

John (NASB)

NIV SB: Audience: Primarily Gentile believers and seeking unbelievers.

*Q: How do we know that John's gospel was aimed primarily at Gentile believers and seeking unbelievers?

*A: This is a supposition but perhaps a reasonable one. We know that John was active in Asia Minor at the time of writing, and that the churches he corresponded with had large gentile memberships (cf. the three names mentioned in 3Jn. are all gentile rather than Jewish names, and the seven churches of Revelation are all in Asia Minor and would likely have had a majority gentile complement – cf. what Acts has to say about Paul and Ephesus in Acts chapter eighteen through twenty). However, the same could probably be said about almost all of the New Testament – meaning "no particular, specific audience in mind" as opposed to a predominantly Jewish audience assumed. After all, we are all brothers in Christ, and all unbelievers need Christ regardless of ethnicity. This is the "default position" (i.e., addressed "to all" as opposed to having a Jewish audience in mind), given that this is the testament for the Church into which the gentiles at time of writing (and up until this moment) had been steadily flowing and would generally come to outnumber the Jewish Christians who formed the backbone of most of the new churches. So unless a book specifically says otherwise (as in the case of Hebrews and James), we would really be making the assumption this note makes since God wants all to be saved and wants all to grow after salvation.

NIV SB: The author knew Jewish life well, as seen from references to popular Messianic speculations (see, e. g., 1:21 and note; 7:40-42); to the hostility between Jews and Samaritans (see 4:9 and note); and to Jewish customs, such as the duty of circumcision on the eighth day taking precedence over the prohibition of working on the Sabbath (see note on 7:22).

*Q: The references to John 1:21 and Messianic speculations and to hostility between Jews and Samaritans to support the point about knowing Jewish life are clear, but the John 7:22 includes a quotation of the from our Lord rather than John's own words, so I'm not sure if it should also be taken as evidence.

*A: Your point is well taken. It is fine and well to make use of the internal evidence to be found in John's gospel to present a case that the book is as it purports to be in fact written by the apostle John. But referencing words spoken by our Lord as an indication of this suggests that they have been "made up" by "someone who knew Jewish life well"; the comment betrays a questionable understanding of the principle of divine inspiration. Our Lord told us that the Spirit would "bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you" (Jn.14:26 NKJV), and that is what we have in John 7:22, the actual words of Christ brought to perfect remembrance by the Spirit and recorded by John under divine inspiration – and this would have been true even if John had not "known Jewish life well" (which of course he certainly did, being Jewish).

Date: In general, two views of the dating of this Gospel have been advocated:

(1) The traditional view places it toward the end of the first century, c. AD 85 or later.

(2) More recently, some interpreters have suggested an earlier date, perhaps as early as the 50s and no later than 70.

The first view may be supported by reference to the statement of Clement of Alexandria (died between 211 and 216) that John wrote to supplement the accounts found in the other Gospels (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, 6. 14. 7), and thus his Gospel is later than the first three. It has also been argued that the seemingly more developed theology of the fourth Gospel indicates that it originated later.

The second view has found favor because it has been felt more recently that John wrote independently of the other Gospels (See essay and chart). This does not contradict the statement of Clement, referred to above. Also, those who hold this view point out that developed theology does not necessarily argue for a late origin. The theology of Romans (written c. 57) is every bit as developed as that in John. Further, the statement in 5:2 that there "is" (rather than "was") a pool "near the Sheep Gate" may suggest a time before 70, when Jerusalem was destroyed. Others, however, observe that John elsewhere sometimes used the present tense when speaking of the past.

What is your opinion on the date of John's gospel and the arguments presented?

*A: To take the last question first, the arguments are nonsensical. It is not necessary for John to have written without any knowledge of the other gospels for his gospel to have an earlier date than "traditionally" thought – it is only necessary for the synoptics to have been written first (which they were). This reasoning is a hangover from the time, not so long ago, when conventional wisdom placed the gospels as much as a century or two after the events described. The discover of papyri and other evidence for the text only a few decades removed from the cross put paid to such erroneous, secular views. Taking the reasonable proposition that Revelation, the last book in the Bible, was also the last canonical work written by John, the gospel would have to precede it, and Revelation was written no later than the death of Nero in A.D. 68, because Nero is the sixth king who "now is" at John's time of writing (Rev.17:10), the last of the Julio-Claudian emperors to be followed in the far future by the "seventh king" (antichrist).

John 1:1 (NASB)

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

NIV SB: 1:1 In the beginning. A deliberate echo of Ge 1:1 (see note there) to link God's action in behalf of the world through Jesus Christ (cf. 3:16) with his first work, the creation of the world. Word. Greek logos, a term Greeks used not only of the spoken word but also of the unspoken word, the word still in the mind—the reason. When they applied it to the universe, they meant the rational principle that governs all things. The Jews, however, used it to refer to the "word" of God by which he created the world and governs it (see the Septuagint [the pre-Christian Greek translation of the OT] rendering of Ps 33:6; 119:89; 147:15, 18) and to refer to the law of God that he gave the Israelites to be their life (see Dt 32:47 and note on 30:20). Of the law the rabbis said that it was "created before the world," that it "lay on God's bosom while God sat on the throne of glory," that it was divine, that it was God's "firstborn" through whom he "created the

heaven and the earth," that it is "light" and "life" for the world and that it "is truth." This Jewish use of logos as that which comes from God to fulfill his purpose in and for the world appears to lie behind the heavily freighted affirmation with which John begins his Gospel. with God. The Word was distinct from the Father. was God. Jesus was God in the fullest sense (see note on Ro 9:5). The prologue (vv. 1-18) begins and ends with a ringing affirmation of his deity (see note on v. 18).

*Q: What is your take on the point made in this note that "This Jewish use of logos as that which comes from God to fulfil his purpose in and for the world appears to lie behind the heavily freighted affirmation with which John begins his Gospel"?

*A: The word *logos* in Greek was also extremely "heavily freighted" at time of writing, being a key philosophical term used for the better part of a millennium by this time for the "rational principle" behind creation. That also could not have been lost on John nor did the Spirit fail to take this into account. But we need not go into such antecedents when one considers that the primacy of God's Word – both the written and the Living Word of God, Jesus Christ (which are actually inseparable) – is a fundamental principle of scripture from the beginning ("and God *said*", Gen.1:3) to the end ("His Name stands [forever]: 'The Word of God.'"; Rev.19:13). As the One who carries out the policy / plan of the Father, Jesus is the embodiment of His "word of command", the very truth of Him who is the truth from beginning to end, the Alpha and the Omega.

It is of this [Church] that I, [Paul], have become a minister according to God's mandate given to me for dispensing [the truth] to you, in order to bring completeness to God's Plan (lit., "word", Gk. *logos*).
Colossians 1:25

John 1:4 (NASB)

4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

NIV SB: light of all mankind. This Gospel also links light with Christ, from whom comes all spiritual illumination. He is the "light of the world," who holds out wonderful hope for humanity (cf. 8:12 and note) and for the creation (see 3:16 and note). For an OT link between life and light, see Ps 27:1; 36:9 and notes.

*Q: How specifically should we understand "Light" in this verse? As spiritual illumination or is there a better way to put it in your view? Or should we interpret this in more general terms, as a symbol of all the good things that come through Christ?

*A: Light illuminates. Darkness obfuscates. The world is dark and the kingdom of this world is a kingdom of darkness. The truth is light which illuminates the heart just as the Light of the world "illuminates everyone" (Jn.1:9). Light is glory and God is glorious. Light and glory and understanding through the truth will be the eternal state of all whom God has chosen for Himself in Jesus Christ, but darkness and separation from Him will be the lot of all who have rejected Christ and His sacrifice for them. When we see the rainbow glory of God face to face we will

understand the full meaning of this description. Until then we are looking "through a glass darkly" at the reflected glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (1Cor.13:12; cf. 2Cor.3:9-18). God is light (1Jn.1:5; cf. 1Tim.6:16; Rev.22:5), and light represents His glory and essence, which in this dark world can only be perceived and understood through the truth of Him who is the Truth by means of the Holy Spirit.

For God who said, "Let light shine forth from the darkness!", is He who has shone forth [His light] into our hearts to illuminate our knowledge of God's glory in the Person of Jesus Christ.
2nd Corinthians 4:6

John 1:7-8 (NASB)

7 [a]He came [b]as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. 8 [c]He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light.

- a. John 1:7 Lit This one
- b. John 1:7 Lit for testimony
- c. John 1:8 Lit That one

*Q: Why does John in verse 7 use *houtos* (this one) to refer to John the Baptist, but *ekeinos* (that one) in verse 8?

*A: The former is the near demonstrative, the latter the far demonstrative. In the first instance John the baptist is the focus; but John the baptist is merely the herald of the Messiah so by reversing these pronouns the Spirit gives the apostle John to remove the baptist from center stage, so to speak, in order to bring the focus back on the Son of God.

John 1:9 (NASB)

9 There was the true Light [a]which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.

- a. John 1:9 Or which enlightens every person coming into the world

*Q: Considering what is said in the footnote, do you agree with the NASB rendering of this verse? Does "coming in to the world" refer to the light, or to every man? Looking at Greek it seems it could go either way.

*A: It refers to "the Light". The verb form *en* which begins the sentence in Greek is to be taken with *erchomenon* as a periphrastic past tense. That is what the word order seems to me to demand. It also makes little sense to assume the Christ enlightens people only at the point when they "come into the world" – and if that phrase could be taken to mean "and thereafter" then there is little point in having said it. But John is calling attention to Christ as God coming into the world to bring light to its darkness. Some versions have this correct, e.g., RSV:

The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world.
John 1:9 RSV

John 1:14 (NASB)

14 And the Word became flesh, and [a]dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

a. John 1:14 Or tabernacled; i.e. lived temporarily

NIV SB: humanity. made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory. Cf. 2Pe 1:16-18; and note on 1:16. The Greek verb translated "made his dwelling" is connected with the Greek noun meaning "tent/tabernacle" which, in turn, is associated with the Hebrew word for "tent/tabernacle." The verse would have reminded John's Jewish readers of the tent of meeting, which was filled with the glory of God (Ex 40:34-35). Christ revealed his glory to his disciples by the miracles he performed (see 2:11 and note) and by his death and resurrection.

*Q: Could you explain this point? How do we know that the phrase "made his dwelling" would have been linked with Exodus 40:34-35 by the readers of John's gospel? How is the Greek word used connected to the Hebrew term? Has it been derived from it?

*A: The note is perhaps a good application of scripture but hardly a necessary interpretation inasmuch as it is a commonplace in the Bible to refer to being in this earthly body as sojourning in this world temporarily as in a tent – for human beings who have no claim on God's glory (e.g. 2Cor.5:1-4; 2Pet.1:13-14).

John 1:15 (NASB)

15 John *testified about Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'"

*Q: I'm not sure how this verse should be best rendered. Most versions render *emprosthen mou gegonen* as referring to our Lord's status - "is greater than I", "has surpassed me", others translate literally, which seems to relate to chronological order of appearance - "has come before me" (the ending than goes - "has come before me, because He was before me").

*A: It is meant temporally as expressing sequence; NASB wants to have one phrase taken temporally and one not, but they are clearly meant to be parallels of one another. This does not preclude the necessary inference that Christ is (obviously) superior: NASB's rendering of what comes next, "for He existed before me" is correct, namely, a temporal rendering which at the same time makes clear Christ's deity.

"The One coming after me has surpassed me because He existed before me".

John 1:15b

John 1:16 (NASB)

16 For of His fullness [a]we have all received, and [b]grace upon grace.

a. John 1:16 Lit we all received

b. John 1:16 Lit grace for grace

NIV SB: 1:16 grace in place of grace already given. To the blessing that came through Moses has been added the greater blessing that has come through Jesus (see v. 17; see also Heb 1:1-4 and notes). Another possible interpretation of the Greek phrase is "grace on top of grace," meaning an abundance of grace.

*Q: How should we understand the phrase?

*A: The translation "grace on top of grace" is a good one since it makes use of an English idiom which is comparable in meaning to the Greek here. The preposition *anti* expresses things from the point of view of the observer so that the "we" here behold/receive "grace", the favor and blessing of God, and more grace yet behind that initial wave of grace (to an unlimited degree).

John 1:17 (NASB)

17 For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.

*Q: Could you explain this verse? The point about contrasting the Law with grace is quite clear, but why does John say that "truth" was realized through Jesus Christ, as if it wasn't realized through Moses?

*A: It is not that the Law is not the truth, but it is the case that the truth upon which the Law is founded is veiled in shadows which were not fully removed until Christ came in the flesh (cf. 2Cor.3:6-18).

John 1:29 (NASB)

29 The next day he *saw* Jesus coming to him and *said*, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

NIV SB: 1:29 Lamb of God. An expression found in the Bible only here and in v. 36. Many suggestions have been made as to which "lamb" John had in mind (e. g., the lamb offered at Passover or the lamb of Isa 53:7, of Jer 11:19, of Ge 22:8 or of Rev 5:6 [see note there]). It may be that John chose this unique way of referring to Jesus' mission to point both to the sacrificial offering that Jesus would become and to his subsequent conquest of all evil powers-the two ways by which he "takes away the sin of the world" (see 1Jn 2:2 and note).

*Q: Aren't all the meanings of "lamb" contained in the passages mentioned closely linked to each other? Why has the question been asked as to which "lamb" John had in mind, as if there were many different ones?

*A: When I was in seminary, one of my theology professors had to be convinced from scripture that the Passover lamb (and sacrificial animals generally) deliberately foreshadowed and symbolized Christ's sacrifice on the cross. This was the key passage he couldn't ignore. So while this connection seems so obvious to us, having devoted ourselves to the truth of scripture, the depth of ignorance in the present day church visible on such basic matters cannot be overestimated. The note would seem to be reflective of just such confusion.

John 1:31 (NASB)

31 I did not recognize Him, but so that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water."

*Q: Can you explain how John didn't know Jesus?

*A: Though they were cousins, Jesus had lived in Galilee all of His life (after returning from Egypt), but there is no indication that his cousin John had ever left Judea. They might have met in their youth (i.e., at some family get-together for one of the festivals in Jerusalem), but it seems clear from this verse that John either did not recognize his cousin – or that he did not understand that his cousin was the Messiah. John apparently expected the Messiah to be obvious and glorious in appearance. In this verse, therefore, John is contrasting his initial failure to recognize Jesus as the Messiah (which probably astounded him) with the fact that the whole purpose of his ministry was to proclaim our Lord's coming. This is a profound illustration of the misapprehension under which Jesus' generation was laboring, imagining that the Messiah would come in an obvious way like a conquering king. He will do so – at the second advent – and to a degree to which "this generation" cannot really fathom. But His first advent was for a different purpose: the salvation of us all through the washing away of our sins. From the same general failure of reasoning John was unwilling to baptize Jesus at first, but the symbolism of our Lord's water baptism was fundamentally different from that of those who came to John to be symbolically cleansed of their sins: our Lord went into the same water, sinless though He is and was, and immersed Himself in all of the sins symbolically washed off. This is part of the explanation of why He also calls the cross a "baptism" (Lk.12:50), namely, His immersing of Himself in the sins of the world, so to speak, in paying the penalty of judgment for them all so that all may be saved. Our Lord's resurfacing symbolizes His resurrection, and the Spirit descending upon Him shows both the Spirit's role in the resurrection and also God's seal of approval on our Lord's work in dying for the sins of us all.

John 1:33 (NASB)

33 I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.'

NIV SB: Holy Spirit. His normal title in the NT, though it appears only here and in 14:26; 20:22 in this Gospel-emphasizing his holiness rather than his power or greatness.

*Q: How should we understand that holiness of the Holy Spirit is emphasised rather than His power or greatness? Aren't these linked?

*A: Of course. The question is, "why is He called the *Holy* Spirit?", and I think that tells us a good deal about the nature of the plan of God. Holiness or sanctification (biblical synonyms) refers to separation of that which is pure from that which is impure. The devil's revolt introduced corruption into a previously perfect world and resulted in God's judgment upon it. After its reconstruction, the devil's temptation and our first parents' fall brought that corruption to the whole human race. But the whole plan of God throughout the seven thousand years of human

history is all about rescuing those of us who are willing to be rescued from corruption, and from the death and judgment which are its necessary results. That is what the cross does: by dying for our sins, our Lord liberated us from sin, death and otherwise inevitable condemnation. In the end, we will be "ultimately sanctified", possessing resurrection bodies which can never sin and living in a renewed universe wherein only righteousness dwells (2Pet.3:13). At the point of salvation, the Spirit makes us one with Christ and we become "positionally sanctified". In between, Christians endeavor (or should) to walk in the Spirit at all times, that is, perfecting our "experiential sanctification". The Spirit is the One who provides the empowerment for all of this, at the new birth (Jn.3:5-8), in our spiritual growth (Gal.5:16-18), and at the resurrection (Rom.8:11). So He is the Spirit of Holiness – because it is only through Him that we are empowered to become holy/sanctified, initially, progressively, and in the end.

John 1:35 (NASB)

35 Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples,

NIV SB: 1:35 two. One was Andrew (v. 40). The other is not named, but from early times it has been thought that he was the author of this Gospel. his disciples. In the sense that they had been baptized by John and looked to him as their religious teacher.

*Q: Do you agree that John is meant here?

*A: Scripture does not say, but I would sooner think it to have been Philip. For one thing, just before Jesus leaves for Galilee the next day, He finds Philip and says "follow Me!" – whereupon Philip goes and tells Nathanael "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." (Jn.1:45 NIV). Now this makes more sense if Philip was the unnamed disciple in our context (i.e., Philip not only responding but *knowing* that Jesus was the Messiah – because he was the one who was there when John the baptist said so). Also, Philip and Andrew knew each other, being from the same town (Jn.1:44); we see this also from John 12:21ff.: when certain Greeks want to meet Jesus and make their request of Philip, Philip goes to Andrew to relay the request. So Philip was apparently friends with Andrew and accustomed to being in his company (as was possibly the case in our context too).

John 1:39 (NASB)

39 He *said to them, "Come, and you will see." So they came and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the [a]tenth hour.

a. John 1:39 Perhaps 10 a.m. (Roman time)

*Q: The footnote says that it was Roman time - could you explain this, as Jewish time was used in other gospels?

*A: This is a mistaken footnote (it seems to follow the work of Jack Finegan, a scholar with controversial views on Roman time calculation). In the ancient world, every day had twelve

hours; and every night had twelve hours. Literal midnight described the end of the sixth and the beginning of the seventh hour of the night – though this was impossible to determine without a good knowledge of the stars. In the day time, however, it was very easy to tell the time – at least for people who lived most of their lives outside and made a habit of telling time by the sun. When the sun was directly overhead, it was the end of the sixth and the beginning of the seventh hour. And that was true no matter the time of year. That is why sundials work. Of course, in this system, hours are longer in the summertime and shorter in the winter time because the actual time of daylight is divided by twelve whatever the time of year. This also was much more natural than what we have to deal with today, rising the dark in the winter and seeing the sun full up by the time we arise in the summer – if we keep to the modern system of uniform hours of sixty minutes each with sixty seconds (which we must of course do to get along in the present world).

So to translate "the tenth hour" into our clock, we have to know what time of year this was. According to my calculations, Jesus' baptism by John marked the inauguration of His three and a half year ministry which culminated at the cross and resurrection at about the time of spring equinox. The event mentioned here, then, probably took place around the fall equinox (cf. Jn.1:32). So this was one of the two times of the year when the ancient "clock" came the closest to squaring with our modern clock. "About" the tenth hour would mean somewhere around the point when there would be two hours of daylight left – or about 4 P.M., roughly speaking. As to the note, the best I can do with this is that it may represent an attempt to explain why at John 1:35 "the next day" becomes "the tenth hour" in our verse so rapidly. This was an issue in antiquity as well, and I note that at least one reputable manuscript (Alexandrinus) reads "sixth" instead of "tenth" here. But the text is certain (well supported by all other major mss.). Part of our problem as English readers is that Robert Estienne (who inserted the verse division in the mid-16th c.) chose to put this phrase in verse thirty-nine instead of in verse forty. But if a period is used after "and they remained there that day", and then a new sentence is begun (preferable with a conjunction), being linked to the following verse, then what the Greek actually says is made more clear: "Now [when] it was about the tenth hour (i.e., after they had remained there most of "that day"), Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter and one of the two who had heard [this] from John and had [thus] followed Him, he, that is this man [Andrew] first finds his brother . . .". In other words, the temporal phrase in question is employed by John to show that most of the day had passed when Andrew got around to searching for his brother Peter.

John 1:40 (NASB)

40 One of the two who heard John speak and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

*Q: Who was the other one?

*A: That is not known, but it makes a good point. Two men, both disciples of John and thus apparently believers, were told by John himself that Jesus was the Messiah and then had the great privilege of spending the day with Him. One of these one then immediately goes and finds others dear to him to bring them to Jesus – with the result that these share in the ministry; while the other disappears from the narrative. Perhaps this person continued in the faith, and perhaps even made some contribution to the Church of Jesus Christ; but this mystery person does not

have his name on one of the gates of New Jerusalem as Peter and Andrew (and John and James) do. It is a good lesson for us to remember: we all have bountiful spiritual opportunities for growth, progress and production in this life, but not everyone is willing to make the most of them. It is those who do who will receive the highest rewards.

John 1:41 (NASB)

41 He *found first his own brother Simon and *said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means Christ).

John 1:45 (NASB)

45 Philip *found Nathanael and *said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote-Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

*Q: How did Andrew realize so quickly that Jesus was the Messiah? Was it through John's testimony? The same could be asked about Philip in verse 45.

*A: John only gives us the general outline of what happened. I am certain that over the course of the two days related in the context our Lord had plenty to tell these men, and in many instances in the gospels it only takes a person with a good heart who wants to believe (or someone who was already a believer) a few words from the Lord to appreciate the light and truth they contain. And I am sure that if you or I could spend just five minutes with the Lord we would realize completely that John's testimony was the least of it.

John 1:50 (NASB)

50 Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these."

