

v. 19:1 Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged [him].

Barabbas is released and Jesus is sent to be scourged. At this point Pilate had probably given-up his quest to release Jesus. He gives the order and probably retreats to his residence.

- a) To be scourged by the Romans was to be tortured. It was much worse than a flogging. The instrument used inflicted major damage, actually ripping of chunks of flesh. As in the case of Jesus, it was usually administered prior to execution. Many died as a result of the wounds. So cruel was the punishment that Roman citizens were exempt.

v. 19:2-3 And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put [it] on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands.

The Roman soldiers got into the act. The ongoing joke was that Jesus was the Jewish king and this seemed to fuel the wrath of the Roman soldiers who hated the Jews. The Romans knew that the Jews looked upon them as a defiling presence that they longed to exterminate under their political Messiah. The Roman soldiers now had the opportunity to show them what they thought of their Messiah.

- a) They stripped Jesus and put a purple robe on Him. They made a crown of thorns and jammed it on His head. They mocked Him as king while spitting on Him and striking Him. (Matt. 27:27-30) These soldiers took out every bit of frustration they had with the Jews on Jesus.
- b) The prophet Isaiah gives us a picture of the extent of the cruelty directed toward Jesus. It is in Isaiah that we find out that the hair and beard of Jesus were plucked out. Isaiah also gives us the result, stating that Jesus was disfigured more than any man. Those that looked upon Him were astonished that so much damage could be inflicted. The gospels are relatively silent as to the extent of the beating. (Is. 50:6, 52:14, 53:3-8)

v. 19:4-5 Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And [Pilate] saith unto them, Behold the man!

While Jesus is being tortured Pilate has time to reflect on his decision. A conscience that had probably long since been dead has been brought back to life by the "Light that lighteth all men." Pilate again goes to see Jesus, tortured beyond recognition, yet still standing silently. Pilate himself is now tortured. He must try again.

- a) Probably an unprecedented act, the governor of a Roman province, goes out to his local rivals asking them to have mercy on a prisoner that had already been condemned. He tells them he finds no fault in Him and he is willing to rescind the order. Such was the impact that Jesus had on Pilate!
- b) Jesus comes out in His "kingly array" and Pilate exclaims to the Jews, "Look at the man!" According to what we read in Isaiah, Pilate probably needed to identify Jesus to these men because they couldn't tell it was Him. It was out of envy that they delivered Jesus, so in essence, Pilate is asking them if they still envy this man. Do they think He could recover from this beating or from this total humiliation? Would anyone ever believe the claims that this man was a king and Messiah? Was this man still a threat to them?

v. 19:6-7 *When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify [him], crucify [him]. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify [him]: for I find no fault in him. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.*

The minute they see Jesus the chief priests and officers begin to repeatedly shout, "Crucify Him." The truth that is Jesus convicts the heart of a pagan governor yet hardens the hearts of the so-called religious.

- a) *Pilate, totally exasperated that these men are so unmoved by the sight of Jesus and that his last ditch effort to rid himself of Jesus is failing, tells the priests to crucify Him themselves.*
- b) *Pilate knows that they do not have the authority to crucify Him and so is daring them to take matters into their own hands. Pilate publicly declares for at least the third time that he can find no fault in Jesus. (vs. 18:38, 19:4)*
- c) *The Jews reply that this man indeed had a fault. According to their law He was guilty of blasphemy because He made himself equal to God. They finally admit that it was purely a religious matter, but what is strongly implied is that they are a self-governing people and Pilate is bound to respect their law. Their law demanded death and Pilate must honor it.*

[The original charge against Jesus before Pilate was sedition on trying to overthrow the government. (Luke 23:2) The Sanhedrin however, had convicted Him of blasphemy. (Matt. 26:63-66) They must have sensed that Pilate was not going to have Jesus put to death on the charge of sedition and so now come up with this new accusation.]

- d) *Blasphemy was a Jewish law that if broken was punishable by death. (Lev. 24:16) Blinded by their envy they heard His claims but failed to see the proof. He did not make himself the Son of God, but was indeed the Son of God. What He spoke was truth and had witnesses who testified to the truth. (vs. 5:31-33, 36-37, 39)*
- e) *Pilate now clearly saw that they were trying to deceive and manipulate him into carrying out their will concerning Jesus. This must convince him even more of the innocence of Jesus. He again retreats into his residence.*

v. 19:8-9 *When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.*

This latest saying of the Jews, this new information as to Jesus claiming to be the Son of God, greatly disturbed Pilate. Why was this man different? What about his wife's dream? What about Jesus talking of a kingdom not of this world? Now they tell him He is the son of a god!

- a) *Pilate was a pagan. He believed in multiple deities all in competition with one another, as well as exacting revenge on each other as well as from man. Was he not only being used by the Jews but also a pawn of the gods? Paganism fostered superstition and paranoia. Pilate was right in the middle.*
- b) *Pilate again goes into the judgment hall where Jesus is being kept. He tries to get some more answers from Jesus. With his limited understanding he asks Jesus where He is from. It seems*

like a logical question in view of the fact that Jesus said He was not of the world and the possibility that He might be the son of a god.

v. 19:10-11 Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldst have no power [at all] against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.

When Jesus doesn't answer, Pilate becomes indignant and begins to boast of his power over Jesus. Pilate was obviously confused and scared. His reaction to Jesus' silence can probably be attributed to frustration and even panic. It was his last effort to get some useful information.

- a) *Pilate was the authority, placed in his position by God. He had sin in that he exercises this power out of pride or in this case fear. He betrayed the light of his conscience in all of his decisions pertaining to this case.*
- b) *On the other hand, Caiaphas and/or the Jews delivered Jesus to the God ordained authorities out of envy and jealousy. They sought to manipulate the powers that be by deception to meet their own evil ends.*
- c) *Furthermore, the Jews acted out of knowledge. They had the scriptures, saw the miracles and heard the teachings of Jesus within the context of their religion. They were guilty of the greater wrong.*

v. 19:12 And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.

Pilate realized that Jesus was turned over to him strictly out of envy on the part of the Jewish leaders. He knew that they were trying to use and manipulate him, however, what had begun as a simple power struggle between himself and the Jews had now become an intensely personal matter to Pilate through his dealings with Jesus.

- a) *The superstitious Pilate was afraid to take action against Jesus. The latest comment by Jesus proved to Pilate that He was not guilty of sedition because He recognized Pilate's authority and power. Jesus submitted to this power. (v. 11)*
- b) *Jesus spoke as if He knew the "higher power" that controlled the destiny of men. Pilate was concerned about his own position and the possible ramifications brought against him if he put Jesus to death.*
- c) *Therefore, Pilate goes out again to the crowd and tries to get them to agree to releasing Jesus. The crowd would still have none of it and now personally attack Pilate in order to force him into doing their bidding.*
- d) *The Jews make it a purely political matter. They again accuse Jesus of making himself a king and therefore guilty of sedition against the Roman government. If Pilate should release Jesus he would be condoning such claims and would make himself the enemy of Tiberius Caesar.*

- e) *Implied is that a complaint would be lodged against Pilate by these Jews. Pilate would face being called before the jealous and suspicious Tiberius for refusing to execute a man turned over to him by His own people on the charge of sedition. Pilate would have little defense against such a charge.*
- f) *The total hypocrisy of the Jewish leaders is seen. They had no loyalty to the Roman government. They hated the Romans and prayed for the day of their deliverance. They believed the emperor to be a pagan, cursed by God, and yet to further their own agenda they would now pledge their loyalty to him.*

v. 19:13-14 *When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!*

Pilate, hearing that they would appeal to Caesar, knows he is out of options. He calls Jesus out and sits in the seat of judgment to pronounce his official ruling. In one final attempt to shame them or possibly even poking fun at them in his defeat, he shouts out, "Look, it's your king!"

