspective. To John, everyone was either for or against the Lord; either a child of God or a child of the devil; either a child of light or a child of darkness.
 - iv. Christian maturity seems to have brought a measure of gentility to John’s temperament so that he was seen preeminently the “apostle of love” as his first epistle bears witness.
 - v. A compelling view of John’s nature is hinted at in John’s Gospel in 18:15-16. It is not stated but inferred that the un-named disciple accompanying Peter outside the gate was John. It was known that Zebedee had access to the Temple Court, as he was a prominent businessman and supplier of salted fish to the Jewish leaders. John and his brother would certainly have had access as well, and would have had access to what actually occurred in these closed legal sessions. The courage of this un-named disciple who risked exposure to check on Jesus, along John’s preference of an indirect identity like “the disciple Jesus loved” and John’s reluctance to speak much of himself provides an interesting composite of this complex individual. John was likely more of a “committed all in” disciple than a “wimpy tag along.”
- b. Date written – Although the earliest remaining fragments of John’s Gospel are dated too early in the 2nd century AD, the evidence and conclusion of most scholars has John’s Gospel written at the end of the 1st century AD.
- i. John was the elder Spiritual leader of the church when he wrote his Gospel, epistles and Revelation.
 - ii. John’s Gospel was most likely written in the mid 80’s to early 90’s AD.
 - iii. John’s perspective is significantly different than the other New Testament writers. The Synoptic Gospels were written in the mid-1st century, while John

- wrote at the end of the 1st century. It is generally understood that John was the last of the original 12 to survive.
- iv. John wrote significantly later than the other writers, and it is understood that in his old age and he approached things differently in a deliberate manner.
 - v. To John, Jesus is Lord and Messiah, God in the Flesh, King of heaven and earth, the second Person of the Trinity.
 - vi. To John, to Believe is to know, love, and obey Jesus.
 - vii. John's Gospel focuses upon a person's life in the Spirit... not coincidentally that John was "In the Spirit" when he received the Book of Revelation.
- c. John Provides New Gospel Material – Nothing in the first five chapters of John's Gospel are in the synoptics.
- i. In the first eleven chapters, only twenty-one verses relate with the synoptics... followed by four verses in chap 13, then nothing in 14-17.
 - ii. John used Eight Miracles as 'Signs' indicating Jesus' divinity, only two repeated from the Synoptics... these were Jesus' walking on the water, and feeding the 5,000. While some stories are repeated such as the Passion and Resurrection, most of the rest is new material not revealed before.
 - iii. A total of 36 verses are used in common with John and synoptics.
 - iv. Contrasts Between the Synoptic Gospels and John's Gospel:
 - 1. The Synoptics were more focused on Jesus ministry in the North around Galilee; while John was more focused on Jesus ministry in the South around Judea.
 - 2. The Synoptics focused more on the Kingdom of God, while John focused more on the Person of Jesus.
 - 3. The Synoptics referred to Jesus more as "Son of David" and "Son of Man;" while John preferred "Son of God."
 - 4. Synoptic thought development focused more on the early and developing Church; while John focused more on the maturing Church.
 - 5. Synoptics focused more on the earthly story of the events, while John focused on the Heavenly meaning of the events.
 - 6. Synoptics generally provided short dialogues of Jesus primarily in parables; while John provided long discourses.
 - 7. Synoptics provided little commentary of the events, while John provided much commentary.
 - 8. Synoptics mention only one Passover; while John speaks of three and maybe four.
 - v. Thus, John found a completely different way to tell the Gospel story.
- d. John's mastery of literary Greek is generally considered by scholars as "grossly inferior" to the other NT writers, because he uses very simple and limited words. However, he makes incredibly deep and penetrating observations with the words he chose to use. Complexity amid simplicity is an apt observation of John, and it speaks of his brilliance as an orator and writer.
- i. John uniquely uses the terms "day" and the "next day" [1:29; 4:3; 2:2] etc., to move along the details in developing his story. You definitely get the feeling

that is chronicling these events, though few scholars think it was his literal intent but more of a literary feature. If you add all the days up, they equal 34 days out of a three-year ministry... understandable in the context of the conclusion of his Gospel that John states... “Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written” - John 21:25.

- ii. Another interesting aspect of how John develops his Gospel is his usage of the Jewish feasts at Passover, etc. Many of the stories occur in the context of feast celebrations with Jews. This also provides a historical context for the story and time of telling.
- iii. Interesting to note that the Jewish month is a lunar calendar... thus the “First day” of the month is always a new moon. Passover is on the First day of the month.
- iv. It is accepted that John lived for some while in Ephesus, and it is believed that Jesus’ mother lived there with him under his care.

- 2) **Literary Structure** – unlike Mathew and Luke, John’s literary structure is simple and not highly developed. Transitions are obvious as are the chapter breaks and episodes. Such obvious markers indicate John was intentional about employing them. These outlines are helpful because it is the job of the interpreter to discover what the author provided for us to understand... meaning the things the author for the most part rendered reasonably clear. The author’s intended meaning is not hidden, as he wants it to be found and understood. It is not good interpretation to try to sharpen what the author deliberately left vague.

Following are two examples of Literary Structural Outlines of John’s Gospel:

OUTLINE 1:

- a. The Prologue of 1:1-18 is essentially John’s Creation Story. It is represented in two Hebrew structural forms below:
 - i. 1:1-2 – is a paired couplet – it is chiasmic poetry echoing Gen 1:1:
 - 1. A = in the beginning was Logos
 - 2. B = Logos was with God – associated with God
 - 3. B’ = Logos was God – identified as God Himself
 - 4. A’ = in the beginning with God
 - ii. Prologue is one large chiasm:
 - A – (1-2) One with creation and God
 - B – (3-5) Fullness of light and life
 - C – (6-8) Witness of the Prophet John
 - D – (9) Jesus Life the Light of humanity
 - E – (10-11) Unrecognized and rejected
 - E’ – (12-13) Received and believed
 - D’ – (14) Jesus the Word enlightening humanity
 - C’ – (15) Witness of the Prophet John
 - B’ – (16-17) Fullness of grace and truth
 - A’ – (18) One with God

Bible Survey – NT 1.5 – Gospel of John

b. Public Ministry – 1:19-12:50

i. Inauguration – Jesus’ True Identity – 1:19-28

- 1. Day 1 – John’s witness – 1:19-28**
- 2. Day 2 – John’s witness – 1:29-34**
- 3. Day 3 & 4 – John, Andrew & Peter follow Jesus – 1:35-42**
- 4. Day 5 – Philip & Nathaniel follow Jesus – 1:43-51**

ii. Jesus Ministry amid Receptivity – 2:1-4:54

- 1. Galilee – First Sign... Water to Wine – 2:1-12**
- 2. Judean Ministry – cleansing Temple, Nicodemus... First discourse 2:13-3:36**
- 3. Samaritan Ministry – Woman at well... Second discourse 4:1-42**
- 4. Galilean Ministry – Second sign... nobleman’s son healed – 4:43-54**

iii. Jesus Ministry with Growing Opposition – 5:1-6:65

- 1. Healing at Jerusalem – Third sign 5:1-9b**
- 2. Teaching – Third discourse – 5:10-47**
- 3. Miracles and teaching in Galilee – feeding 5,000... Fourth sign – 6:1-71**
- 4. Walking on water – Fifth sign – 6:16-21**
- 5. Bread of Life – Fourth discourse – 6:22-65**

iv. Jesus Ministry with Open Antagonism – 7:1-11:57

- 1. Spirit gives life – Fifth discourse – 7:1-52**
- 2. Forgiveness for sinner – 7:53-8:11**
- 3. “I Am” – Sixth discourse – 8:12-59**
- 4. Sight and Blindness – Sixth sign blind healed – 9:1-41**
- 5. Good Shepherd – Seventh discourse – 10:1-42**
- 6. Resurrection of Lazarus – Seventh sign – 11:1-57**

v. Closing ministry of First Coming – 12:1-36

- 1. Anointed by a sinner – 12:1-8**
- 2. Triumphal entry into Jerusalem – 12:12-19**
- 3. Greeks signify arrival of Jesus’ “Hour” – 12:20-36a**
- 4. End of public ministry – 12:36b**

c. Private Ministry – preparation for farewell – 13:1-17:26

i. Foot washing, servant leadership, departure of false disciple – 13:1-13:30

ii. Preparation discourse for disciples – 13:31-16:33

iii. High Priestly Prayer – 17:1-26

d. Passion & Resurrection – 18:1-20:31

i. Crucifixion – 18:1-19:42

ii. Resurrection – 20:1-29

e. Conclusion of Messiah’s First Coming – 21:1-25

OUTLINE 2:

a. Book of Signs – 1:19-12:50 – documents most of Jesus public ministry. There are 7 signs that occur:

- i. 2:1-11 water changed to wine.**
- ii. 4:46-54 healing of centurion’s son**

- iii. 5:1-17 healing at the Bethesda pool
- iv. 6:1-14 feeding of the 5,000
- v. 6:15-25 walking on the water
- vi. 9:1-12 healing man born blind
- vii. 11:1-46 raising of Lazarus
- b. Transition - 12:20 – Greeks seeking Jesus – now the time has come...
- c. Book of Glory 13:1-17:26 – mostly documents Jesus' private ministry
- d. Book of the Passion – 18:1-20:31
- e. Epilogue – 21:1-25

3) KEY STORIES – That will be explored:

- a. New Creation Narrative – 1:1-19
- b. Water Changed to Wine – 2:1-11
- c. Jesus clears the Temple Court of the Nations – 2:12-25
- d. Jesus teaches Nicodemus - 3:1-21
- e. Woman at the Well – 4:1-42
- f. I Am the Bread of Life – 6:25-59
- g. I AM the Light of the World – 8:12-30 – 9:5
- h. I AM the Good Shepherd – 10:1-21
- i. I AM the Resurrection and the Life – 11:1-44
- j. Upper Room Discourse – 13:1-17
 - i. I AM the Way, the Truth and the Life – 14:5-41
 - ii. I AM the True Vine – 15:1-17
 - iii. High Priestly Prayer – 17:1-26

4) KEY THEMES of JOHN'S GOSPEL – In conducting a word study a “synthetic chart” is often used for mapping out key words and themes developed through the book. This thematic map provides a direct indication of what the author thought was important. There are about two dozen major themes in John, while there are only a few in Matthew. On the other hand, Mathew is very complex structurally while John is very simple. These differences demonstrate two very different approaches to the same subject matter.

a. Key terms & word usages:

- i. Believe – 98 times
- ii. Messiah/Christ – 20 Times:
 - 1. Messiah is used two times
 - 2. Christ is used eighteen times
 - 3. Both mean King, and sent one – *Aspotelo*
 - a. John 11:25-27 & 12:12-15
 - b. Believing means to follow Him as King
- iii. Light – 23 times
- iv. Dark – eight times [light & darkness especially in chap one and eight]
- v. Judging – both verb and noun forms – 30 times
- vi. The world – *Cosmo* – 78 times
- vii. Heaven – fifteen times

- viii. Glory – sixteen times
- ix. Word – 52 times:
 - 1. *Logos* – 40 times... meaning the Second Person of the Trinity, God in the flesh in terms of Messiah-Jesus. The revealed and eternal Word that is God.
 - 2. *Rhema* – twelve times... meaning spirit and life.
- x. Love – 59 times:
 - 1. *Agapo* – 47 times... meaning God's perfect love. *Agapo* or *Agape* are roughly equivalent to the Hebrew *Hessed* – meaning God's faithful enduring love.
 - 2. *Adelphos* – 12 times... meaning brotherly love. This is not sexual as some have mistakenly interpreted, it is strictly a fraternal relationship.
- xi. Know – 142 times
- xii. Life – 36 times
- xiii. My Hour – used nine times
- xiv. Father – 98 times
- xv. Son – 54 times
- xvi. Jews – 70 times
- xvii. Truth – 25 times
- xviii. Testified and witness – 47 times
- xix. Disciple – used 78 times
- b. Deity of Christ Jesus – John's message is clear that Jesus is Savior and Lord; Jesus is King and God incarnate:
 - i. Jesus is King... Christ, Son of Man, Son of God all mean King.
 - ii. God means King... King of Heaven, creation and eternity.
 - iii. Heavenly origin statement of Jesus testifies to His deity.
 - iv. I Am statements directly unify Jesus and God... follows from God's revelation of His Personal Identity at the Burning Bush – "I AM that I AM."
 - v. Jesus existed before Abraham – demonstrates Jesus' pre-existence as Deity.
 - vi. Son of man – Daniel 7:13... Daniel is an important text for John and shows up powerfully in Revelation. The images, words used, etc. link Daniel's prophecy to Jesus as Messiah and the end times. (See Apocalyptic Writings... pathway Biblical Literacy/Bible Survey/Apocalyptic)
 - vii. Creator – Jesus pre-existence and active participation in the creation means He is God.
 - viii. Author of Life – another term for Jesus role in creation.
 - ix. Holy One of Israel – another term of Jesus Messianic role to humanity.
 - x. Knowledge statements – Jesus knew things only God could know... therefore, the only reasonable conclusion for this is that Jesus is God.
- c. Humanity of Christ Jesus:
 - i. Jesus' humanity is taken as understood by His being born of Mary. He was a human and experienced life as a baby, a child, a young man, and an adult before He entered into His ministry. He fulfilled His Spiritual/Heavenly calling as a human being-Messiah.