*Q: I'm not sure how to interpret Jesus' words? Isn't it a good thing that Nathanael believed in Jesus after a relatively small sign of His power? And since it is a good thing, how should we understand our Lord's reply? Was Jesus ability to see Nathanael supernatural? Was Nathanael surprised because he was at a place where Jesus could not have seen him "normally"?

*A: Yes it was supernatural, and that was what impressed Nathanael – a clear miracle being proof enough for Him that Jesus was who He claimed to be (not to mention who John said He was). This impressed our Lord and that is why He complimented Nathanael. Our Lord's words mean that what He had miraculously done in this instance – which was enough for Nathanael to believe – was very small in comparison to what was to come (though most of His countrymen would not believe even so: Jn.1:11).

John 1:51 (NASB)

51 And He *said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

NIV SB: the angels of God ascending and descending. As in Jacob's dream (see Ge 28:12 and note), thus marking Jesus as God's stairway between heaven and earth, "the way and the truth and

the life" (14:6). He is God's elect one through whom redemption comes to the world-perhaps identifying Jesus as "truly" the "Israelite" (v. 47). Son of Man. Jesus' favorite self- designation (see note on Mk 8:31).

*Q: I thought that verse 47 refers to Nathanael rather than Jesus, but this not seems to suggest otherwise? What does our Lord mean here and when are these words fulfilled? Do they refer to our Lord's ascension after His resurrection or the Second Advent?

*A: These words clearly refer to what Nathanael will see, and, yes, he will see the second advent . . . as will we all who have put our faith in Jesus Christ. There is no mention of Nathanael seeing a vision of these things before they are to happen, but it should be remembered that Peter, James and John saw a preview of the second advent (at the mount of transfiguration: Matt.17:1-9; Mar.9:1-8; Lk.28-36), that Paul saw heavenly things which may not be repeated: 2Cor.12:1-4), that Stephen saw "the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God" (Acts 7:55), and that John of course saw the heavenly host attending the throne of God the Father and the Lamb (Rev.4-5). Whether or not Nathanael saw any such vision while still on earth is not recorded – but he certainly is witnessing it now. Greater things indeed.

John 2:1 (NASB)

2 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there;

*Q: Third day from when is meant here? From the last verses of the first chapter?

*A: Apparently on the third day from when our Lord made the statement to Nathanael at the end of chapter one. In the inclusive counting of the ancient world, this means two days later. So we may intuit from this that once our Lord had made these disciples, He set out immediately for Galilee with them. In other words, no time was wasted once the objective was accomplished (a good lesson for us all).

John 2:4 (NASB)

4 And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does that have to do with us? My hour has not yet come."

*Q: Why does our Lord say at this point that His hour has not yet come?

*A: The time of our Lord's earthly ministry, though now at hand, had not yet officially begun. The purpose of His miracles was to demonstrate the truth of the gospel message He was giving, after all. But this was not an occasion where He would be preaching repentance and the coming kingdom (Matt.4:17). That would begin after John was put in prison (Matt.4:12; Mk.1:14; Lk.4:14) and after our Lord moved His earthly family from Nazareth to Capernaum (Jn.2:12; cf. Matt.4:13).

John 2:11 (NASB)

11 This beginning of His [a]signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.

a. John 2:11 Or attesting miracles; i.e. one which points to the supernatural power of God in redeeming grace

NIV SB: In his account of Jesus' first display of "his glory" by providing an abundance of wine at a wedding feast, John probably was testifying that Christ's saving mission would culminate in the redemption of the creation from all its distresses, so that the wine of joy would flow fully, as the prophets had announced (see Isa 35:1-2; Joel 3:18; Am 9:13 and notes; cf. Ge 49:11 and note).
his

*Q: I have to say that the expression "supernatural power of God in redeeming grace" isn't clear to me. Do you agree with that this first miracle was symbolic in the way in which the NIV SB explains it?

*A: The note is attempting to explain the use of the word "sign" (Gk. *semeion*), but insufficiently so; i.e., all miracles and signs demonstrate God's supernatural power, His grace is behind everything He does, and redemption, the deliverance of mankind from sin, is the point of the incarnation of Christ and the plan of God as a whole vis-à-vis mankind – but combining them in the way the note does not only does not explain why this "sign" is unique but also manages to obfuscate the other terms in the process. As to the meaning of "the beginning of His signs" as explained in the NIV SB, I think rather that the explanation John gives in contradistinction to what he had said before sums up the meaning. That is to say, this was not "His hour" so that the sign/miracle was not an official part of our Lord's preaching of the kingdom – that would begin very shortly after this wedding as discussed in the previous Q/A. However, this sign was very clearly a "manifestation of His glory", that is, a demonstration of His status as the Messiah and the Son of God, and this was apparently the first time He had done something like this publicly so that His disciples could witness it.

The words "sign" and "miracle" (or "power", Gk. *dynamis*) are essentially synonyms as used in the New Testament. The only (occasionally observable) difference is that the former is more often used of something done publicly and thus "seen far and wide" (as in this instance where everyone at the feast sees it and all the disciples realize who did it), whereas the latter may be applied to supernatural acts done privately which only one person or a few persons may see (as when our Lord tells certain individuals He has healed not to reveal who did it). The two words overlap in most actual usage, however: the accomplishment by our Lord of something that no one who was not empowered by God in an unprecedented way could possibly do. Everything our Lord does and says is "miraculous", after all, but "miracles" and "signs" are indisputable indications that He is who He says He is, even for those who in their hardness of hearts refuse to accept Him.

John 2:20 (NASB)

20 The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?"

NIV SB: 2:20 forty-six years. The temple was not finally completed until AD 64. The meaning is that work had been going on for 46 years. Since it had begun c. 19 or 20 BC, the year of the event

recorded here is c. AD 27 (see chart).

*Q: Do you agree with these dates?

*A: I would only agree that these Jewish unbelievers said what they said to our Lord. They may have been wrong about the duration of the building process – they were certainly wrong about everything else. As to when the forty-six years would have commenced, assuming they were correct about that number, that is impossible to peg chronologically. Those who attempt to do so are basing their start point on the testimony of Flavius Josephus, *Ant.* 15.11.1 (whose testimony is incorrect on very many points), and not only that – such interpretations are also thus based upon other interpretations of what Josephus means (and these are often incorrect as well). In short, based upon such flimsy evidence, there is no basis for altering what we know about this date already (i.e., that since this is approximately three years before the crucifixion, that it must have happened in 30 A.D., not 27 A.D.).

John 2:22 (NASB)

22 So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.

NIV SB: 2:22 recalled what he had said. See 12:16; see also 14:26 and note. Then they believed the scripture. See 20:9 and note. It is not clear whether reference here is to a particular word from the OT (see, e. g., Ps 16:10; 17:15 and notes) or to the OT in general (cf. 1Co 15:4).

*Q: I thought that specifically the references to resurrection are meant in this verse, but according to the NIV SB it could be OT in general - what is your interpretation? What OT scriptures foresaw Jesus' resurrection?

*A: It's not a hard and fast rule, but generally when the word *graphe* ("writing" or more particularly "scripture") is used in the singular as it is here, a particular citation is meant. I take this to mean the scripture the disciples are similarly recorded as having remembered about this incident just previously in verse seventeen (the quote from Ps.69:9). The "scripture" and Jesus' words are all the truth, and the two sandwich the incident in question giving it the proper interpretation. Verse twenty-two, read carefully even in English, is not talking about believing in the resurrection – they saw Him raised with their own eyes, after all; rather it is about their remembrance of and belief in "what He said" on this occasion, and, in my opinion, the scripture He quoted which they likewise believed. In the Greek, "the scripture" and "His Word" are very closely connected. As to the question of "what Old Testament scriptures foresaw Jesus' resurrection", here is one important one to keep in mind:

For You will not abandon My soul (i.e., "life") to hell (lit., *sheol* – the underworld including paradise: Lk.23:43). You will not give your Holy One over to see decay.
Psalm 16:10

This is important because Peter would later use this verse to explain that our Lord's resurrection fulfilled this prophecy – which could not apply literally to David himself who said it – because

David did die physically and has not [yet] been raised from the dead (Acts 2:25-28; 2:31).

John 3:1-3 (NASB)

3 Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; 2 this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." 3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

*Q: a) Could you explain why our Lord answers Nicodemus the way He does? Since Nicodemus says "we know that You have come from God as a teacher" and Jesus says "unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God", does it mean that Nicodemus has been born again? But then later on he shows the lack of understanding of what being born again means.

*A: Our Lord has the perfect way of answering us all. Unlike us, He always knows the motivations behind the questions asked and the answer which will most benefit the one asking the question, assuming that the person doing so is really interested in being helped. We know that Nicodemus did come to believe (Jn.7:50; 19:9), so our Lord is dealing with him as he is: a reluctant unbeliever struggling with accepting the truth. Those not immersed in the Law as Nicodemus was, easily threw aside the false teachings of their day to accept Jesus as Savior. Nicodemus had been convicted of the emptiness of his course of life, but was not yet willing to admit it was largely wasted. So he addresses our Lord in what amounts to a condescending and flattering way, hoping, I suppose (if he had thought it out) to be able to speak with our Lord, whose miracles proved to anyone not totally hardened the truth of His deity, as a sort of equal – or at least someone "on the same team". Our Lord immediately dispels all of Nicodemus' false hopes based upon following the Law and makes it crystal clear that faith alone can bring the new life which accompanies salvation. This is a good lesson for us all. When we are dealing with unbelievers who are clinging to subtle forms of religion wherein they think to be saved, we ought to give them the truth straight and direct as our Lord does here – provided of course they actually do manifest a spark of desire to be saved.

NIV SB: 3:2 at night. Perhaps Nicodemus was afraid to come by day. Or he may have wanted a long talk, which would have been difficult in the daytime with the crowds around Jesus.

*Q: b) Which one of the two reasons do you consider more likely to have influenced Nicodemus?

*A: It seems clear that Nicodemus was at this point "wavering between two opinions" (cf. 1Ki.18:21). He wanted to have it both ways, namely, to find out about the Lord and the truth and yet not to jeopardize his standing as an important man in the society. But we either have to follow the Lord or not – there are no "secret Christians". Interesting here is also the contrast between Jesus who is the Light of the world and this man wanting to cloak his own actions in the dark of night (cf. Jn.1:4-5). As our Lord says to him a few verses later:

"And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

John 3:19 NIV

NIV SB: 3:3, 7 born again. The Greek may also mean "born from above" (see NIV text note on v. 3). Both meanings are consistent with Jesus' redeeming work (see 1:13 and note).

*Q: c) What is your view on the rendering "born from above"?

*A: It is true that the Greek adverb *anōthen* means both "anew" and "from above" and is sometimes used in the New Testament deliberately in both senses at once (e.g., Lk.1:3). I take that to be the case here (please see the link: "Spiritual Rebirth", section II.7 in BB 4B: Soteriology).

John 3:5 (NASB)

5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

NIV SB: 3:5 kingdom of God. See note on Mt 3:2. born of water and the Spirit. A phrase understood in various ways:(1) It means much the same as "born of the Spirit" (v. 8; cf. 7:38-39; Titus 3:5 and notes). (2) Water here refers to purification. (3) Water refers to baptism-that of John (1:31) or that of Jesus and his disciples (see v. 22; 4:2 and notes). (4) Water refers to physical birth, specifically to the water of the amniotic sac (cf. vv. 4, 6).

*Q: Why doesn't the NIV SB make a reference to the water of the Word? Having browsed through the commentaries I found some which do actually reject the idea of baptism (like Pulpit commentary), but water is not pointed as the meaning.

*A: It is a major error, especially since that – the Word of God – is precisely what is meant (Is.55:1; Jn.3:5; 3:8; 4:10; 4:13-14; 6:35; 7:37-39; 1Cor.10:4; Eph.5:26; Heb.10:22; 1Jn.5:8; Rev.7:17; 21:6; 22:1; 22:17; cf. Ex 17:5-6; Num. 20:8; Ps.42:1-2; 63:1; 84:5-7; Is.41:17; 44:3; Jer.2:13).

John 3:10 (NASB)

10 Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things?"

*Q: Does our Lord's question imply that Nicodemus should have understood these things through Old Testament writings?

*A: Yes indeed. Compare:

(25) He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! (26) Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" (27) And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

Luke 24:25-27 NIV

John 3:11 (NASB)

11 Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony.

*Q: Why does our Lord use plural here?

*A: I think because Nicodemus stands here as a representative of the unbelieving Pharisees who relied on the Law but without saving faith in the Lord. Unless and until Nicodemus turned fully to the truth, he remained one of "you" and not one of "us".

John 3:12 (NASB)

12 If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?

*Q: Why does Jesus refer to what he has just told Nicodemus as "earthly things", if he referred to being born of the Spirit and entering the Kingdom of God?

*A: The gospel is the entry into life eternal and the kingdom, and it must be responded to positively on earth. All of the other truths of the Bible are "heavenly" in that they can only be understood and appreciated by those who have the Holy Spirit ministering to them (cf. 1Cor.2:10-16). Nicodemus had attempted to engage our Lord in a spiritual conversation, but was not yet equipped to receive spiritual information – because such things are heavenly, "spiritually discerned" (1Cor.2:14). So our Lord understandably directs Nicodemus' attention to "first things first": without responding to the gospel so as to be born again, there was no point in discussing any other topic of truth since he would not have been able to understand it.

John 3:13-16 (NASB)

13 No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man. 14 As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; 15 so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life. 16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

*Q: Could you clarify the logical sequence of our Lord's reply? I'm not clear about how the points made by Jesus from verse 10 to verse 16 are linked with each other. Particularly the relationship between verse 13 and 14 is difficult for me to comprehend.

*A: Verse 13 demonstrates Christ's deity; verse 14 explains the need for His humanity, to die on the cross for the sins of the world, so that eternal life may be offered to all willing to receive it (v.15), through accepting the person (v.13) and work (v.14) of the Messiah. That is the essence of the basics of the gospel which any "teacher of Israel" ought to understand, having the entire Old Testament to hand (cf. Lk.24:25-27).

John 3:16 (NASB)

16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

NIV SB: 3:16 God so loved the world. The great truth that motivated God's plan of salvation (cf. 1Jn 4:9-10). "So" here means "in this way" rather than "so much."

*A: Do you agree with how NIV SB explains the meaning of the word "so"?

*Q: Not at all. While I wouldn't rule out that this adverb also comprises the way in which the Father loves the world (i.e., all whom He has made) – in giving up His only Son for it – the key idea is very clearly the immensity of the sacrifice He made for it – through the spiritual death of Jesus Christ for all of the sins of the world.

John 3:22 (NASB)

22 After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He was spending time with them and baptizing.

*Q: Why were Jesus' disciples still baptizing? Should John's baptism still have been undertaken at the time when our Lord's ministry already commenced? With regard to reconciling John 3:22 and John 4:2, commentators say that they were performing the baptism "with the sanction" of Jesus, or "under His direction", or that Jesus baptized "through them" - which is the best way to explain it in your view?

*A: One foot is in (the disciples are doing it) but one is not – our Lord is not water-baptizing. And it would have been inappropriate for Him to do so because that ritual looked forward to His coming and He had indeed come. But it was legitimate for the disciples to do it during the first advent to make the connection between the Lord and His herald crystal clear, and also for the apostles in the time of transition chronicled by Acts for the same reason in ministering to the Jewish generation which had accepted John but which had not accepted Christ for who He was (and the connection to John, His herald, is what was emphasized through water-baptism).

John 3:25 (NASB)

25 Therefore there arose a discussion on the part of John's disciples with a Jew about purification.

*Q: Who is meant by "a Jew" here?

*A: The correct text reads "[some] Jews" (Sinaiticus, Bodmer papyrus); there is no definite article because otherwise one might assume, based upon John's usage throughout the gospel, that "*the* Jews" referred to the unbelieving political and religious rulers of Jerusalem (as is often the case in this gospel); whereas these are merely some unidentified Judeans.

John 3:26 (NASB)

26 And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified, behold, He is baptizing and all are coming to Him."

NIV SB: 3:26 testified. See note on 1:7. John's disciples knew that he had testified about Jesus, but they loved their master and were apparently envious of Jesus' success.

*Q: Do you agree that John's disciples could have been envious of Jesus' success?

*A: I don't think we have to impugn the motives of these followers of John – almost certainly believers – who were naturally zealous for their own master. John had been sent to "baptize with water", so one can understand why they were at the very least surprised at this development – since John had prophesied that Jesus, the Messiah, would "baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Matt.3:11; Lk.3:16). Since generations of the church-visible over thousands of years have failed to understand that this water-baptism (by our Lord's disciples) and the temporary continuation of water-baptism in the early part of Acts had as its purpose merely the temporary linking of the Messiah to His herald in order to demonstrate that Jesus was in indeed the Messiah, we should not be so hard on these individuals who were seeing that unexpected (and temporary) development for the very first time.

John 3:27 (NASB)

27 John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given him from heaven.

NIV SB: 3:27 The words are true of both Jesus and John (and of everyone). Both had what God had given them, so there was no place for envy. given. The Greek verb is used 76 times in this Gospel, especially of the things the Father gives the Son.

*Q: Isn't John referring here specifically to Jesus? Or is it a general statement, applicable, as the NIV SB says, to everyone?

*A: I don't see any point in the statistic given here, but I do agree with the note. The statement in Greek is generic: *anthropos* meaning "any human being", male or female. You are certainly correct, however, that John is talking about the Lord first (He had "been given" this authority and right) and about himself secondarily (it was not John's place nor his intent to usurp the rights of the Messiah).

John 3:29 (NASB)

29 He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. So this joy of mine has been made full.

*Q: What is John referring to here by "the bride"? Did John understand it as church?

*A: Whether or not John personally understood the doctrine of the Church, he did say these words and the Spirit caused them to be recorded. Jesus is the Bridegroom and the Church is the Bride, and that prophecy is also recorded in the Psalms (Ps.45:9-17), and our Lord did use this analogy with prophetic effect as well during His first advent (Matt.9:15; Matt.25:1-13; Mk.2:19; Lk.5:34).

John 3:31 (NASB)

31 "He who comes from above is above all, he who is of the earth is from the earth and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all.

*Q: Does by the one "who comes from above" John is referring to our Lord and by the one "who is of the earth" to himself?

*A: Yes.

John 3:32 (NASB)

32 What He has seen and heard, of that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. 33 He who has received His testimony has set his seal to this, that God is true.

*Q: Does John here refer to Jesus' testimony not being received?

*A: Yes. John is speaking about our Lord. Many did receive John's testimony (though not all), but while our Lord "came to His own", for the most part "his own did not receive Him" (Jn.1:11).

John 3:33 (NASB)

33 He who has received His testimony has set his seal to this, that God is true.

*Q: The logical sequence of "He who has received His testimony has set his seal to this, that God is true" isn't clear to me - does John here mean that everyone who believes Jesus confirms that God is true, as otherwise he wouldn't have believed?

*A: Yes. Jesus is the incarnate Word of God. Believing in Him is accepting the Father's testimony, accepting His Word. That is the only way to be saved, even in the case of those of Jewish origin who respect and revere the Father. That is why the Father has exalted His Word even over His own Name (Ps.138:2b) – because accepting the Father's Gift, Jesus Christ, is what is necessary for salvation.

John 3:36 (NASB)

36 He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

NIV SB: 3:36 has. Eternal life is a present possession, not something the believer will only obtain later (see note on v. 15). God's wrath. A strong expression, meaning that God is actively opposed to everything evil. The word "wrath" occurs only here in John's Gospel (see note on Ro 1:18). remains. No one who persists in rejecting the Son of God as Savior and Lord can expect God's wrath eventually to fade away. God's opposition to evil is both total and permanent.

*Q: NIV SB says that God's wrath is "A strong expression, meaning that God is actively opposed to everything evil." I thought that what was meant here is God's wrath being "on hold" until the time of judgment rather than an active opposition.

*A: You make a good observation in the face of a potentially confusing note. Clearly, if God

chose to actively oppose anyone, they would be instantly destroyed. But our God is "longsuffering" because He is "not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2Pet.3:9). The devil and his followers are given their time. Unbelievers are given their time. And even we who have now believed are "given our time" on earth; the former to demonstrate intransigence in the face of God's mercy (and to give place for repentance in the case of some human beings), the latter to demonstrate to all, ourselves included, just how much we love the Lord and how worthy we are of being rewarded (or not).

John 4:1-2 (NASB)

Therefore when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John 2 (although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were),

NIV SB: 4:2 The disciples did not baptize without Jesus' approval (see 3:2 and note).

*Q: Do you agree that our Lord gave the disciples the approval to baptize in water?

*Yes. For the reason, see above on John 3:22.

John 4:3 (NASB)

Therefore when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John 2 (although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were), 3 He left Judea and went away again into Galilee.

NIV SB: 4:3 left Judea. Success (which aroused opposition; see note on 7:1-8:59), not failure, led Jesus to leave Judea.

*Q: Why did our Lord leave Judea and go into Galilee having found out that Pharisees "had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John 2 (although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were)"? What is the link between the two?

I'm trying to arrange the described events geographically. Since our Lord was in Jerusalem for the Passover in chapter 2, should we understand that His dialogue with Nicodemus also took place in Jerusalem? Then John 3:22 says:

John 3:22 (NASB)

After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He was spending time with them and baptizing.

I'm not sure how to understand that they "came in to the land of Judea" if Jerusalem is already in Judea? And then I take it that in verse 4 Jesus leaves Judea having attended the Passover and spent some time there and comes back to Galilee through Samaria?

*A: On the question of "why?", this has to do with the continuation of Christ's earthly ministry for the allotted time. Our Lord functioned as a true human being without inordinate divine intervention by His deity so that His life experience might be truly human as well (Heb.2:17;

4:15; the doctrine of *kenosis*; see the link). Accordingly, He took all good and godly proper precautions – which included not unnecessarily endangering Himself or His disciples by lingering in places and circumstances which might have otherwise forced the issue and led prematurely to the cross. While of course the Father could easily have intervened to prevent any such thing, there was a "right way" for all He did "in order to fulfill all righteousness" (Matt.3:15), and our Lord did everything in exactly the perfect way.