Author's note:

It is probably safe to say that Pilate all along was looking out for himself. In his superstition he feared Jesus. His trying to release Him was not in the name of justice but in that he feared the possibility of a higher power taking retribution against him if he had a hand in the death of Jesus. He also feared the Jews would ruin him before Caesar. At this point Caesar was more of a reality to him than Jesus being the son of a god and so he opted to send Jesus to His death.

- a) *The day that this occurred was the day before the Sabbath of Passover. (Luke 23:54) In other words, it was Friday of Passover week, Saturday being the Sabbath. The time given is the sixth hour or around 6:00 A.M. Mark gives the time of the crucifixion as 9:00 A.M. (Mark 15:25) The consensus is that John uses Roman time and Luke uses Jewish time. So according to the biblical record, everything that we have covered up to this point happened before 6:00 A.M.*

v. 19:15-16 *But they cried out, Away with [him], away with [him], crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar. Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led [him] away.*

Pilate's remark puts the Jews in a frenzy and they again begin to shout, "Crucify Him." Pilate seeing that his comment hits its mark does it again even more emphatically. In the original writings the emphasis is on the word "king," it reads. "Your king shall I crucify?"

- a) *The total hypocrisy of the Jewish leaders is confirmed as they publicly state that their only allegiance is to Caesar. This was blasphemy on their part for Caesar claimed to be a god. Such was their hate for Jesus that they would pledge their loyalty to a pagan emperor.*
- b) *In view of verse twelve it is very possible that implied in their proclamation of loyalty is a questioning of Pilate's allegiance. "We have no king but Caesar, What about you, Pilate?" This is a major confrontation between Pilate and the Jews.*

[It is ironic that the statement of the Jewish leaders was true. With the rejection of Jesus as their Messiah, Caesar was their only king!]

- c) *The Jews did not physically crucify Jesus, as the language seems to indicate. It means that Pilate delivered Jesus over to be crucified according to their wishes. The soldiers at the command of Pilate led Him away.*

v. 19:17 *And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called [the place] of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha:*

The cross on which Jesus is to be hung is put on His shoulders and He begins His journey carrying or dragging the cross. He is headed for Golgotha, which means skull. It was a hill someplace outside the city gates. (Calvaria or Calvary is skull in Latin)

- a) *Shortly after the start of the journey Jesus evidently can no longer carry His cross so a man named Simon is forced to carry it for Him. Many people followed Jesus, among them were a group of women wailing in His behalf. He speaks to them giving a dire prediction of things to come.*

Luke 23:26-31

And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear [it] after Jesus. And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed [are] the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?

- 1) *Jesus was the truth of God and was going back to the Father but the Jews had rejected the truth and so judgment would come upon them. Jesus predicts the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. It was one of the most brutal sieges in history. Mothers watched as their children died or in some instances even killed them. So the references to it being an advantage not to have children.*
- 2) *The reference to the tree seems to be a proverb of some sort. The green tree is Jesus while the dry is the Jews. Green wood is not fit to burn while dry wood is readily burned. The idea is that if Jesus is going through this torture, who is undeserving of it, then how much more will they, who are deserving, suffer. If they are doing this to Jesus then what is their fate?*

v. 19:18 *Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.*

Two criminals followed Jesus to the hill and were crucified on either side of Him. (Luke 23:32-33) This also was in fulfillment of the scriptures that stated He was numbered with the transgressors. (Is. 53:12)

[From the other gospels we find that when they first arrived at the place they offered Jesus wine mixed with gall. (Matt. 27:34) He tasted it but would not drink. They then nailed Him to the cross and He was lifted up from the earth in fulfillment of the scriptures as well as His own sayings. (vs. 3:14-15) Mark tells us that the gall or bitter substance in the mixture was myrrh. (Mark 15:23) What Jesus refused was a crude sedative.]

- a) All four gospels mention the two thieves. Mark tells us they both railed Jesus as they hung on the cross. Luke gives us the story of one of them eventually coming to repentance. He believed, probably moved by the events taking place around him, and salvation was afforded him. (Luke 23:39-43)

v. 19:19-22 *And Pilate wrote a title, and put [it] on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, [and] Greek, [and] Latin. Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.*

Many things happened during the time Jesus hung on the cross, some of them probably simultaneously. At this point John chooses to briefly leave his narrative of the crucifixion and give his readers a "behind the scenes" look at the power struggle still going on between Pilate and the Jewish leaders.

- a) Pilate wrote the title "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews" and placed it on the cross of Jesus. He had it written in three languages. Hebrew was the language of the Jews, Greek the language of worldly commerce and culture, while Latin was the official language of the Roman government.
- b) Being crucified near the city the title was there for all to see. This was the week of the Passover and many people from near and far were going in and out of the city. Jesus was easily seen and easily identified by all. Was this a sign that He, now rejected by His own people, was the Savior of the world, a Savior of all languages, cultures and peoples?
- c) The Jews went to Pilate and strongly objected that the title proclaimed Jesus to be, in fact, the king of the Jews. They insist that Pilate change the title from a fact to a claim. This time there is no need for Pilate to yield and he emphatically states that the title will not be changed.
- d) Since he got backed into a corner by the Jews, Pilate has referred to Jesus as their king. (vs. 14-15) He could not win the war in this situation, but he could make their victory miserable for them. They brought Jesus before him on charges of sedition, namely, because He claimed to be a king. Pilate now makes it appear as though he determined Jesus to truly be their king and so crucified Him.
- e) This made the Jewish leaders appear ignorant. It appeared as though they had unknowingly turned over their king to the Romans and had Him crucified. The One whom they spoke of and waited for, the Hope of Israel was dying on a Roman cross!
- f) The irony is that this was indeed the truth. It was unknown to the Jews as well as to Pilate. Jesus was their Messiah and King but they did not recognize Him and turned Him over to be crucified.

[The other gospels tell us that even as Jesus hung on the cross He was incessantly mocked by those who gloated over their apparent victory. In their "trash talking" the priests were mocking God by trying to force His divine hand into delivering Jesus before their eyes. This would be the proof they needed and they would believe. In their way of thinking, if Jesus was the Messiah, God would deliver

Him, for He was destined to establish an earthly kingdom. If God did not deliver Him then they put to death a false prophet. The fact that He was dying proved to them that He could not be the Messiah. (Matt. 27:39-43; Mark 15:29-32) All was in fulfillment of the scriptures. (Psalm 69:19-21, 22:6-8)]

v. 19:23-24 *Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also [his] coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.*

John next turns his attention to the Roman soldiers who were attending to the crucifixion. While Jesus is hanging on the cross, being openly mocked by the passers-by, the soldiers go about the business of dividing the clothes of Jesus.

- a) A type of lottery was setup. The soldiers cast lots to establish the order in which they would pick. Mark's account clears up some of the ambiguity of John's narrative. (Mark 15:24)
- b) Evidently there must have been four soldiers and five pieces of clothing. The customary clothing that would have been worn by Jesus would have been a head-covering, sandals, belt, outer garment and the one piece tunic. They must have each gotten an article of clothing and then cast lots once again for the tunic.
- c) John adds that this was in fulfillment of the scriptures. (Psalm 22:12-18) It follows that if all of the garments of Jesus were divided among the soldiers then He hung upon the cross naked. This added to the shame and humiliation. Hendricksen draws a parallel to the nakedness of Adam and Eve when he writes, "Jesus bore for us the curse of nakedness in order to deliver us from it."

v. 19:25-27 *Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the [wife] of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own [home].*

At some point, standing at the foot of the cross, were four women who had been instrumental in His ministry as well as the apostle John. The women were Mary, Jesus' mother, His mother's sister (His aunt), Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.