- ii. Jesus' humanity was not initially a cardinal New Testament/New Covenant doctrine. Because His humanity was more of a given, they focused more on His deity. As the doctrine of salvation became better understood as needing to be preserved for posterity, Jesus' humanity was better communicated as crucial in terms of the propitiation of the sin for all of humanity for all who would accept His Sacrifice as the cleansing by blood on the cross.
- iii. Jesus resurrection body was a physical body; it wasn't merely a Spiritual resemblance of a physical body. But Jesus resurrection body was also somehow different than before. The text demonstrates that something about Jesus was different when He wasn't immediately recognizable by His disciples. Also, there was some different sort of physics in play demonstrated by how Jesus could appear and disappear. This is a tantalizing foretaste of eternity that CS Lewis captures well – "when you see someone in Heaven the way God intended them to be, you will see a being so magnificent you would be inclined to worship them."
- iv. Proof of deity was more the focus for John, presumably because his physical nature was taken for granted as being so well known. While John focused on Jesus' deity, he held also to a functional unity of God and man in Jesus. John knew Jesus personally as a man and as God incarnate, and testifies to what he knew and understood. This is undoubtedly a matter of paradox as Jesus was both God and man.

5) EXPLANATION OF JOHN'S KEY THEME OF BELIEF – Although John's message can seem incongruent and obtuse, he is in fact very rational and straightforward. John employs subtle concepts about belief (noun) and believing (verb) in the telling of his stories, these subtleties will be more fully explored here. Note the different implications of the same words that be more clearly interpreted from the context of the text:

- a. That "You may believe that Jesus is *the* Christ" – John 20:30-31 – this is the author's self-stated purpose for writing his Gospel. So that the readers/hearers would know that Jesus is the Messiah promised throughout Jewish history.
 - i. The author is saying that Jesus is the answer about salvation and eternal life. That Jesus is God in the flesh... the promised Messiah who brings truth into the world, who makes peace between God and humanity, who leads God's people into eternal life. "Therefore, many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book... but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, you may have life in His name."
 - ii. The last verse of John's Gospel indicates the magnitude of proof that Jesus displayed as to His divinity 21:25 – "There are many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written."
 - iii. The specific content of "belief" is centered in Jesus:
 - 1. He is Son of God = deity and king.
 - 2. He is the Eternal Christ [Messiah] = deity and king.

3. Result of belief = to have eternal life.

- b. John's Theology is all about "Belief and Believe" – Remember that John is the last of the Apostles to write and was well aware of the writings of his peers – Peter, Paul, and James. John had a few things to add to clarify the Gospel message before he joined his friends in eternity. Unlike his friends' writings, John uses "Noun and Verb Tense" to reveal much about his thoughts on "Belief" and "Believing." It is important for us to remember that the disciples each had a slightly different personal theology, and John has his own distinct theological view which is slightly different from Peter or Paul. Although John is almost always in agreement with Peter, Paul, and James, the other main writers and theologians of the New Testament, John has a few priorities he wanted to clarify and John also had a slightly different way to tell his message as well.

Other authors of Scripture used faith and belief in the noun form, meaning that "Truth" is personified. Psalms writers employed a similar approach in describing "Wisdom" as a person. The embodiment of "Person" in this context is in reference to the Person of the Holy Spirit.

John emphasizes the verb form of believe, emphasizing that belief was based both on knowledge and an action to be performed by each individual. The result of properly knowing and acting is eternal Life. John often employs a back and forth tension between belief and unbelief, this is a clever way of indicating that there is an ongoing struggle for the choice we need to make to continue believing and acting.

- i. John 13:19 – I tell you this now before it occurs – that you may believe.
- ii. John 14:1 – Believe in God – form of "believe" used here by John is what we know as an active present-perfect tense – meaning "you are believing and you keep on believing." It is a description of an active faith that is being constantly renewed.
- iii. John 14:10-11 – Don't you believe? Believe Me! This is a question followed by an imperative.
- iv. John 1:48-50 – "You believe"? Yes, but... the disciples have expressed belief but it is limited and conditional, as their faith takes shape it becomes unconditional and unlimited.
- v. John 6:64 – "Yet there are some of you who do not believe" – John links the feeding of the 5,000 and makes a direct connection to Jesus and the bread of Life [Manna] which came down from Heaven connecting with the Exodus imagery of Manna in the desert and water provided in the desert in supernatural ways. John's thought process affirms that Jesus presents His flesh and blood as true food and drink, no comparison to the miracles God produced through Moses. There are several deductions we should make:
 1. It is intuitively obvious regarding the truth about faith and belief, that Jesus knows and God knows, but we don't see it as clearly.
 2. The crowd John is writing to are a mixed group of sheep and goats... the sheep will know the Truth and be set free by it; the goats will listen but

not hear... meaning they refuse to understand and remain in bondage to sin and death.

3. The sheep are God's people destined for eternity in heaven, the goats are the people of the world destined for separation from God – see Matthew 7:21-23.
- vi. John 16:27 – “You have believed” – this is an affirmation of a completed action, and indicates an effective faith that results in Eternal Life.
- vii. John 16:30-31 – “We believe” – here the disciples announce their belief; however, Jesus asks “Do you believe?” This is understood as an indication that their faith is still incomplete, and so Jesus properly questions it.
- viii. John 20:8 – The “other disciple” is a humble reference John uses about himself. It is used in the context when John and Peter waited by the armory gate where Jesus was being held and interrogated, and also at the empty tomb after Jesus' resurrection where they “saw and believed.” This combination of “seeing and believing” is a confirmation of a qualitative change in their faith.
- ix. John 20:25 – Thomas says, “I will not believe until I see...” thereby continuing the “seeing is believing” notion. This seeing is a perception of reliable physical evidence that demands acceptance as an objective reality. In John's thinking, it would be wicked to see and not believe – which some of the Jewish leaders were guilty of.
- x. John 20:27 – Jesus invites Thomas to “see and believe.” Jesus knows what Thomas needs and wants to give it to him, and presses him to come into the fulness of belief.
- xi. John 20:28-29 – Thomas now “sees” and he proclaims, “My Lord and my God.” John is saying that some now believe because they have “seen.” Yet a special blessing is reserved for those who haven't seen and yet believe. This is for those who would come to believe from the testimony of those who had objectively “seen.”
- xii. John 11:14-15 – Preceding the Lazarus resurrection is Jesus plaintive call to come, see, and believe.
- xiii. John 2:11 – Revealed Glory – disciples believed because of what they had seen.
- xiv. John 2:22 – Disciples believed – but missed the “destroy this temple” meaning where Jesus was speaking about His physical body which they would be destroyed on the cross and then resurrected from the tomb.
- c. John often employs a “back and forth” approach – As he seems to argue different aspects of his teachings on faith and belief in his Gospel. At first, this seems awkward, but John is deliberately employing it for clarifying a theological purpose. John was well versed in Old Testament writings, and his writing approach often follows that of Wisdom Literature, especially Proverbs which also uses this back and forth approach. Notice not just *What* but also *How* John saying things about believing:
 - i. Each statement reflects a different *quality of believing*. John is making the point that is possible to know *about* God and Jesus, but not be personally *related and connected* with them. In other words, it is possible to know about God, and not love Him. True faith that leads to eternal life requires we place

our hope for salvation in God, and receive the Holy Spirit whose transformational power within allows us 1) to love God, 2) to be obedient to God, and 3) to serve God. True belief includes all three of these components.

- ii. John is teaching that Jesus as Messiah is *God in the Flesh* who has the power and authority to:

1. Forgive sins.
2. Bind up and heal.
3. Free the oppressed and those in bondage.
4. Give life in abundance.
5. Recreate and destroy.
6. Transform humanity from sinners to saints.

Knowing all this, John's argument is essentially that it would be crazy not to believe Jesus as Savior and Lord.

- iii. John is teaching about what is important about faith. It can be discovered, but he is also indicating that it can also be lost. This is the point of the "I AM" assertions John makes of Jesus – 6:35ff; 8:12ff; 10:7ff; 11:25ff; 14:6ff; 15:1ff; 20:21. John is reminding us in these "I AM" statements that it is the continuation in faith believing that is important, not merely that you have believed at some time in the past or some affirmation you have made with no evidence of a transformed life or changed values and motives. We know that no one will live life perfectly, we all will stumble and fall until we reach perfection in eternity, but it is the continuance of belief in all its components that demonstrates the inner transformational life.
- iv. John 2:23-24 – Believe in His name... many people saw the signs and believed, but Jesus didn't entrust [literally believed] Himself to them. This is a word play John employs. They saw and believed Messiah by His words and actions, but Jesus knew their hearts and who were His true sheep that could be trusted.
- v. John 6:60-71 – note some provisional aspects of believers in this passage:
 1. 6:60 – Those who fell away were the questionable or provisional believers; they saw, liked, and were interested, but not committed because they were unwilling to make Jesus Lord [King] of their life.
 2. 6:64 – There was a negative context to their faith – yet they were among those called disciples – 6:61-71. John is teaching about committed faith in the context of the presence of the Spirit. In this passage, there were those "among you" who do not believe.
 3. 6:66 – Some turned away from Jesus. The choice to believe necessitates you submit and obey.
 4. 6:67-69 – Are you going to turn away too? John is reporting Jesus as He is asking the hard question, "will you submit and obey?"
- vi. John 8:31-32 – To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." **Many believed in Him, but continuing in His Word is what will set you free. Note that there is no formulaic approach to faith in Scripture... no "sinner's prayer" or "Four Spiritual Laws" in Scripture. These are**

simplistic tools to employ but unfortunately people may want to avoid hell, but not submit and serve God. All too often we tend to decouple these two verses instead of treating them as one integrated thought.

- vii. John 8:42-47 – Some of these followers were of the devil; they saw but failed to believe. Jesus is speaking here to a group of sheep and goats... the goats were just following to see what would happen next, while the sheep were clinging to Jesus' every word as their Messiah.
- viii. John 8:48-59 – This is not a nice conversation Jesus is having with these non-believers. It is evident that believers would not throw stones at God. Jesus is not mincing words in this passage, He is calling them onto the carpet for their lack of faith.

d. Faith and Faithlessness:

- i. John 11:48 – The faithless Jewish leaders feared everyone would come to believe in Jesus, and then the Romans would respond brutally and take away their Nation and their Place. Here John demonstrates that power and prestige were more important to these leaders than obeying God.
 - 1. Regarding the nation – these leaders were thinking and acting politically. One obvious interpretation was that they were sure Jesus could not lead a successful rebellion, and one more Jewish outbreak was sure to get attention from Rome with swift and severe retribution.
 - 2. Regarding their place – they were thinking socially – as they were more concerned with their positions in their socio-cultural context. They not only liked the attention they received as Rabbi and teachers, they totally loved it! They totally missed the spiritual context of the Kingdom of God.
- ii. John 21:19 – Believing involves following... it is not a passive matter. To believe is to lay down your right to your life in obedience to the Messiah. This is not merely head knowledge; rather it is an integration of head, heart and action [knowing, loving, and serving God].
- iii. John 21:22 – Don't YOU worry about what the others are doing, you just follow Me!
- iv. Believing means to abide – abide means to continue – John 5:38 & 8:31.
 - 1. Abide means continuity – it is to abide and remain with, to continue and endure.
 - 2. Jesus was not impressed with people just knowing the Truth or knowing about God. Knowing alone doesn't set you free – instead it is in living, loving and abiding in conjunction with knowing the Truth that sets you free.
- v. John 7:50-51 – Nicodemus was pretty daring to take a stand against the Sanhedrin. Being thrown out meant being both a religious and social outcast. Typically, the Sanhedrin consisted of 70 elders who ruled as the spiritual leaders of Judaism. This takes its significance from the 70 who helped Moses judge the tribes as they traveled in the Exodus, and is mirrored with the 70 that

Jesus sent before Him to bring His message to the country before coming to Jerusalem in the “Triumphal Entry.”

- vi. John 19:38-39 – John discloses that Nicodemus was a disciple in secret for fear of the Jews. Both Nicodemus and Joseph stood and faced opposition against the Sanhedrin to demonstrate their love for Jesus, meanwhile the Apostles were in hiding.

6) **INTERPRETING JOHN’S THEOLOGY OF BELIEF AND BELIEVING** – has definite implications for how a Christian lives out their life. Note that John has definite ideas about what it means to believe, and what Christian discipleship should look like in the faith community:

a. **Signs and wonders** – Interact with the Truth:

- i. John 4:46-40 – John sets the story in the context with believing – the official approached Jesus to heal his son. Jesus responds with the wicked generation that demands signs and wonders as a condition to believe. The man departs taking Jesus at His Word. On the way home the official gets word that his son is healed, and deduced it was at the time Jesus told him that he would be healed. So, what is John saying?
 - 1. The official believed the word of Jesus. The first part of the event was the official took Jesus at His word, the second part of the event was that he returned home, the third part of the event was that he believed the miracle. In other words, the miracle validated the faith the official already had and demonstrated. Thus, the miracle was a sign – meaning a confirmation of the Word he already had received, believed, and acted upon.
 - 2. Jesus said it was OK to have faith in the signs and the works of miracles He performed. The miracles Jesus performed were amazing and dramatic events that captured everyone’s attention and imagination. It was obvious that a mere man could not do what Jesus was doing, thus Jesus was validated as something more.
 - 3. In this story the official believed Jesus, he acted by returning home believing, and then the consummated miracle became a sign for his faith. Meaning the official would forever look back upon this event with the presence of his son validating his faith. This interplay of faith, belief and action is important to remember when studying John.
 - 4. It is also important to understand that signs were a validation of Old Testament truths where God entered history, and then were repurposed for the New Testament.
 - a. In the Noachian Covenant, the sign was the rainbow.
 - b. In the Abrahamic Covenant, the sign was circumcision.
 - c. In the Sinai Covenant, the sign was the Passover.
 - d. The New Covenant sign is the Cross and Resurrection.
 - e. In the Church, the sacrament of baptism is a sign for entrance into the faith community, and the sacrament of communion is a sign for the ongoing demonstration of commitment.