On the timing, the text of John 3:22 says in Greek *ten Ioudaian gen*. That is not typical of John's phraseology. In fact, this is the only place in the gospel where "Judean land" is found – everywhere else we have the noun "Judea" without the word "land". I think NIV is correct in its translation, "the Judean countryside". So there is no issue with understanding the events between the first Passover of our Lord's ministry (Jn.2:13) and His return to Galilee (at Jn.4:3) happening in Jerusalem, and then later (from Jn.3:22 onward) in the countryside of Judea (rather than in Jerusalem proper).

I address the timing of these issues advent generally and the passages in John pertinent to the overall chronology of our Lord's 1st advent ministry in SR 5 (at the link: <http://ichthys.com/Satans-Rebellion-Part5.htm#Comparative%20Chronology%20of%20the%20Ministries%20of%20John%20the%20baptist%20and%20Jesus%20Christ>).

John 4:4 (NASB)

4 And He had to pass through Samaria.

NIV SB: 4:4 had to go. Perhaps the necessity lay in Jesus' mission rather than in geography. Samaria. Here the whole region, not simply the city. Jews often avoided Samaria by crossing the Jordan and traveling on the east side (see notes on Mt 10:5; Lk 9:52).

*Q: Do we know why our Lord had to go through Samaria?

*A: By far the most expeditious way from the lower Jordan valley back to Galilee would have taken them through Samaria. We need not understand "had to" (Gr. *edei*) in the sense of dire necessity; it merely means here that no other route was reasonable. One can go from France to Poland without going through Germany, I suppose, but it would involve making an unnecessarily onerous and round-about journey, e.g.

John 4:6 (NASB)

6 and Jacob's well was there. So Jesus, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about [a]the sixth hour.

NIV SB: John 4:6 Perhaps 6 p.m. Roman time or noon Jewish time

*Q: According to which time reckoning did John write his gospel?

*A: See above on John 1:39. The note is incorrect. John makes use of the most common way time was told in the ancient world, namely, dividing the daylight hours of the day into twelve

parts. So "about the sixth hour" would be going on "high noon", that is, when the sun was directly overhead. In our western method which is now divorced from the actual solar mechanics this only happens at the equinoxes in spring and fall. But in this most common method of reckoning, anyone who spent a good deal of time outdoors could estimate the hour by casting a glance at the sun just as easily as we do by glancing at our wristwatches (or cell phone).

John 4:7 (NASB)

7 There *came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus *said to her, "Give Me a drink."

NIV SB: 4:7 to draw water. People normally drew water at the end of the day rather than in the heat of midday (see v. 6; Ge 24:11 and note). But the practice is attested by Josephus, who says that the young ladies whom Moses helped (Ex 2:15-17) came to draw water at noon.

*Q: Do you agree with Josephus' point?

*A: This happened at noon we know because that is what John writes. At Mark 14:13 and Luke 22:10 our Lord commands the disciples to prepare the Passover and directs to a man carrying a vessel of water. This had to be well before the end of the day since the Passover was to be eaten directly after the sun went down and took some lengthy time to prepare. So even if women usually carried the water and did so at dusk, here we have a man doing it and at midday. I think if a person went to any third world venue where water must similarly be collected, one would find water being drawn and carried by all and sundry and at various times. In other words, there may be such a rule, but the exceptions are so numerous and common as to make this event (drawing water at midday) unexceptional. I will also note that as one reads this passage, the impression is not given that there are numerous people drawing water but rather that the woman is alone with our Lord in having this conversation.

John 4:7-38

*Q: How is it that Jesus speaks with this Samaritan woman and later stays with the Samaritans, when He was ministering to Jews (cf. Syrophenician woman) and He told His disciples not to go among the gentiles (Matthew 10:5-6)?

*A: Our Lord is elsewhere also recorded as healing a Samaritan (Lk.17:12-19). On that occasion he calls the man an "alien" or "foreigner" (Gr. *allogenes*), but not a "gentile". The Samaritans, as seen also from Acts, represented a sort of middle-type between Jew and gentile. They dwelt in the land, had their own version of the Torah (the Samaritan Pentateuch) and worshiped in a way which mimicked the true worship in Jerusalem. As such, they are given here an exceptional blessing from the Lord on account of the readiness of heart He knew He would receive – and this readiness to believe stands in stark contrast to the hardness of heart presented to Him by those who by birth were "of Israel" (cf. Jn.1:11) and serves as sign to His own people as a result (cf. Matt.21:31).

John 4:9-10 (NASB)

9 Therefore the Samaritan woman *said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a

drink since I am a Samaritan woman?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) 10 Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

*Q: Why does our Lord reply the way He does to the question asked by the Samaritan woman?

*A: To shift the conversation to the important issue of salvation from the unimportant issue of race: "the gift of God" (our Lord about to die for our sins) and "who it is" (Jesus Christ the object of faith) – these are the two essential aspects of the gospel, the Person and work of Christ.

John 4:10 (NASB)

10 Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

NIV SB: 4:10 gift. The Greek for this word is used only here in this Gospel and emphasizes God's grace through Christ. Jesus gave life and gave it freely. living water. Not stagnant cistern water but fresh, flowing water, as of a spring or mountain stream, that revives and refreshes life. In 7:38-39 the term is explained as referring to the Holy Spirit, but here it refers to that which produces eternal life (see v. 14).

*Q: Do you agree that living water is used with two different meanings in these passages? I'm not clear about the distinction drawn here.

*A: "Living water" in Greek does refer to what we would call "fresh, running water" as opposed to water drawn from a well as we have here. The participle "living" can thus be either objective or subjective in application, depending upon how the person hearing receives the phrase. In the latter instance, the water is "living" in the sense of itself being on the move instead of being inactive (i.e., "dead"); in the former instance, it is "living" in the sense bestowing life. While the woman may have sensed before further explanation that there was more to this phrase as our Lord was using it than was commonly the case, His method of using parables and approaching things indirectly can be seen in this encounter as well. Some respond and demonstrate their positiveness to the truth; others "keep on hearing but not understanding". This is a good lesson for anyone sharing the gospel. We need not worry about slamming the message home – the Spirit is the actual Evangelist in all such situations.

John 4:12 (NASB)

12 You are not greater than our father Jacob, are You, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself and his sons and his cattle?"

a) NIV SB: 4:12 our father Jacob. Deep regard for the past prevented her from seeing the great opportunity of the present.

*Q: Why does the Samaritan women call Jacob her father? Do you agree that the regard for the past stood in the way?

*A: What both Samaritans and Jews had in common in our Lord's day was their preference of tradition over truth. But while many of our Lord's own countrymen saw His miracles and heard His words of truth and were even so not prompted to respond in faith, this woman – and here fellow town-folk – recognized our Lord as the Messiah based at least at first merely on His knowledge of the woman's past. So in fact her "past" led to salvation, since in her heart she preferred the truth to any and all tradition which may have otherwise stood in the way.

John 4:15-16 (NASB)

15 The woman *said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty nor come all the way here to draw." 16 He *said to her, "Go, call your husband and come here."

*Q: Again, why does Jesus reply in this way?

*A: This is our Lord graciously moving from the symbolism of the truth to a tangible proof of it (in this case, knowing things He could not otherwise know), based on the positive inclination of this woman's heart obvious from her response in asking for the living water.

John 4:22 (NASB)

22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.

*Q: Regarding Samaritan worship you wrote:

This group made use of the same Bible (albeit translated into Aramaic, the so-called "Samaritan Pentateuch", a form of which still exists today). But this is a very interesting observation by our Lord. His words here should give pause to anyone who wants to assume that because a group worships "God" that they therefore have anything whatsoever to do with "/the/ God". Just because a religion is monotheistic, this passage teaches, does not mean that they are in anyway genuinely worshiping God Himself. That is certainly so because of all the non-orthodox groups in the history of the world, the Samaritans came closer to being orthodox than any other group ever could – but not close enough, as Jesus makes quite clear.

However, according to the NIV SB, they do worship the true God: 4:22 worship what you do not know. The Samaritan Bible contained only the Pentateuch. Samaritans worshiped the true God, but their failure to accept much of his revelation meant that they knew little about him. salvation is from the Jews. The Messiah would come from God's historic people (see notes on Ro 1:16; 11:18).

I take it you disagree with the point made here?

*A: In my opinion, no one who is not truly saved can truly worship. Who knows what is really in the heart of an unbeliever? Many religions claim to worship "one god" or "the One true God", but do they really? If they (their adherents) are not willing to respond to the basic truth of the gospel so as to be saved, then I think we have to conclude with Isaiah that "their fear (i.e.,

"worship") of Me [consists only in] the commandment[s] of men taught [by tradition]" (Is.29:13).

John 4:24 (NASB)

24 God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

NIV SB: 4:24 God is spirit ... worship in the Spirit and in truth. The place of worship is irrelevant, because true worship must be in keeping with God's nature, which is spirit. "True worshippers" (v. 23) must worship God in the power (enablement) of his Spirit and in accordance with truth. In John's Gospel truth is associated with Christ (see notes on 1:14; 14:6), a fact that has great importance for the proper understanding of Christian worship.

*Q: Do you agree that our Lord's message here is that the place of worship is irrelevant?

*A: I would not put it that way. Clearly, there is no special advantage to any place of worship unless the Lord says there is. Jerusalem was the place chosen by God for the temple and also for the sacrifice of our Lord which the rites of the temple merely foreshadow. But our Lord's words in verse 23 make it clear that even though Jerusalem and the temple will be destroyed, worshiping Him will always be possible – for those who are truly His (as we who have been sealed by the Holy Spirit always shall be).

John 4:25 (NASB)

25 The woman *said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us."

NIV SB: 4:25 Messiah ... will explain everything. The woman's last attempt to evade the issue. The matter was too important, she reasoned, for people like Jesus and herself to work out. Understanding would have to await the coming of the Messiah (see note on 1:25). The Samaritans expected a Messiah, but their rejection of all the inspired writings after the Pentateuch meant that they knew little about him. They thought of him mainly as a teacher.

*Q: Were the words in the parenthesis spoken by the woman or added by John as an explanation? Do you agree with the NIV SB point that the woman tried to evade the issue?

*A: There are only two other places in the New Testament where this construction is found as an explanation given by someone who is represented as speaking them (Matthew 27:17 John 9:11), and once where a similar verb is used likewise as an explanation or gloss by a speaker (Acts 8:10); in all three of these other instances, the speaker is indeed giving the explanation, not the writer of the book. What we can take from this is that this woman most likely was the one to explain what she meant by "Messiah" (she does not use the definite article with this term). It is possible that she was speaking in Aramaic, but in my view more likely that this conversation took place in Greek, and that this was the reason for the Greek explanation of "Messiah", that is, "the Anointed One" (Christ).

As to evasion, I think instead this is a manifestation, however dim, of some positive interest in the truth. She was genuinely looking forward to the coming of the Messiah. She had not

received the answers she would have liked to have had up to this point – and understandably so inasmuch as the Samaritans, not to mention the Jewish teachers and authorities, were not walking in the truth. I think we can intuit that she had heard of John's ministry which heralded the Messiah's coming and that this is one reason why she makes the comment she does. This also helps to explain why she was quick to accept Jesus as Him – she had been hoping for Him and looking for Him all along. It says a lot that the person who was most interested in salvation and thus most ready to accept Christ was a woman and a person who was no doubt looked down upon by the religious crowd because of her behavior, a situation not unparalleled in Israel (cf. the example of Mary Magdalene).

John 4:26 (NASB)

26 Jesus *said to her, "I who speak to you am He."

NIV SB: 4:26 I am he. The only occasion before his trial on which Jesus specifically said that he was the Messiah (but see Mk 9:41, "Messiah"). The term did not have the political overtones in Samaria that it had in Judea, which may be part of the reason Jesus used the designation here.

*Q: Do you agree with the reason given in the NIV SB for our Lord disclosing that He is the Messiah?

*A: As our Lord says elsewhere,

"To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that 'Seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.'"

Luke 8:10 NKJV (cf. Matt.10:11; Mk.4:11)

To those who were willing to accept the truth, our Lord gave the truth unveiled. To those who were not interested in the truth, He spoke in parables, that they might have the truth but at the same time be able to do what they really wanted to do with it, namely, reject it. This took place so that the issue of free will in accepting God's Gift might be maintained in spite of the dramatic proofs, given through various and sundry miracles that our Lord performed, of who He was and is – the Son of God.

John 4:27 (NASB)

27 At this point His disciples came, and they were amazed that He had been speaking with a woman, yet no one said, "What do You seek?" or, "Why do You speak with her?"

*A: Was even speaking to a woman considered improper at that time?

*Q: The role of women in antiquity generally was of course significantly different from what we find in modern western societies (cf. 2Ki.4:27), and that is reflected in Orthodox Jewish practice even today. So for example, women are not allowed to pray at the "Wailing Wall" except in a small portion set aside for them, and they are not allowed many other things allowed to men. So the disciples are surprised to see the Lord engaging in a private conversation in public with a

woman and a Samaritan woman at that, not in this case because it was improper but because it stood in stark contrast with the customs of the times.

John 4:29 (NASB)

29 "Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done; this is not the Christ, is it?"

*Q: Was this woman a true believer? Regarding this question you wrote previously:

Finally, as to her way of approaching the men of the village, as another pastor observed (I don't recall which one; I want to say Col. Thieme, but I can't honestly remember for certain), was exceedingly wise. If she had said "This is the Christ!", she may well have been discounted (not only because she was a woman but also because of her personal background); because she put it the way she put it, her comments invited personal investigation instead of prideful opposition, and did result in the salvation of many in the town.

*A: Yes I think she did indeed believe in the Lord, and I also think the observation above has value as well (it was actually one of my Talbot professors, Prof. McDougall, who made the remark). That is to say, her words don't indicate doubt but reluctance to proclaim directly something such as "I have found the Messiah!", since she no doubt knew that this would only cause the men of the town to get their hackles up so as not to give our Lord a fair hearing – just because she was a woman and one in low standing at that.

NIV SB: 4:29 everything I ever did. An exaggeration, but it shows the impression Jesus made on her. Could this be the Messiah? Her question seems full of longing, as though she did not expect them to say "Yes," but she could not say "No."

*Q: Do you agree that the motive given in the NIV SB - longing (to be saved perhaps) - could also explain her question?

*A: Our Lord's detailed knowledge of the woman's past was the proof for her – all she needed – that He was the Messiah as He said He was (cf. Jn. 1:47-49). It was only natural that she should share this proof with those she was urging to consider our Lord's words. Her motive is that the rest of her people be saved even as she had been saved.

John 4:31-32 (NASB)

31 Meanwhile the disciples were urging Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." 32 But He said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about."

*Q: Should we understand our Lord's reply literally, as meaning that doing God's will even subdues physical needs, or is it a reference of only spiritual meaning and Jesus here changes the focus from earthly nature of disciples concern, to the importance of what's eternal?

*A: I'm not sure it's either or. Our Lord needed to be physically and mentally sharp and to have a clear voice for the work He was about to do, whereas a meal in the middle of a hot day after a

tiring journey would induce sleepiness and also affect the voice (as all singers and public speakers understand). This is another example of our Lord putting the spiritual well being of others in front of His own basic needs – a good lesson for us all.

John 4:35 (NASB)

35 Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest.

*Q: Why does our Lord say "they are white for harvest"? Does any type of grain whiten when it's ripe?

*A: Not being intimately connected with agriculture, I wouldn't want to weigh in on this with specificity. What I can say is that this description is meant to demonstrate that the crop is ready to be harvested (and I do believe I'm correct in saying that many cereal crops turn from green to a darker or lighter colorless complexion when they ripen). The point is that anyone who looks on this "crop" can see that it is ready to be picked or harvested, and that is the work that our Lord is entering into and encouraging the disciples and us by extension to enter into as well.

John 4:36 (NASB)

36 Already he who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for life eternal; so that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.

*Q: Who does our Lord mean by the one who sows and the one who reaps? Are Old Testament prophets meant here as those sowing?

*A: This verse makes it clear that all work for the kingdom of God is valuable, regardless of whether or not we see any clear result ourselves from our labors at the time, and regardless of whether or not we are directly involved or supporting the ministries of others. In this case, the Samaritans had the Pentateuch and no doubt knew of many other if not all of the prophetic writings of the Old Testament. They also could hardly have been unaware of John the baptist's ministry. So in this case all who came before who had given this woman and the people in this village a basic understanding of the things of God (and an anticipation of the coming of the Messiah) had "sown" the truth and made ready a crop which our Lord was about to reap with the disciples assisting in this process. To apply this to our day and age, whenever we as teachers help someone forward spiritually through ministering the truth, odds are we are not the very first to have worked this field. Any Christian who has contributed through the Spirit to the work of sharing the truth of God's Word will receive a reward for it, even if the results of his/her labor were not necessarily visible at the time.

John 4:39 (NASB)

39 From that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all the things that I have done."

*Q: According to NIV SB woman's words were an exaggeration: "4:29 everything I ever did. An exaggeration, but it shows the impression Jesus made on her. Could this be the Messiah? Her

question seems full of longing, as though she did not expect them to say "Yes," but she could not say "No." " So is it the case that genuine belief of Samaritans (and it does seem genuine, but please correct me if I'm wrong) was started by an exaggeration? It does seem that their focus shifts later:

John 4:42 (NASB)

42 and they were saying to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world."

But original motivation to believe came from elsewhere.

*A: Anyone who is gifted to be an evangelist or an apologist would do well to consider this example. In the way she approaches the matter, she legitimately invites further investigation into the truth in a way which encourages it rather than repelling it.

It seems to me overly pedantic to call this woman's words an exaggeration. I have written elsewhere about the false purity of our present day hyper-analytical view of things, induced no doubt by our modern love of science. But it is important to point out that science knows nothing for certain (understanding of all matters is constantly "growing"); science merely approximates the absolute (physical) truth. The same is true when we use words such as "all" and "everything" in contemporary speech. It's just that our standard of "all" and "everything" is different from that used in the ancient world, especially in the Hebrew culture. Our understanding of "everything" or "all" or "whole" when used in conversation is also not meant to be absolutely complete, after all:

"Did you see all of that game?" "Yes." "What, you didn't go to the kitchen for a sandwich?" "Well yes, but only twice and once to answer the phone, but other than that I saw it all". "What, you didn't blink once in three and a half hours?" "Now you are being ridiculous." "And of course they don't broadcast most of the time between innings; they show commercials instead, so you couldn't have seen that; and they usually only show one camera angle, so you couldn't have seen what the left fielder was doing at all times". "You are holding me to an impossible standard with your meaning of 'all' ".

John 4:43-45 (NASB)

43 After the two days He went forth from there into Galilee. 44 For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country. 45 So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things that He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they themselves also went to the feast.

*Q: Since our Lord was brought up in Galilee, why does John say in verse 44 that he moved from there into Galilee because "a prophet has no honor in his own country"? Wasn't Galilee considered "His own country"?

*A: Our Lord was of the house of David in Judea. The family had moved to Galilee to avoid

persecution by Herod's family. It is true that also the people of Nazareth likewise resisted the truth about Him more than others because of the assumptions made on the basis of familiarity (Matt.13:54ff.).

NIV SB: 4:45 welcomed him. The welcome of the Galileans actually was a kind of rejection, for they were interested only in Jesus' miracles. They were not welcoming the Messiah who could bring forgiveness of sins, but only a miracle worker who could meet all their physical needs and expectations. all that he had done. See 20:30 and note. Passover Festival. The one narrated in 2:13-25.

*Q: Do you agree with the NIV SB take on the issue? It seems somewhat circumventive to me. I'm also not sure about the point whether by "all that he had done" we should understand our Lord's cleansing of the temple or the signs referred to in John 2:23.

*A: I would translate the key part here, "the Galileans received Him because they had seen the things which He had done in Jerusalem during the festival". This would include the cleansing of the temple, but I think it is fair to say that these unbelievers were indeed more impressed by the healing and miracles He had performed – even Herod later wanted to meet Jesus because "he hoped to see some miracle done by Him" (Lk.23:8). The fact that they were impressed by our Lord's supernatural acts is not a bad thing – the whole point of these signs was to demonstrate His Messiahship and the power of God; the fact that they did not even so respond to Him in faith was the problem.

John 4:54 (NASB)

54 This is again a second sign that Jesus performed when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.

NIV SB: 4:54 second sign. This was the second time Jesus performed a sign after coming from Judea to Galilee (see 2:11 and note; see also chart).

How should we reconcile John's counting of our Lord's miracles with Luke's account which is chronological?

*A: See answer at Jn.2:11 above. There is no definite article here with the word "sign". I would prefer to translate, "This was a second famous miracle Jesus did [in Galilee], [on this occasion] having [just] come from Judea" (the first being the changing of the water into wine which also apparently became widely known). Clearly, our Lord did many miraculous things daily. So John is merely making a special point of emphasizing an event which caught everyone's particular attention.

John 5:1 (NASB)

5 After these things there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

NIV SB: 5:1 one of the Jewish festivals. Probably Passover, Pentecost or Tabernacles. The identity of this festival is significant for the attempt to ascertain the number of Passovers included in Jesus' ministry, and thus the number of years his ministry lasted. John explicitly

mentions at least three different Passovers: the first in 2:13, 23 (see note on 2:13), the second in 6:4 and the third several times (e. g., in 11:55; 12:1), suggesting a public ministry lasting between two and three years. However, if the festival of 5:1 was a fourth Passover or assumes that a fourth Passover had come and gone, Jesus' ministry would have lasted between three and four years.

*Q: Do we know what feast is meant here? What is your take on the points made in the NIV SB note? Do you agree with the chronology proposed in this graph?

*A: This was in fact the Passover of 31 A.D., the second Passover of our Lord's three and a half year ministry (He was crucified on the fourth).

John 5:2 (NASB)

2 Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool, which is called in [a]Hebrew [b]Bethesda, having five porticoes.

a. John 5:2 I.e. Jewish Aramaic

b. John 5:2 Some early mss read Bethsaida or Bethzatha

*Q: Is "Bethesda" the correct spelling?