- a) The other gospels record at least two of these women observing from a distance when Jesus died. (Matt. 27:56; Mark 15:40) So evidently Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joses did not stay at the foot of the cross till the end.

Author's note:

It is interesting to note that three women, other than Mary Jesus' mother, are mentioned in all the accounts. Mary Magdalene is identified in all of the accounts. Mary the mother of James and Joses is identified in two of the accounts. The third woman in Matthew is identified as the mother of the sons of Zebedee, while in Mark's account, the proper name Salome is used. Was this the same woman? In John, one of the women is identified as the wife of Cleophas. Is this also the mother of James and Joses? Following this scenario, is the mother of the sons of Zebedee, Salome and Mary's sister the

same person? If so, this would make James and John the cousins of Jesus. Remember the mother of the sons of Zebedee asking Jesus if her sons could rule with Him? (Matt. 20-20-21) The above is highly probable but cannot be definitively proven by the information given in the scriptures.

- b) Jesus looks down and sees His mother standing with the disciple John. Even in His suffering He makes certain that He provides for her physical care. He had given His disciples final instructions, comforting them and committing them to the Father. Now, He would have His final earthly dealings with the woman who bore Him and now stood by as He was about to leave the world. (Luke 2:34-35)
- c) He presents John to Mary as her son and likewise presents Mary to John as his mother. John understood this to mean that he was to care for Mary with the death of Jesus for he says that he took her to his home.
- d) It is interesting to note that Jesus uses both the word "mother" and "woman" in reference to Mary. When He addresses her He uses the more informal word "woman" but in presenting her to John He uses "mother." Any resemblance to a mother/son relationship that may have existed was now over. He was her Savior as well as her Lord and God. The relationship existed in the realm of time according to the purpose and plan of God. Earthly relationships do not continue or are not binding in heaven. (Matt. 22:30)

Author's note:

Catholic doctrine references these verses in its declaration that Mary is the mother of the church. They emphasize her being given unto John as his mother and expand this to include the church. They go even further saying that Mary, in standing at the foot of the cross, fully participated in the sacrifice of Jesus. "Therefore the blessed Virgin is invoked in the church under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress and Mediatrix." (Catechism of the Catholic Church pp. 963-970)

v. 19:28-29 *After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put [it] upon hyssop, and put [it] to his mouth.*

It is now necessary to leave the Gospel of John, for just prior to Jesus stating His thirst was probably the most trying time of His ordeal. We will proceed to the gospel of Matthew to fill in the gap, in the gospel of John, between the time He addressed His mother and the declaration of His thirst.

Matthew 27:45-46

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

Crucified the third hour (9:00 A.M.) Jesus had been hanging on the cross for three hours. During this time He endured the mockery of the bystanders, the soldiers had parted His clothes, the one thief had repented and He had provided for the care of His mother. Now in this "second phase" another interval of three hours, darkness comes over the land.

- 1) Much is written about this darkness and many attempts have been made to explain its cause in natural terms. The fact that it is mentioned shows that whatever happened was not in the realm of the ordinary. It must have been an intense darkness that lasted some three hours and during the brightest part of the day.

- 2) *There are some secular writings that speak of or allude to the darkness as well as an earthquake. All we know for sure is that it did take place and that it being carried out by supernatural means cannot be ruled out. (Ex. 10:22-23) In the scriptures darkness very often symbolizes judgment and the sin of the world was being judged.*
- 3) *Except for the darkness the scriptures are silent as to what went on during this three-hour period, the three final hour hours of the life of Jesus on earth. Perhaps the scriptures are silent because in the physical realm it was a time of darkness and relative quiet but in the spiritual realm a time of unbelievable intensity. Maybe what was now taking place in the spiritual realm or even within the Godhead itself we could not comprehend. It probably could not be put into words.*
- 4) *What we do know is that during this time of intense darkness and relative silence Jesus was being made sin on our account. (2 Cor. 5:21) He was being made a curse for us. (Gal. 3:13) The iniquity of us all was being put upon Him. (Is. 53)*
- 5) *The three-hour silence of Jesus is broken with Him calling out in a loud voice. His words are translated, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" This is the culmination of what has been going on for the past three hours. It implies a sense of rejection, abandonment and loneliness on the part of the Son. Did the Father in some way desert Jesus in His human nature?*

Author's note:

We have talked about how the human emotions of Jesus were pure and uncompromised. We saw how He could genuinely weep for Lazarus knowing that he would soon raise him from the dead. We heard Jesus in His prayer tell the Father numerous times that He was coming home, but here is also able to genuinely feel the weight of the sin of the world and God's hatred of sin. I believe we again come face to face with the mystery of the dual nature of Jesus. Jesus was in complete communion with the Father who revealed to Him the will of the Godhead. Perhaps the Father was now silent. It was Jesus who had the power to give His life, but always subjected this power to the will of God. Perhaps He was crying out for the Father's direction. "How long will this last?" "When will it be over?" "Father, answer me!"

Matt. 27:47-49

Some of them that stood there, when they heard [that], said, This [man] calleth for Elias. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled [it] with vinegar, and put [it] on a reed, and gave him to drink. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.

The cry of Jesus prompts a response from those who were still standing there. The response is not that of a loved one or of the Roman guards, so, some of the Jewish leaders must have continued on. Many think that what transpired was more mockery by those who just couldn't get enough.

- 1) *Jesus cried out in a loud voice and the people were familiar with the language. The word Jesus shouted is pronounced "Eliya" because of the similarity in sound to the prophet Elijah, and the fact that it was a Jewish belief that Elijah would return and introduce the Messiah, some of the bystanders use a play on words to mock Him and those trying to attend to Him.*

The cry of Jesus to God was answered. He now knew that all things had been accomplished. He again had direction as He uttered the statement, "I thirst," in fulfillment of the scriptures.

- a) *This request must have come just after His loud cry. It was this request that prompted the mockery described by Matthew. Some sympathetic to Jesus proceeded to answer His request for a drink, while others mocked their efforts. A sponge is nevertheless dipped in sour wine and hung on a stick so to reach His mouth. (Ps. 22:1, 15)*

v. 19:30 *When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.*

Jesus received the vinegar and stated, "It is finished." All that was to be accomplished by Him in the flesh had been completed. All that had been written about Him in the scriptures had been fulfilled.

- a) *The last words of Jesus are recorded by Luke. Declaring that His work was done Jesus commits His eternal spirit into the hands of the Godhead represented by the Father. (Luke 23:46) Jesus then bows His head and dies. The precise moment for Him to give His life had arrived. He voluntarily surrendered His spirit in accordance with the divine will and plan.*

With the death of Jesus, God continued to bear witness of His Son by supernatural means. The gospel of Matthew provides what is probably the best account of these happenings. We will examine these events before continuing with John's narrative.

Matthew 27:50-54

Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.

Three major signs are listed as occurring as a result of the death of Christ. It is implied that they occurred immediately following His death. These signs were the temple veil or curtain being torn in half, an earthquake and the resurrection of some of the dead.