- ii. John 4:39-42 – The village believed first because of the woman’s word – and then secondly many came to believe Jesus’s spoken word. This secondhand-firsthand interplay makes the experience personal and objective.
- iii. John 10:38 – Believe My words and deeds – Real believing involves believing in the signs – the miracles were important to validate Jesus’ authority and to generate and maintain faith.
- iv. John 17:8 – Belief in the words Jesus spoke with authority is also important.
- v. John 6:26 – The focus of many was on their physical needs of being fed – they didn’t grasp the Spiritual life ramifications inherent behind the event. These people are likely those who stopped following Jesus when He made His “Bread of Life” discourse. This is what was behind the point of John 20:29.
- b. Faith is the faculty of the inner-man – Inner-man is Paul’s term, in John’s writings the spiritual-man is John’s term. John’s focus is life in the Spirit. For John believing is spiritual, not merely material world outcome. Though Paul, James and Peter wrote more on obedience to prove out your faith, John doesn’t necessarily disagree but chooses to focus on what is going on inside each believer. Genuine faith is intimacy with God, and this spiritually is necessarily enduring. The signs John deliberately calls out in his Gospel are the *physical proof* of why we should be obedient to Jesus’ words. No one but God could do these things.
 - i. Real faith and real belief are not static – they are dynamic, growing and developing over time. Discipleship begins with relative ignorance, but ends in maturity, becoming like our Master. There are many then and through the ages who profess faith, but then act no differently than non-believers. John would question the validity of such “faith” as would both Paul and James.
 - ii. John’s theology of faith would not be supportive of a “sinner’s prayer” or achieving security merely from a verbal affirmation. In John’s theology, if you are not actively believing and being transformed by your belief you are probably not saved. Thus, if you fall away, you are not believing [ongoing] or never believed to begin with.
 - iii. In John’s theology, there is nothing deficient in Jesus’ words or His works – if there is a deficiency it is in the quality of the faith response of the believer.
 - 1. John 8:12 - When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” **Note the words – light, follow, walk, darkness, light and life. This is an amazingly powerful statement on saving faith.**
 - 2. John 8:21-24 – If you do not believe that “I Am” you will die in your sins. “I Am” is the name God gave for Himself in response to Moses question at the burning bush... literally God revealed His Name as “I Am that I Am” indicating Self-Existence, Self-Sufficiency, and Eternality. Jesus is clearly saying in this statement that He is God.
 - 3. John 8:25-30 ^{Jn 8:30} Even as he spoke [word], many put their faith [belief] in him.
 - a. Believe Him
 - b. Believe in Him

- c. Believe in His name
 - d. Believe in His works
- 4. They were following Him – this is a good thing!
- 5. They stopped following Him – this is a bad thing!
- iv. John 8:31-47 – Know the truth and the truth will set you free
 - 1. Jews focused their security on being Abraham’s descendants – This was an Old Covenant mindset based on being blessed as “Abraham’s seed” [descendants] in the “land” [inheritance]. This was based upon a material world view rather than a Spiritual world view, and Jesus confronted this directly with in His words and actions. A Spirit filled other-worldly perspective is inherent with the New Covenant revelation and saving faith in Jesus.
 - 2. Part of the message is the doubt and misunderstanding inherent in the human experience, and the true knowing inherent in God. This is why Messiah had to come: 1) to make the Truth Known, 2) to validate the Truth with His actions and 3) as propitiation to settle the account for humanity’s sin with God.
 - 3. John is not affirming every person’s faith, nor is he saying that anything we do will necessarily make a difference in terms of eternity. It is not our responsibility to know what we believe transforms us from the inside out and that that what we do changes things from the outside in; both are to focus on the change the Spirit brings about in us.
 - 4. In conjunction, there is no clear resolution of the election/free will debate in John. It remains a mystery. John does demonstrate that there is an interplay between God and humanity in saving Grace, and that humanity must respond in faith, but he doesn’t solve the free-will/election problem.
 - 5. What he does say is that true faith perseveres... faith is proven by its continuance, and discontinuance demonstrates false faith.
 - 6. When we continually affirm our faith, it is a good thing! When our actions and words align with God’s will that’s an even better thing!
- c. John’s message of Belief – Is pretty much the same as what is expressed in the Epistle to the Hebrews, both are a strong message that emerged from the Jewish tradition with an admonition to continue walking in the faith.
 - i. It is not for us to judge another’s faith; we cannot know what is in the heart of another. If they profess faith, we pretty much have to take them at their word – except that their words and their actions should be in accordance, thereby validating their faith. In the final analysis – only God knows for sure the nature of someone’s heart.
 - ii. Spirit borne transformational belief is the only kind of faith and that is saving faith that incorporates mind, heart, and action.

- iii. Faith is a journey, the object and end of the journey is Jesus – who is the epitome of light, life and truth. It is Jesus and becoming increasingly like Him that motivates true faith and demonstrates His followers as God’s children.

7) **JOHN’S THEOLOGY IS AN “OLD MAN’S THEOLOGY”** – John’s Gospel, Epistles and Revelation reflect what many call an “Old Man’s Theology.” It is important to remember that John was the last Apostle of Jesus on earth, and as an old man steeped in the meditative and contemplative aspects of Christian mysticism he saw things more clearly as right or wrong, and black and white.

- a. **John’s theology is characterized by duality**, meaning John sees things as “either/or” (Duality)... never as “both/and” (Paradox). Insights on Duality and Paradox include:
 - i. Duality is the more simplistic approach to reality. An older person is more likely to see things in terms of black and white, while a young person is more apt to see things in terms of the shades of gray in which we live. It takes maturity to see things more clearly from a well-defined value structure and to act more consistently accordingly. This is the nature of mature wisdom living in the Spirit and in Truth. Dualities present in John’s thought development include:
 - 1. Light and darkness.
 - 2. Spiritual and material.
 - 3. Good and evil.
 - 4. Belief and doubt.
 - 5. True and false.
 - 6. Right and wrong.
 - ii. Paradox is a more scholarly approach that may see reality as “both/and” rather than the dualistic “either/or.” Paradox allows for the certainty of human free will and the Sovereignty of God. Thus, the Goodness and Mercy of God may be perfectly balanced with His Justice and Anger. C.S. Lewis and Parker Palmer are noted authors who have written extensively on the bridge between the natural and the supernatural. In Lewis’ perspective for example, humanity was created a “spiritual being” living out a “physical life.” Through humanity was intended to live forever in the company of God, the Fall changed that. Jesus in His resurrection body becomes the first fruit of perfected humanity that all God’s people will one day enjoy. The logical conundrum of two seemingly contradictory ideas both being true is the nature of paradox.
- b. **John’s Theological Perspective is focused squarely upon eternity** – with the human mindset being dynamic and transforming, whose spiritual truth is enduring and unchanging.
 - i. ***Hen-Dia-Dys*** – Greek term of functional unity meaning “one through two.” This term captures the intent of the concept of “buy one, get one free.” It is a different way of seeing reality where although one could make a distinction of the two, they are the same. With this concept in mind, John would hold there is a functional unity in human experience even in the natural and supernatural.
 - ii. Examples of these functional unities include:

1. Spirit and truth.
 2. Heart [emotive, EQ] and head [cognitive, IQ].
 3. Wisdom and maturity.
 4. Belief and obedience.
 5. Man and Woman.
- iii. John would hold that when you believe something is true, it is inconsistent to not act upon that truth, meaning to submit to that reality and to live according to that truth. There is both right and wrong, and black and white here.
- iv. To John, true faith is:
1. Consistent in mind, heart, and action – a person’s words and actions bear it out. John would interpret the confusion of a person’s expressed belief and their wrong actions as evidence their faith is immature and/or deficient.
 2. Enduring in being viable and growing over time. Paul said much the same in expressing the necessity of Spiritual Fruit developing in the believer’s life. In other words, they should look more and more like Jesus over time.
 3. A believer’s life is thus as a “Spiritual Life” being lived out in the flesh of a physical world. For more on this topic of Spiritual Growth and Maturity click this quick link to the AD website - <http://www.authenticdiscipleship.org/pdfs/2-spiritual-formation/Spiritual%20Maturity/SF%202.2.1%20-%20Spiritual%20Journey%20Discovery.pdf>

- 8) **JOHN’S GOSPEL DEMONSTRATES a “HIGH CHRISTOLOGY”** – meaning a high view of the greatness and importance of Jesus as Messiah. Key Messianic Thoughts about Jesus Include:
- a. **A New View of the Creation Narrative – John 1:1-18.** In this passage, John provides a New Testament view of the Old Covenant Creation narrative. John proclaims that Jesus is the God/Man Messiah, not merely a political liberator but the Creator of everything and Liberator of Fallen creation and humanity.
 - b. **God Sends His Last Old Testament Prophet** – John the Baptist is the last direct link to the Old Covenant Prophets concluding their Old Testament ministry and launching a New Covenant New Testament ministry. John the Baptist is called specifically to Announce Messiah-Jesus’ Arrival – 1:19-34. Here are some helpful insights from an article from “Faithlife Study Bible” by David Seal:
 - i. John the Baptist, sometimes called John the Baptizer (e.g., Matthew 3:6; Mark 1:5), was born around 4 BC, six months prior to the birth of his cousin, Jesus. His parents were the elderly Zechariah and Elizabeth (Luke 1:13, 36). Prior to his son’s birth, Zechariah was told by an angel the child was to be named John (Luke 1:13). The angel also declared the boy would be Spirit-empowered and was to be raised in the Nazirite tradition (Numbers 6:3; Judges 13:2–5)—all of which were indications of the special role this child would serve in the plans of God (Luke 1:14–15). Further, the angel related that John would minister in the spirit of

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Elijah, serving as a prophet and a preacher, and preparing the people for God's intervention in history (Luke 1:16–17; Malachi 4:5).

- ii. The Gospels recount little of John's childhood years (Luke 1:80), focusing primarily on his adult ministries of preaching and baptism; his work made an enormous impression on people, attracting huge crowds (Matthew 3:5–6; Mark 1:5; John 3:23). John preached a message of the judgment of God, repentance, and the good news of the Messiah's imminent arrival (Mark 1:4, 7–8; Matthew 3:10; Luke 3:3, 9, 18). John used vivid imagery when preaching—presumably with the intent to summon a national movement of repentance and baptism among the Jewish people.
 - iii. The Gospel of Matthew indicates that John wore unique clothing, consisting of a camel hair wrap secured by a leather belt around his waist. John's attire speaks of his function as prophet and suggests his poor economic status (see Matthew 3:4; 2 Kings 1:8; Zechariah 13:4). He also lived on grasshoppers and wild honey, nourishment garnered from the wilderness environment in which he lived and preached (Matthew 3:1–4).
 - iv. According to Luke 3:1, John the Baptist began preaching in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar. Tiberius' rule started in AD 14, suggesting John began in AD 28 or AD 29.
 - v. Many thought John to be the Messiah (Luke 3:15), but John predicted the coming of Jesus, whose status would make John pale in comparison (Matthew 3:11–12; Mark 1:7–8; Luke 3:15–18; John 3:30). John prophesied about God's imminent coming, preached about the need for repentance, and baptized—but the remedy for human sin required the coming of Jesus.
 - vi. At one point in John's ministry, Jesus comes to John to be baptized. John initially refuses (Matthew 3:14), but ultimately agrees. John and Jesus have an additional indirect interaction when John, while in prison, asks if Jesus is the expected "coming one" (Luke 7:18–23).
 - vii. Jesus said John was greater than a prophet (Matthew 11:7–9; Luke 7:26). He also said that of all those born of women, there was none greater than John (Matthew 11:11; Luke 7:28).
 - viii. John was ultimately beheaded for rebuking Herod Antipas for divorcing his wife and marrying Herodias, the wife of his brother, Philip (Matt 14:3–12; Mark 6:17–29; Luke 3:19–20).
 - ix. In John's role as prophet, the details of God's plan of salvation can be seen. Jesus did not just appear; God sent a messenger to proclaim His arrival and preach about the role He would play in the divine plan of redemption (Luke 1:15–17; compare Isaiah 40:1–3).
- c. **Upper room discourse – John 13:1-16:33 – This is about the Private Ministry of Jesus to His disciples. First Jesus provides two new aspects of Christian Discipleship... foot washing and communal meal. Then Jesus provides for the leadership of His Church as He prepares to depart.**
- i. **Foot washing is the first aspect of New Testament Christian discipleship, and it is an allegory for personal Spiritual cleansing – 13:1-20**

1. Jesus provides an example for His followers to emulate – in His example, the leader is doing the work of a slave – this is a demonstration of servant leadership, the gold standard of leadership for the Church. This was definitely not the norm at the time. Only a slave would be expected to wash another's feet in first century Palestine... until Jesus. Jews would never touch another's feet for fear of being rendered unclean. In this context, Jesus' example is truly amazing and completely counter cultural!
2. Foot washing is indicative of the ongoing cleansing each of us requires from sin. Jesus washed us, this is the payment of our sin based on Jesus' redemptive offering on the Cross. And Jesus commands that we wash each other – that is, as we must accept Jesus' forgiveness, we must also forgive each other. This is the mutual confession and release of Christian Grace to each other.
3. Baptism conveys the supreme expression of love that is the forgiveness of sins by God. The Jewish purification bath was a ritual for personal ceremonial cleansing. Baptism symbolizes the cleansing Christians receive by faith with the forgiveness of our sins by God – 13:10. This is what the sacrament of Baptism symbolizes.
4. Foot washing is the ongoing practice within the Christian community necessary because we often if not continually offend each other. If we fail to release our offense, the result is disappointment, anger, and bitterness... killers of relational harmony and intimacy in community. Relational intimacy requires vulnerability and is necessarily founded on mutual trust and respect. To nurture relational intimacy and protect trust and respect, mutual forgiveness is crucial. In this context, foot washing is a picture of working out Luke 17:1-10.
5. The nature of forgiveness John is speaking about is to act as if you have forgotten the wrong that was committed against you, and deliberately not bringing it up again. This was the nature of forgiveness Jesus had for His Disciples and presents for the Church. [See the article on forgiveness through this quick link - <http://www.authenticdiscipleship.org/pdfs/2-spiritual-formation/Spiritual%20Disciplines/SF%201.13.1%20-%20Forgiveness%20Study%20&%20Praticum.pdf>]
6. This type of forgiveness is a mutual and active relational exercise. Such forgiveness is not cheap, and it is not easy. It is prayerfully and reverently done in love. [See "Spiritual Formation 1.3 – Prayer Practicum 1 – Confession and Intercession - <http://www.authenticdiscipleship.org/pdfs/2-spiritual-formation/Spiritual%20Disciplines/SF%201.3%20Prayer%20Practicum1%20-%20Confession%20&%20Intercession.pdf>]
7. True forgiveness requires the sequence of conviction, remorse, repentance, restoration/restitution, and reconciliation.