*A: Spelling of place names in ancient texts is often problematic, and that difficulty is much more pronounced in the New Testament because we have the issue of transliterating Hebrew place names (as well as all proper names) into Greek. Add to that the fact that there was no accepted convention for such transliteration (the place name "Megiddo" is transliterated dozens of different ways in the Greek version of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, and the NT takes much from that version). We also see in the NT that different authors follow different conventions on this issue. Finally, there is also no hard and fast convention in English for the spelling of Bible names. As with Classical proper nouns, the most we can say is that if someone or some place is famous, then we are obliged to make use of the transliteration in common use. So for example "John" is what we have always used for *Iōannes* / *Iōanes* (note the two different spellings in Greek), a name which according to transliteration from the Hebrew would be closer to *Yōchanan*.

The derivation of this noun is uncertain, and the textual tradition contains variants. The traditional rendering, "Bethesda", represents a possible Hebrew/Aramaic combination meaning "house of mercy"; however, the text reads "in Hebrew" (*pace* those who want to make the adverb *hebraisti* mean "in Aramaic"), and Sinaiticus has "Bethzatha", which might mean "house of olives". Since "house of mercy" fits the story nicely, it is likely that this alternative was preferred for that reason rather than following the more difficult text, so I would prefer "Bethzatha".

John 5:3-4 (NASB)

3 In these lay a multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, and withered, [[a]waiting for the moving of the waters; 4 for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool and stirred up the water; whoever then first, after the stirring up of the water, stepped in was made

well from whatever disease with which he was afflicted.]

a. John 5:3 Early mss do not contain the remainder of v 3, nor v 4

*Q: Should verse 3 and 4 be a part of the scripture? Could you explain the phenomenon of the angel of the Lord stirring up the water? Is it attested anywhere else in the scripture?

*A: John 5:4 is not a part of scripture. The verse is absent from all of the oldest and best manuscripts of the New Testament (including Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, Ephraemi rescriptus, the Bodmer papyri, and many other important witnesses). No doubt this verse and a half was added by someone wishing to explain just why these individuals were waiting by the pool, supplying what was seen as a reasonable explanation based upon what this man says in verse seven. The man does *not* say that an angel was responsible for the movement of the waters, and neither our Lord's words nor the scripture give us any reason to suppose that there were any healing properties in these waters at all, stirred or not. That clearly is what the man (and the other invalids) supposed, regardless of their reasoning or popular myths about this pool.

John 5:7-9 (NASB)

7 The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I am coming, another steps down before me." 8 Jesus *said to him, "Get up, pick up your pallet and walk." 9 Immediately the man became well, and picked up his pallet and began to walk.

NIV SB: 5:7 when the water is stirred. The man did not see Jesus as a potential healer, and his mind was set on the supposed curative powers of the water.

NIV SB: 5:9 the man was cured. Ordinarily, faith in Jesus was essential to the cure (e. g., Mk 5:34), but here the man did not even know who Jesus was (v. 13). So while Jesus usually healed in response to faith, he was not limited by a person's lack of it.

*Q: Our Lord healed the man despite him not seeking rescue in Him, but still being fixed on the curative powers of the water - could you clarify? Normally Jesus healed those who believed. The same refers to not on verse 9, which says that "Jesus usually healed in response to faith, he was not limited by a person's lack of it". I would have thought that our Lord indeed didn't heal those who did not believe.

*A: This is indeed a special situation, and here our Lord sought this man out, out of sympathy for his long suffering, asking him if he wished to become "healthy". This is a good example of the fact that our Lord died for all our sins that all might be made "healthy" in salvation, not saved from disease but from the sins for which we otherwise have no answer (disease is symbolic of sin: Is.53:4; Matt.8:17). It is also a good example of the fact that God wants "all to be saved and to come to acceptance of the truth" (1Tim.2:4; cf. Ezek.18:23; Matt.18:14; Jn.12:47; 2Tim.2:24-26; 2Pet.3:9). The fact that this man, sought out by the Lord Himself, healed from a condition which had plagued him for 38 years, after being miraculously made whole nevertheless seems to want nothing in particular to do with our Lord or the truth demonstrates decisively that

suffering is not the reason why people are lost nor is healing or deliverance from trouble a panacea when it comes to salvation. A person has to want to be saved and has to be willing to put his/her faith in Jesus Christ for that salvation in order to receive it. I think this the reason for this episode – and also for its uniqueness.

John 5:14 (NASB)

14 Afterward Jesus *found him in the temple and said to him, "Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you."

NIV SB: 5:14 Stop sinning. Implies that the man's sins had caused his disability. In 9:1 Jesus repudiates the idea that disabilities (such as blindness there) are always caused by sin, but he does not say they are never caused by sin. something worse. The eternal consequences of sin are more serious than any physical ailment.

*Q: Do you agree with both points given here - that the disability was caused by sin and that our Lord has eternal consequences in mind here?

*A: NIV SB correctly reports what our Lord says here and what He says elsewhere (Jn.9:1), but I believe that they miss the point. Sin is a problem for us all. The fact that our Lord tells this man to "sin no longer" is remarkable – because no one is capable of living in this world in the body we presently occupy without any sin whatsoever, and saying otherwise is essentially calling God a liar (1Jn.8-10). I take this command along the lines of many other things our Lord said to bring the true issue home with force in the minds and consciences of His listeners. Along the same lines, for example: "it is harder for a rich man to enter heaven than it is for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle" (Matt.19:24-26), to which the disciples respond, "who, then, can be saved!" Their response represents an appropriate assessment of the ramifications of Jesus words. Our Lord's response to them, "with God all things are possible" makes clear what the point of the statement was, namely, to demonstrate that without divine intervention of an amazing sort (i.e., the cross of Jesus Christ) no one can be saved at all. The proper response from an honest assessment by this man just healed would have been to throw himself down on his knees and beg forgiveness, confessing the inveterate sinfulness he knew to be lodged in his heart. That would have led to faith in Christ and salvation. But by his actions he makes it clear that he was not only ungrateful but unrepentant.

John 5:21 (NASB)

21 For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes.

NIV SB: 5:21 the Father raises the dead. A firm belief among the Jews (except the Sadducees; see this essay), who also held that the Father did not give this privilege to anyone else. Jesus claimed a prerogative that, according to his opponents, belonged only to God. the Son gives life. Probably refers to Christ's gift of abundant life here and now (10:10), though possibly also to the future resurrection (see 11:25 and note).

*Q: How should we understand the words "the Son also gives life" here?

*A: While separate persons, the Trinity are also "one" in a way and to a degree human beings cannot completely grasp; but we can say that they have never had a disagreement, and that everything that they are doing in history is part of a completely unified and preordained plan that encompasses absolutely everything. For us to exist, for us to have the image of God, free will, so as to be able to decide for ourselves our eternal future, for any of this to be possible required God to become man as well as God. As such, Jesus Christ in His first advent was required to live His life, conduct His ministry, and run the gauntlet of the cross – including first and foremost bearing our sins in His body in the darkness until He had atoned for every single one of them – as a man without undue intervention from His deity. It is in this regard that there is significance in the giving of life being attributed to the Son. He gives us life eternal when we believe in Him. But attempting to separate things out between the members of the Trinity is a questionable thing to do. In terms of giving life, for example, we also know that the Spirit is the Agent of regeneration; and in terms of the resurrection, the Spirit too has an undeniable role therein:

But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

Romans 8:11 NASB

John 5:25 (NASB)

25 Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.

*Q: How should we understand that the hour is not only coming, but "now is", if the verse refers to the resurrection?

*A: "and now is" is not part of the original text (absent, e.g., from Sinaiticus).

John 5:27 (NASB)

27 and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is [a]the Son of Man.

a. John 5:27 Or a son of man

*Q: I checked this passage in Greek and thought - why isn't it simply rendered "Son of Man" without "a" or "the", as in the Greek?

*A: As "the Son of Man", our Lord is the archetypal human being, the Last Adam, the one who in contrast to the first Adam whose sin spread to all mankind provided redemption for all mankind through faith by His death on the cross for us all (Rom.5:12-21). Our Lord had to become a true human being – in addition to His undiminished deity – in order for us to be saved, because He had to bear all of our sins in His body on the cross (1Pet.2:24; cf. 2Cor.5:21). As far as I can tell, this is the only place where the definite article is not used in this title for our Lord, and the text here is not in doubt. Therefore the absence must be significant. The meaning will then be that the Father has handed the function of judging other human beings over to "a son of man", that is, to a genuine human being, namely, "*the* Son of Man", our Lord and Savior Jesus

Christ. This passage, therefore, specially emphasizes the fairness and equity of we human beings judged by one of our own, a Person who can sympathize with everything that we as human beings have had to go through in this world, having done so Himself, only without sin (cf. Heb.2:17-18; 4:15).

John 5:29 (NASB)

29 and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.

*Q: Do you agree with the addition of "deeds" here by the NASB? Such addition makes it impossible to interpret "the doing of good" as believing in Jesus, and I was wondering whether our Lord could have had this in mind here.

*A: The Greek has *ta agatha*, which, literally translated, means "the good things". "Deeds" is only problematic if it is misunderstood. A "deed" is anything done, and, in biblical terms, anything thought, said or done. The neuter plural here is meant to stand for the totality of every positive choice the believer has made in this life (just as *ta phaula*, "the vile things", does for the actions of unbelievers). So this phrase does embrace accepting Christ in the case of believers – that is the first "good thing" anyone can do (it is, "the work/deed of God": Jn.6:29), since it is the first thing done in the power of the Spirit (and similarly "vile things" will preeminently include failing to accept Christ or rejecting Him outright).

John 5:31 (NASB)

31 "If I alone testify about Myself, My testimony is not [a]true.

a. John 5:31 I.e. admissible as legal evidence

*Q: Could you explain the point made in the footnote? Do you agree with NIV SB take on it: 5:31 Jesus' testimony about himself required the support of all God's revelation. Otherwise, it would have been unacceptable. How to reconcile this verse and our Lord's words with John 8:14 (NASB):

14 Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from or where I am going.

*A: The answer to both of these questions is that our Lord never testified or witnessed to Himself alone. The witnesses to Him and to who He was/is were powerful and credible, John the baptist, all of the prophets of the Old Testament, the signs and miracles our Lord was given to do, and of course the witness of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of those who saw and heard Him; last but of course not least, the Father too witnessed to Him and substantiated His authority (Jn.5:37). So in this conditional, the point is that our Lord was *not* "giving testimony on His own behalf" only – had that been so, He would not have been who He was and claimed to be in truth, because in that hypothetical case He would not have been sent by the Father. At John 8:14, our Lord's statement is true: even if He were to give testimony on His own behalf, it would be true, because

He is the truth and everything He says is the truth. In other words, the context verse gives a hypothetical wherein our Lord was not who He said He was; the other verse, John 8:14, states a truth based upon our Lord being exactly who He said He was.

John 5:32 (NASB)

32 There is another who testifies of Me, and I know that the testimony which He gives about Me is true.

*Q: Does our Lord mean John here or the Father?

*A: The Father is primarily meant (cf. v.37), but our Lord knew that John was going to be thought to be the person mentioned – and certainly John did witness to our Lord's Messiahship as well. As mentioned above, John the baptist, all of the prophets of the Old Testament, the signs and miracles our Lord was given to do through the Holy Spirit along with the Spirit's supernatural witness and the Father of course too were "witnesses" to this truth. The fact that our Lord says "another" does not negate the fact of this panoply of witnesses, and anyone who was truly saved and who knew the truth would have recognized as much.

John 5:34 (NASB)

34 But the testimony which I receive is not from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved.

NIV SB: 5:34 Not that I accept human testimony. Probably meaning that he does not rely on human testimony-which is always fallible and often fickle (1Jn 5:9).

*Q: What is the meaning of this verse? It is rendered in a number of ways in different versions.

*A: NASB quoted above is fine. The meaning is that the true witnesses to our Lord's Messiahship were all supernatural, not earthly and worldly – as would be the case on earth in any judicial proceeding according to the Law.

John 5:35 (NASB)

35 He was the lamp that was burning and was shining and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light.

*Q: It seems that Meyer gives quite a good explanation of the words "and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light": "[A] striking description of the frivolous worldliness which would gratify its own short-lived excitement and pleasure in this new and grand manifestation, instead of making use of it to obtain saving knowledge, and allowing its full solemnity to operate upon them. The Jews flocked in great crowds to the Baptist (Matthew 3:5; Matthew 11:7 ff.), as to the messenger of the approaching glorious kingdom of the Messiah; but instead of finding what they desired, they found all the severity of the spirit of Elias calling to repentance, and how soon was the concourse over! In like manner, the Athenians hoped to find a new and passing divertissement when the Apostle Paul came among them. "Johanne utendum erat, non fruendum," Bengel.

Would you agree with the points made here?

*A: At all times in all generations, it seems, people want excitement and spectacle. Our Lord's generation's interest in John and their expectation of what he was preaching is analogous to present day Charismatics who want the excitement of the power of God but not according to the truth He is actually trying to get them to respond to.

John 5:37 (NASB)

37 And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form.

NIV SB: 5:37 the Father ... has himself testified ... his voice. Probably a reference to God's voice in the Scriptures (see vv. 38-39). God had also given his voice of approval at Jesus' baptism (see Mt 3:17 and note). nor seen his form. Probably refers to their lack of spiritual perception of who Jesus really is.

*Q: Does Jesus have here in mind any specific type of Father's testimony - scriptures, voice during our Lord's baptism? Or are all meant here?

*A: The words are equally straight-forward in Greek and English. We human beings have neither seen nor heard the Father. As verse 36 shows, our Lord is speaking of the miracles empowered by the Father that testify to the truth of who He is.

John 5:39 (NASB)

39 [a]You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me;

a. John 5:39 Or (a command) Search the Scriptures!

*Q: Should indicative or imperative be used here? It seems either could work.

*A: It is a command. There is no indication here or elsewhere that these individuals were actually "searching the scriptures" for anything. Our Lord is commending the Word of truth to them, the very scriptures whose keeping (in their flawed way) they think give them live eternal, when in fact these scriptures tell of the coming of the One who would give them life eternal . . . through faith in Him.

John 5:42 (NASB)

42 but I know you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves.

NIV SB: 5:42 love of God. May mean God's love for them or theirs for God. Probably it is the latter.

*Q: Which one is meant here in your view? The latter sense seems better here.

*A: This is what is called a "objective genitive" in grammar. The "in yourselves" makes that especially clear in the Greek (i.e., Jesus is speaking of something going on internally in the listeners – or rather something that is *not* going on). Our Lord states that these individuals were not "producing [as the subjects of the action] love for God"; not that they were not receiving it from Him – they clearly were receiving the love of God, as evidenced by the gift to that generation uniquely of the Son of God Himself.

John 5:43 (NASB)

43 I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him.

*Q: Does our Lord mean the antichrist here by "another"?

*A: It means any manner of "other" speaking lies whom unbelievers will gladly accept, but it does have a particular application to the beast who will pretend to be Christ.

John 5:46-47 (NASB)

46 For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me. 47 But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

a) NIV SB: 5:46 he wrote about me. The authors of the NT books sometimes expressly stressed and everywhere assumed that the OT, rightly read, pervasively points to Christ (see Lk 24:25-27, 44-46 and note on 24:44). Here Jesus applies this truth specifically to the writings traditionally ascribed to Moses. He may have had Dt 18:15, 18 especially in mind but probably was thinking more broadly of the whole scope of what the Pentateuch disclosed concerning God's saving program in history, which Jesus the Messiah came to complete.

*Q: Does Jesus have Deuteronomy 18:15 in mind here, or is He speaking more broadly? Should our Lord's question be understood as meaning - "If you don't believe Moses, even though you claim you do believe in him, then how will you believe my words, if you despise me?"

*A: There are many passages in the Pentateuch which speak of Christ (e.g., the Seed of Gen.3:15); and of course the entire symbolism of the Mosaic Law is meant to point to Christ who is the Lamb without spot or blemish. As to belief, the Bible is the Word of God, so anyone who refuses to believe the Bible is not going to be persuaded by extra-biblical arguments since that person has already rejected God's authority. That is why it is largely pointless to argue about the truth with anyone who does not accept the veracity and inspired nature of scripture.

John 6

*Q: In this chapter NASB has got a chapter called "Words to the People" and "Words to the Jews" - could you explain the basis on which this distinction is made?

*A: As I say in another place, "Sometimes, as here [Jn.7:13], John uses [the word "Jews"] to mean "those in Judea who belong to the power structure"; that is, the sort of people in positions

of authority you would expect to find if you went to Judea or more particularly to Jerusalem in Jesus' day. In such contexts I feel it would be helpful to translate "[religious] Jews [who do not believe]" (Jeremiah's usage at Jer.43:9 is similar); that makes the distinction a bit more clear (and the brackets let the reader know that the word "religious" is an interpretive addition)".

John 6:5 (NASB)

5 Therefore Jesus, lifting up His eyes and seeing that a large crowd was coming to Him, *said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these may eat?"

NIV SB: 6:5 Philip. Since he came from nearby Bethsaida (see 1:44 and note), it was appropriate to ask him.

*Q: I'm not sure about the link between Philip coming from Bethsaida and our Lord's question being appropriately directed towards him, as our Lord's question was about spiritual discernment rather than the knowledge of the surroundings?

*A: An excellent observation on your part. To the point, the problem was one of insufficient resources which no knowledge of local geography could solve. That said, it was "a test" (as the next verse tells us), and the Lord does say "where shall we buy?" – so the commentators have fallen into the same mistake Philip did, seeing things from the earthly perspective when this was a spiritual test.

John 6:14 (NASB)

14 Therefore when the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world."

NIV SB: 6:14 sign ... Prophet. It pointed people to the Son of Man and the food for eternal life that he gives (see v. 27 and note), but they thought only of the Prophet, i. e., the prophet of Dt 18:15, 18 who would be like Moses (see 1:21 and note). Through Moses, God had provided food and water for the people in the wilderness, and they expected the Prophet to do more than this.

*Q1: Do you agree with the point made in NIV SB? Did this miracle really point people "to the Son of Man and the food for eternal life"? Was not their focus only on physical provisions? This is also what is suggested by our Lord's words shortly after (Jn.6:26-27).

*A1: I agree with you. Just as the Jewish people of that day were looking forward to a conquering Messiah who would destroy their enemies and restore their political independence, so they were looking for the Millennium and the miraculous provision which Moses and the exodus generation had experienced. This highlights their inability to hear and believe what the Lord was actually saying to them, namely, that the kingdom of God is spiritual first and foremost (salvation by grace through faith in Christ), and that the eternal blessings which will one day be ours are based upon that spiritual conversion. Settling for material advantage here and now is the typical mindset of the unbeliever after the pattern of Esau.

*Q2: What is meant by "but they thought only of the Prophet, i. e., the prophet of Dt 18:15, 18 who would be like Moses (see 1:21 and note). Through Moses, God had provided food and water for the people in the wilderness, and they expected the Prophet to do more than this"? The verse doesn't seem to imply what the note suggests.

*A2: It is a confused note. Jesus is "the Prophet". Jesus is "the Messiah". The problem with our Lord's generation by and large was that they wanted the crown without the cross, and they wanted the material promises of Millennium without the spiritual dynamic through which believers receive them.

John 6:15 (NASB)

15 So Jesus, perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone.

NIV SB: 6:15 make him king by force. Jesus rejected the widely held Jewish view of the Messiah's kingship (cf. notes on 18:36; Lk 24:21).

*Q: I take it that only temporal rejection by Jesus is meant here, until He comes again?

*A: That is a charitable interpretation. Jesus *is* the King (Jn.18:33-37; cf. Matt.27:11; Lk.23:3; Jn.12:15), but the timing was not that of the crown first but of the cross first – that is what our Lord's contemporaries did not understand and were unwilling to accept.

John 6:21-25 (NASB)

21 So they were willing to receive Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going. 22 The next day the crowd that stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other small boat there, except one, and that Jesus had not entered with His disciples into the boat, but that His disciples had gone away alone. 23 There came other small boats from Tiberias near to the place where they ate the bread after the Lord had given thanks. 24 So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they themselves got into the small boats, and came to Capernaum seeking Jesus. 25 When they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, "Rabbi, when did You get here?"

*Q: I think that after numerous attempts I got a grasp of this sentence and I have now realized it has exercised commentators too. Your clarification of the course of events here would be appreciated.

*A: One needs to read all of the gospel accounts to get every detail of this event. Things proceed as follows: 1) our Lord sends the disciples ahead and they depart by boat while He dismisses the crowd and goes up to the top of the mountain in order to have some much needed prayer time (Matt.14:22-23; Mk.6:45-47); 2) the disciples meanwhile make little headway because of an adverse wind (Matt.14:24); 3) so our Lord is able to catch up with them later, walking toward them on the sea (Matt.14:25; Mk.6:48); 4) they are alarmed when they see Him, but He assures them that "It is I" (Matt.14:26-27; Mk.6:49-50); 5) Peter then asks to join Him, is told to come out, does well until an upsurge in wind and waves startles him, and has to be saved by our Lord

(Matt.14:28-31); 6) our Lord (and Peter) get back into the boat and the wind dies down (Matt.14:32-33; Mk.6:51-52); 7) the boat then miraculously and instantly arrives at the farther shore with no further rowing necessary (Jn.6:21). John's gospel shows, in addition, that the crowd had seen the disciples depart but had waited for the Lord instead of following them. There not being any physical means for Him to follow in the normal human way, they are surprised when they do find Him at Capernaum – which demonstrates their hardness of heart in not recognizing that God can do anything (even though they had just been miraculously provided with a heaven-sent meal).

John 6:28-29 (NASB)

28 Therefore they said to Him, "What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?" 29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."

NIV SB: 6:29 work of God. Believing in Jesus Christ is the indispensable "work" God calls for—the one that leads to eternal life (see 9:4 and note).