- 1) *The veil spoken of was probably the "inner veil" that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. Only the high priest was permitted to enter the Holy of Holies and only once a year bearing the blood of the sacrifice. A description of this veil is given in several places in the Old Testament. (Ex. 26:31-33)*
- 2) *The meaning behind this curtain being torn in half is that with the death of Christ God no longer dwelt in the Holy of Holies. All men now had direct access to God. There was no more need of a priesthood or the ceremonial law that governed it. Through the "veil" of Christ's flesh all men could enter boldly into the spiritual tabernacle not made with hands. (Heb. 10:19-22)*
- 3) *A violent earthquake took place. Rocks were split in two by its force. The tombs of that time were cut out of huge rocks and the entrances also sealed with a rock. The earthquake disturbed many of the tombs, either splitting them in two or causing their openings to be exposed. There are secular writings of this period that mention such an earthquake.*
- 4) *After the resurrection of Jesus some came out of these tombs and went into Jerusalem appearing to many. There is much about this event that we do not know. Who were these saints? Did they go back to their tombs? Were they given their resurrection bodies and taken to heaven with Jesus?*

- 5) *The soldiers who were bound to stay by the cross throughout the whole ordeal had witnessed everything that had taken place. They heard the taunts of the bystanders, saw the dealings of Jesus with the thief and heard His conversation with His mother and disciple. They stood in the silent darkness and heard the cries of Jesus to the Father. Now with His death, the earth violently quakes and the darkness is probably lifted as suddenly as it had occurred. Such is the impression on these soldiers that their leader proclaims Jesus to truly be the Son of God.*
- 6) *Was this proclamation born in the fears of their superstitions or in the six hours that they stood listening and observing? Did they come to a knowledge of just whom Jesus claimed to be? The scriptures are silent as to if this man and/or his men were converted.*

v. 19:31-33 The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and [that] they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:

The hypocrisy of the Jewish leaders is once again demonstrated. They were responsible for the death of an innocent man but were now concerned that if His body, as well as the bodies of the others, remained on the cross overnight then the land would be defiled. (Deut. 21:22-23) Earlier, guilty of such sins as bribery, deceit and lies in turning over Jesus to Pilate, they would not enter his residence in fear of being defiled. (v. 18:28)

- a) *It happened to be the preparation day (day before the Sabbath) and the Sabbath began at sunset. Furthermore, it was a special Sabbath seeing that it was Passover week. The leaders therefore sought out Pilate to get permission to remove the bodies.*
- b) *Pilate gave his permission despite his relationship with the Jewish leaders because of the people. To leave the bodies would have been an affront to the entire nation. Pilate's fight was with these unscrupulous leaders and so probably reluctantly granted permission.*
- c) *Death by crucifixion could take days, especially if the condemned man was not scourged. To hurry the process along the legs of the one hanging on the cross were broken. This was done with a steel hammer or mallet. If the prisoner did not die from the shock produced by this inhuman act then he soon died as a result of no longer being able to use his legs for support. He would eventually suffocate.*
- d) *The two men that were crucified with Jesus were still alive and the soldiers broke their legs as Pilate had ordered. When they came to Jesus and noticed that He was dead they did not break His legs. It would seem that these were not the same soldiers that had been standing by but others sent by Pilate to carry out the order.*

v. 19:34 But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.

One of the soldiers thrust his spear into the side of Jesus. Seeing that He was elevated, being on the cross, the spear was probably thrust upward in the direction of His heart. Immediately blood and water flowed out of the wound.

- a) Modern science tells us that according to the description given, the spear most likely pierced His heart. The sack surrounding the heart contains a clear liquid that acts as a lubricant. When the spear was pulled out this liquid along with the blood would have flowed out as described.

v. 19:35-37 *And he that saw [it] bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.*

John leaves his narrative to tell his readers that he was an eyewitness to these events. Throughout this book John speaks of himself in the third person. He evidently had stayed at the foot of the cross and had observed all these happenings. He states that what he writes is true. He knows that it is true because he himself had witnessed it and now bears record of what he saw.

- a) When John penned this gospel he understood himself to be a witness through whom others, by his testimony, would come to believe. (v. 17:20) He states this as clearly and as sincerely as he possibly can. He appeals to his own senses and to what he absolutely knows to be true. He begins his letter in similar fashion, appealing to what he knows to be true, that is, to his own experiences and follows it with an invitation to believe. (1 John 1:1-3)
- b) The purpose of these words is to show that Jesus surely died on the cross. John wants there to be no doubt about what he is saying. He saw Jesus die. He saw the soldier thrust a spear upward into Jesus' side. He saw blood and water flow from the wound. The man that he saw, heard and handled was dead.
- c) John also points out that these two events that he had just described were in fulfillment of the scriptures. This adds even greater weight to his testimony. Basically, he says, that is what the scriptures predicted and that is what indeed happened.
- d) The Passover lamb was a prefiguring of Jesus Christ. The bones of the paschal lamb were not to be broken and John relates this to what he had just witnessed. (Ex. 12:46)
- e) The Baptist identified Jesus as the Lamb of God. (v. 1:29) Paul also concurs. (1 Cor. 5:7) The providence of God is evident in that Jesus was dead. He could not have played an active role or influenced in any way the fulfillment of these scriptures. Jesus' legs were not broken because God 2,000 years earlier stated that they would not be broken.
- f) John relates the spear being thrust into Jesus' side to yet another prophecy being fulfilled. (Zech. 12:10) John also mentions in the Book of Revelation that Christ was pierced. (Rev. 1:7)

v. 19:38-39 *And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave [him] leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound [weight].*

The Sabbath began at sunset and the time was quickly approaching. A man identified as Joseph, from the city of Arimathaea, went to Pilate to request the body of Jesus. Pilate was surprised that Jesus

was already dead. In his mind not enough time had passed since he had given the order to break the legs of those on the crosses. He verifies Joseph's story with a centurion, probably the one who had carried out his order, and so releases the body. (Mark 15:42-45)

- a) Joseph of Arimathaea was a member of the Sanhedrin who did not consent to having Jesus delivered up to be crucified. (Luke 23:50-52) With him is Nicodemus who had also been sympathetic to the cause of Jesus. Both of these men were followers of Jesus, but secretly. At least up to this point they feared men more than they loved the truth.
- b) This proves that the dissention within the Sanhedrin concerning Jesus had continued. Many knew that Jesus was a righteous man and believed that He was from God. (v. 9:16) Confusion, however, also existed concerning His doctrine and teachings, especially the ideas He propagated as to the role of the Messiah. The ones sympathetic to the cause of Jesus were not willing to risk literally everything they had on something they were not sure of. The will of the more powerful members prevailed.

v. 19:40-42 Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation [day]; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

The two men take down the body and prepare it for burial. The body was wrapped in linen strips while the spices were put in the wrappings. The spices themselves weighed about 72 of our pounds.

- a) Near the place of the crucifixion there was a garden and in the garden was a tomb. The body had to be carried or carted to the place. The tomb was Joseph's. It was not simply a cave but was cut out of solid rock. The gospels tell us that Joseph was a rich man. (Matt. 27:57, 60) Did he own the entire garden?
- b) Being custom made for Joseph it was a new tomb. The body of Jesus was placed inside on sort of a shelf. The entrance was low so that one had to stoop down to peer in or to enter. Finally, a large stone was rolled in place to seal the entrance. All this took place before the beginning of the Sabbath at sunset.

[Although not mentioned by John the fact that Jesus was buried in a rich man's tomb seems to be in fulfillment of Isaiah 53:9.]