- a. Conviction is the understanding that I have done wrong, and conviction is a gift of the Spirit.
 - b. Remorse is the internalized result or fruit of conviction.
 - c. Remorse leads to repentance – the decision that I will do things differently.
 - d. Restoration/restitution has to do with the outworking of this process in the desire to make things right, it is a tangible response demonstrating true remorse and repentance. Too many people are sorry they were caught or found out, but not necessarily that they perpetrated a wrong against God or others.
 - e. Reconciliation like conviction are gifts from God, but reconciliation is dependent upon how I respond to conviction. It is possible to be convicted, but not remorseful; or remorseful and not repentant; or repentant without seeking personal restoration or restitution.
- ii. Communal Meal is the second aspect of New Testament Christian discipleship, and is a demonstration of the ongoing relational intimacy in community, and an important prelude to serious thought and contemplation – 13:21-30
 - 1. The sacrament of communion is reflective of this event, and punctuates the primacy of sharing in Jesus' life in ongoing fellowship. Jesus asked His disciples to "Do this in remembrance of Me," it is an ongoing living sacrament that is 2,000 years old.
 - 2. The element of the bread symbolizes Jesus' broken body on the Cross. It is also symbolic of the Word of God [the Bible] that we consume with reading and studying.
 - 3. The element of the wine symbolizes Jesus' blood shed as a propitiation of the forgiveness of sin. It is also symbolic of the Old Covenant tradition of blood sacrifice for the cleansing of the people so they may approach God.
- iii. At the end of these two aspects of Christian discipleship, the text says that Judas the traitor went outside and "It was Night" – 13:30, meaning spiritual darkness had descended as the traitor is identified and leaves the meal and the fellowship. Judas' leaving into the darkness of night is a picture of his Spiritual blindness and the judgment that would follow his betrayal.
- iv. Peter was called to be the leader of the Apostles after Jesus left them in the care of the Spirit.
 - 1. Peter along with Paul were the height of early Christian leadership – they along with James were the pinnacles of faith in the early church. Peter along with James the Just [half-brother of Jesus] were the leaders of the Messianic Jewish community headquartered in Jerusalem, and Paul was the leader of the Gentile Christian community.
 - 2. Peter is shown as being fallible, but not a lost cause – same for Paul in Acts. The conflict and resolution of it between Peter and Paul are illustrative of what Jesus expects to occur in the Church. It is OK to see

things differently; it is OK to hold to strong ideals. It is not OK to denigrate another leader, but instead to gently reprove them. This is an extension of Grace in the foot-washing theme.

- v. The apostles were entrusted with carrying on Jesus' work in building up and tending to the spiritual health of the Church – 14:14-17.
 - 1. Peace I leave with you – 14:27. Jesus provides something tangible the world cannot provide – peace. Demonstrated as first with God, and second with one another in the faith community. This is the meaning of truth in love.
 - 2. "I'm going away, but I'm coming back" – 14:28. Jesus provides encouragement to His followers throughout the ages... we are not left as orphans as we have the ongoing Presence of the Spirit to sustain us until Jesus returns at the Parousia – the end of days.
 - 3. These two verses frame the hope we have in Christ.
- vi. John is a Trinitarian, and in his Spiritual World-view he sees:
 - 1. Father is King of heaven – this is the Spiritual realm of the Super-natural in Heaven... the Kingdom of Heaven.
 - 2. Jesus is King of earth – this is the material world where humanity and God may now coexist freely and intimately. The material world we now live in is still Fallen and imperfect, but Satan the usurper has been defeated at the Cross, Resurrection, and Pentecost. The future presented in John's Revelation is a new Heaven and Earth where the two realms converge.
 - 3. Holy Spirit – is the counselor who binds us together in Him... unifying, holding together Father, Son, Spirit – and all of Creation.
 - a. Jesus was the "Paraclete" while He was here.
 - b. The Spirit is the better "Paraclete" because He is not limited by a physical body and can be everywhere simultaneously.
 - c. What Jesus began is being completed by the Spirit and the Body [Church].
 - 4. Trinity – there is an unbreakable unity in the Godhead, into which Spirit indwelt believers are now invited to partake. This is the basis for unity of the church.
 - a. Trinity provides a view that is beyond hierarchical. It is mutually interdependent and submissive.
 - b. Jesus' example of pouring out His life for the Church is a picture of elders and leadership shepherding their people. This is what the leaders of Israel should have been doing but failed to do. It is also a picture for the love and mutual submission in marriage and the family.
 - 5. The Person and Work of the Spirit is clarified by Zondervan's New International Bible Dictionary in this following article:
 - a. The Hebrew and Greek words that are translated "spirit" are *ruach* and *pneuma*, both meaning literally "wind" and "breath."

Both came to be used for the unseen reality of the Spirit including supernatural living beings, especially God and angelic beings with whom humanity could interact. As the breath of God animated humanity in the natural realm (Genesis 2:7), so the Spirit would animate humanity's life in the supernatural realm.

- b. Therefore, breath and wind are appropriate symbols of the Holy Spirit (Genesis 2:7; Job 32:8; 33:4; Ezekiel 37:9-10; John 20:22). Other symbols include the dove (Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; John 1:32), oil (Luke 4:18; Acts 10:38; 1 John 2:20), fire for purification (Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16; Acts 2:3-4), and living water (Isaiah 44:3; John 4:14; 7:37-39). Thus, the Spirit becomes the earnest guarantee of all that God has in store for humanity in eternity (2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13-14).
- c. Jesus taught the nature and work of the Holy Spirit in John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7-15. The transformative work of the Spirit is to dwell in the disciples as Comforter, Counselor, Advocate (Greek *Paraclete*); to teach all things; to help believers remember what Jesus said; to testify of Jesus; to reprove the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment; to guide the disciples into all truth; not to speak on his own initiative, but to speak only what he hears; to show the disciples things to come; and to glorify Jesus by showing the things of Jesus to the disciples.
- d. At Pentecost, a new phase of the revelation of God to people began (Acts 2)—as new as when the Word became flesh in the birth of Jesus. The New Testament is full of the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers (Romans 8:1-27); e.g., he gives gifts (1 Corinthians 12:14), our “body is a temple of the Holy Spirit” (6:19), and he works in us to produce the “the fruit of the Spirit” (Galatians 5:22-23). Being “filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18) means that one experiences Christ living within (Romans 8:9-10).
- e. As the heavenly Father is God and his Son Jesus Christ is God, so the Holy Spirit is God. Trinity is Three in One, One God in Three Persons. The Holy Spirit as well as the Son were active in creation; the Spirit was active on certain occasions in his own person in Old Testament times and more intensively in the Gospels; and in Acts and the Epistles the Spirit becomes the resident divine agent in the church and in its members. Teaching concerning the role and importance of the Holy Spirit has been both neglected and distorted, but the subject deserves careful attention as one reads the New Testament.

6. **For more on this topic see the short study on “Who is God and what can we know of Him.” Here is a quick link to the AD website -**

<http://www.authenticdiscipleship.org/pdfs/3-leadership-dev/LD%20-%206.1%20-%20Discipleship%20Studies%20-%20Who%20is%20God.pdf>

- vii. **Commissioning of the apostles – 14:28-31** is a reminder to the disciples that Jesus is returning to the Father who has sent Him. This really is good news for them, though they cannot understand it as yet. The Spirit will be sent as God's seal upon the disciples and for all believers throughout the ages, and He is God's promise that God will redeem them for eternal life.
- d. **Jesus Prepares His Disciples for His Departures** – Jesus sets the parameters for relationship in the fellowship of faith – first with Jesus, then with each other, then with the world. Jesus commands them to love God, love each other, and provide for the sheep in His absence.
 - i. **15:1-11 – Vine & branches:**
 - 1. Father is the farmer
 - 2. Jesus is the true vine
 - 3. Israel is the false vine – Isaiah 5
 - 4. Good grapes = righteousness
 - 5. Good branches produce good fruit, worthless branches produce no fruit and are discarded.
 - 6. Call to abide – to persevere in the faith, to keep believing
 - ii. **15:12-17 – The commandment to love one another:**
 - 1. Disciples are friends with God, no longer slaves but sons and active participants in God's Kingdom.
 - 2. Called and appointed for ministry, they are to bear fruit in love.
 - iii. **15:18-16:4 – Expect hostility from the world:**
 - 1. As the world was at odds and hostile to Jesus, so it would be for His disciples and His Church.
 - 2. Believers are not “of this world” who instead belong to the next world, meaning the Kingdom of God.
 - 3. The promised Spirit will enable them to testify to the Truth and complete Jesus' purpose on earth.
 - 4. This hostility was prophesized as part of judgment at the Fall – Gen 3:13-15: “Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” So the LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, “Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”
 - 5. Satan was not deceived; he was in open rebellion against God which is why he is cursed... meaning he has no chance for redemption. Humanity was cursed indirectly through the earth from which they were made, but because they acted wrongly sin and death were introduced. The importance of humanity's being deceived meaning they acted wrongly in ignorance, therefore God would provide a means for redemption... the Messiah. Messiah [Jesus] is the offspring who

would be wounded [struck on the heel] by the serpent [Satan]; but Messiah would deal a fatal blow to Satan in crushing his head. This came to fruition at the cross and resurrection.

6. The hostility between Satan and humanity is Spiritual Warfare. This will continue throughout the Church age until Messiah returns at the end of all things when He redeems creation and remakes Heaven and earth, the new home for humanity living with God. This beautiful story of redemption plays out in human history.

- 9) **ADDITIONAL CONCEPTS OF “BELIEVE”** – John deliberately used an ambiguous verb form of Believe in the Greek, but the context promotes the ideal of an active faith-obedience life. In this regard, John would have agreed with Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s definition of “Cheap Grace” in reference to those who receive God’s promises with ambivalence and with no expectation or evidence of an accompanying transformational life. This is not Biblical Christian Discipleship. [See the article on New Testament Discipleship for more on this important subject - <http://www.authenticdiscipleship.org/pdfs/3-leadership-dev/LD%20-%202.2%20-%20New%20Testament%20Discipleship.pdf>]

Note the following concepts John reveals about faith and belief:

- a. **Ambiguity of Faith – Anomaly #1** – What is John saying about believing in the form of word he chose? John seems to be saying that “ambiguity happens in life and in faith, therefore understand why and what is being said through it.” John’s ambiguities are deliberate. This also calls attention to the fact that we cannot understand everything, but we can choose to believe and trust God through faith. These verses relate to the *believers who have continued believing*. Notice the following:
 - i. 13:19 – “I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am He.” “You will believe” is an affirmation because of the irrefutable evidence.
 - ii. 14:1 – “Believe in God, believe in Me also” – note the juxtaposition. The Jews said they believed in God, but their actions discredited their words. John is saying that you cannot believe in the God you have not seen if you refuse to believe in the Living God Whom you have seen.
 - iii. 14:10-11 – “Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.” John is saying of Jesus, “I have been with you for so long... do you still not believe? How can you not see this?” In John’s thought, it is unreasonable for people not to believe in Jesus.
 - iv. 14:20-21 – “On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.”
The ambiguous abstraction that faith seemed to be at the time will be made clear to all, and your actions will validate or disprove your faith.