*Q: How should we understand "the work of God? Is it what NIV SB says - work which "God calls for"? Or should we take this phrase as literally the work which God does? I don't know what type of genitive is meant here. Also, what do you think of the following interpretation: "What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?" (a question proceeding from the erroneous idea of salvation by works) to which Jesus replies "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent" (Jesus corrects them by redirecting their attention not to their own work, but to the work of God, who gave His Son as a redemption for sin). Please clarify.

*A: I agree with both the NIV SB and the comment included: the "work of God" here is "the work God wants us to do". This discussion is taking place, please recall, in the context of a people who had replaced the grace of God with a works-based adherence to their *parti pris* interpretation of the Mosaic Law as the basis for salvation. But that was not what the Father required. The underlying spiritual purpose of the Law is to demonstrate that no one is good enough to be saved – and to foreshadow God's solution to this primary problem through His provision of a Substitute to die for our sins (as symbolized in the Law's sacrifices). On the grammar, in Hebrew and also in biblical Greek in particular (which adopts much from Hebrew expression), genitives constructions (termed "construct" in Hebrew) are very flexible. Systematizing the types is of some help, but it is often difficult to categorize particular cases. The important thing is to perceive the correct meaning from the context. That is plainly evident here – because "the work of God" turns out to be something we are supposed to do as our Lord explains it, namely, "the work God wants us to do" – put our faith in His Son.

John 6:30-31 (NASB)

30 So they said to Him, "What then do You do for a sign, so that we may see, and believe You? What work do You perform? 31 Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread out of heaven to eat.'"

NIV SB: 6:31 manna. A popular Jewish expectation was that when the Messiah came he would

renew the sending of manna. The crowd probably reasoned that Jesus had done little compared to Moses. He had fed 5,000; Moses had fed a nation. He did it once; Moses did it for 40 years. He gave ordinary bread (see note on vv. 1-15; see also note on v. 14); Moses gave "bread from heaven" (see notes on Ex 16:4; Nu 11:7).

*Q: How is it that people ask Jesus for a sign and mention Moses and manna when they have themselves only just been miraculously fed? Do you agree with how NIV SB explains question asked by the people?

*A: John's added information about this event leaves little doubt about the fact that very few of those who came to hear our Lord teach were very interested in the truth. They were interested in being healed. They were interested in miracles – being miraculously fed was certainly of great interest to them. They were no doubt interested by the excitement of His ministry and the expectation that He "might be the Messiah" which would mean that He would restore the kingdom of Israel to power and independence – according to *their* thinking, at any rate. But they were not willing to acknowledge His deity nor were they interested in a Savior who would die for their sins. For all these reasons He taught them via the parable method that "Seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand" (Mk.4:12 NKJV).

John 6:32 (NASB)

32 Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven.

*Q: How should we understand these words? Does our Lord mean here that his listeners should understand that it was God who gave manna rather than Moses? I'm also not entirely clear about the contrast here, since the second part of the sentence is in the present, rather than the past. Jesus doesn't say "it is not Moses who gave you the bread, but it is My Father who gave it", but rather "it is not Moses who gave you the bread, but its My Father who gives you the true bread".

*A: Indeed, Moses was a great man of God, but he did nothing himself – God was the One who empowered all the miracles of course. The present "this generation" seems to think that a "special man" can do all manner of miraculous things independent of the plan of God. They certainly have that expectation of the Messiah – wanting, for example, the crown without the cross. Jesus Christ is the true Bread of Life, and that "bread" is the Father's grace offer of life eternal through faith in His Person and work whose acceptance is demonstrated symbolically by eating the bread He provided (eating symbolizes faith in Him; cf. the communion ceremony).

John 6:33 (NASB)

33 For the bread of God is [a]that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world."

a.John 6:33 Or He who comes

*Q: Should the verse say "that which" or "He who"? Does our Lord mean Himself here?

*A: Either translation is acceptable (as a legitimate way to translate the attributive participle

construction *ho katabainon*), as long as we understand it to refer to our Lord. Yes, our Lord is "the Bread of Life" and so He is referring to Himself as the only way to receive life eternal by grace through faith in Him and His work in dying for our sins.

John 6:35 (NASB)

35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.

NIV SB: 6:35 I am. The first of seven (the number of completeness and perfection) self-descriptions of Jesus introduced by "I am" (see 8:12; [9:5;] 10:7, 9; 10:11, 14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1, 5; see also chart). In the Greek the words are solemnly emphatic and echo Ex 3:14 (see notes on Ex 3:12-15) and the seven "I am he" statements in Isaiah (41:4; 43:10, 13, 25; 46:4; 48:12; 51:12). Cf. note on 2:11. the bread of life. May mean "the bread that is living" and/or "the bread that gives life." What is implied in v. 33 is now made explicit, and it is repeated with minor variations in vv. 41, 48, 51.

*Q: Do you agree that it's significant that "I am" as our Lord's self-description appears seven times? Should we take "the bread of life" as "the bread that is living" or "the bread that gives life"?

*A: The number is notable but the fact of our Lord's self-description as "I AM", that is, YHVH the Lord, is what is important – and would be even if He'd said it only once. More notable is the fact of the hardness of heart of His listeners who do not seem to understand or accept this truth despite it being repeated so often. As to "living" versus "life-giving", either is a legitimate way to translate the genitive phrase "bread of life" here. In Hebrew and in Greek too (especially the NT which is heavily influenced by Hebrew), such genitive or "construct" phrases (the Hebrew term) are more common than in English and admit of much greater flexibility in meaning and therefore in (proper) translation. The bread is characterized by "life", but how so? First, it is alive itself (it refers to our Lord), but also it is eaten by us (we accept Him and His work by faith) so that we are made alive by it.

John 6:37-38 (NASB)

37 All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. 38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

*Q: Does by "all that" Jesus mean "all those"? Should we understand this passage in the following way: "I came to do not my own will, but my Father's and so I will not cast out anyone who comes to me - because the Father doesn't want these to be cast out"? One difficulty here is that our Lord contrasts His will with the Father's will, which may sound as if it was the Father's will not to cast out the ones who were coming to Him, but could have been His will?

*A: To take these in reverse order, the Son and the Father as God have no variation in will. The Trinity have never had a disagreement or "seen things differently"; that is a human perspective. But our Lord is also now a true human being following the incarnation. Mind you, He in His

humanity has never been at odds with His deity either – He is still One Person, albeit now with two natures, human and divine. Our Lord says these words for our benefit: obviously, no human being following his/her own desires and wishes would want to have to endure what our Lord had to endure, not only in the sacrifice of everything human beings hold dear (Is.53:8), even His physical life, but most especially in dying for the sins of the world in the darkness of the cross – His spiritual death which transcends everything in creation to an infinite degree. As to "all that the Father gives Me", we are speaking about "all those" people whom the Father has given to belong to Christ as His Church.

John 6:39 (NASB)

39 This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.

NIV SB: 6:39 I shall lose none. True believers will persevere because of Christ's firm hold on them (see 10:28-29; Php 1:6 and notes; cf. Heb 3:6, 14 and notes).

*Q: I'm not clear about this verse, the NIV SB explanation also didn't clarify it.

*A: The NIV SB is written from a Calvinistic perspective and understands this verse from the standpoint of "perseverance of the saints". It is the case that all believers are saved, and that all who do persevere in fact (as opposed to any theological interpretation of that word), maintaining their faith in Christ to the end and not falling away into apostasy, are saved, are part of Christ's Church, and will be raised "on the last day" when our Lord returns (the second advent).

John 6:44 (NASB)

44 No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.

NIV SB: 6:44 draws. People do not come to Christ strictly on their own initiative; the Father draws them.

*Q: Do you agree with NIV SB note on this verse? Doesn't it violate the principle of free will? Is it not the case that God knows who will choose for Him and draws that person, but doesn't draw those who are not interested in the truth against their will?

*A: I agree with your analysis. Nothing is impossible for God, but He does not violate free will. Anyone willing to be saved is saved, and that includes God doing absolutely everything for the person in question to be saved, including whatever might be necessary to bring him/her to Christ. After all, the Father sacrificed the Son on our behalf, and Jesus died in the darkness for all of our sins. "Drawing us" to Him – if we are willing to respond – is a small thing indeed by comparison.

John 6:53 (NASB)

53 So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves.

NIV SB: 6:53-58 "Flesh" and "blood" here point to Christ as the crucified one and the source of life. Jesus speaks of faith's appropriation of himself as God's appointed sacrifice, not-at least not directly-of any ritual requirement.

*Q: NIV SB says that these verses speak of Jesus' sacrifice and not directly of any ritual, but isn't the communion in view here?

*A: Yes, it is absolutely in view. Communion, after all, harkens back to the sacrificial offerings of the Law wherein the believers ate in communion with the Lord and demonstrated their faith in His coming Substitute represented by the slain animal. Jesus is "the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" (Jn.1:29). The shift from meat to bread merely represents the shift from the old covenant of shadow to the new covenant of revealed truth.

John 6:61-63 (NASB)

61 But Jesus, conscious that His disciples grumbled at this, said to them, "Does this cause you to stumble? 62 What then if you see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before? 63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

*Q: How does the point about the Spirit giving life links back to what our Lord said in verses 61 and 62?

*A: Only through the Spirit can we understand the truth and follow the truth – and only through the Spirit do we have life eternal, the prerequisite for that. So until these hard of heart individuals accepted Jesus as God and accepted that He was going to give up His life for them so as to be saved, they would not have any way to understand the truth because the Spirit's ministry to unbelievers is restricted to truth related to the gospel.

NIV SB: 6:62 Son of Man. See notes on Mk 8:31; Lk 6:5; 19:10. ascend. Probably refers to the series of events that began with the cross, where Jesus was glorified (see note on 7:39). where he was before. Referring to Jesus' heavenly preexistence (see 8:58; 17:5 and note).

*Q: Do you agree that our Lord here refers to the series of events beginning with the cross? Does He not mean the literal ascension, as described by Luke?

*A: You are correct that this refers to the ascension following the cross.

John 6:65 (NASB)

65 And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father."

*Q: How should we understand our Lord's words here? Why doesn't Jesus here put unbelievers' free will choice first?

*A: First, our Lord always spoke in parable fashion to unbelievers who were hard of heart, both

to fulfill prophecy (e.g., Is.6:10ff.), and also for the continuation of His ministry in face of otherwise untenable opposition. Second, this statement would certainly provoke – from anyone with a single tender spot in their heart – a fearful rush to mercy in wishing to be one to whom the Father did grant salvation and not be shut out of the kingdom instead. And of course to any and all who did respond in humility instead of reacting in anger, the Father most definitely did grant salvation.

John 6:66 (NASB)

66 As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore.

NIV SB: 6:66 From this time. May also mean "For this reason." many ... turned back. Jesus had already made clear what discipleship meant, and many were not ready to receive life in the way he taught.

*A: Should we translate "from this time" or "for this reason"?

*Q: Since the Greek does not exclude either, it is appropriate to see both as being the case (i.e., the Greek overlaps both English meanings).

John 7:4-5 (NASB)

4 For no one does anything in secret when he himself seeks to be known publicly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." 5 For not even His brothers were believing in Him.

NIV SB: 7:4 It is not clear whether the brothers claimed some knowledge of Jesus' miracles that other people did not have or were suggesting that any claim to Messiahship must be decided in Jerusalem. Their advice was not given sincerely, for they did not yet believe in Jesus (v. 5).

*A: I'm not clear about the relationship between the words of our Lord's brothers and their unbelief in Him - how does the fact that they wanted Him to show Himself to the world prove that they lacked faith?

*Q: Our Lord was ministering openly daily but He was speaking in parables and not *parhesia*, "freely" in Greek – precisely because almost no one of "this generation", including His brothers, was willing to accept the truth. What they and their fellow Israelites wanted was for Jesus to "get down to business" and lead a revolution to throw out the Romans – or better yet to call down divine fire to destroy them out of hand. They wanted the second advent without the sacrifice of the first. Telling God what to do is never a sign of great spiritual maturity, so I think we can fairly conclude that they did not believe in who He was – as the next verse states explicitly.

John 7:6 (NASB)

6 So Jesus *said to them, "My time is not yet here, but your time is always opportune.

*Q: How should we understand these words? Our Lord has already begun His ministry at this point, so I'm not clear why He says "My time is not yet here".

*A: This comes as a response to His brothers who are attempting to get Him to go up to Jerusalem openly – a very unwise thing to do which would of resulted in His premature arrest (which is why He did not do so). Our Lord's "time" to be offered up for the sins of the world was yet to come. But for those who are both in and of the world (as our Lord's brothers still were at this point), it is always opportune to make use of the world which only hates those who are not of it as Christ was never of it (Jn.15:18-19).

John 7:7 (NASB)

7 The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil.

NIV SB: 7:7 The world. Either (1) people opposed to God or (2) the human system opposed to God's purposes (see note on 1Jn 2:15). The brothers belonged to the world and therefore could not be the objects of its hatred. Jesus, however, rebuked the world and was hated accordingly.

*Q: How should we understand "the world" here? Aren't the two meaning proposed by the NIV SB amounting essentially to the same thing?

*A: Yes, indeed, and I would add that the system really is the devil's system even though human beings respond to it and further it.

John 7:8-10 (NASB)

8 Go up to the feast yourselves; I do not go up to this feast because My time has not yet fully come."9 Having said these things to them, He stayed in Galilee.

10 But when His brothers had gone up to the feast, then He Himself also went up, not publicly, but as if, in secret.

I) NIV SB: 7:8 not. See NIV text note. Jesus was not refusing to go to the festival but refusing to go in the way his brothers suggested-as a pilgrim. When he went, it would be to deliver a prophetic message from God, for which he awaited the right time (see note on v. 6).

*Q: Why does our Lord go the feast having said that he doesn't? NIV SB explanation doesn't clarify it to me. This verse has exercised commentators and numerous explanations are proposed here, some also discuss the textual issue of oupoo being present here, but I'm not sure if it is a part of the text or not. Ellicott's commentary gives one of the more reasonable interpretations: "He is not going up unto the feast in the sense in which they intended-openly, with the usual caravan from Galilee. Another going up publicly, as they intended, and with an issue the dark presages of which now crowd upon Him, is present to His mind. "Ye, go ye up to the feast; I go not up to this feast." The verb is in the present, and its meaning does not exclude a going up afterwards. (See also Note on John 7:10.) They were then going; the caravan was preparing to start. I am not going up (now). The time is coming, but it has not yet fully come. (Comp. Note on Luke 9:51.)" The verb is in the present and so our Lord can go to the feast later without breaking His word. Verse 10 says that our Lord went to the feast "not publicly, but as if, in secret" and yet in verse 14 He goes to the temple and teaches there in front of people?

*A: Think of this as along the lines of our Lord's use of parables. We are not to throw pearls before swine "lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces" (Matt.7:6 NKJV). We are not obligated to be direct and completely forthcoming with people who are only planning to use that response to indict us or destroy us. Being prudent in answering is not at all the same thing as deliberately misleading someone; failing to understand that critical point can bring a naive or self-righteous Christian into great peril. Wisdom requires gauging every situation and giving the proper response, one which may not be what the inquisitor wanted but will be godly and prudent – as was the response of our Lord, the wisest person who ever lived. His enemies were bent on destroying Him and His brothers were jealous of Him and no doubt would have rashly bruited abroad any information He gave them about His precise plans. For practical reasons, therefore, to carry out the Father's plan He answers as He answers. As to later teaching publicly, our Lord was absolutely courageous. In the venue of the temple, teaching publicly with a crowd enrapt with the power of His truth, His enemies could not easily seize Him without first refuting Him – which of course they were powerless to do.

John 7:11-13 (NASB)

11 So the Jews were seeking Him at the feast and were saying, "Where is He?" 12 There was much grumbling among the crowds concerning Him; some were saying, "He is a good man"; others were saying, "No, on the contrary, He leads the people astray." 13 Yet no one was speaking openly of Him for fear of the Jews.

*Q: I'm not clear about this - in verse 11 the Jews ask where Jesus is, verse 12 says that "there was much grumbling among the crowds concerning Him" and yet in verse 13 John says that "no one was speaking openly of Him for fear of the Jews"?

*A: The answer to this and to similar passages in the gospel of John has to do with the various factions John is attempting to represent without parsing them all with long-winded explanations. There were in Jerusalem at this and at all times of festival 1) permanent residents, and 2) those who had come for the festival. In both groups there were genuine seekers of the truth and also hardened unbelievers, and the first group is further broken down between the "rulers", their followers and assistants, and the ordinary population of Jerusalem – and even among the rulers we know of various factions (e.g., scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, some of whom were members of the counsel, some not). John perfectly captures through the Spirit the disparity of opinions and reactions to our Lord's presentation of the truth, and also the voluble and fickle nature of the admiration and "faith" of some (cf. the reaction of the crowd after the fact to the miracle of His feeding of the ten thousand in Jn.6:26ff.).

John 7:18-19 (NASB)

18 He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him. 19 "Did not Moses give you the Law, and yet none of you carries out the Law? Why do you seek to kill Me?"

NIV SB: 7:18 is a man of truth. Or "is true." They should have recognized that Jesus was not self-seeking. In this Gospel, no one is spoken of as being "true" except God the Father (see 3:33 and note; 8:26) and Jesus (here). Once more John ranks Jesus with God.

*Q: Do you agree that the notion of only God being spoken of as true in this gospel and our Lord being called that too can be used as an argument for our Lord's deity? I just wonder if it was the intention of John for us to see make such interpretation. How are our Lord's words from verse 19 linked to what He said in verse 18? Meyer comes up with a reasonable explanation:

John 7:19. There is no ground for supposing that some unrecorded words on the part of the Jews (Kuinoel and many others), or some act (Olshausen), intervened between John 7:18-19. The chain of thought is this: Jesus in John 7:16-18 completely answered the question of the Jews, John 7:15. But now He Himself assumes the offensive, putting before them the real and malicious ground of all their assaults and oppression, namely, their purpose to bring about His death; and He shows them how utterly unjustifiable, on their part, this purpose is.

*A: It is part of the truth that may be deduced here, but the main point to be made is that our Lord sought the Father's glory, not His own, just as He said, and the main application is that we too ought to be out for our Lord's glory and not our own. That is an obvious point but so obvious as to be easy to miss – yet it is of the greatest importance. As to Meyer, I'm not sure I understand the reasoning. I will say that verse 19 is an appropriate capstone to our Lord's words here as I read things, because after telling the crowd the truth, He then finishes by demonstrating their lack of response to it: they don't care about the truth – if they did they would believe Moses (the Law) and that would have led them to accept Him. Instead, for them this is all a show, and their true desire is to kill Him in order to remove competition to their authority – the only ones they are interested in glorifying, namely, themselves.

John 7:20-23 (NASB)

20 The crowd answered, "You have a demon! Who seeks to kill You?" 21 Jesus answered them, "I did one deed, and you all marvel. 22 For this reason Moses has given you circumcision (not because it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and on the Sabbath you circumcise a man. 23 If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath so that the Law of Moses will not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made an entire man well on the Sabbath?"

*Q: a) Having read some commentaries on these verses, I think I understand the main thrust of our Lord's argument here. What I'm unsure about is the relationship between the circumcision and the healing. It seems our Lord here means: "If a man can be circumcised on the Sabbath, how then can he not be fully healed?" And so consequently circumcision tends to be explained in terms of a "lesser healing". Meyer describes the circumcision in the following way: "but with reference to the purification and sanctification wrought upon the member by the removal of the foreskin.[265] In this theocratic sense, a single member was made whole by circumcision; but Christ, by healing the paralytic, had made an entire man whole, i.e. the whole body of a man. The argument in justification, accordingly, is one a minori ad majus; if it was right not to omit the lesser work on the Sabbath, how much more the greater and more important!"

And so in his view the argument proceeds from lesser to greater. Bengel expresses a different view - that an external act and so a symbol of true healing - the circumcision is set against the actual and complete healing: "It is not the whole body of the man, which is opposed to that part, which is circumcised; for a consequence, in the case of an admission, does not proceed from less

to greater, in this way, It is lawful to circumcise a part, therefore it is lawful to cure the whole body. But it is the whole man, body and soul, ch. John 5:14,[185] whose healing is a benefit much greater, and, so much more becoming the Sabbath and sanctioned by the law, than the external act of circumcision regarded by itself, or even circumcision, even though it should be regarded as a sacrament. For circumcision is a mean: healing of the soul is an end."

Pulpit proposes also that the sanitary purpose of circumcision, believed by the Jews, comes into equation here also: "Circumcision was the removal of an offending portion of the human body, the sanitary purpose of which rite was strenuously believed in, but it was a partial cleansing and actual excision of one member of the body. To accomplish this purpose Moses, by his enactment, regarded even the sabbatic law as subsidiary. Why, then are the Jews wrathful with Jesus for making an entire man - a whole physical frame - healthful on the sabbath?"

What is your take on this? It would seem that Bengel's take is reasonable, but I'm not sure if the other two should be applied here also.

*A: I think rather that the point is that circumcision is "work" and that "work" is banned on the Sabbath. That is the point of commonality since healing is also "work". But our Lord points out that there were always exceptions – for circumcision in this example – so that the absolutist understanding of the Sabbath by the legalists is entirely wrong.

b) NIV SB: crowd. Probably the pilgrims who had come up to Jerusalem for the festival-different from "the Jewish leaders" who were trying to kill Jesus (v. 1) and the Jerusalem mob that knew of the plot (see v. 25 and note).

*Q: Do you agree with the distinction presented by the NIV SB here between the crowd, the Jewish leaders and the Jerusalem mob?

*A: John presents a composite picture; no doubt there were people in all of the categories as discussed in previous Q/A above. One additional point to make, however, is that just because certain people said to our Lord "You have a demon! Who seeks to kill You?", does not mean that many of them who joined in with this refusal hadn't heard the rumors to the effect that He was correct about what He says here – or even didn't have sure and personal knowledge of that fact. It's a mistake to think that people in the Bible who are not believers speaking in circumstances of inspiration are always telling the truth.