[John, in his gospel, gives his narrative of the resurrection immediately following his account of the burial of Jesus. A significant event took place between the burial and resurrection of Jesus. The account is given in Matthew]

Matthew 27: 62-66

Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make [it] as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

- 1) *The Jewish leaders, consisting of the chief priests and the Pharisees, assemble and set out to make yet another request of Pilate. They want Pilate to make certain that the grave of Jesus is secure, seeing that Jesus had stated He would arise on the third day. Pilate tells them that they still have a group of Roman guards that were put under their authority and they can continue to use them to secure the gravesite.*
- 2) *The day that followed the day of preparation was the Sabbath. It commenced at sunset so this request was not necessarily made on what we would consider the next day. It could have been shortly after Jesus was buried, that is, at anytime after sunset. It would seem logical that they would have posted the guard immediately, not leaving the grave unattended for a whole night.*
- 3) *It is interesting to note that the Jewish leaders picked up on something that even Jesus' disciples did not seem to realize. They tell Pilate plainly that Jesus said He would arise in three days. They are afraid that the disciples would steal the body and in their fear actually give the disciples too much credit because the disciples were still confused concerning the saying. (Mark 8:31-32, 9:31-32) There is nothing in any of the gospels that gives any indication that after His death the disciples were anticipating the resurrection.*
- 4) *According to the Jews belief in a political Messiah the death of Jesus was proof that He was an imposter and a deceiver. He had deceived many into believing that He was the Messiah, if His disciples were successful in making it appear that He rose from the dead then this deception would be worse. Without the body there could never be closure. He would always have followers who would be looking for His return. Even though dead, He would never really die and would remain a rival. How could they contend with a supposedly risen Messiah?*
- 5) *Rumors of a resurrection from the dead would not be in Pilate's best interests either. By this time Pilate probably never wants to hear the name of Jesus again so he grants the request. A Roman guard is placed by the tomb. It is probably the same group that was assigned to the crucifixion. The stone is in some way sealed, probably with mud or mortar, and the official stamp of Pilate affixed to the stone.*

[The powers that be, the Jews as well as the Romans, did not want there to be any possibility that someone could say that Jesus rose from the dead as He had predicted. The Romans made sure Jesus was dead and the Jews believed Jesus to be dead. They were certain He was buried in the tomb. It can be certain that some of them even observed the burial. Now under the orders of Pilate they do everything in their power and take every precaution to make certain that no one

could get to the body. These are His enemies who know of the prediction. They have nothing to gain and everything to lose if this prediction appears to have come true]

v. 20:1. The first [day] of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

Mary Magdalene along with a group of women set out early Sunday morning to anoint the body of Jesus. The embalming and burial was hastily done late afternoon Friday because of the approaching Sabbath. The names mentioned in the other gospels of those that accompanied Mary are; Mary the mother of Jesus, Salome, Joanna and possibly others.

- a) The conversation between the women centered on the problem of moving the stone. Apparently the women were unaware that the tomb was both sealed and guarded. The fact that they were coming to anoint the body on the third day proves that they were not anticipating any resurrection. (Mark 16:1-3)
- b) While on their way a great earthquake hits the region. Unknown to the women was that the earthquake was the result of an angel descending from heaven. The angel rolled back the stone and sat on it. At the sight of this the guards were terrified and either went into shock or fainted. (Matt. 28:1-4) They left before the women arrived.
- c) The women arrive at the tomb and see that the stone had been rolled away. They enter the tomb and the body of Jesus is gone. The women are puzzled not only by the missing body but that the grave clothes were still there. (Luke 24:1-4) Before the angels appear Mary Magdalene leaves the group of women and goes to get Peter and John.

[With Mary Magdalene leaving the group there are now two story lines. John tells us the story of Mary Magdalene while the other three gospels tell the story of the group of women who remained at the tomb.]

v. 20:2-7 Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he stooping down, [and looking in], saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

Mary arrives at the place where Peter and John are staying. It is possible that some or all of the apostles were present at this place. Mary is very upset thinking that the tomb had been broken into and the body of Jesus stolen. The idea of the resurrection had not yet entered their minds.

- a) Peter and John run to the tomb with Mary Magdalene following them. John outruns Peter and reaching the tomb stoops down to look in. He sees the linen clothes but no body. When Peter arrives he does not hesitate but goes into the tomb. John then follows. Upon closer examination they see the linen strips that wrapped the body in one place while the head covering was folded and put in another place.

- b) *The scriptures do not tell us how or exactly when Jesus came out of the tomb. He may have already been out of the tomb when the angel rolled away the stone, this then being for the benefit of those who would come so that they could readily see that He was gone.*
- c) *The description of the grave clothes seems to indicate that Jesus did not hastily blast forth from the tomb, but that He arose with a Godly peace. That He took off His grave clothes taking the time to calmly fold the headpiece and put it to the side.*

v. 20:8-10 *Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.*

John, in a personal note, says that when he walked into the tomb he believed. He quickly follows this profession of belief with a statement indicating that, at this point, they still did not understand the scriptures, in that, Christ would rise from the dead. In view of this admission exactly what did John at this point believe?

- a) *John believed what he observed. The tomb was open and the body was gone just as Mary had said. He believed there was something out of the ordinary that had taken place. Why would someone unwrap the body? Why would they take the time to fold the headpiece? He believes what his eyes told him, and from his past experiences believed that the miraculous could have happened. He saw Jesus raise the ruler's daughter and Lazarus. He believed that Jesus arose, but not yet according to the certainty of the light of the scriptures.*
- b) *After observing the scene and possibly speculating among themselves as to what had occurred, they go back to their place of lodging.*

[Before these things occurred, just after Mary Magdalene had initially left the tomb to get Peter and John, an angel appeared to the group of women who remained at the tomb. The angel announces to them that Jesus had risen and invites them to again look into the tomb. Looking into the tomb they see two more angels who confirm the story. The women are told to go and tell the disciples. (Matt. 28:5-7; Mark 16:5-7; Luke 24:4-8)

v. 20:11-13 *But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, [and looked] into the sepulchre, And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.*

Peter and John left the tomb but Mary stayed at the site weeping. In her sorrow she looks into the tomb again and this time sees two angels sitting where Jesus once laid.

- a) *The word translated "weeping" literally gives the idea of uncontrolled sobbing. The angel basically asks her why she is so upset. This is probably an honest question asked by the angel who knows that this is a time of great joy. The angel is not all knowing and cannot read the thoughts or the heart of Mary. It probably cannot understand Mary's lack of understanding concerning the resurrection.*
- b) *Mary must be so torn with grief that her mind is totally occupied with her perceived loss. She is*

not startled by the sudden presence of the angels but through her sobs carries on a conversation as if this was an everyday occurrence. She answers that someone had taken the body of Jesus, again oblivious to the concept of the resurrection.

v. 20:14-16 *And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.*

Mary turns around and Jesus is standing behind her, however, she does not recognize Him. He asks her the same question as did the angel, namely, "Why are you in such grief?" and "Who are you looking for?"

- a) *Exactly why Mary turned around or why she did not readily recognize Jesus we do not know. There is much speculation as to the answer to these questions. Probably she suddenly perceives a presence behind her and turned. As to why she did not recognize Him, it must be remembered that she was despondent. She was totally focused on finding the body of Jesus. For Him to alive was totally unexpected.*
- b) *She supposes that Jesus is the gardener and does not answer His questions assuming that if anyone knows what has happened he must know. She asks him if he knows where the body is to take her to it.*
- c) *Jesus calls her by name, probably in a way that He had many times, for she now instantly recognizes Him. She calls Him Rabboni, which means Master or Teacher. This is the first appearance of Jesus after His resurrection. (Mark. 16:9)*

v. 20:17 *Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and [to] my God, and your God.*

This is a difficult verse and many explanations have been offered. It is not a warning to Mary not to physically touch Him. Within the hour the other women would touch Him and would not be rebuked. (Matt. 28:9) Jesus would invite the touch of Thomas, even to the point of examining His wounds.