1. 1:48-51 – “Do you believe?” – Jesus poses the question in context meaning “amazing, you believe on so little evidence? You will see greater things...” and left unsaid “and still not believe as you should.”
2. 6:61-65 – My words are “Spirit and Life” – some of you do not believe because you are unspiritual... you refuse to be moved by the Word of God, thus you remain dead and refuse life. Those who are Spiritual believe in my Words... and are alive for eternity.
3. 6:66-69 – “You have the words of eternal life, we have believed and we know you are the Holy One of God” – Peter’s declaration that Jesus is Messiah.
4. 16:27 – “Because you have loved Me and have believed” – John uses a form of the verb believed that means they “are continuing to love and believe Jesus.” This is not a one-time matter; rather it is continuous and ongoing through eternity. One of the great mysteries of faith is the collaboration between God and humanity... it is a dance of faith, not the wrestling match the Jews made it to be.
 - a. **Note Gen 32:24-28a in the Amplified version:** “And Jacob was left alone, and a Man wrestled with him until daybreak. And when [the Man] saw that He did not prevail against [Jacob], He touched the hollow of his thigh; and Jacob’s thigh was put out of joint as he wrestled with Him. Then He said, Let Me go, for day is breaking. But [Jacob] said, I will not let You go unless You declare a blessing upon me. [The Man] asked him, What is your name? And [in shock of realization, whispering] he said, Jacob [supplanter, schemer, trickster, swindler]! And He said, Your name shall be called no more Jacob [supplanter], but Israel [contender with God].”
 - b. **It is important to remember when interpreting Scripture that you must not take verses out of context and to consider the meaning of the entire passage in the overall context of redemptive history. The Jews throughout their history and seemingly in spite of their having been chosen by God as His ambassadors for humanity, they continued in disobedience and rebellion against God. This was largely the message of the prophets. Even when the leaders and people did well in their faith, they presumed God’s favor was reserved exclusively for themselves and not for the world at large. This was not what God had planned. God intended the Jews to be a blessing to all people so that all of humanity may be redeemed. However often God’s people and their leaders stumbled and fall, God always remained faithful to His people and always retained a remnant who would love Him, obey Him, and serve Him as salt and light to the world.**
5. 16:30-31 – The disciples declare, “by this we believe!” To which Jesus asked, “Do you now believe?” This back and forth tension is a deliberate

literary play by John, that focuses on the fact that they still really didn't believe as they should.

- v. 17:1-26 – Jesus' "High Priestly Prayer" is one of the more compelling passages of Scripture. Note the thought development:
 - 1. Verses 1-5 are about Jesus' prayer for Himself.
 - 1. Verses 6-19 are about Jesus prayer for His disciples. Verses 14-19 are especially focused on Spiritual warfare.
 - 2. Verses 20-26 are about Jesus prayer for all believers present and future who will come to faith.
 - 3. Note the clever word-play:
 - a. 17:8 – They have believed.
 - b. 20:25 – I will not believe – Thomas' statement is in contrast to their first meeting in 1:48-50.
 - c. 20:26 – Jesus tells Thomas, "Do not be unbelieving, but believe," – in other words, look at the evidence!
 - d. 20:28-29 – "Have you [Thomas] believed? Blessed are those who have not seen yet believe." John is making a statement about the quality of childlike faith that does not demand the burden of proof that Thomas demanded. This is a reproof of Thomas, and an encouragement for the future believers who would have the testimony of Scripture and the Spirit, but not the eye-witness evidence the disciples had. It is important to remember that many others [Jews and Gentiles] were eye witnesses of these events with some believing and others not.
 - i. 11:14-15 – "That you may believe" – this is John's own self-declaration of the purpose of his writing. Also bear in mind that John wrote this some 40-50 years after the events, thus the following verses are foreshadowing for the faith that would yet emerge:
 - 1. 2:11 – His disciples believed in Him.
 - 2. 2:22 – His disciples remembered and believed the scripture and the Word.
- b. Rescinding Faith – Anomaly #2 – These following verses deal with *believers who believed for a while, but then they stopped believing*:
 - i. 2:23-25 – The text actually says, "Many believed in Jesus... but He would not believe Himself in them." This is another interesting word play in the Greek as it presents a logical conundrum. There is an obvious mystery in faith regarding those coming to belief in Jesus in conviction, remorse, repentance, restoration and reconciliation; and with those who continue in belief – knowing the truth, being set free from bondage, and persisting in loving and following Jesus is faith and belief in John's view.
 - ii. 6:60-69 – Some disciples grumbled and stumbled – these were believers who heard the truth and initially believed it, but could not or would not accept it and follow Jesus over time. In contrast, the faithful "abided" – meaning they continued following Jesus.

1. 6:62 – “What if you saw angles ascending and descending on the Son of Man” – Jesus is asking, would my being Jacob’s ladder offend you?
 2. 6:64 – “Some among you do not believe” – many people who initially followed Him, but refused to believe Him. These were the onlookers who were curious about what Jesus was saying and doing but would not submit to God.
 3. 6:66 – “His disciples stopped following” – these are those who stopped being His disciples, meaning they believed for a while but turned away; they didn’t persevere. This begs the question about how this squares with the Calvinist and Armenian theological debate about the theology of “Believer’s Security.” John’s theology would appear to have an Armenian stance rather than a Calvinist stance. It is akin to Jesus teaching about the four types of soil – “those who heard the truth and initially received it with joy, but failed to continue when persecuted.” In other words, their faith was on their own terms not on Jesus’ terms. Another interesting aspect of the four types of soil is in relation to how they continued to hear and apply the Word. It is not a once and done matter, but how we respond every time we hear God’s Word.
 4. 6:67-69 – “We have believed and have come to know.” There is a quality of faith that endures under questions and troubles. There is also some interplay going on between faith, knowing, and belief. The point John is making is that there is a quality of faith that is transformational – where through the indwelling Spirit you become a different person, with a galvanized hope and faith that announces “let everything else be proved false, yet I will steadfastly believe.” This type of faith is unshakable even in the face of death. Knowing the truth, and even believing the truth is insufficient; it must fundamentally change you in thought and action.
- iii. 8:30 – “As He spoke... many came to believe:”
 - iv. 8:31-32 – Speaking to those Jews who had believed, “if you continue in My Word – you will know the Truth and the Truth shall set you free.” This is an ongoing matter of a persevering faith that is ongoing and not a “once and done” event.
 - v. 8:42 – The Jews claimed Abraham as their father and by extension of the Old Covenant, that God was their Father. To which Jesus confronts their duplicity, “If God was your Father, you would love me!”
 - vi. 8:43 – “Why is my language unclear to you? Why do you not understand?” Because you cannot hear my word.” John’s use of “hear” speaks of perception that is transformational, not merely informational.
 - vii. 8:46 – “Which of you convicts Me of sin? If I am speaking the Truth, why don’t you believe Me?”
 - viii. 8:48 – “Do we not rightly say you are a Samaritan with a demon?” One of the best ways to avoid a message you don’t want to hear is to discredit and invalidate the messenger. The Jews didn’t want to believe because it would have necessarily changed everything about them. They wanted their place, and the Law, and Grace. They wanted all these things on their own terms, and where they could

keep their present level of comfort and prestige. Jesus confronts them that they must accept God's offer on His terms.

- ix. 8:55 – “You have not come to know Him, but I know Him....” This is an interesting peak at Grace: one can resist the truth, one can hear the truth and not be moved by it; and yet it is possible for them to come to faith at some point in the future. All things are possible with God. Unfortunately, the opposite course is also possible, you can know the truth and chose to ignore it, or later change your mind. True faith fundamentally changes a person.
 - x. 11:48 – After Jesus called Lazarus from the tomb when everyone knew he had been dead for days, the Jews duplicity now turns to open rebellion against Messiah Jesus. “If we let Him go on like this, all will believe in Him.” The power and evidence of Jesus’ campaign was compelling. The result of Jesus’ teaching was rightly understood as a complete change of priorities for the Jewish leaders. Jesus was transforming Israel from the inside out including some of the leadership, but not all would accept Israel’s Messiah.
 - xi. 21:19-21 – Jesus has been resurrected and is preparing to leave, He says to Peter – “Follow Me!” Essentially saying, “Don’t worry about John or anyone else. Your call is to follow and remain obedient to Me.”
 - xii. 5:35-40 – Is an interesting statement by Jesus that pretty much sums up the faithless Jewish leaders – “John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose for a time to enjoy his light. I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the very work that the Father has given me to finish, and which I am doing, testifies that the Father has sent me. And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent. You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.” In essence, John is saying to the Jews “You do not have His Word abiding in you – because you do not believe. Jesus is the “Living Word” of God, and Scripture is the authoritative “Testimony about Jesus.” The Spirit calls to those who might be saved and for those who respond. The Spirit bridges the four aspects of Faith John is teaching about 1) hearing, 2) knowing, 3) loving, and 4) obedience – this is transformational faith.
- c. **Tentative Faith – Anomaly 3** – there is another facet of believing that John talks about: *those who want to believe but need help to do so*. These are the “Lord I believe, but help my unbelief” group characterized by Mark 9:24:
- i. 12:42-43 Many of the Jewish rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him. These were closet believers who wanted Jesus, but were not ready to renounce their position in the Jewish socio-cultural world.
 - ii. 7:50-51 – Nicodemus bucks the trend in the Sanhedrin meeting and is accused of being a follower too [which of course, he was secretly]. This showed great courage because all believers who publicly affirmed their faith in Jesus were thrown out of the synagogue and all leaders who did so lost their position in the Sanhedrin. The senior Jewish leaders would pronounce these as “stealth or tentative” believers

who are cursed, and they treated them as those who didn't know the Law. Joseph of Arimathea was a member of the Sanhedrin who distanced himself from the other leaders and boldly went to Pilate to ask to retrieve Jesus' body on preparation day... the day before the Passover Feast [see Mat 27:58; Mark 15:43; Luke 23:52].

- iii. 19:38-42 – Joseph – a secret disciple because of his fear of the Jews – what is John saying about Joseph? In essence, Joseph is no longer believing in secret – while others moved away, Joseph stepped forward and boldly asked for the body. Like Nicodemus, his courage and conviction overcame his fear and proved his faith.
- iv. Case studies – Peter, John, Thomas, Nicodemus, Joseph, Judas – are each examples of stealth-tentative believing, with Judas' example ending very badly.
- d. Hearing-Seeing [Objective] Faith – Anomaly 4 – This is another facet of believing that developed out of the interplay of Jesus' Words and Signs. Jesus' Words were authoritative and thought provoking, and His signs were absolutely captivating and compelling – a very powerful combination of *evidence that demanded a faith response*:
 - i. 4:48-54 – The man had faith and searched out Jesus to make his request. Though Jesus was reluctant at first, the man took Jesus at His Word... meaning he believed what Jesus said. On his way home, he received the news that his son recovered and pressed the matter to know at what time his recovery occurred. Knowing it was the time Jesus said he would recover. This validated his faith and the fact that he believed was a “sign” of his faith, with sign meaning an identifying characteristic.
 - ii. 4:39-42 – The Samaritan townspeople first believed in Jesus because of the woman's testimony, then when they heard His words first-hand they believed in earnest. Some may ask, “Are these two types of believing?” I think more likely the woman's testimony they accepted as true, and when they heard for themselves it validated what they already believed.
 - iii. 10:37-38 – Jesus said, “Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.” **This probably captures John's intent in this aspect of believing, “Even if you don't believe my words, believe my works.”**
 - iv. 11:45-46 – Many Jews saw what Jesus did, and believed. However, just because you see the evidence doesn't mean you'll accept the obvious conclusion. “Therefore, many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary and had seen what Jesus did, put their faith in him. But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.”
 - v. 17:8 – Jesus validated His ministry in terms of His obedience to the Father – “I gave them the words You gave Me, and they accepted them and believed.”
 - vi. 6:26-27 – “I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.” **They followed Jesus not because they saw the works, but because they ate and were satisfied.**

These folks were driven by their base animal drives, here to eat and be filled. Jesus offered a Spiritual filling, but they weren't interested.

- vii. **6:28-30** – Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?” Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.” So they asked him, “What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do?” **The work of God is to believe the One He sent, not chase the excitement of signs and wonders.**
- viii. **20:29** – “Because you have seen Me you believe, blessed are those who have not seen Me and believed.” Some scholars think that John seems to be writing about the difference of “intellectual knowing” and “experiential knowing” in these examples. Other scholars see this as a reference between “objective knowledge” of those who had personally observed the events described and then believed, and “Spiritual knowledge” of those for whom the Spirit has made this Truth real and vital apart from objective evidence. Personally, I think this is a Paradox. It is not the dualism of an “either/or” conclusion, but rather a paradox of a “both/and” conclusion. The Spirit brings all these belief aspects into play progressively to bring people to an abiding faith.
- ix. **Summary** – It is not just hearing or knowing, but following and abiding that demonstrates the quality of belief that John equates with discipleship. [See the discussion of “High Christology” – item # 7 on page 11]
- x. “Believe” is obviously a huge theme in John – he uses the term 98 times and this is no accident!
- xi. John also uses different verbs and verb tenses of believe, as well as different direct and indirect verb objects to develop his thoughts. Even the penetrating thoughts listed above only highlight John’s brilliant writing style.
- xii. Believing is continuing or persevering – it is remaining faithful in all such cases and circumstances you find yourself in.
- xiii. John’s theology of believing is far from simple as it is expansive, multi-layered, continuing, and progressive.
- e. **Transformational Faith – Anomaly 5** – Inner-man faith is imperfect but never stops believing and developing, and the result is eternal life. Outer-man faith is full of intellectual doubts and fails to persevere, and does not result in eternal life. The quality of “True Faith” that lives and perseveres is transformational in nature. *You are changed by what you believe, and you think differently and act accordingly.*
 - i. Paul wrote in Romans that we should no longer conform to the “worldly” order, but be transformed to an “other-worldly” order. Paul writes in Romans 12:2 – “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind [meaning truth through Scripture, and also heart meaning relational intimacy with God through spiritual formation]. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”
 - ii. **Faith that is merely intellectual will rarely transform an individual leading to a transformed nature. Knowing the Truth is foundational, but knowing, loving and serving God is transformational. Satan and the Demons knew God and His Truth but didn’t love Him or serve Him (see James 2:19).**

- iii. Faith that is transformational tends also to be relational and results in a different value structure and nature, this is Spiritual transformation.
- iv. Transformational faith is submissive, as the true believer intentionally submits their will to God. The sin of rebellion is the problem which Satan and his Demons, as well as many of the Jewish leaders and nominal followers who were condemned by Jesus.
- v. Submissive faith looks to be obedient even when the disciple doesn't fully understand. They know God, and trust God, and hear God, and respond in obedience.
 - 1. **Notice John 1:19-25:** This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." They asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" And he ^{*}said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am A VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, 'MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY OF THE LORD,' as Isaiah the prophet said." Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, and said to him, "Why then are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" John answered them saying, "I baptize in water, *but* among you stands One whom you do not know. *"It is He who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie."* **John knew his role was to preach and point toward the Messiah. Whatever else happened wasn't his concern. Like Elijah he responded in obedience even though he didn't fully understand how it would all play out (see Matthew 11:3).**
 - 2. In Matthew 11:14; 17:10-13 – Jesus identifies John as the fulfillment of the Prophet Malachi 4:5. John is the Prophet who was foretold as coming in the Spirit of Elijah, the last of the Old Covenant Prophets. But John only speaks of himself in terms of Isaiah, as the one making straight the path of the Lord. So either John was being coy with the Jews not wanting to identify Jesus before He was ready, or perhaps John didn't know his own true identity and was merely being obedient with the call he knew was upon him. I suspect the latter to be true.
 - 3. We are not called to understand our role in the scope of redemptive history, only to play the part that God has revealed to us in faith believing. Jesus alone saw the entire scope of the redemptive plan, all other prophets and disciples saw only a small part. God does not expect us to do what is impossible for us to do, only to listen and be obedient and trust That God will work all things out according to His purpose – Romans 8:28.
- vi. Transformational faith example of the disciples:
 - 1. The 12 lived together and observed and participated in the life and works of Jesus, but only 11 were saved. What was different about the one that was lost?