*Q: c) NIV SB: 7:22 circumcision. The requirement of circumcision was included in the law Moses gave (see Ex 12:44, 48 and note; Lev 12:3), yet it did not originate with Moses but went back to Abraham (see Ge 17:10-12 and notes). The Jews took such regulations as that in Lev 12:3 to mean that circumcision must be performed on the eighth day even if it was the Sabbath. This exception is of critical importance in understanding the controversy (v. 23). Jesus was not saying that the Sabbath should not be observed or that the Jewish regulations were too harsh. He was saying that his opponents did not understand what the Sabbath meant. The command to circumcise showed not only that work might sometimes be done on the Sabbath but that it must be done then. Deeds of mercy are in this category (see notes on 5:10; Mk 3:2).

NIV SB doesn't seem to directly address the issue at hand.

*A: If I'm understanding the question here, our Lord attributes circumcision first to Moses because the rules are codified in the Law and because even the first instance of it with Abraham is only known because it is recorded in Genesis written by Moses.

*Q: d) There are two more difficulties here. Firstly, Jesus says "For this reason" - what is the reason?

*A: The Greek phrase *dia touto*, "because of this", harkens back to the giving of the Law in John 7:19: circumcision is a sign of keeping the commandments of God even before the Law but even more so afterwards (another reason for our Lord to bring in Moses here), but keeping all the commandments of God is impossible – which is why the Law leads us to grace, properly appreciated and understood (Gal.3:24).

*Q: e) As for the reason why Jesus makes the reference to the patriarchs, do you agree with the point that just as the Law had to give way to a ritual introduced before the Law, so the Law of sabbath had to give way to a deed of mercy? That seems to be an oft repeated interpretation.

*A: No; see previous answers. This sort of interpretation is a grasping at straws that results from a fundamental misunderstanding of the basic meaning of the text.

John 7:27-29 (NASB)

27 However, we know where this man is from; but whenever the Christ may come, no one knows where He is from." 28 Then Jesus cried out in the temple, teaching and saying, "You both know Me and know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. 29 I know Him, because I am from Him, and He sent Me."

*Q: a) Did the Jews believe that Christ's origins will be unknown? If so, then why is that? Do you agree with Meyer's explanation of this?

*A: Anyone who reads the Bible and believes it knows certain things about the Messiah, of the line of David and born in Bethlehem (Mic.5:2), e.g. But it really wasn't the origin of the Messiah so much as the nature of the Messiah that our Lord's contemporaries were confused about. They all wanted the conquering Son of God, not the suffering Son of Man – and they doubted His deity in any case. But for all who had hearts open to the truth, the truth of our Lord's Messiahship was crystal clear to see:

The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ).

John 1:41 NIV

*Q: b) Again, our Lord's reply is unclear to me. Some say it's ironic, other interrogatory. This would mean that by saying "You both know Me and know where I am from" our Lord first refers to the earthly aspect of His life, but immediately afterwards contrasts that with His divine origin,

by saying: and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. 29 I know Him, because I am from Him, and He sent Me."

*A: The way you have described it is correct. The people knew or thought they knew about Jesus' earthly origins – although they were wrong about the town/land of His birth (Jn.7:42) and most certainly didn't understand that He was miraculously born. And to add to their self-induced confusion, they clearly also didn't understand His response, because as unbelievers (for the most part) they were certainly not willing to attribute to Him the divine origin that is His – let alone the divine nature that is His.

John 7:37-38 (NASB)

37 Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "[a]If anyone is thirsty, [b]let him come to Me and drink. 38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'"

a. John 7:37 Vv 37-38 may also be read: If anyone is thirsty,...let him come..., he who believes in me as...

b. John 7:37 Or let him keep coming to Me and let him keep drinking

*Q: Could you explain both footnotes?

*A: The second one has to do with the fact that there is only one way to represent the present tense in Greek whereas we have three in English (simple: "drink"; progressive: "be drinking"; emphatic: "do drink"). As to the first note, it makes no sense to comma-splice the two sentences; but this may reflect the difficulty with the meaning which the overall incorrect rendering produces. In fact, there should be no comma after "believes in Me", because Jesus telling us to "believe in Me *as the scriptures tell you to do*". So the note is based upon a misunderstanding of the passage common to all versions I have been able to check (i.e., the promise of the Spirit is not a quotation from the Old Testament; rather, faith in Christ has always been the prerequisite for blessing from God: Gen.15:6).

John 7:32-36 (NASB)

32 The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about Him, and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to seize Him. 33 Therefore Jesus said, "For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him who sent Me. 34 You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come." 35 The Jews then said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we will not find Him? He is not intending to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks, is He? 36 What is this statement that He said, 'You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come'?"

I) NIV SB: 7:33 then I am going. Jesus changed the topic from his miracles to his death, to which he referred enigmatically (v. 34).

*Q: Do you agree that our Lord is here referring to His death?

II) If my understanding is correct, Meyer proposes that the words "then I go to Him who sent me" have not been spoken by Jesus. Other commentators (e.g. Expositor's Greek Testament) propose that this is not so and the people didn't know who our Lord meant in any case.

III) As for the Jews seeking Jesus, Meyer proposes that it refers to them searching for Him in the terror of Jerusalem being conquered.

IV) I'm not entirely clear about the words "and where I am, you cannot come" - based on the above interpretation it would seem to mean that they won't be able to come to heaven and leave the earthly abode. Not sure if that's correct.

*A: You are absolutely correct. Our Lord is referring to His departure for heaven, His ascension, and none of His enemies would be able to follow Him there. We have to remember that at this time death meant the departure of the spirit for parts below (Paradise or Torments depending), but our Lord was about to ascend into the presence of the Father in the third heaven (after which time all departed believers are in heaven). So for all the more reason this statement was absolutely appropriate.

John 7:38-39 (NASB)

38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" 39 But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

*Q: I) According to Meyer, it is hard to establish the link between our Lord's expression and the libations performed during the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. Other commentators, however, support this link. Do you think it's possible for us to establish why Jesus used this particular expression here?

II) I know that you take the "living water" as referring to the word of God, so would the words at the beginning of verse 39 - "But this He spoke of the Spirit"- indicate that by the "living water" Jesus meant both the Spirit, here, and the word of God, elsewhere?

III) Meyer adopts an interpretation opposite to yours when explaining the words "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water'" and takes it to be a free quotation, however, as for the explanation of the passage, meaning that the inner change brought about through the Spirit results in one sharing the message of salvation and bringing others to it, it seems to make sense, your comment would be appreciated.

*A: See previous answer on verse 37: The problem is applying "as the Scripture has said" forward with "out of his heart will flow rivers of living water" – which is incorrect – instead of backward with "He who believes in Me" – which is what it actually applies to: we are to believe in Christ "as the scriptures tell us to do", and then we receive the Spirit (although this was a future promise at the time our Lord made this statement).

John 7:41 (NASB)

41 Others were saying, "This is the Christ." Still others were saying, "Surely the Christ is not going to come from Galilee, is He?"

NIV SB: 7:41 from Galilee. Typical irony by John. The crowd doubts that Jesus is the Messiah because he comes from Galilee instead of Bethlehem. Apparently they are not aware of his Bethlehem birth (see Mic 5:2; Mt 2:1; Lk 2:4 and notes).

*Q: Do you agree that it's irony by John? It just seems to be a statement reflecting crowd's ignorance of our Lord's place of birth.

*A: I don't find John engaging in irony; it's not his style. The statement is somewhat ironic, but it is an accurate report of what some in the crowd said in their ignorance, not a deliberate literary device.

John 7:46 (NASB)

46 The officers answered, "Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks."

NIV SB: 7:46 guards. They knew they would be in trouble for failing to make the arrest but did not mention the hostility of part of the crowd, which would have given them something of an excuse before the Pharisees. They were favorably impressed by the teaching of Jesus and were not inclined to cause him trouble.

*Q: Do you agree with this note? It seems that our Lord's truth has made an impression on them.

*A: We can't conclude from John's abbreviated report that the guards said nothing else, but it is true that our Lord's teaching seems to have impressed them. Whether or not it did so to the extent of believing in Him, we cannot say. But this is strong evidence that for all but the most hardened in their religious ways, the power of the truth did make an impact. The amazing thing for us who do believe is how unbelievers can even so push away that very truth that brings life instead of death, even when it has touched their hearts.

John 7:49 (NASB)

49 But this crowd which does not know the Law is accursed."

NIV SB: 7:49 this mob. The pilgrim crowd again (see note on v. 20). knows nothing. The Pharisees exaggerated the people's ignorance of Scripture (cf. v. 42). But the average Jew paid little attention to the minutiae that mattered so much to the Pharisees. The "tradition of the elders" (Mk 7:3) was too great a burden for people who earned their living by hard physical work, and consequently these regulations were widely disregarded.

*Q: I'm not clear about the point that "The Pharisees exaggerated the people's ignorance of Scripture" if they show themselves to be equally ignorant shortly after.

*A: It is always very dangerous to generalize in any case. I am sure that there were plenty of individuals in Jerusalem listening to our Lord who were very aware of scripture and many others

who were not too concerned with it. Such is the case even today, after all. But it is true that the Pharisees felt themselves to be utterly superior, even though that confidence was baseless because they did not understand – or care to understand (since spiritual understanding comes by faith) – the scriptures they had learned.

John 7:50-51 (NASB)

50 Nicodemus (he who came to Him before, being one of them) *said to them, 51 "Our Law does not judge a man unless it first hears from him and knows what he is doing, does it?"

*Q: Did Nicodemus come to believe?

*A: Only God knows each heart, but I would say so:

(50) Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night,[fn] being one of them) said to them,
(51) "Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?"
John 7:50-51 NKJV

(39) And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. (40) Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury.
John 19:39-40 NKJV

John 8:12 (NASB)

12 Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."

*Q: I) Do you agree with Meyer's comment on the transition from John 7:52 to 8:12, according to which the following discourse took place after the last day of the feast?

*A: I see no justification, given the nature of the gospels and most particularly the nature of John, for Meyer's statement: "we must look for some connection with John 7:52". That is Classics thinking transposed to the Bible. The gospel writers were recording Jesus' words and acts directed by the Spirit; they were not creating literature according to human canons via human means.

*Q: II) How specifically should we understand the expression "Light of life"? Do you agree with the NIV SB take on this: light of life. "God is light" (1Jn 1:5), but Jesus is also the light from God that lights the way for life-as the pillar of fire lit the way for the Israelites (see Ex 13:21 and note; Ne 9:12). Cf. Ro 13:11-14; Eph 5:8-14; 1Th 5:4-8; 1Jn 1:5-7; 2:9-11. Some commentators interpret this expression by referring back to the Feast of the Tabernacles, but those interpretations didn't seem convincing and perhaps a more general sense is meant here. Meyer says it is not identical with salvation.

*A: I agree. The grammatical issue is what to do with the genitive. In English, "of" covers a lot of ground, but the genitive in Greek (and comparable Hebrew construct construction) are even more flexible and used in ways we don't really employ in English. If I were to expand this phrase

it would be as follows: "I am the Light which has/gives Life", taking the genitive as essentially objective.

John 8:14 (NASB)

14 Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from or where I am going.

*Q: How to reconcile our Lord's words from this verse - "Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true" - with His words from John 5:31 (NASB): "If I alone testify about Myself, My testimony is not true." So if my understanding is correct, Meyer sees these words as being spoken in our Lord's deity, or referring back to His deity: "Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true - for I existed as God from eternity past (John 1:1) , I came to the earth having taken on my humanity and I will leave this earthly abode and come back to heaven - because I am God. And because I am God, I can testify concerning myself".

This does make sense, but please correct as appropriate. Following this lead we could then conclude that John 5:31 is spoken from our Lord's humanity and it does seem to make sense too, because our Lord doesn't support His testimony on His own divinity, as He does in John 8:14, but rather on the Father's testimony:

John 5:31-32 (NASB)

31 "If I alone testify about Myself, My testimony is not true. 32 There is another who testifies of Me, and I know that the testimony which He gives about Me is true.

Jesus has shown He has fulfilled the Law, since He has the Father testifying of Him (John 5:31) and this testimony He used to support the veracity of His words speaking as a human being under the Law and in John 5:31. In John 8:14, however, our Lord speaks as the One who is divine and whose testimony, by virtue of being divine, must be true.

*A: Nicely done. I will note that "If I am testifying about Myself, my testimony is not true" as a conditional – that is what it is, after all ("*if*"): our Lord was in fact *not* testifying about Himself. The Spirit was the One doing the testifying through miracles, signs and wonders, and by making the truth clear in the hearts of the listeners. And the Father who authorized these things was testifying too. But our Lord was not actually testifying or witnessing to Himself.

John 8:15-16 (NASB)

15 You judge according to the flesh; I am not judging anyone. 16 But even if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone in it, but I and the Father who sent Me.

*Q: I'm not entirely clear about Meyer's distinction between the subjective and objective norm. If my understanding of his notes is correct, Meyer reconciles our Lord's words from verse 15 "I am not judging anyone" with the word from the beginning of verse 16 "But even if I do judge" by saying that the main purpose of our Lord's first advent was not to judge (John 12:47), but there would inevitably occur situations when His opposition to sin and all that is evil would have to be

expressed. This sounds reasonable, but any remarks from you would be appreciated, particularly as numerous explanations of this verse have been offered and the reconciliation of verses 15 and 16 has clearly caused difficulties. Do you agree with Meyer's rejection of all the attempts to harmonize these two verses by adding a condition to verse 15, such as "I am not judging anyone - as you do, according to the flesh"? This is also NIV SB interpretation: 8:15 The judgment of the Pharisees was limited and worldly. In the sense they meant, Jesus made it clear that he did not judge at all. In the proper sense, of course, he did judge (v. 26).

*A: I think the solution is along the lines of the answer to the previous question. This is conditional. That means we have to consider the "if" before we factor in the "then". The fact is that the Lord was not – at that time – rendering judgment. It is a blessing to us all that God did not and has not and will not judge us for our sins because He judged them all in Jesus Christ – otherwise no one could be saved. But the time for judgment will come . . . when He returns. The Church will be judged for reward at the second advent (and the millennial believers at the end of the Millennium); all unbelievers will be judged at the Last Judgment – by Jesus Christ – for their lack of faith. But He was not judging anyone then. Since He is the perfect Son of God, had He done so, His judgment would have been "true" and just. With these words our Lord affirms His credentials as the just Judge of all, all judgment having been committed to Him by the Father (Jn.5:22).

John 8:19 (NASB)

19 So they were saying to Him, "Where is Your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father; if you knew Me, you would know My Father also."

*Q: Meyer takes the Pharisees' question as a mockery. Do you agree with that?

*A: As is often the case, I'm not sure that I understand Meyer entirely, but I am sure that this was not a simple, innocuous question on their part but rather one asked with disdain, meant to diminish our Lord and His testimony (whatever the individual thought processes may have been).

John 8:21 (NASB)

21 Then He said again to them, "I go away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come."

*Q: I) According to Meyer this verse introduces events of one of the following days, something I wasn't aware of: John 8:21. A new scene here opens, as in John 8:12, and is therefore, after the analogy of John 8:12, to be placed in one of the following days (so also Ewald; and in opposition to Origen and the common supposition).

Do you agree that's the case?

*A: No, I see no evidence of that. Keep in mind that Meyer was heavily influenced by the practitioners of "source criticism", of whom Ewald was one. These individuals were constantly on the lookout for evidence of "composition strata", indications that the text had been patched here or there by generations of amalgamators instead of being written as single piece by John –

which is the actual case.

*Q: II) I was wondering why our Lord said "you will seek Me, and will die in your sin"? It may seem unclear to me - why would the Jews seek Jesus if they rejected Him? And if they sought Him, would they not have found Him? And if they would have found Him, they wouldn't have died in their sins. Meyer says that by seeking only deliverance from external afflictions is meant. This seems like a reasonable explanation, similar to the one given in John 7:34.

*A: As Sinaiticus punctuates it so I would agree: these are all separate sentences. Therefore they all have independent force. Since they are not linked together with explanatory particles, we have nothing but juxtaposition to suggest a relationship between them. There is a relationship: they all apply to the Pharisees; but any explanation has to be one for one. Our Lord says they will look for Him but not find Him. So they must have done (they were keen to have the tomb guarded lest it be stolen and a resurrection claimed), and of course they couldn't find Him. Our Lord says they will die in their sins; they are unbelievers and, unless they were to repent, that is certainly true. And as a result, they will not be able to come to heaven where our Lord is – and where we will certainly follow Him on that day.

*Q: III) I also assumed that it is sin of unbelief that is meant, together with its ultimate consequence - eternal death. Meyer, however, takes a different stance here. Your comments would be appreciated.

*A: Technically speaking, only believers are redeemed. As unbelievers, these individuals have not been redeemed – even though our Lord was about to and now has paid the full redemption price for them – because they have rejected the Redeemer. He was about to and now has died for all the sins of all people, including these Pharisees, but the blessing of redemption is given only to those who accept it by grace through faith (see the link). So you are correct in your theology, but our Lord is making a different point.

John 8:22 (NASB)

22 So the Jews were saying, "Surely He will not kill Himself, will He, since He says, 'Where I am going, you cannot come'?"

*Q: Meyer and many other commentators take the response of the Jewish as uttered in mockery - would you agree?

*A: If the crowd had an absolutely unified response it would be the first time in the history of the world. I think we can posit a range of impressions, suppositions and negative motives to the people who foolishly thought and uttered this or similar statements.

John 8:23 (NASB)

23 And He was saying to them, "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world.

*Q: I) I take it that by being "from below" Jesus here means being carnal, given over to this

world and without belief?

*A: These statements are as absolute as it gets in the contrast between One who is of God and those who are not. Compare what Paul says about the resurrection body:

As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man.

1st Corinthians 15:48-49 NIV

II) NIV SB: 8:23 Things other than death divide people (cf., e. g., v. 47; 3:31; 15:19 and note; 1Jn 3:10). of. Here denotes origin. Jesus was certainly in the world, but he was not of the world. They belonged to "this world"-Satan's domain (1Jn 5:19; cf. Jn 12:31; 14:30; 16:11).

*Q: The point that "things other than death divide people" doesn't seem very clear to me.

*A: Doing my best to interpret the note, it may be an attempt to explain that even though our Lord and these unbelievers were both physically alive at the moment, the difference between them was absolute – as it is between us as believers and all unbelievers. Every day we pray, "hallowed be Thy Name", and holiness, sanctification, is the prime area of distinction. The world began with holiness only; it will end in new heavens and new earth where likewise only "righteousness dwells" (2Pet.3:13); but in between there is also sin and evil. The world is divided – from the divine point of view – into those two camps: the holy and the unholy. We who have believed will be with the Lord, worshiping Him "in the splendor of His holiness" forever (Ps.29:2). But in the meantime, this is war. Every believer thus must always keep in mind that we belong to the forces of holiness, and take great care to have nothing to do with the forces of evil.

(10) For the Day of the Lord will come like a thief, a day in which (i.e., over the course of which) the heavens will depart with a roar, the very elements will ignite and dissolve, and the earth and everything which has been done upon it will be laid bare [for the Lord's inspection]. (11) Since the universe is going to be dissolved in this way, **what sort of people ought we to be**, [walking] in a **sanctified** (i.e., holy) and godly way, (12) eagerly looking forward to the coming of the Day of God (i.e., the day of eternity)? For on that day the heavens will burst into flame and dissolve, and the elements will catch fire and melt. (13) But we are awaiting new heavens and a new earth just as He promised – [a world] where righteousness dwells.

2nd Peter 3:10-13

John 8:24 (NASB)

24 Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that [a]I am He, you will die in your sins."

a. John 8:24 Most authorities associate this with Ex 3:14, I AM WHO I AM

*Q: I) NIV SB: 8:24 believe. See note on 1:7. I am. Jesus echoes God's great affirmation about

himself (see v. 58; 6:35; Ex 3:14 and notes.

Do you agree that our Lord's words ego eimi in this verse refer to Exodus 3:14? Commentators' opinions on this are divided. Some say that this is an analogy, but is not equivalent to the words from Exodus 3:14.

*A: The content of what must be believed in order to be saved is "I am He". To be saved, we have to accept Jesus Christ as our Savior – which means accepting who He is, the God-man, and what He has done for us in dying for our sins. Both aspects of our Lord as Savior of the world are present in this phrase which our Lord used repeatedly to let anyone interested know that He was the Messiah, the Son of God, God Himself who was also the sacrifice for our sins.

*Q: II) According to Meyer the reference is to the Messiah.

*A: Yes, it refers to our Lord as the Messiah, but what does that mean? It means, rightly understood (as opposed to merely being culturally understood) the Son of God, God become man as well as God, and come into the world to deliver His people from their sins . . . by dying for them and being judged for them in their place.

John 8:25 (NASB)

25 So they were saying to Him, "Who are You?" Jesus said to them, "[a]What have I been saying to you from the beginning?"

a. John 8:25 Or That which I have been saying to you from the beginning

*Q: Do you agree with Meyer's interpretation of this verse? I read the whole section and it seems that the second sentence spoken by our Lord has really exercised the commentators - numerous renderings and interpretations have been proposed. What is the best translation in your view? Do you agree that we have an interrogation here?

*A: This Q and A serves to reinforce the fact that those who were not willing to believe in our Lord were further unable – because of being unwilling – to accept the truth of who He was and is, the Savior of the world. For this reason our Lord spoke in parables and indirectly to the hard of heart, and rightly so: so that they might hear but not understand and thus be confirmed in their hardness from their own choice.

John 8:26 (NASB)

26 I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and the things which I heard from Him, these I speak to the world."

*Q: Here both Meyer's view on the verse and the one which he presents in his note, by Lucke and De Wette, seem to have some value to them. I would appreciate your comment here.

*A: See previous discussion. Honestly, it seems pretty clear to me, even in the English versions. Our Lord did not come to enter into immediate judgment with unbelievers such as these but to

present Himself as the Son of God, the Savior of the world, the One who divides the world between those who humbly accept the Father's Gift of grace and those who arrogantly reject it, between the holy by position in Him and the unholy through rejection of Him, between the righteous by faith and the unrighteous by choice. The time for judgment will come:

Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.