(v. 20:27) Likewise, the other apostles. (Luke 24:39)

- a) *The best explanation would seem to be that it had something to do with the relationship between Jesus and Mary, and how she perceived it. In her emotion she probably wanted to casually hug Him, thinking that He was now here to stay.*
- b) *He tells her that He would be going away. The relationship she desired was no longer possible for He was returning to the Godhead. They would soon be united in a way she never could have imagined, that is, in the spirit.*
- c) *His disciples are no longer just His friends, but also His brothers. Mary is told to go and tell them that He is going back to the Father.*

- d) *Their new intimacy with the Godhead is stressed but a distinction is also drawn between their relationship to the Godhead as opposed to His. He does not say “our Father and our God” but “my Father and your Father, and my God and your God.” He is a Son by nature but they by adoption. He is of the Godhead, while they have been united to Him.*

[The women had seen the angels at the tomb after Mary had left them to get Peter and John. We saw that the angels had instructed them to tell the apostles that Jesus had risen. Mark tells us that they did not immediately carry out the instructions of the angels because they were afraid. (Mark 16:5-8) In the meantime, Peter, John and Mary arrive at the tomb and find it empty. Mary, in her grief, lingers behind after Peter and John depart. The Lord appears to Mary and instructs her to tell the disciples He is going to ascend to the Father. Shortly after Jesus appears to Mary, He appears to the frightened group of women, who were probably on their way to tell the disciples. (Matt. 28:9-10)]

v. 20:18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and [that] he had spoken these things unto her.

Mary goes to the place where the apostles were staying and relates the unbelievable news that Jesus was alive. Shortly after the other women arrive and tell the apostles of their experience.

- a) *Although Mary and then the other women relate two independent stories confirming that Jesus was alive the apostles do not believe them. (Mark 16:10-11) Peter rises and again runs to the tomb. He examines the grave clothes and is filled with wonder. (Luke 24:8-12)*
- b) *It is clear from Luke’s account that Peter goes to the tomb after he heard from the women that Jesus was alive. It is clear from John’s account that when Peter and John went to the tomb the Lord still had not yet appeared to anyone. Peter had to visit the tomb twice.*
- c) *Luke tells us that Jesus appeared to Peter sometime during the first day. The story is not given to us in the scriptures, but the Simon spoken of was indeed Peter, and is confirmed to us by Paul. (Luke 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5)*
- d) *Jesus also appeared that afternoon to two disciples who were on the way to a town called Emmaus. These were not apostles. Jesus walked most of the afternoon with them, expounding to them the scriptures as pertaining to the Christ. He finally reveals himself to them and they make their way back to Jerusalem to tell the others the news. (Luke 24:14-33)*

[Matthew follows the storyline of the soldiers who guarded the tomb. When they came to their senses they wandered back to Jerusalem and told the Jewish leaders what had happened. Whether some of them believed the guards or not is unknown, however, the Jewish leader’s greatest fear had been realized. What they had taken every conceivable precaution to prevent had come about. The body was gone. The leaders bribe the soldiers to say that they fell asleep and the disciples stole the body. The Jews also promise the soldiers that if Pilate found out they would nevertheless take steps to protect them. (Matt. 28:11-15)

v. 20:19-20 Then the same day at evening, being the first [day] of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace [be] unto you. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them [his] hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

In the evening of that first day the disciples were assembled together. No doubt the conversation centered on Jesus. The women had seen Him, Peter had seen Him and the two disciples from Emmaus had arrived with yet another story of an appearance by Jesus.

- a) *Although those who had seen Him were filled with wonder and joy a certain amount of contention also existed, for some still refused to believe. Emotions probably ran wild as joy was tempered by unbelief and wonder by confusion. As the men from Emmaus were relating their story Jesus suddenly appears in the room.*
- b) *John makes it a point to mention that the doors were shut. They were afraid of the Jews and were in a secured location. John does this to stress the fact that Jesus simply appeared in the room. It was Jesus and yet He was different. He possessed the resurrection body. He could appear and disappear. Mary didn't recognize Him at first thinking He was the gardener. To the disciples on the road to Emmaus He appeared in another form. (Mark 16:12)*
- c) *They were at first terrified at the sight of Jesus suddenly appearing, thinking He was a ghost. Jesus rebukes those who did not believe the reports of those who saw Him. (Mark 16:14) It took some doing on the part of Jesus to put them at ease. He showed them His wounds and asking for a fish, ate it in their presence. (Luke 24:36-43)*
- d) *Finally convinced that He was not a ghost or apparition, they are filled with great joy and glad to again be in the presence of their Lord. (v. 16:16)*

v. 20:21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace [be] unto you: as [my] Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

Seeing the manner in which they had at first received Him, it was appropriate for Jesus, after the disciples had been assured, to repeat His greeting of peace. He desires them to enter into His rest. From this time on they could have a peace within them that passes understanding; a peace that would keep them secure in all of the trials and tribulations the world would present.

- a) *Jesus officially commissions them to go out into the world. He compares this sending of them to His being sent by the Father. The priestly prayer of Jesus was coming to pass. In that prayer He told the Father that the disciples were trained and sent out. He said they would be set apart with the setting apart of himself. Jesus had now been sanctified and the disciples could now understand the truth of their commission, of what they had been chosen to do from the foundations of the world. (vs. 17:14-19)*

v. 20:22-23 And when he had said this, he breathed on [them], and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; [and] whose soever [sins] ye retain, they are retained.

Jesus breathes or blows on them in a demonstration of the nature of the gift they would receive and in turn bring to others. The breath of God was life and Jesus had imparted to them, through the Holy Spirit, spiritual life. (Gen. 2:7)

- a) *His breath was symbolic of the nature of their message. They would not know why it would blow on some and yet blow by others. They would not see it or be able to direct it according to their wills, but would be aware of its presence and be able to observe its influence. (vs. 3:7-8)*

- b) *In Luke's account of this incident he simply states that at this point Jesus opened their minds to the scriptures concerning His suffering, death, burial and resurrection. (Luke 24:44-49) The receiving of the Holy Ghost was the opening of their understanding. Jesus had told them repeatedly that it was the Holy Ghost that would teach them and give them understanding. (v. 14:26) They would receive the fullness of the Spirit after Jesus departed. (vs. 16:7-14)*

Author's note:

Because the words of these verses have been twisted and misinterpreted by many over the centuries it is necessary to point out who was present when they were uttered by the Lord. Luke tells us that it was the eleven, the two disciples from Emmaus, as well as others who were present with them.

(Luke 24:33) John tells us that Thomas was missing at this time from the ranks of the eleven. These words therefore were not directed to or intended for the apostles only. A priestly caste with the power to forgive sins was not being formed.

- c) *The remitting and retaining of sins must be understood in light of who was present and the understanding of what they had just been given. They were being commissioned to communicate the grounds for the forgiveness of sins.*
- d) *They were now being given the keys to the kingdom of heaven as Jesus had promised. The keys to the kingdom of heaven or what unlocks the door of heaven to the unworthy sinner is the belief in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. This is the understanding or the "keys" they had just received. (Matt. 16:19) This is what they were being sent out to communicate.*

"The meaning of the passage is not that a man can forgive sins – that belongs only to God, but the meaning is, that they should be inspired; that in founding the church, and in declaring the will of God, they should be taught by the Holy Ghost to declare on what terms, to what characters, and to what temper of mind, God would extend forgiveness of sins. It was not authority to forgive individuals, but to establish in all the churches the terms and conditions on which men might be pardoned: with a promise that God would confirm all that they taught, that men might have assurance of forgiveness who would comply with those terms; and that those who did not comply should not be forgiven, and their sins should be retained." Albert Barnes

v. 20:24-25 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

Thomas, one of the apostles, was not present when Jesus appeared to them as a group on that resurrection evening. By now there were many who had seen Him, touched Him and had spoken to Him, and all had, no doubt, shared their experiences with the apostle.