2. Jesus knew Judas' heart, but the rest of the 12 did not know his heart – they didn't know he wasn't one of them or that he was a thief and traitor until after the fact.
 3. When seeking to exegete the truth out of the text, look for the anomalies the author wants you to find and explore them.
- vii. Transformational example of Mary & Martha in John 11:
1. V21-32 – Martha [11:21] and Mary [11:32] both say the same thing when they first see Jesus – if you had been here my brother would not have died. This is a loving complaint of faith, not a demand or accusation.
 2. V22 – “Whatever you ask, God will give you” – this is complete faith, but they also responded out of their own pain and loss in ignorance of the Divine plan. They wanted their brother to be alive, but they trusted Jesus for allowing him to die.
 3. V24 – But I know he will rise at the last day – they trusted Jesus for their eternity, but the unasked question is “what does that do for me now?” I hurt. Jesus entered into their hurt and wept with them. This is all the more remarkable because Jesus knew what He planned to do. The resurrection of Lazarus was always what Jesus intended, it was His proof of being the “Living Resurrection.”
 4. This led to Jesus' stunning announcement that, “I Am the resurrection and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.” Then He proved it by raising Lazarus.
 5. After this experience, do you think anything could shake the faith of Mary or Martha, or Lazarus? They remained still fallen human and weak, but while everyone else was in hiding Mary was the first one to come to the tomb and made the wonderful Easter discovery of the risen Lord. After the initial reality of the Resurrection of Jesus and the follow-up reality of Pentecost, nothing could stop this band of disciples from being obedient to Jesus.

10) CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT CONTEXT – It is important to understand that John was writing into a Greco-Roman Culture that enjoyed a rich tapestry of philosophical thought. John is effectively speaking to these educated individuals when he wrote his Gospel. The following elements are some of the philosophical and theological contexts that his readers would have known. John takes these and builds upon them to make his case:

- a. Logos – John 1:1-2 “In the beginning” is a deliberate reflection of Genesis 1:1-2. There was a reason John employed this imagery – the Jews would have picked up on the similarity to Genesis, but was that John's only intent? What was the background into which John was preaching? Logos equals the Word – meaning Jesus is the “Living Word” that God employed when He spoke creation into existence. To say that the Word merely means “to speak” or “to say” is only a superficial definition. The fuller meaning has a background in Greek philosophy, which provides a better answer. To the Greeks, to speak means “discourse” or the “mental faculty of reasoning.” This is communication of the highest order, not merely talking casually.

- b. **Heraclitus** – was called the “Obscure Greek Philosopher” who was born in the 6th century BC, in Ephesus. He was a contemporary of the Persian King Darius. Heraclitus was invited to serve at Darius’ court, but he refused electing to remain with a minimal existence and the freedom to pursue philosophy unimpeded by the demands of the royal court. In other words, he preferred a free life of contemplation to the rich and pompous life in the service of royalty. Heraclitus believed that change is the basic reality. He thought all things were in a constant process of change, that nothing stands still. Thus, for Heraclitus fire with its constant motion and change was the perfect symbol for reality. Accordingly he taught as follows:
- i. He believed in the elemental nature of reality – and wrote about earth, water and fire as the elements with fire being the primary element. Accordingly he reasoned, all things will be destroyed.
 - ii. He believed that all change is guided by an intelligent law, which he called the “Logos.” He concluded that wisdom consists in understanding the hidden harmony of the Logos.
 - iii. The logos is the principle of underlying everything, however he believed that all other thinkers were inferior to himself and incapable of understanding this basic truth.
 - iv. In his thinking, opposites attract, move, and interact according to the Logos which was the key in the unity of reality.
 - v. He was a Monist and a materialist – Monists held that all things are essentially One; and while they are in a constant state of change, only what can be experienced and known is reliably True.
 - vi. Heraclitus was the first “Western Process” philosopher – his priority was how to deal with the state of constant change.
 - vii. He was also very Eastern in his thinking and had many Hindu and Buddhist concepts expressed in his thought.
 - viii. The elements of fire, water and earth and their changes and interaction corresponded to the repeated cycles of life, sleep, and death.
 - ix. John’s use of Heraclitus as a person known to his adopted Greek cultural environment is intriguing. Like Paul in his appeal to the Athenians, John was making his Gospel available in the context of his cultural world.
- c. **Plato** – 4th century BC approximately 2 hundred years after Heraclitus. Plato was a reductionist of Heraclitan thought, believing and teaching that the realm of nature and human experience was in a state of constant flux with nothing being permanent. Some of Plato’s belief structure include:
- i. He shunned written documentation of his thinking believing that ordinary thinkers would not understand him. In this way, he held to the idea that like Heraclitus he was beyond the mere mortal thinkers of his day.
 - ii. He believed that even if you could identify and document a truth that it or the circumstances around it would eventually change, and then it would no longer be true. Thus Truth was always in motion and relative to its time and perception.

- iii. Plato believed that form was important and was consistent according to its nature. The “chair” was his basic element of perspective as your point of observation fundamentally influences what you observed.
- iv. The Allegory of the “Cave” from Plato’s Republic is related to Plato's Theory of Forms. According to Plato the "Forms" (or "Ideas") and not the material world of change known to us through sensation possess the highest and most fundamental kind of reality. To Plato, only knowledge of the Forms constitutes real knowledge. In addition, the Allegory of the Cave was an attempt to explain the philosopher's place in society: in essence to attempt to enlighten the "prisoners" trapped in the world.
- v. Plato was a dualist – his theory of “forms” and “shadows” related to the spirit [real world] and the physical [unreal world]. All ultimately broke down into these two aspects of reality. Both Paul and John shared a more dualistic view of the world in Spiritual and material terms.
- vi. He reasoned that if man could ascend from specific worldly objects and ideas to universal ones, then he could have an unchanging formal objective knowledge – by moving from the many changeable objects in nature to the unchangeable object of the circle as it appears in geometry. Thus, he held that a firm reality could be grasped, unlike Heraclitus.
- vii. The realities grasped by the mind alone were the more “real” and knowable than the changeable material objects around us.
- viii. He reasoned that arithmetical relations expressed harmonic intervals – with arithmetic being constant and harmonics being transitory – as instruments would go out of tune and constantly need retuning; only arithmetic would remain constant and reliable.
- ix. He believed in the virtues of temperance, courage, and wisdom.
- d. **Aristotle** – mid 4th to early 3rd century BC, and was a student of Plato.
 - i. He believed that all things could be understood as unities of “form” and “mater.”
 - ii. To explain this concept, he developed the idea of causality. He taught there were four causes: “material,” “efficient,” “formal,” and “final.” The 1st cause material equals mater; while the other 3 causes (efficient, formal, and final) were aspects of form.
 - iii. He was committed to logic, concluding that the “logos” was simply reason.
 - iv. Aristotle is credited as being the 1st truly scientific thinker. In rejecting the dualism of form/mater and material/spiritual, he taught that all form – everything that was observable, experiential and quantifiable could be the only truths.
 - v. Aristotle was Deistic – he believed that God existed and created the material world, essentially God started things and put everything in motion and then just stepped back let it go. The idea that God remained a causative factor in history that the Jews and Christians accepted, was untenable in his thinking.
 - vi. To Aristotle, the Logos became the mediating principle, it was the ability to reason which provided the basis of all understanding.
- e. **Stoics** – 3rd century BC – the philosopher “Zeno of Citium” taught in Athens and was commonly known as the “Stoic Philosopher” of father of Stoicism.

- i. Zeno taught that the only real use of knowledge was to help man find his proper place in nature.
 - ii. Nothing could happen that was not part of the perfection of nature. Thus, it was man's duty to cheerfully accept whatever nature brought man's way – blessing, pestilence, adversity, etc. To Zeno, everything worked for the good of man.
 - iii. Stoics differentiated between things or events that were in their power to influence or change and things that were not. They divided nature into things that were in their power to be shaped as they wished and things outside their power which were to be accepted as the will of God.
 - iv. Thus worrying over things you had no control of was useless, and accepting God's will was seen as the greatest virtue.
 - v. Zeno reinvigorated the primacy of the Heraclitus concept of fire, and saw "the Logos" as the binding principle of truth producing true freedom.
 - vi. Stoics deliberated on the conundrum of how man could be good and bad at the same time. This problem obviously remains as a major stumbling block to this day. The Stoics held that everything was bound up in the logos.
 - vii. They saw change as part of the natural cycle, which they accepted with equanimity. They saw destruction and death as natural events that preceded growth and rebirth.
- f. Philo of Alexandria – was the first Greek philosopher to attempt to synthesize revealed faith and philosophic reason. He is accepted God's self-revelation in the Jewish Scripture, and reason which was fundamental in Greek philosophy. He was seen as the forerunner of Christian theology. Philo was a Hellenized Jew living in the port city of Alexandria from 15 BC to 50 AD.
- i. He accepted the Septuagint [Greek translation of Scripture] as the inspired Word of God, and felt that Moses was the greatest of all philosophers.
 - ii. Philo was critical both of those who took the Bible too lightly and those who took it too literally. He held that much of Scripture was not intended to be literally interpreted, the result of those who did was to encounter major theological difficulties. This particularly pertained to anthropomorphisms (i.e., describing God in terms of human characteristics).
 - iii. He was likewise critical of those who went to excesses in their allegorical interpretation of the laws, with the resulting conclusion that because the ceremonial laws were only a parable they need no longer be obeyed. This is the substance of Paul's complaint against "antinomianism."
 - iv. Philo believed that God sent a mediator into history, the Logos to interrelate spiritual and physical. This Logos he saw as a created thing like an Angel, and as such was a "son of God" at term he applied to both Angels and humanity.
 - v. To Philo, philosophical "form theory" becomes personal and is represented by the Ark of the Covenant... the place where Heaven [the abode of God] and earth [the abode of humanity] converge.
- g. John the Apostle – 1st century AD – John employed "logos" for the Greeks much as Paul employed the "shrine of the unknown god" in Athens to preach a message and a bridge to engage his audience.

- a. John lived in Ephesus and understood the importance of the philosophical history and background of the Greeks. Rather than circumvent it, he directly interacted with it and explained how Christianity reasonably answered the questions raised by the Greek philosophers, completing their logic.
- i. John employed imagery and conceptual development that had been initiated by Heraclitus and culminating in Philo.
- ii. For John, the Logos is Jesus – He is the convergence of the Spiritual and material worlds and the new mediator for humanity with God.
- iii. Because John's Gospel approach emerges from a logical and rational world view set in the realm of the Spiritual life, it is easily the most approachable and available Book of Scripture in the Bible.
- iv. It is helpful to understand John's view of "Belief" in Jesus as a faith journey. The disciples begin their journey with Jesus with some faith, which grows and evolves through the Gospel presentation. The culmination of their faith is in the empty tomb. Here is where everything changes. When Thomas the doubter finally sees and understands, he proclaims "My Lord, and my God!" in 20:28, a fitting ending of John's Gospel.