Jude 1:14b-15 NKJV

John 8:27 (NASB)

27 They did not realize that He had been speaking to them about the Father.

*Q: Most commentators propose that this inability by those who spoke with our Lord to recognise that He spoke to them about the Father does not contradict the content of the discourse from verses preceding John 8:21, as there was a gap between the two and a new event is described from John 8:21 onwards. Do you agree with that?

*A: I don't believe it is necessary to go to those lengths. It is difficult to underestimate the level of blindness that hardness of heart produces (see the link). The soldiers who arrested Jesus in the garden were blown backwards and all fell down when He said "I am He" (Jn.18:6), but they immediately arrested Him and turned Him over for execution anyway. Even the disciples who had just witnessed our Lord feed the ten thousand were amazed that He was able to calm the storm, because their hearts were not yet ready to let in the entire truth (Mk.6:52), and we find this with the believers on the road to Emmaus as well (Lk.24:25). If this is true of believers, how much more so of those who had no intention of accepting our Lord or the Father?

John 8:28 (NASB)

28 So Jesus said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that [a]I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me.

a. John 8:28 Lit I AM (v 24 note)

*Q: a) As for the events through which the Jews would recognise our Lord's Messiahship, Meyer lists "the outpouring of the Spirit; miraculous works of the apostles; building up of the Church; punishment of the Jews; second coming to judgment". Do you agree with this list? Could the second coming also be in view here, rather than only the events immediately following the resurrection?

*A: The "lifting up" refers to the cross and all of the events associated with it – including significantly the resurrection – which demonstrate our Lord's deity and the fact that He is the Messiah. Everything in M's list follows as a matter of course – except for "punishment of the Jews" which I utterly fail to understand; it strikes me as antisemitic.

*Q: b) Is this another reference to Exodus 3:14?

*A: Yes. It cannot be otherwise because this is the thing which will be understood, namely, that Christ is the Messiah, "God with us", Emmanuel.

*Q: c) As for the words "and I do nothing on my own initiative", according to Meyer they are a continuation of what has been said, but others take them as a new statement. As for Expositor's explanation of the words "and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me" as being a proof of our Lord's Messiahship, I'm not clear about it. What is your take on this? The interpretation according to which the point made here is the union of Jesus with the Father seems most convincing to me, but I may be wrong.

*A: For me, this is a distinction without a difference. In any case, the fact that John, who often does not connect statements connects here with the Greek "and" (*kai*) indicates that the connection is very close whether the statement is "new" or not. It should be understood in the same way in any case as both a statement in its own right and part of the truth that will eventually be recognized "when every knee shall bow" to Him.

John 8:30 (NASB)

30 As He spoke these things, many came to believe in Him.

*Q: Another difficult verse. As evident from my questions above, Jesus' words in this chapter and His train of thought are often difficult to follow. Maybe the Jews did understand what He meant in all that He said, but it's still hard for me to comprehend how they would believe in Him following such complex soliloquy and yet often fail to believe following a miracle. Given the responses of those to whom our Lord was speaking which follow immediately after this verse, it is hard to see whether genuine, saving faith is meant here, or not and opinions of commentators are divided on this. Which view is better here and why? Perhaps the view according to which the word of our Lord divide men and cause more resistance from those whose hearts are hardened against the truth and cause others to believe Him could be a good explanation.

*A: That is part of the answer. Not all who believe persevere in faith. Like the seed which falls on shallow ground, they receive the Word with joy, but quickly fall away at the least provocation. This was certainly true of many of the "disciples" of our Lord (cf. Jn.6:60ff. for a notable example of this phenomenon). It also has to factored in here that John is, naturally enough, chronicling responses which are true for some of the crowd, even "many" as here, but not for all. As to following the Lord's discourse, keep in mind that all of chapter eight should be considered in regard to the belief mentioned here (not vv.1-11 which are not part of the Bible, of course); also, John is not telling us absolutely everything that our Lord said – as we know from comparison to the other gospels and John's own testimony (Jn.21:25). What we know for certain is that this verse is true. The Spirit can take the smallest part of the "good news" and bring a willing person to salvation (cf. Acts 10:40-44).

John 8:31-33 (NASB)

31 So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then

you are truly disciples of Mine; 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."
33 They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, 'You will become free'?"

*Q: How is it that John refers to the Jews to whom our Lord was speaking as those "who had believed Him" and yet Jesus shortly after says that His word "has no place" in them:

John 8:37-38 (NASB)

37 I know that you are Abraham's descendants; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. 38 I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father."

Similarly, shortly after they accuse Him of having a demon. Please explain.

*A: Again, we have to do with 1) a mixed group – our Lord addresses His comments to "those Jews who had believed", but that does not mean that there were not others in the crowd who had not; there clearly were; 2) some who "believed" later took offense and turned away (as at Jn.6:66); the legalistic mindset and the superiority of their race over all others based on a special relationship with God which alone provided salvation to all by means of birth (in their erroneous thinking) was a deeply held and intimately cherished belief, erroneous as it was. Exploding it, as our Lord does in this context, had the effect of separating the true wheat from the true chaff – and those of temporary from those of lasting faith (cf. Lk.8:13).

NIV SB: 8:32 truth. Closely connected with Jesus (see v. 36; 14:6 and note), it is not philosophical truth but the truth that leads to salvation. free. Freedom from sin, not from ignorance (see v. 36).

*Q: What is meant by "freedom of sin, not of ignorance" here?

*A: SB means to say (I assume in giving them the benefit of the doubt) that our Lord was talking about salvation (being redeemed from sin through faith in His Person and work), rather than being made "free" from lack of knowledge through "knowing" the truth. Clearly, our Lord meant "free from sin and death"; His audience seems to have ignored that entire issue and assumed it meant "free from being slaves", literally, and they found that whole idea offensive. So I wouldn't agree with the second half of SB's proposition.

NIV SB: 8:33 have never been slaves. Appears to be an amazing disregard of their Roman overlords-and their Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian and Syrian overlords as well. Perhaps they meant that they have always viewed themselves as the descendants of Abraham and heirs of the promises God made to him and so have never accepted servitude to others as their proper status.

*Q: Do you agree with this explanation of Jews' words? It seems almost difficult to believe how they could just ignore such long-lasting portions of their history.

*A: While it is clear that our Lord's audience did not think of this freedom/slavery issue in a spiritual sense it is equally clear that this is precisely how He meant it (see previous Q/A): everyone born is born in slavery to sin and that requires God's redemption from the bondage of sin to remedy. Such redemption could only be accomplished by the sacrifice of a Substitute as every aspect of the Law teaches and demonstrates. The fact that our Lord's listeners completely overlooked this essential truth demonstrates that they felt that by being Jewish and "keeping the Law" they were righteous and redeemed – when in fact the Law cannot be kept and physical birth does not result in salvation (Paul's argument in Romans is directed precisely towards these same misapprehensions).

John 8:35-36 (NASB)

35 The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever.³⁶ So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

*Q: There are various interpretations of these verses and different opinions of commentators as to who is meant by the first "son", but it seems that the most natural way to take these verses would be: "The slave of sin will does not remain in the Kingdom of God, but Christ - God's son - does remain forever. And if it is He who makes you free, then you will truly be free". Let me know what you think.

*A: This part of the translation in NASB, "the son does remain forever", is not part of the text. It is absent in Sinaiticus and some other witnesses (notably W). One can see how it was added – to contrast with "the slave". But as your question makes clear, trying to figure out what it might mean or why it is here is problematic, and that is further proof that it is not actually part of the Word.

John 8:37 (NASB)

37 I know that you are Abraham's descendants; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you.

*Q: Meyer, together with other commentators, explains here why the belief expressed in verse 31 was only transitory. So he interprets that true faith was meant in verse 31, but it was very feeble, as Christ's word made no progress in them.

*A: Again, it's the combination of a mixed audience and seed fallen on rocky ground.

John 8:41 (NASB)

41 You are doing the deeds of your father." They said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God."

NIV SB: 8:41 illegitimate. May have been a slander aimed at Jesus.

*Q: Do you agree that this could have been a slander aimed at Jesus? According to Cambridge Bible such a slander on our Lord did not come about until the second century.

*A: The point is that our Lord's respondents missed the point completely: Abraham's true descendants consist of those who are of the faith of Abraham (Rom.4:16), not those who are merely his offspring in a physical sense.

John 8:42 (NASB)

42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me.

*Q: Why does Jesus say "for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me"?

*A: The Greek conjunction *gar* ("for") tells us that this is an explanation or proof that God is not their Father – for if He were, their attitude towards our Lord would have been one of love and acceptance rather than bitter resistance to the truth He was speaking.

John 8:44 (NASB)

44 You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

*Q: What is John referring to by saying "He was a murderer from the beginning"? Do you agree with Meyer that man's fall is meant here? Is it possible that Satan's fall is alluded to here by our Lord?

*A: I wouldn't want to rule out the fall, nor Cain's murder of Abel, nor Satan's revolt: All three result in the death of others through willful action that has total disregard for the death caused: 1) the fallen angels are irrevocably doomed to the lake of fire; 2) mankind is doomed to physical death at the end of life because of spiritual death and thus resultant second death – absent salvation by grace through faith; 3) Abel's physical life was taken away from him – with Cain's actions undoubtedly being egged on by the evil one. This is the devil's pattern from the beginning (and all three of these actions were in the distant past from the point when our Lord made this remark and so are part of the "beginning" of all created things). I don't think it is necessary (or helpful) to choose. Anyone giving serious consideration to our Lord's words at the time would probably have thought of all three.

John 8:45-46 (NASB)

45 But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. 46 Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?

*Q: Why does our Lord ask the Jews "Which one of you convicts Me of sin?" following His words from verse 45? Is it to show that all that He has is entirely credible?

*A: Given that our Lord is entirely sinless, this is a fair question to ask. Those who opposed Him no doubt felt – or least postured – as if He were wrong in some way. But that would have made Him fallible . . . and sinful. But if a person cannot be demonstrated to have ever committed a single sin, then how would His words possibly be anything but the truth? So He

must be telling the truth – otherwise they would be able to find some error in Him (and they were certainly trying hard to do so). So yes, you are correct: this is all about verifying that He IS the truth – and yet they refused to believe Him even so.

John 8:49 (NASB)

49 Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me.

*Q: Some commentators suggest that we should understand the words "and you dishonour Me" as also implying the dishonouring of the Father, so the meaning would be: "I do not have a demon; but I honour my Father and you dishonour Me - and you, by dishonouring Me, dishonour Him also, as I have come from Him and am in perfect union with Him (as the whole discourse also shows)". What do you think?

*A: Since our Lord tells us elsewhere, "I and my Father are one" (Jn.10:30), that is certainly logically correct. However, the statement here seems straightforward enough. Our Lord was "doing what He should do / giving honor where honor was due", but His adversaries were not, for they were not honoring Him, although He is the Savior of the world and due every bit of honor we can summon up.

John 8:50 (NASB)

50 But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks and judges.

*Q: Should we understand our Lord's words here as meaning: "Although you dishonour me (verse 49), I do not seek My glory - so I will not argue with you about this. However, my Father does seek His glory and He does judge"?

*A: Again, it seems pretty straightforward to me that our Lord is presenting Himself as the Vessel of the Father's Will, not looking to advance His own interests or agenda but having completely subordinated Himself to the Father's plan of salvation, coming into the world as the Substitute for our sins – on which the entire plan depends absolutely. NIV has "seeks *it*" here and that is correct. There is no "it" in the Greek but in Greek the direct object is often left out if it is obvious from the context as is the case here. Our Lord was doing what He calls us to do, namely, to put aside our own interests and trust the Father that by doing His Will we are advancing our own reward as well as benefitting the Church of Jesus Christ. The Father is the One who will glorify us as He has glorified our Lord in His humanity; He is the Judge of all things and has committed that judgment in our case to the Son. If we seek the Son's glory, ours will be forthcoming; if we trust Him to do the judging, we will receive a much better judgment when we stand before Him on that great day to come.

John 8:51 (NASB)

51 Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death."

*Q: Commentators don't seem to discuss the link between this verse and the previous one, except some speculations on the connection with verse 31. I thought that what Jesus could have meant here is that whoever keeps His word will never see death and so will be able to gain God's

acceptance in the judgment described in verse 50 - do you think that is possible? That would make our Lord's point resulting directly from what He has just said.

*A: Our Lord is the truth; He is the Word. Holding onto Him – faith in Him, His Person and His work – is the only way to avoid the second death.

John 8:56 (NASB)

56 Your father Abraham rejoiced [a]to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."

a. John 8:56 Lit in order that he might see

*Q: Which reading is correct here? Should we understand that our Lord here refers to time in the past when Abraham was looking forward to His appearance? Do you agree with Meyer here who explains that Abraham understood the messianic character of God's promises to Abraham?

*A: The footnote translation may be more "literal" but it obscures the true meaning which NASB brings out: the purpose clause (in form) expresses the intention or the object of the joy.

*Q: How should we understand the words "Abraham rejoiced to see My day"? Was Abraham aware that Messiah was coming? Regarding this you wrote:

Abraham is only "dead" from the point of view of limited human beings. He is in the third heaven with all of the other departed elect, and he is observing events as they all are. He rejoiced as all in heaven did to see the coming of the Son of Man. Jesus uses this point to refute the whole incorrect mind-set of His accusers who do not actually believe in God and who consider Abraham "dead" -- but he is very much alive. But in your email response regarding the interim state you wrote (<http://ichthys.com/mail-interim%20state.htm>):

The parable of Lazarus and the rich man is indeed key to this discussion vis-a-vis Hades, but I do not think that it implies any particular knowledge of what is transpiring on the earth. Abraham can see Torments, and the rich man can see Paradise, but nothing in the parable indicates that their information about what is happening on earth is current (i.e., it comes from what they know from those coming out of the world: Abraham from Lazarus, and the rich man from his own earthly experience).

So how does Abraham know and rejoices about Jesus? Is it to do with how he understood the promise given to him by God? Is it by observing what happens on earth? But if it is through observance, then doesn't it contradict your point made above?

*A: It's a good point. I do think the biblical evidence suggests that now believers are observing as witnesses the events that transpire on the earth. Was that the case before they were transferred to the third heaven at our Lord's ascension? This seems less likely. But that does not mean that they were not provided with some information about events beyond paradise. After all, there were new believers arriving there every day. Still, our Lord is very particular about the fact that Abraham actually "saw" our Lord's day, and I do not wish to diminish in any way this very clear

statement here. I cannot say for certain whether this means that he was made aware of it by report, or that believers in paradise were allowed to see earthly events as is the case in the third heaven today, or that Abraham was given a special dispensation / ability / opportunity to see the coming of the Messiah into the world – but the last eventuality seems to me the most likely. In any case, Abraham did "see" the coming of the Messiah.

John 8:57 (NASB)

57 So the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"

NIV SB: 8:57 not yet fifty years old. A generous allowance for Jesus' maximum possible age. Jesus was "about" 30 when he began his ministry (see Lk 3:23 and note).

*Q: Why did the Jews say that Jesus was not fifty, if He was much younger than that?

*A: I wouldn't get too excited about why unbelievers said what they said. This is what they said and it has nothing to do with God or godliness. The most we can say is that this age may have represented to the unbelievers who said it the average age of themselves and their contemporaries who were presently in power, men who were offended by the truth coming forth from this "young upstart".

John 8:59 (NASB)

59 Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.

*Q: There is no agreement between the commentators whether our Lord hid Himself or was hidden miraculously or not, but the majority seem to be inclined towards the latter. What is your view?

*A: Despite the NASB translation, while in Classical Greek the middle and passive of *krypto* are sometimes used as statives rather than true passives, whenever *krypto* is passive in the New Testament it always has a passive sense. So there is no justification here for the translation "hid Himself"; the text says "He was hidden", i.e., supernaturally veiled from the sight of His assailants so that He could leave without being harmed.

John 9:2 (NASB)

2 And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?"

NIV SB: 9:2 who sinned ...? The rabbis had developed the principle that "there is no death without sin, and there is no suffering without iniquity" (cf. Introduction to Job: Theological Theme and Message). They were even capable of thinking that a child could sin in the womb or that its soul might have sinned in a preexistent state. They also held that terrible punishments came on certain people because of the sin of their parents. As the next verse shows, Jesus plainly contradicted these beliefs.

*Q: Do you agree that the rabbis developed such views? If so, then on what basis were they founded?

*A: I don't think we have any way of knowing so as to be able to state with authority anything about rabbinical teaching at *this* time beyond what is clearly obvious from the Bible. It is a common human reaction when we see bad things happening to people, however, to assume that they are receiving divine discipline, and there is a biblical basis for assuming that the punishment for the parents' sins is continuing down to their children (the so-called four generational curse; cf. Ex.34:7); but that curse assumes that the children repeat the sins of the parents so that cycle of spiritual devolution continues until the sinful stock is eliminated. This was clearly not the case here. Just as Job's false friends assumed the worst in his case, but in fact his suffering was meant for the glory of God, so in this case as well.

John 9:4 (NASB)

4 We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work.

NIV SB: 9:4 we. Not Jesus only; his disciples share with him the responsibility of doing what God wants done. Night is coming. When Jesus, "the light of the world" (v. 5), will be taken away in death.

*Q: Do you agree that this is what is meant by "night is coming" - that our Lord would depart? This view seems to be contradicted by what the end of the verse says about the night, that it is a time "when no one can work", which cannot be a reference to the Church Age. Many commentators suggest that literal life and death are in view here.

*A: Christ is the One sent and He is the One "doing the work of Him who sent Me"; He is the one to restore sight and He is the One who will be leaving. So the "we" is incorrect here (corrected in Sinaiticus to to "I"). As to "night is coming", I take this as a reference to the Great Tribulation, the period which directly precedes His second advent return. The synoptic view of all future history was a commonplace from the Old Testament viewpoint – and the Church Age was still at the point of the event a mystery which had not yet been revealed to the disciples. This is all explained in detail in the first part of the Coming Tribulation series ([link](#)).

John 9:6-7 (NASB)

6 When He had said this, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes, 7 and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he went away and washed, and came back seeing.

*Q: Do we know why our Lord performed this miracle in this particular way, instead of, for example, simply telling the man for his eyes to be opened?

*A: By accomplishing the miracle in this way, both our Lord and the man healed did visible "work" on the Sabbath – to make the point that doing good on the Sabbath day was not a violation of the Law in fact as the dead interpretation of the Pharisees saw things. If our Lord

had not make the clay and if the man had not been required to wash, the issue would not have been made so crystal clear.

*Q: Should we see "Siloam" here as being purposefully chosen for its name, that the man was "sent" by our Lord?

*A: Our Lord is the "One Sent" and the water of the truth that comes from the One sent by the Father is what removes spiritual blindness and leads to eternal life.

*Q: On John 9:6, most versions read "his eyes", but shouldn't *autou* be applied to the clay?

*A: It is impossible to get into the minds of the translators, but it should be pointed out that the definite article in Greek is generally used in lieu of a possessive pronoun in cases where something near and dear to the person in question is involved, body parts in particular. So even if we had no *autou* here, I would translate "his eyes" instead of "the eyes". Assuming this is what the translators have done, then the question becomes "what to do with the *autou*?" From its position in the text, it does indeed seem to go with "the mud", however, translating "his mud" or "His mud" – depending upon whom we think the "his" is, makes for confusing and misleading English. If we wanted to bring the word into our translation, it seems to me that we should have to say something like "the mud *He had just made*" or "the mud *made for him*" in order to do so. But "his eyes" is correct in any case.

John 9:13-14 (NASB)

13 They *brought to the Pharisees the man who was formerly blind. 14 Now it was a Sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes.

*Q: Do you agree that the man was brought in front of the Pharisees because the healing took place on the Sabbath?

*A: Indeed, this is precisely why the Lord conducted the healing in the manner that He did, so that there would be demonstrable "work" according to the false definition of the Pharisees. As to the reaction, it is telling that the people of "this generation" felt justified in finding fault with an exceptional miracle which could only be done by God and in taking action to "sort it out", whereas they had no interest in the truth or the One who is the Truth.

John 9:17 (NASB)

17 So they *said to the blind man again, "What do you say about Him, since He opened your eyes?" And he said, "He is a prophet."

NIV SB: 9:17 What have you to say about him? It is curious that they put such a question to such a person; their doing so reflected their perplexity. prophet. Probably the highest designation the man could think of. He progressed in his thinking about Jesus: from a man (v. 11) to a prophet (v. 17), who might be followed by disciples (v. 27), to one "from God" (v. 33) to one who was properly to be worshiped (v. 38).

*Q: Do you agree that Pharisees' question resulted from perplexity? It seems a plausible explanation - they later discredit his testimony and yet clearly they don't know how to understand what is happening.

*A: It seems clear from the context that asking this man his opinion was a "settle the bet" type of question: since they did not agree, they requested an opinion from him, and, given their reaction to the response, it may very well be that the skeptics did not expect this answer.

*Q: What do you think about "the prophet" being the highest designation that man could think of? Would you agree that the way he refers to Jesus shows progression in his thinking? Or is it more about recognizing Jesus power early, but not stating it explicitly from the start?

*A: Jesus was a prophet; He also was and is *the* Prophet. We find out later that the man did not yet know that He was the Messiah. But given what He had done for him, it was clear to this individual that He was at least a prophet – because only a man sent from God and given exceptional powers could possibly do such a thing.

John 9:24 (NASB)

24 So a second time they called the man who had been blind, and said to him, "Give glory to God; we know that this man is a sinner."

*Q: There seems to be a general consensus among the commentators that the words "Give glory to God" signify an oath that the man should only speak the truth. Would you agree with that?

*A: I don't see any indication of an oath here, but the parallel of Joshua 7:19 did occur to me as well: the rulers are styling themselves as being in Joshua's place with this man and Christ being in Achan's place – whereas the reverse was true.

John 9:27 (NASB)

27 He answered them, "I told you already and you did not listen; why do you want to hear it again? You do not want to become His disciples too, do you?"

NIV SB: 9:27 his disciples too. The man already counted himself a disciple.