- a) *In trying to convince him it is certain that they shared with him their new understanding of the scriptures, explaining to him why the Christ had to die and then arise. Thomas will not listen. He probably regrets that he had not been with them that night and probably wonders why, if it were true, Jesus did not appear to him.*
- b) *Jesus had appeared to Peter as well as to the women. He appeared to the disciples on the road to Emmaus as well as to others. Wasn't he a faithful servant and one to the twelve? Why was he being singled out? In frustration he states that he will not believe.*

- c) Not wanting to be badgered by the others he sets down his “conditions” of belief. “I will believe only if I see Him and physically examine His wounds.”

v. 20:26-29 *And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: [then] came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace [be] unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust [it] into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed [are] they that have not seen, and [yet] have believed.*

Eight days pass and the frustration of Thomas mounts. A group of disciples are again assembled, Thomas among them, and Jesus suddenly appears in the room as He had a week earlier. John again emphasizes the fact that the doors were shut and/or locked.

- a) The greeting of Jesus is the same, as He desires them to enter into the peace of His presence. He addresses Thomas, instructing him to physically examine His wounds. Jesus uses the exact words that Thomas had used a week earlier proving His unseen presence among them.
- b) It is doubtful that Thomas did indeed put his finger in the nail prints and his hand into the side of Jesus. The sight of Christ and the invitation to Thomas in his own words was enough. Jesus rebukes him for being faithless and encourages him to believe.
- c) Thomas, with the words, “My Lord and my God,” proclaims his belief to Jesus as well as to the others. He proclaims the deity of Christ as well as His Lordship over all. Possibly with his belief his mind was now opened to the truths of the scriptures as were the minds of the others.
- d) Jesus pronounces a blessing on all who would believe in His deity and profess His Lordship apart from the unique opportunity enjoyed by a few during Jesus’ time on earth. This is directed to those of faith who preceded Christ as well as those who would follow. (Heb. 11:13-14)
- e) Jesus is not promoting “blind faith” but a faith based on the scriptures and on the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. It is a faith based on the spiritual instead of the physical.

v. 20:30-31 *And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*

Thomas, the skeptic among the disciples, had just been convinced that Jesus is the Lord God. The deity of Christ has been one of the underlying themes of this gospel, so John now leaves his narrative to emphasize this point.

- a) The resurrection was by far the greatest sign of His deity and the proof of all His claims. The disciples saw Jesus possessing the resurrection body and saw Him in light of the scriptures to which their minds had been opened.
- b) John states that many other signs were done in the presence of the disciples that attested to Jesus’ deity that he did not record. The idea is that in John’s mind the proof was insurmountable. He, as well as the other disciples, was convinced that Jesus was God.

- c) *There seems to be a certain amount of reflection here on John's part. He thinks about all of the signs he had included in this gospel, namely, the water changed to wine, the feeding of the five thousand, the healing of the man at the pool, the healing of the blind man, and the resurrection of Lazarus. When these signs were performed he was somewhat blinded to their true meaning and impact. How could he have been so slow to understand?*
- d) *The spiritual signs, such as all the fulfilling of prophecy, cannot be discounted for they in many ways render even greater proof of His deity than the physical signs. The cleansing of the temple, the entry into Jerusalem, the proclamation of himself as the Living Water, as well as His death and subsequent resurrection, were all in fulfillment of words written thousands of years earlier.*

[It is pretty much agreed that John was familiar with the other gospels. Those writings contained an account of many of the other signs that John did not include, however, the purpose of his, as well as the other writings, was to bring their readers to belief in Jesus Christ]

- e) *John states that eternal life is synonymous with the belief that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and all that that belief entails. It is through these words that the blessing of Jesus, as to those who do not see and yet believe, would be applied. Through the foolishness of preaching God chose to save those who would believe. (1 Cor. 1:21)*
- f) *John realized that he was chosen to be a member of a unique group in a unique period of time. He was able to physically observe the work of the salvation of men. All forthcoming generations would rely on the words that he, as well as others, was chosen to pen. The Holy Spirit would work through the word. (v. 17:20; 1 John 1:1-3)*

v. 21:1. After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he [himself].

The gospel of John seems to conclude with chapter 20, however, it appears that John was moved by the Spirit to include one last incident in which Jesus manifested himself to the disciples. Some go as far as to say that this chapter was a later addition by another author, but there is no valid reason to doubt that it was not written or added by John.

- a) This manifestation or showing of himself took place at the Sea of Tiberias sometime after the last recorded appearance, that is, after His appearance to the disciples on which He dealt with the unbelief of Thomas.
- b) The intent of the author seems to be to emphasize that Jesus is alive and physically present. Just as he emphasized the point that Jesus had truly died (vs. 19:34-37), he also wants it to be known that Jesus is again truly alive. Jesus can be seen and touched in the normal way. He can speak and eat, but possessing the resurrection body, He is also changed.

v. 21:2-3 There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the [sons] of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.

The story begins with the disciples being assembled together and at least seven of them deciding to go fishing. It was Peter who decided he was going to go and the others followed. The Sea of Tiberias is better known as the Sea of Galilee. It is where they fished before being called by Jesus.

- a) Too much must not be read into Peter's statement, such as he had given up on preaching and desired to go back to his old way of life. The disciples were not yet fully empowered with the Holy Spirit and so had little direction except for the command of Jesus to wait for the Spirit's coming.
- b) The fact is that Galilee would provide a certain amount of safety from the Jewish leaders while allowing them to get out and provide for themselves. What better place to wait than on a boat fishing in the Sea of Galilee?

v. 21:4-6 But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

The disciples fish all night and catch nothing at all. Morning comes and they notice a man standing on the shore. The man yells out to them inquiring as to whether they had caught anything. They reply that they had not. The man is Jesus, but for whatever the reason they do not recognize Him.

- a) Jesus instructs them to cast the net on the right side of the ship. They do so and the net is filled. This happened to the disciples once before. (Luke 5:4-6)
- b) Being called "children", did the disciples think that the man on the shore was an old fisherman and so simply threw in the net out of respect or to humor him? Were they completely blinded to the previous time this had happened or did they remember and so throw in the net?

- c) *At any rate, the miracle is repeated. Their net is full to the point of breaking and they cannot pull it on board.*

v. 21:7-14 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt [his] fisher's coat [unto him], (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea. And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes. As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken. Jesus saith unto them, Come [and] dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise. This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

John is the first to discern that the man on the shore is Jesus. He shares this information with Peter who immediately put on his clothes and jumps into the sea. We again see the differing personalities of these two men. John is usually the first to understand while Peter is always the first to act.

- a) *While Peter is swimming to shore the other disciples bring in the boat dragging the net of fish behind. They are about one hundred yards from shore. When they arrive they see that a meal of fish and bread had been prepared for them by Jesus.*
- b) *Jesus instructs them to bring in the fish so that the miracle will have its full impact. Peter hauls the net onto shore and it contains 153 big fish. John, being a fisherman and acquainted with the equipment, writes that the net did not break, so evidently this was well over the capacity of the net.*
- c) *Jesus invites the disciples to dine with Him. The statement to the effect that no one asked Him who He was, because they all knew it was the Lord, is an interesting one. It would suggest that in these appearances Jesus disguised himself or took on other forms. Mary Magdalene thought He was a gardener. The disciples on the road to Emmaus spent a whole day with Him without recognizing Him. Here, these disciples do not ask Him who He is only because they already intuitively know. It is implied that they would not know simply by looking upon Him, but would be compelled to ask, "Who are you?"*
- d) *Jesus then serves them breakfast, giving them bread and fish. John adds that this was the third appearance of Jesus to the disciples as a group with a majority of them present.*

v. 21:15-17 So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, [son] of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, [son] of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, [son] of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

These verses are difficult for they are not clearly explained. It is the general consensus that Peter is undergoing some sort of reinstatement or reconciliation in view of his denial of Jesus. The intent of

Jesus seems to be to inform the disciples, any readers of the gospels, as well as Peter himself, that he was forgiven. His denial of Jesus did not strip him of his apostolic office and he was still entrusted with the care of the church.