11) THEOLOGY and MINISTRY – John makes use of Significant Events, Signs and Theological

Disclosure:

- a. **Jesus enters Jerusalem** – This event conjures imagery that harkens back to the imagery of King David entering Jerusalem with the Ark of the Covenant signifying the Presence of God, with the people celebrating the coming of their King and their God [2 Sam 6:12ff].
 - a. Jesus knows what He is doing and the Jewish leaders know what He is saying – thus the Jews tell him to silence the crowd, but Jesus says if they were silent even the rocks would cry out [Luke 19:38-40].
 - b. Jesus came as King for Israel first, and secondly for all of humanity. This is not the Messiah the Jews expected. The Jewish leaders and especially the Zealots wanted to see the Roman's and all the Pagans utterly destroyed with a world ruled by the Jews from Jerusalem. These so called "Zionists" were focused upon Israel and cared nothing for the people of the world.
 - c. John shows that Jesus' intent was the reconciliation of all humanity. John employs a foreshadowing clue of this when some Greeks ask to see Jesus (12:20), and after 8 previous times where Jesus' was pressed to reveal Himself as Messiah and John writes, "His hour has not come" now John writes that "the hour has come" – what happened? Grace is now being expanded out into the world.
 - d. Then John writes – "Now judgment has come upon this world, now the ruler of this world will be cast out." This refers to the Spiritual usurper Satan. John sees the Messiah revealed with Kingdom of God advancing on earth and Satan's fall and destruction assured.
- b. **Apostolic & Pastoral Ministry** – Events where the Church progresses from Apostolic to Pastoral leadership. John makes distinctions between apostolic ministry and the pastoral ministry of Timothy, Titus and others shepherding the Church under the ministry of the Spirit.

- i. John knows he is the last apostle – he is the last direct link to the living Jesus. His writing takes on a certain urgency as a result.
- ii. The high priestly prayer (17:1-25) speaks to the commission of the apostles, but is followed by 17:20 with the transition to those who would come to believe through the ministry of the apostles – this is for the rest of humanity through the Church throughout time until Jesus returns. The “you” pronouns from 17:1-20 are for the apostles; afterward they are for all believers.
- c. The Wedding at Cana – In chapter 2 is the 1st Sign – the characters are Jesus, His disciples and His mom with an unknown household of Jews (2:1-2):
 - i. 2:4 – dear woman, why do you involve me? Literally, “What to you and to me” – roughly translated as, “And what does this have to do with us? I am no longer under your authority and I now have different priorities.”
 - ii. 2:5 – “Whatever He says, do it” – Mary believes in Jesus and knows what He is capable of. This is an object lesson in faith:
 - 1. Fill the pots with water – the servants obey not knowing what He is up to.
 - 2. Take some to the steward – the steward has no idea where this came from, but the servants know. The scripture does not say that they knew it was wine, only that they obeyed – and that is the important part to the story.
 - 3. Obedience when you don’t understand is active faith.
 - 4. John is making a case that Jesus is the “New Improved Moses” – while Moses turned water to blood that brought death; Jesus turns water to wine and that brings joy.
 - 5. It is not just good wine, it is the very best wine. In the ancient near east, and the best wine would be reserved for the King’s table. Here the King is sharing it liberally with the common people, the subjects of the Kingdom. This sign sets the stage for all that follows.
 - 6. Blood is a symbol of life and death.
 - 7. Wine is a Messianic symbol of life and joy.
 - iii. The signs prove that Jesus’ words are from God, that He is telling the truth, that He is the World’s savior. The right response to this is to kneel in faithful obedience before the King.
 - 1. A real faith response might look like Nicodemus, or it might look like Peter, and it might look like John.
 - 2. A bogus faith response might look like Judas, or it might be the Rich Young Ruler, and it might look like the Jewish leaders.
- d. Upper Room discourse – Theology basis for the move from Apostolic to Pastoral Ministry:
 - i. Up until this discourse, Jesus was the unquestioned leader of the Messianic Church. John is essentially recalling how Jesus set up the transition for Himself to the Apostles, and from the Apostles to ensuing Pastors. This is the commissioning for the secession of the ministry of the Church. In essence, Jesus is passing the torch to us.
 - ii. It is possible that much of what was said was reviewing things that had been taught before. The text is not necessarily a stenographic interview in real time.

However, it is obviously a thoughtful and faithful theological treatise. Again, this is a faith journey, not merely a historical event or argument.

- iii. John is writing this Gospel about 50 years after Easter which occurred approximately in 30 AD. In the interim, these things have been taught and passed down for years in the church. Now at the end of his life, John is making sure the records of the events and their importance are properly recorded for posterity.
 - iv. John is probably the last of the inner-circle eye-witnesses living, and his focus is to accurately redirect the present and future generations to the truth and reality of Jesus.
 - v. Jesus promised His Apostles divinely assisted human memory (14:26) that would aid their ministry. The promise for future generations of faith is that the same Spirit that wrote the Scripture, would aid believers throughout the Church age into clarity and illumination of the revealed truth in Scripture. There is no new authoritative revelation, but rather illumination of previously revealed Truth.
 - vi. The upper-room message was addressed directly to the 11 disciples who are designated Apostles [sent ones]. As Jesus was sent by God, He was sending these to the world. These would in turn teach the Truth to the Church and to a new evolving group of pastoral leaders. Here we are some 2,000 years later and it becomes our message also.
- e. Theology of the Trinity – Chapter 14:
- i. The new commandment from God is issued from Jesus who is the new (and greater) Moses (13:34-35).
 - ii. 1 John 2:7-8 (New/Old Commandments of love), Deuteronomy 6:5 (Love God), Deuteronomy 10:12-13 (Love God and keep covenant). The Sinai covenant was a dramatically inferior covenant in comparison to the New Covenant.
 - 1. Love in Deuteronomy is understood in terms of loyalty to the Suzerain, in return for his defense of the people.
 - 2. Love in the New Covenant is adoption as sons and daughters of the Suzerain.
 - 3. This is obviously an entirely new order of Transcendent Grace.
 - iii. Romans 3:25 – Abraham's sins were forgiven on the same day ours were. The event of the Cross stretched out simultaneously throughout history – into the past and the future. Good Friday, Easter, Pentecost are when the circumcision of the believer's heart began, and when the New Covenant took over.
 - iv. The significance of the Transfiguration was that the Old Covenant leaders [Moses and Elijah] were engaged with Jesus and witnessed by the New Covenant leaders [Peter, John, and James]. This presents a functional unity in redemptive history, it is the culmination of God's redemptive plan with Jesus as the bridge between the past and the future.
- f. Command to Love One-another – Chapter 15:17 through 17 – the command is issued to love one another... followed by hate, hate, hate.
- i. Christianity is not oblivious to evil and hate in the world, and it is not prejudiced to say so; this presents that it is theologically correct to acknowledge that presence.

- ii. Evil and hateful people disguise themselves (wolves in sheep's clothing). They care nothing for the sheep, only their own self-interest at the expense of the sheep. This is an ugly picture of the faithless Jewish leaders, and unfortunately of many subsequent Christian leaders who seek their own benefit at the expense of the flock they should be serving.
- iii. Shift in 15:26-16:3 to the Spirit as the Helper bringing aid in times of stress and persecution (especially for the apostles and many early believers who would be martyred).
- iv. John 16:5-11 – “But now I am going to Him who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’ “But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. “But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. “And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.”
 - 1. Don't fall into hokey theology on this verse... some people get hung up on how the Trinity works and what Person serves whom in authority. It is better to see the Trinity as fully submitted and as equally engaged UNITY in the redemptive process. John is most likely just drawing attention to sequence.
 - 2. Relationship of the Holy Spirit in the context to the world and judgment.
 - 3. Paradox of joy and sorrow is the experience of a saint in this world because we're in between the first coming and the second coming. We can endure the sorrow now because we live for the joy that will be our birthright in eternity.
 - 4. Before Easter, nobody even had redemption of the inner man, so quit whining.
 - 5. Plain speech (16:25-29). Expository language is the language of post Pentecost
 - 6. God did not ask us to be a new Jesus and invent new parables – Jesus was unique.
 - 7. Even if we do invent parables (which is ok in the context of prophetic Word ministry), that should not be the expectation of pastors and teachers. They are called to just speak truth.
- v. High Priestly Prayer – Chapter 17 – this prayer can be seen as a ministry leadership template that goes on beyond the transition from Old Testament leaders (1.King, 2.Priest, and 3.Prophet) to Jesus who embodies all three roles as Messiah, and to Apostles and Pastors who act in Jesus Name under the direction of the Spirit:
 - 1. This is very much about Jesus Himself... this is a very personal revelation of Jesus' heart, which is also the example of the heart of every Christian leader and disciple throughout time.
 - 2. This is about restored glory... returning to glory after setting it aside in incarnation through the resurrection

3. This is about preparing His friends for what they will encounter... Vs. 6-19 praying mainly for the apostles knowing what they will be fearful and suffer.
4. This passage is the source of the slogan “in the world, not of the world” even though the exact wording is not there.
5. Vs. 20 – the transition from the apostles to those who would believe through them, and in anticipation of those who will shepherd them throughout the Church age.
6. When we read the New Testament, we are connecting to the message of Jesus by a direct sequence... Jesus => the apostles => us.
7. There are really only two sides to the preaching of pastoral ministry:
 - a. Receive the message – hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is about the study and discipline of understanding what the original hearers would have known, and then putting the text into a modern context.
 - b. Deliver the message – homiletics. Homiletics is putting an everyday, personal, relational experience of the message to allow the congregation to personalize it.
- vi. Easter – Chapter 20 – the empty tomb is just the beginning, and Pentecost launches the Church Age of Redemptive History:
 1. 20:19 – Easter evening.
 2. 20:21 – Jesus was the first apostle (first “send” is Apostello, second is “pempo”)
 3. Unique stature of the apostles (20:21-23)...Maybe this is John’s statement of canonical authority
 4. 20:28 – Despite his brashness and doubting, the end of the Thomas story is “My Lord and my God!” This is an example of saving and transforming faith. It is the only faith that really matters to God.

12) INDUCTIVE MESSAGE OF JOHN’S STORY OF THE WOMAN AT THE WELL – John 3:31-4:26

a. INTRODUCTION:

- i. I am convinced that all disciples of Jesus should remain life-long students of God’s Word. God also invites us to be explorers of a supernatural and a relational God who loves us passionately, has invested in us completely, and has enabled us to be ambassadors of His Grace to our community.
- ii. For some reason the Apostle John’s writings really speak to me, and the Gospel of John I have found to be particularly compelling. John speaks in a language medium I understand and love to hear.
- iii. An “inductive study” involves doing the requisite background hermeneutic [interpretative] work, then working through the entirety of the text. The result is to discover the entire redemptive message that God has placed in Scripture for us to find. Along the way we evaluate what we see in light of its theological, historical, and redemptive consistency.
- iv. The story of the “Woman at the Well” is a contrast of life’s disappointments and God’s faithfulness to the “least of these” meaning the disenfranchised, the

downcast, the outsiders. In our world there are so many people who have been beaten down being told who they are and what their defined value is, and most of us tend believe these judgments. In this story we learn about how God goes out of His way to engage this one woman, and then transforms her in the midst of her troubles. This story is important because we need to be reminded of who God says we are. Every Christ-follower who has been indwelt by the Holy Spirit is God's son and daughter. Though every person is important to Him, God's promises are for those who are relationally connected to Him, those who love Jesus and desire to be like Him and who will be with Him always.

b. THE WOMAN AT THE WELL:

- i. This story is of an un-named woman who had a Divine Appointment with Jesus. Not unlike the Woman at the Well, most of us as Christ followers have had our own appointment with Jesus that significantly impacted if not radically changed our life.
- ii. God loves the challenge of personal transformation, and John's Gospel rings with Spiritual Life and transcendent hope. Though all of these things may result from our experience with God, He is not merely interested in just cleaning us up and making us more presentable. He's not merely interested in giving us a better life or just making our life work better here on earth. God is not merely interested in just making us nicer persons. Instead, God's plan for every Christ-follower's life is to radically transform us into the image and likeness of His Son Jesus. God wants us to live with Him forever in Heaven as Spiritually reborn sons and daughters. God is particularly interested in transformational life in every believer.
- iii. Some of John's stories that serve as examples of Jesus' transformational power include:
 1. When Jesus changes ordinary water into the best wine ever – John chapter two.
 2. When Jesus takes a proud and arrogant fisherman named Simon and sees in him the Apostle Peter, something Peter obviously didn't see in himself – John chapter one.
 3. When He takes a leader of the Sanhedrin named Nicodemus who was an expert in the Jewish Law, and then Jesus schools him on his need to be transformed by being born Spiritually as well as naturally – John chapter three.
- iv. In each of these stories and many other examples in Scripture, Jesus proves He is not satisfied in merely making some one's life better or more meaningful. Although He does this and so much more for us, His desire is all about our individual radical transformation into sons and daughters who have the right to live forever in the Kingdom of God.

c. "THE STORY WITHIN THE STORY" – A WOMAN WITH MANY BURDENS:

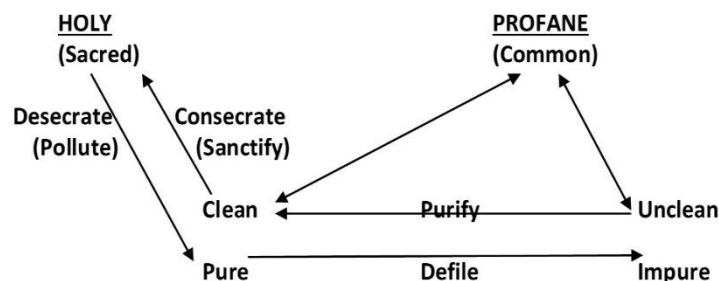
- i. The Apostle John sets up this story and lets us see where he's going with it in his declaration in 3:30-36... quoting what John the Baptist had said about Jesus' True identity as God incarnate and affirming Jesus' power and authority as the Messiah.

“He [Jesus] must become greater; I [John] must become less. The One who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The One who comes from heaven is above all. He testifies to what He has seen and heard, but no one accepts His testimony. The man who has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. For the One whom God has sent speaks the Words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit. The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in His hands. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him.”