- a) After they had eaten, Jesus, probably still in the company of the other disciples, asks Peter if he loves Him more than do the others. The question of Jesus seems to have a direct connection to the boast that Peter had previously made. (Matt. 26:31-33) He had at that time put himself above the others, implying that they might be offended but he would not.
- b) At the supper, Peter also attempted to make a distinction between himself and the others. (vs. 13:5-8) Jesus was washing the feet of the other disciples, but when He came to Peter he refused to let Jesus wash his feet. Implied is that maybe the others would let Jesus demean himself in this manner but he would not. Peter in the past had thought very highly of himself even in relation to the others.
- c) Peter's reply demonstrates his newfound humility in two ways. First, there is an important word change in the original language that translates as follows; Jesus uses the word that expresses the highest degree of love, while in his reply Peter uses the word that expresses love in a lower degree, one that is synonymous with affection or deep friendship.
- d) Second, he leaves out completely any reference or comparison to the others in his answer. He now understands that the Lord knows him better than he knows himself. He appeals to the Lord's knowledge of him rather than any empty boast. He knows that he has a great love for Jesus in his heart but also knows that his actions were inconsistent with his feelings. He himself is unsure and confused not trusting his own feelings.
- e) Jesus questions Peter as to his love for Him three times, possibly corresponding to the three denials. The third time Jesus uses Peter's word for love. In essence He asks, "Peter, do you even think of me as a friend, feeling affection for me?" This question hurts Peter deeply causing him to more emphatically appeal to Jesus' knowledge of him.
- f) This would appear to have been the correct answer or response, proving that Peter had been broken, having learned a lesson. Was this a test? Was Jesus "pushing" Peter to see if he would resort to his old ways by coming up with a list or examples of things that proved his love? Was it to see if Peter would come up with excuses for his actions?
- g) After each of his answers Jesus exhorts Peter to take up the ministry. Subtle word changes in the original language convey the following ideas. In the first instance, He tells Peter to provide the basic food or nutrients to the immature. The second exhortation is one to shepherd or meet the needs of the flock. The third command incorporates the virtue of love into the teaching and shepherding process.

v. 21:18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry [thee] whither thou wouldst not.

Jesus appeared to the disciples on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. It appears as though this was a rather lengthy appearance for He has spent a good part of the morning with them. After breakfast Jesus re-instated or re-confirmed Peter into the ministry of the gospel. Continuing to address Peter, Jesus gives Peter insight into his future.

- a) *In what is a rather vague statement, Jesus basically tells Peter that when he was young he would come and go as he pleased. Peter usually acted in such a manner. He had just recently seen the Lord on the beach, girded himself and flung himself into the sea. (v. 7)*
- b) *Jesus then tells Peter that when he is old this would not be the case. Another would gird him and take him to a place, that if it were up to him, he would not go.*
- c) *Taken by itself, this statement does not appear to have much significance. The description given of young and old could be applied to just about anyone. When one is young, he is his own man, but when one grows old others have a tendency to control you, many times for your own good.*

v. 21:19 *This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.*

John tells us that these words to Peter did indeed have more significance than what meets the eye. With these words Jesus told Peter of his death. The stretching forth of the hands and being girded by another seems to mean that he would be bound and led away.

- a) *The reference to Peter being old when this would occur implies that Peter enjoyed a rather lengthy ministry. Some think at least 30 years. The reference to his death glorifying God implies that he would be a martyr of the faith.*

[Tradition tells us that Peter was crucified in Rome. It is said that he was crucified upside down at his own request deeming himself unworthy to die as did Jesus. Some say that the phrase "stretch forth thy hands" implies crucifixion. As with all such tradition it cannot be proven or even deemed reliable. The fact is that Peter was killed because of his faith probably after a long and fruitful ministry.]

- b) *Jesus commands Peter to follow Him. Jesus was probably referring to Peter following His ways as an apostle and minister of the gospel. It would appear that Peter mistakenly takes Jesus literally and begins to physically walk with Him along the shore.*

v. 21:20-22 *Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what [shall] this man [do]? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what [is that] to thee? follow thou me.*

As Jesus and Peter walk, Peter notices that John is following them, probably at a distance. In light of the prediction of Jesus concerning his fate, he asks Jesus what John's fate would be.

- a) *John, as is his style, describes himself in the third person. It is widely believed that John was the youngest of the apostles, probably a teenager, when he walked with Christ. We also saw the possibility that John was a cousin of Jesus. In His humanness Jesus took a particular liking to John.*
- b) *What prompted Peter's question? Still smarting from the question put to him by Jesus concerning his love, and having been given a prediction of his death, was he envious of John? On the other hand, John and Peter seemed to be very close. They were always together. Was Peter simply concerned about John in light of what he had just found out concerning his own fate? Perhaps Peter was just curious, wanting to know. This would be consistent with his personality.*

- c) *Whatever Peter's motive in asking the question, Jesus basically tells him that it is none of his concern. Jesus hypothetically says that if He wills for John to live until He comes again, then what is that to Peter.*
- d) *Jesus follows the rebuke with a command, "You Peter, you just follow me." If Peter had previously misunderstood the command of Jesus to follow Him, there now can be no mistake. Peter is to walk in the teachings and example of Christ. He is to be a minister and shepherd of the church. John's future had no bearing on what Peter was called to do.*

"Peter must not be so interested in God's secret counsel (regarding John) that he fails to pay attention to God's revealed will." Hendricksen

[Every Christian is given his lot in life according to the will of God. We are to keep ourselves focused on the task given to us. Comparing our lot in life, our accomplishments or even failures with those of others is ill advised. We will all be judged as individuals, on our own merits according to the grace of God given to us. We will not be graded on a curve, that is, in comparison with others. The burdens of some appear to be heavy while the burdens of others seem light. It is God who has given each individual his lot according to His will and in proportion to His grace]

v. 21:23 Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what [is that] to thee?

Evidently a misunderstanding developed among the members of the early church about the words of Jesus to Peter concerning John. It was widely believed that John would not die but remain alive until Jesus returned.

- a) *At the time this gospel was written it is believed that John was the last surviving member of the twelve. This fact either led to the error or at least fostered the idea that Jesus said John would not die. John makes certain that his readers know that this is not true. He explains that Jesus, at the time, was speaking hypothetically, merely giving Peter an example to make His point.*

v. 21:24-25 This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true. And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

The apostle John, the one whom Jesus loved, the one who leaned upon Him at the supper, the one who witnessed the blood and water spill from His pierced side, is the one that wrote this gospel. Furthermore, at the time of this writing, John still orally testified of the things he had written.

- a) *This gospel is his testimony or solemn proclamation of the things he had witnessed and so knows to be true. Throughout this writing he has backed-up his testimony with scripture. (vs. 19:35, 20:30-31)*
- b) *John's gospel contains much information not given in the other gospels. It seems that John, as he is about to conclude, does not want the readers to think that the full story and significance of the life of Christ was now complete with the addition of his written testimony.*

- c) *On the contrary, more had been left out than told. As Matthew Henry puts it, "Everything that Christ said and did was worth our notice, and incapable of being improved. He never spoke an idle word nor did an idle thing." Therefore, everything that He said and did was significant and had infinite ramifications and applications.*
- d) *His life fulfilled all of the prefiguring and shadows of the Old Testament. A relative few are revealed to us. The miracles He performed in the gospels are but a mere sampling. Volumes could be written alone of His discourse to the disciples on the road to Emmaus.*

"It is literally true that were one to attempt this he would discover that the world itself could not contain the written volumes, and this for the simple reason that no finite number can ever record the deeds performed by Infinite Love." Hendricksen

Amen