- ii. In John 4:4 the Gospel says that Jesus “had to go to Samaria.” This would have been a shocking tongue in cheek statement for first century readers because John’s readers knew that the Jews hated everything that wasn’t completely Jewish. The reason for this is ancient:

1. Samaria was the northern kingdom while Judah was the southern kingdom of divided Israel following the death of Solomon. Samaria’s center of worship was at Mount Gerizim, while the Judah’s was at Jerusalem. Assyria conquered Samaria in 721 BC, and the southern king fell to Nebuchadnezzar in 597 BC.
2. The Samaritan’s religious culture is believed to have remain predominantly Jewish, but different customs were developed and a schism grew between the north and the south.
3. Orthodox Jews avoided Samaritans because they were seen as “unclean” and not like “pure blood Jews” of Judah based on their divergent genealogy. Orthodox Jews who came into contact with Samaritan’s caused personal defilement, meaning they couldn’t come into contact with other “clean” Jews, attend Synagogue, or attend Temple worship without undergoing a long and involved purification process.

- iii. The Jews held that the material world was divided into the Sacred or Common. Common things were either clean or unclean. If you were clean and touched something unclean, you became unclean. Anything unclean could not come into proximity with the Sacred. Hence, you couldn’t be presented at Temple, and you couldn’t come into physical contact with a clean Jew. The diagram below depicts how the Sacred and common world interacted.



- iv. **The anomaly of this clean and unclean world view was Jesus. As the God-man Messiah He was inherently clean, and if He touched someone or something unclean, He made it clean without becoming unclean Himself.**
- v. **Jewish leaders for the most part kept to themselves and had nothing to do with the common folk. The anomaly expressed again was Jesus who loved the simple folks and engaged them regularly.**
 - 1. **Jesus' "Cleansing of the Temple" told in 2:12-16 records Messiah's anger at the hard-hearted Jewish leadership of the time who allowed the area reserved for the Gentiles who wanted to come close to God in the area known as the "Court of the Nations," to be used instead as a place of business to make money for the Temple. Jesus' righteous indignation with the Jewish leaders sets up Jesus' journey into Samaria, and another lesson in Kingdom of God discipleship for Jesus' followers.**
 - 2. **Jesus' teaching the Jewish leader Nicodemus about being Spiritually born as well as physically born in 3:1-21. In this story 3:10 is key – You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and do you not understand these things?" Jesus makes it clear that Nicodemus should understand what He's telling him, but the faith of the nation had fallen to such a low level they needed to be completely realigned. Nicodemus would become a student of Jesus.**
 - 3. **Knowing that Jesus' mission was fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy:**
 - a. **Matthew 4:14-16 quoting Isaiah 9:1-2 –***This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: "THE LAND OF ZEBULUN AND THE LAND OF NAPHTALI, BY THE WAY OF THE SEA, BEYOND THE JORDAN, GALILEE OF THE GENTILES — THE PEOPLE WHO WERE SITTING IN DARKNESS SAW A GREAT LIGHT, AND THOSE WHO WERE SITTING IN THE LAND AND SHADOW OF DEATH, UPON THEM A LIGHT DAWNED."*
 - b. **Luke 3:4-6 quoting Isaiah 40:3-5 -** as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, "THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT. EVERY RAVINE WILL BE FILLED, AND EVERY MOUNTAIN AND HILL WILL BE BROUGHT LOW; THE CROOKED WILL BECOME STRAIGHT, AND THE ROUGH ROADS SMOOTH; AND ALL FLESH WILL SEE THE SALVATION OF GOD."
 - c. **Luke 4:18 quoting Isaiah 61:1-3 –** "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners."
 - 4. **The Samaritan's had also been God's people, and God's love for them was still strong even though their brothers in Judea had renounced them because of their impure blood line and confused faith. This woman that Jesus went to visit had a strong faith, though she was the least loved and forsaken of a disenfranchised nation. BURDEN # 1 – the**

woman was part of a bigger problem that Jesus came to remedy – finding the lost sheep, easing their suffering and unifying the sons and daughters of Abraham.

- vi. In Samaria Jesus sends His disciples away on an errand, and waits patiently at the well for the appointed hour when the “un-named woman” would appear. What is unsaid about this woman is that Jesus already knows her and loves her, though as yet she has absolutely no clue about it. The woman was coming to draw water, which was something only a servant would do. The text says the well is deep, and archaeologists have discovered that the well was over 130’ deep. At that depth, you would have needed a rather heavy vessel to break the surface of the water and go deep enough to fill it up, as a light vessel would just float uselessly on the surface. Once filled, the woman had to pull the loaded jar back up the 130’ before carrying it back into town which was some distance away. This was arduous work that had to be done several times a day and every day without relief. BURDEN # 2 – the Physical burden of this water jar the woman carried, it was daily back breaking and mind-numbing work with little relief.
- vii. Jumping ahead in the story, the woman is soon to be revealed as having been married five times (John 4:16-18), and now living with a man who wasn’t her husband. In terms of modern standards of relationships and divorce we might think that she must have had some serious issues to be unable to remain married after so many tries. However, the more common reason for divorce in the Ancient Near East was the inability of a woman to bear children. In that era if a man didn’t have children it was his wife’s fault and he was justified to divorce her. The unsaid story here is that this woman was likely barren and unable to have children. This is not an uncommon theme in Scripture as Sarah, Abraham’s wife was long barren until she miraculously had Isaac in her old age. Similarly, Elizabeth the mother of John the Baptist was long unable to have a child. BURDEN # 3 – This was the relational burden she carried... every relationship ended in failure and her hope for a future was gone.
- viii. Please note that as a young girl this un-named woman undoubtedly had the same expectations of all young girls such as marrying a husband who would love her and care for her, of having children and grandchildren to love and raise, of a happy home full of family and friends, and of a satisfying life in her later years.
- ix. Instead, after five marriage failures and years of disappointment all such hope was crushed out of her. In this culture, an older woman who was unmarried could return to her family and be cared for. Her place in the man’s house in which she now lived was most likely because she had nowhere else to go except that of becoming a servant in another’s home. She most likely did the cleaning and cooking in the home, the tending of the animals, the fetching of the water, etc., all in exchange for a place to live. This had become her life, certainly not what she had expected. BURDEN # 4 – This was the emotional burden she carried... her life had become one of impermanence, with the possibility of being cast out of the home when she could no longer carry her load.

- d. **THE WOMAN MEETS JESUS** – Not unsurprisingly, when she meets Jesus some interesting things begin to happen:
- i. First, as Jesus asks her for a drink in 4:7-9 her identity is being revealed. Now a Jew would never ask a Samaritan for anything, and wouldn't take it from them if they did knowing that they did not conform to all the Jewish religious and ritual purity laws.
 - ii. Second, notice as Jesus identity develops as they talk. First in verse 4:9 she notices 1) Jesus' is a Jew and marvels that he would ask anything of her. The conversation that ensues leads to her conclusion that 2) Jesus is a prophet in 4:19 because He knew things about her that no one could know. As Jesus starts to teach her it is unsaid but obvious that 3) Jesus is a Rabbi because He is revealing Truth from the Law and the Prophets only a Rabbi would know. In this short exchange Jesus is revealed as Jew, Prophet, and Rabbi.
 - iii. Third, as this conversation continues the woman becomes more engaged and her demeanor softens reflecting greater relational interaction. Here she is a woman well acquainted with disappointment who is now talking to a Jewish-Prophet-Rabbi. This is probably the best day of her life! So she ventures out and reveals that she has *one hope remaining*, that Messiah is coming someday. Then Jesus says the unimaginable to her in 4:26... "I who speak with you am He."
 - iv. Just for a moment... put yourself in this woman's place. All her hopes and dreams have failed, and her life has been hard and disappointing. She bears physical, emotional, and relational wounds that some of us know all too well. Hope has been all but completely crushed out of her, but the text reveals Her only remaining hope is "that Messiah is coming" someday, and now here He is! Can you imagine her excitement after so many years of pain and discouragement? *This is a picture of oppression and failure being replaced by Hope realized.*
- e. **SOME ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS:**
- i. The first observation is that the text reveals "The Woman" left her water jar at the well in 4:28. While this may seem an insignificant fact, instead this is intentional information John provides which begs the question why did he include this? What does this mean? To me, I believe the jar had become a symbol of all her failures and lost hope. All her burdens were essentially drawn up into this one vessel. Up until now the jar was her primary focus and her only means for making a living, and now she meets Jesus and she deliberately and purposefully leaves the jar behind and it is not mentioned again. Think about it, *this is a picture of deliverance.*
- The application of this observation is multi-layered. Realizing that we all have our own issues, and we all have baggage, we all have disappointments and wounds

that we carry around with us. Right now as you ponder your own life things are coming to mind. Imagine, that Jesus is right now inviting you to leave these burdens behind with Him. Jesus knows that we all have burdens, but He says we don't have to keep carrying them. In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus is quoted as saying: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

- ii. **A second observation is that the woman's status had now changed – not only did she experience personal hope in meeting Jesus, but in 4:30 we see that now everyone in her town is responding to her realization. The woman has been transformed from the "failed servant water woman" into the "lady who brought Messiah to her village." The text in 4:39-42 goes on to say that many believed in Jesus and that He stayed with them for 2 days! Amazing! Wouldn't you love to know what was said during that time? Wouldn't it have been interesting to have been one of Jesus' disciples taking all this in? The disciples' world was being transformed just as the Samaritan's world was. They were seeing first-hand the transformational power of Messiah, the beginning of the reunification of God's people.**

The application of this observation is that we don't need to continue carrying old burdens and baggage of broken relationships and familial collapse. Who might Jesus be placing on your heart to heal broken relationships? I encourage you to pray for an amazing transformation in your life, that you would find the courage to answer the invitation you hear from the Spirit now.

- f. **THEOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTION – Worshiping in Spirit and in Truth – 4:19-26. This passage has long spoken to me, and I've often pondered what it means to be a worshiper who worships in Spirit and Truth. If God is seeking out such worshipers, then I definitely want to be one! Read and pray through the text, and then let's consider some implications:**
 - "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem." Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he."
 - i. **4:20-23 – Worship is not fixed upon a place or location – since the Spirit indwells believers and the human heart becomes the Temple of the Living God, believers may worship wherever we are.**
 - ii. **4:24 – Consider God's "Breath of Life" (Genesis 2:7 – "Then the LORD God formed**

man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being”). **This Breath of Life doesn’t simply animate our physical being, it makes us a sentient self-aware beings. Humanity was created as a Spiritual being living out a physical life, a hybrid of spirit, soul, and flesh. Because of the Fall we are rendered spiritually separated from God, in other words spiritually dead. Thus, it makes sense that the Spirit Jesus is speaking about to the Woman is the Breath of Life that re-animates our Spiritual being. Cross reference Jesus’ conversation with Nicodemus, where Jesus teaches being born of water refers to the common life, while being born of Spirit refers to the supernatural life.**

- iii. **Worshiping in Truth** – is a reference to Scripture and the Words of Jesus. It means knowing the Scripture – what it says, how to interpret it, how to apply it and teach it to others, and finally being obedient to it.
- iv. **Worshiping in Spirit** – is a reference to having a personal, vital, and intimate relationship with God (the Triune God of Father, Son and Spirit). It is not sufficient to know about God; we need to know Him personally and intimately.
- v. **The combination of Spirit and Truth is transformational and it encourages us to live a supernatural life that honors God and reflects Jesus’ character and nature that is being developed within us, the result is being Good Fruit – Matthew 7:18-23**
“A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, **‘I never knew you.** Away from me, you evildoers!’” **The work alone will not save us, the gift of Grace we receive by faith is the Spirit, which internally transforms us into sons and daughters of the Kingdom of God.**
- vi. **Everything in this passage is built upon the previous stories John wrote, note the sequence of the story development:**
 - 1. **Jesus as the new creation narrative**
 - 2. **John the Baptist identifies Jesus as the Lamb of God [the Atonement Propitiation] – 1:31-34** – “I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.” Then John gave this testimony: “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God.”

3. **The calling of the disciples ending with the declaration in 1:51** – Jesus then added, “I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”
 4. **Water to Wine** [water a metaphor of life, the wine a metaphor of the Kingdom of God]
 5. **Clearing the Temple of the debased “business of faith”**
 6. **Teaching Nicodemus about water and blood as physical and Spiritual life**
 7. **Finally leading to teaching the woman at the well on Spirit and Truth.**
- g. **CLOSING THOUGHT** – This is how I interpret the message of the Woman at the Well... but there is one final thought: it begs the question of “what happened with that old water jar?” John goes out of his way to make sure we know she left it at the well, and it is not mentioned again. My own guess is that it was permanently attached to the rope and left at the well as a reminder to all that the Messiah came to visit them. And my guess is that everyone who used it to draw water were reminded of the day Messiah came and visited. My friend Farley Shane once observed about the Theory of Relativity that time passes more quickly when you’re happily engaged doing something you love, and that it moves far more slowly when you’re doing something you don’t enjoy. I think there is a direct application involving the water jar and I’ll bet that the jar was far lighter and no longer considered a burden, and that whoever used it did so with a glad heart. I suspect that it probably became an object of praise and joy from then on for all who used it. Every time someone went to the well to draw water they may have been met by the woman’s jar, reminding them of this wonderful encounter. This is an example of the power of transformation. To commemorate this powerful story and its background, the early church built this impressive structure at the site of Jacob’s Well commemorating Jesus visit to the Samaritans.