*Q: Do you agree that the way the man phrases the question indicates that he considered himself a disciple of Jesus? It doesn't seem to be directly implied and although Pharisees say of him that he was one in the next verse, he doesn't make such a claim.

*A: The translation is in error. The "also" goes with the word "want" not with the word "disciples", meaning, "are you asking me all these questions because you really *also* want to be His disciples?" It is a bit of a sarcastic and edgy response, and shows an amazing amount of confidence and no tolerance for nonsense in this young man. His courage in the face of pressure from the authorities of that time, men with the power to imprison and damage and do all manner of things (remember that his parents were deathly afraid of them), tells us much about his character, being unwilling even to the smallest degree to be ungrateful or untruthful about the

One who had delivered him from blindness. Most people do not have that degree of courage or gratitude – and so we are not at all surprised when he puts his faith in Christ after being thrown out of this meeting.

John 9:29 (NASB)

29 We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where He is from."

*Q: How exactly should we understand the words "where He is from" and how should we reconcile them with John 7:27 (NASB):

27 However, we know where this man is from; but whenever the Christ may come, no one knows where He is from."

Pulpit commentary takes these words as referring back to John 8:14:

But as for this Man, we know not whence he is. It is remarkable that, in John 7:27, they had been equally explicit in declaring, "We know whence he is." Then they thought to discredit his Messianic claim by drawing a distinction between the well-known parentage and home of Jesus, and the coming of Messiah from some undiscoverable source, some hidden place, where God retained him before his revelation to Israel (see notes, John 7:27, 28). While, however, Christ (John 8:14) allowed the validity of their superficial knowledge on that occasion, he declared that he alone knew whence he came and whither he was going (see notes, John 8:14). It is, perhaps, in reference to this last expression that they echo his own words. The supernatural source of his being and teaching seemed to their minds, throughout that discourse and controversy, to vacillate between the Divine and the demonic. The contrast between Moses and Jesus in this bitter speech runs along the same low level. "We know not whence" he derives his prophetic character, or his right to legislate for the people of God.

Others suggest that these words are not a reference to our Lord's earthly origin, but rather to the lack of divine commission of which they accuse Him, for example Matthew Poole on this: this fellow; and say, they know not whence he was; that is, they know of no Divine authority that he had. They were blinded through malice and prejudice. Indeed they did know whence he was as to his human nature, for they often made that the cause of their stumbling at him; that he was of Galilee, that his father was a carpenter, and his mother called Mary: but they knew of no Divine mission or authority that he had: this they might have known also, for he did those things which no man ever did, nor could be effected by any thing less than a Divine power; but their eyes were blinded, and their hearts were judicially hardened; they studied to shut out the light by which they should have seen, and would not know whence he was.

*A: I don't think it's necessary to choose between one or the other. The statement is clearly meant to put the burden of proof of any divine authority or truth onto this man and onto Christ – most ironic seeing as how opening the eyes of a man blind at birth could only have been done by God (as this man points out in the next verse).

John 9:32 (NASB)

32 [a]Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person

born blind.

a. John 9:32 Lit From the age it was not heard

*Q: Is it really the first case such a miracle has been performed?

*A: While our Lord is said to have restored the sight of numerous persons, no one else in scripture is specifically said to have done so (Lk.7:21; cf. Is.42:7; Matt.11:5; 12:22, etc.). Matthew 10:1 does say that the twelve were given authority to heal "every sickness and disease" – that may or may not have included restoration of sight, but we are not told of any such instance. The fact that physical blindness can represent spiritual blindness, something that is only cured by turning to Christ, would seem to be part of the reason.

John 9:39 (NASB)

39 And Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind."

I) NIV SB: 9:39 It is unlikely that the conversation of vv. 35-38 took place in the presence of the Pharisees. The incident of vv. 39-41, therefore, probably occurred a little later. For judgment. In a sense Jesus did not come for judgment (see 3:17; 12:47 and note), but his coming divides people, and this always brings a type of judgment. Those who reject his gift end up "blind."

*Q: This is an interesting observation - would you agree that the incident of verses 39-41 probably occurred a little later?

*A: No, I think this all happened at the same time. There were always people following our Lord around, some with good intentions, some with evil intent, many wavering between two opinions.

John 9:41 (NASB)

41 Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains.

*Q: Meyer provides what seems a reasonable explanation of why by blindness our Lord here means "consciousness of being destitute of true knowledge" rather than the lack of capability to perceive.

*A: Meyer's distinction may make sense academically, but not scripturally. It's important to remember that hardness of heart, spiritual blindness, is not something that happens by accident. It is a conscious choice. Giving oneself over to sin, to arrogance, to selfishness, to an anti-God way of thinking, results in the natural ability all human beings are given at birth to perceive the reality of God and the divine – the "eternity in the heart" of Ecclesiastes 3:11 – diminishing and eventually disappearing. God allows such hardness in order for those who reject Him and any desire to have a relationship with Him to be able to live their lives as if He did not exist – and that is also the case with those who, like the Pharisees, were invoking Him only by name but actually did not "know Him" in any way and were certainly not "known by Him" because they

were unbelievers who had rejected Him. So while the physical blindness of the man born blind was not spiritually culpable in any way (as Jesus made clear to the disciples when they asked Him about that very issue: Jn.9:2-3), spiritual blindness is completely culpable because it involves rejecting the truth which God has written in broad and undeniable terms throughout His creation – that He exists, that He is good and righteous, and that the only deliverance from death comes in seeking Him – and then rejecting any thought or desire of responding to the truth that has been made known, spurning any inclination "that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us" (Acts 17:27 NKJV). These men had rejected the truth that every child can see, had rejected the testimony of the Holy Spirit about salvation written on every page of the scriptures they claimed to honor, had rejected the Messiah Himself in spite of being given to see more miracles at His hand than any generation had been privileged to observe since the Israelites were delivered from Egypt. And perhaps the most arrogant thing, to pretend "vision" and to teach others the wrong way (Matt.23:15) – how would their sin not remain?

John 10:1-5 (NASB)

10 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber. 2 But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep. 3 To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. 5 A stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers."

*Q: Does by the one "who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way" Jesus means false teachers and leaders of Israel?

*A: Yes.

*Q: Who is meant by the doorkeeper who opens the door to the good shepherd?

*A: Primarily this refers to anyone giving the gospel or teaching the truth when they do so in the Spirit to the glory of Christ. By application, we also individually open the door of our hearts to the Lord to accept Him and after salvation to accept His truth when we respond to the truth itself and true teachers while rejecting false ones (cf. Rev.3:20).

*Q: Since in verse 3 the sheep hear the shepherd's voice and follow him, should we take these to represent believers and those who would go after Jesus? Such reading also seems to me to be suggested in verse 5, as we know that Israel has often followed the voice of strangers.

*A: Yes. That is what distinguishes between the sheep of His Hand and other sheep, namely, responding to the voice, the truth, of the true Shepherd.

*Q: What does Jesus mean by "when he puts forth all his own" in verse 4?

*A: NKJV has "And when he brings out his own sheep"; that is the idea, namely, the Shepherd

(Ps.23:1) leading His sheep to water and to pasture (Ps.23:2), then leading them in the right way, the path of righteousness (Ps.23:3), and protecting them from every danger (Ps.23:4).

John 10:7 (NASB)

7 So Jesus said to them again, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.

*Q: According to Meyer, access to the sheep is meant here, as based on John 10:1. How should we interpret this verse?

*A: It seems pretty straightforward to me. In addition to being the Good Shepherd, Jesus is also the Door to the safe harbor of the sheepfold where the sheep are protected. He will not allow wolves or robbers or plunderers to enter, nor will He allow those who are (deliberately) not His sheep to come in. He protects the sheep and keeps them safe – salvation by entering in through the Door (cf. v.9) – and provides for the sheep (cf. v.10). The comments in Meyer demonstrate why I generally stay away from commentaries.

John 10:8 (NASB)

8 All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them.

NIV SB: 10:8 All ... before me. "False shepherds" like the Pharisees and the chief priests, not the true OT prophets (see note on vv. 1-30; cf. Zec 11:5, 8 and notes).

*Q: Do you agree that our Lord has got Pharisees and chief priests in mind here, or are false leaders and evil kings of the past meant here also?

*A: The statement is not limited. This is a case of "if the shoe fits, . . ." – and it certainly fits the religious leaders of the day.

*Q: Again, our Lord says that "the sheep did not hear them", does it mean that the true believers are in view here, which can be contrasted with the goats from Matthew 25:32-33?

*A: The followers of the false teachers and the unbelieving religious leaders are not the ones who hear their Master's voice; believers hear Him – and then follow Him (cf. Lk.6:46).

John 10:9 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

9 I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.

*Q: Here also Meyer stands by his interpretation that it's the shepherd who is the subject, but that makes his explanation of "he will be saved" seem somewhat less reasonable.

What is your take on this? In verses 7 through to 10 should we take only the shepherds as the subjects?

*A: Of course, every pastor in this life needs to be saved and every pastor has as his Chief Shepherd the Lord Jesus Christ (1Pet.5:4; cf. Heb.13:20). But in our Lord's parable the sheep are

the ones who come and go and "find pasture" – it's not talking about shepherds in verse nine, true or false.

John 10:10 (NASB)

10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and [a]have it abundantly.

a. John 10:10 Or have abundance

*Q: Could you comment on the rendering given in the footnote? Does the NASB rendering reflect what our Lord meant here? I'm not sure what specifically our Lord means here by abundance and the commentaries haven't clarified it.

*A: The Greek words related to *perissos* mean to have a superfluity of something, an "over and above", and a "more than one could want" amount of whatever it is. So we might translate, "and have it (i.e., life) to a superabundant degree". Our Lord is talking about eternal life, not merely the means of life here and now – pasture (for sheep) and protection (from wolves, et al.), but the blessings of life eternal enjoyed forever in resurrection in the New Jerusalem. That is quantitatively and qualitatively better than "merely" feeding and protecting the flock here and now.

John 10:12-13 (NASB)

12 He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. 13 He flees because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep.

*Q: Does Jesus have anyone specific in mind when describing the shepherd who is "not concerned about the sheep"?

*A: This applies to anyone who is an erstwhile leader or teacher or pastor, but who in fact is only in it for the money (or other material benefits). This is true of the Pharisees and Sadducees of Jesus' generation, it has been true of many clergy in religious denominations since the beginning of the Church, and it is true of anyone who takes to a pulpit (literally or figuratively) from false motives instead of out of a genuine desire to edify the Church of Jesus Christ through sound and substantive teaching of the Word of God.

John 10:16 (NASB)

16 I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd.

NIV SB: 10:16 other sheep. These already belonged to Christ, though they had not yet been brought to him. not of this sheep pen. Those outside Judaism. Here is a glimpse of the future worldwide scope of the church. one flock. All God's people have the same Shepherd (see 17:20-23).

*Q: What does the NIV SB mean by "These already belonged to Christ, though they had not yet been brought to him"?

*A: I believe they are trying to explain the phrase "I have other sheep". It is unnecessary to do so. Of course God knows what is going to happen before it happens: nothing could happen in this world unless He had decreed it.

John 10:23 (NASB)

23 it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in the portico of Solomon.

NIV SB: 10:23 Solomon's Colonnade. See Ac 3:11 and note; 5:12. It was a roofed structure-somewhat similar to a Greek stoa-commonly but erroneously thought to date back to Solomon's time.

*Q: Do you agree that dating this portico back to Solomon's time was erroneous? It seems that commentators' opinions on this are divided, with some proposing that a part of the original edifice built by Solomon could have remained. Or even if none remained John could still simply have used the name used to describe that part of the temple.

*A: This was what it was called. So this is what John called it. What else would he call it since this is what it was called? Questions of historicity may be interesting but have nothing to do with the interpretation of the passage or of its meaning.

John 10:25 (NASB)

25 Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me.

NIV SB: 10:25 I did tell you. Jesus had not specifically affirmed his Messiahship except to the Samaritan woman (see 4:26 and note). He may have meant here that the general thrust of his teaching made his claim clear or that such statements as that in 8:58 (see note there) were sufficient. Or he may have been referring to the evidence of his whole manner of life (including the miracles) -all he had done in the Father's name (for the name, see note on 2:23).

*Q: How should we understand Jesus' words "I told you"? Some commentators propose that the reason our Lord wouldn't directly answer such questions by saying "I am the Messiah" is that the concept of Messiah was so mistaken by the Jews at that time (who didn't understand and accept the need for the Suffering Servant to come first) that He wanted to avoid using this description. Do you think there is any merit in such an explanation? I agree with your take on these things that often Jesus would not make direct statements in order to leave the room for their free will, but I'm wondering whether the explanation offered by some of the commentators has any weight to it.

*A: On more than one occasion our Lord says "I AM". So His statement is true. The fact that He did not go out of His way to put the matter into the terms asked for by His adversaries who had no interest in the truth does not change that fact. For those interested in the truth, Peter's

conclusion from what our Lord said and did was easy enough: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt.16:15).

John 10:26 (NASB)

26 But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep.

NIV SB: 10:26 not my sheep. Their failure to believe arose from what they were.

*Q: Perhaps the logic of the two is best considered reciprocal, but should it not be stated the other way round - "What they are arose from their failure to believe"?

*A: Absolutely! A strange remark. A hyper-Calvinistic remark. Clearly, we have free will. Just because God knows ahead of time how we will use it doesn't change that fact. The Bible is – and good Bible teaching should be – protreptic (i.e., seeking to turn everyone towards the truth), *not* fatalistic.

John 10:28 (NASB)

28 and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.

NIV SB: 10:28 eternal life. Christ's gift (see note on 3:15). never perish. The Greek construction here is a strong denial that the sheep will ever perish. The sheep's security is in the power of the shepherd, who will let no one take them from him (see 3:16).

*Q: What Greek construction is meant here? The double negative ou and mee?

*A: That is correct. Peter uses this emphatic construction also at John 13:8 (cf. also Matt.24:2; Mk.13:2; Lk.6:37; 1Cor.8:13). So this is a strong assurance from the Lord that if we stay faithful to Him, He will never forsake us (cf. Deut.31:6, 8; Jos.1:5; Heb.13:5).

John 10:29 (NASB)

29 [a]My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

a. John 10:29 One early ms reads What My Father has given Me is greater than all

*Q: Could you comment on the footnote - what is the correct reading of this verse?

*A: Vaticanus (B) reads omicron (*meizon*) instead of omega (*meizOn*) here, but that makes a mishmash of the meaning and is opposed by more ancient witnesses. Also, by the time of writing, there was little or no distinction between the two letters in the way they were pronounced (so this is a very common "sound error"). The word "greater" refers to the Father.

John 10:30 (NASB)

30 I and the Father are [a]one."

a. John 10:30 Or a unity; or one essence

NIV SB: 10:30 one. The Greek is neuter-"one thing," not "one person." The two are one in essence or nature, will and purpose, but they are not identical persons. This great truth is what warrants Jesus' "I am" declarations (see 6:35; 8:24, 58; 17:21-22 and notes).

*Q: The point made about the Greek neuter used here seems to make sense - would you agree with it?

*A: Yes, a very good point; cf. the same exact idiom used by Paul of himself and Apollos: 1Cor.3:8 – "one [thing]" meaning that they are two equals united in one purpose. In terms of His comparing Himself to the Father, this would of necessity include deity on the part of Christ.

John 10:32 (NASB)

32 Jesus answered them, "I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?"

*Q: Jesus must have known why the Jews picked up stones and yet asks them the question - why is that?

*A: To drive home the point to them that they were virulently opposing the truth – and also for our benefit and the benefit of all believers who were watching and listening at the time.

John 10:34-36 (NASB)

34 Jesus answered them, "Has it not been written in your Law, 'I said, you are gods'? 35 If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), 36 do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?"

NIV SB: OT. you are "gods." The words Jesus quotes from Ps 82:6 (see note on 82:1) refer to the judges (or other leaders or rulers), whose tasks were divinely appointed (see Ex 22:28 and NIV text note; Dt 1:17; 16:18; 2Ch 19:6).

*Q: *'El* is a "Mighty One" and can mean God or god; *'Elohiyim* is the plural and functions sometimes as a true plural (as in the case of pagan gods but also in the case of the Trinity in Genesis chapter one notably), and also as a plural of majesty (i.e., true "God" in bold as distinct from a false god). I'm unclear about why our Lord here refers to a scripture which uses the word Elohim in a different meaning than applies to Himself. Elohim from Psalm 82:6 is a reference, as you wrote, to those who have the image of God - free will, but our Lord is God with the Father. So it may seem as if Jesus here quotes a scripture which diminishes the meaning of Elohim that applies to Himself. Could you clarify why Jesus uses Psalm 82:6 as a reference here? Do you agree that judges or leaders are meant by "gods" here?

*A: Our Lord's words come in response to the crowd's words: "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God" (Jn.10:33

NASB). But our Lord was and is God as well as a man. Rather than confront them on a point they have just proclaimed themselves unwilling to accept, He refutes them by citing the passage mentioned, one which shows that all who truly act in God's stead are *'elohiyim*. Rather than being an issue of what the word means precisely (the word is better transliterated than rendered as "judges" in the context, but only for those familiar with what *'elohiyim* means in Hebrew), the point is that Jesus was AT LEAST acting for God the Father; and if that were the case as it had been demonstrated to be through many miracles (the previous proof He had used), then these people certainly had no cause to stone God's legitimate representative – especially since He was and is God's Son indeed.

*Q: Why does Jesus in verse 36 say "'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'", if the Jews picked up stones after He said that "I and the Father are one" in verse 30?

*A: This delineates how He and the Father are One: as members of the Trinity, Father and Son.

John 10:38 (NASB)

38 but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father."

*Q Could you clarify why Jesus phrases things the way He does? Since faith in Him is needed to be saved, why does He say "though you do not believe Me, believe the works"?

*A: If a person believes that the works our Lord did were done in the power of God, then this leads inexorably to believing that the One doing them in the Father's Name is speaking the Father's truth. In other words, by denying Him, they were also denying the miracles they saw with their own eyes; but if they would allow in the truth that these were truly of God, then that would lead them to believe that Jesus was and is truly God's Son.

NIV SB: 10:38 works. Miracles were only a part of Jesus' works. It was Jesus' quality of life, not people's inability to explain his marvels, that he primarily spoke of here (see note on v. 32).

*Q: What is meant here by "It was Jesus' quality of life, not people's inability to explain his marvels, that he primarily spoke of here"?

*A: While there is no denying that our Lord's life itself was miraculous in every way, our Lord is referring to His miracles for they are what undeniably manifested the power of God which these hard-hearted people were rejecting.

"But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you."
Matthew 12:28 NIV

John 10:39 (NASB)

39 Therefore they were seeking again to seize Him, and He eluded their grasp.

NIV SB: 10:39 they tried to seize him. It is not clear whether this was to arrest him for trial or to take him out for stoning. he escaped. John does not say why they failed, but he often makes it clear that Jesus could not be killed before the appointed time (see note on 2:4; see also Lk 4:30 and note).

*Q: Is this an instance of a divine help given to Jesus to complete His ministry? Commentators' opinions on this are divided.

*A: I don't know why they should be. This was clearly a supernatural help of the type we have seen before. Nothing anyone could do was going to prevent our Lord from fulfilling His mission perfectly. The same is true of all believers as well, of course – but our Lord fully understood this and acted accordingly in the perfect way. We should follow His example and do likewise, trusting the Lord to deliver us in every case regardless of what our eyes and ears and emotions may be telling us. He will continue to use us in the plan just as long as we are willing to be used.

John 10:41 (NASB)

41 Many came to Him and were saying, "While John performed no sign, yet everything John said about this man was true."

*Q: Should we understand this verse as saying: "Although John's testimony has not been attested by miracles, now we can see that what he said was true"?

*A: I think rather that this verse affirms the superiority of the Messiah: He fulfills everything John said (validation) and does miracles the likes of which John did not do (superiority).

"He must increase, but I must decrease."

John 3:30

So for those who accepted John's testimony, it is doubly confirmed by 1) correspondence to his message exactly, and 2) being further confirmed by the miraculous signs our Lord performed (cf. Jn.12:9).

John 11:1 (NASB)

11 Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.

*Q: Together with most other commentators, Meyer doesn't seem to take the Mary from this verse to be Mary Magdalene - what is your take on this?

*A: This was Mary Magdalene indeed. This is explained at the link:

[https://ichthys.com/4A-Christo.htm#1\)_To_Mary_Magdalene_\(Jn.20:11-18](https://ichthys.com/4A-Christo.htm#1)_To_Mary_Magdalene_(Jn.20:11-18)

John 11:2 (NASB)

2 It was the Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.

*Q: Is John here referring to the event described in John 12:3?

*A: Yes indeed.

John 11:4 (NASB)

4 But when Jesus heard this, He said, "This sickness is not to end in death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it."

NIV SB: 11:4 Cf. 9:3 and note on 9:2. This sickness will not end in death. Thus predicting the raising of Lazarus (v. 44), since Jesus already knew of his death (v. 14). In fact, Lazarus must have died shortly after the messengers left Bethany, accounting for the "four days" of vv. 17, 39: one day for the journey of the messengers, the two days when Jesus remained where he was (see v. 6 and note) and a day for Jesus' journey to Bethany. But see note on v. 17. glory. See notes on 7:39; 12:41; 13:31. Here God's Son would be glorified through what happened to Lazarus, partly because the miracle displays the glory of God (who alone can raise the dead; see 5:21 and note) in Jesus (v. 40) and partly because it would help initiate events leading to the cross (vv. 46-53).

*Q: Do you agree with the explanation of the chronology of this event and the four days in verse 17?

*A: Lazarus was on his "fourth day" in grave when the Lord raised him (Jn.11:39); our Lord stayed two more days after the news was reported and then departed for Bethany. But because of inclusive counting in the ancient world, the note's conclusion is unnecessary (and in fact wrong, because our Lord speaks of Lazarus as still being alive when the message arrives: Jn.11:4).

*Q: What is your take on the point that these events resulted in glory through Lazarus' resurrection and by initiating events leading to the cross? I always thought only of the former.

*A: Of course glory redounded to our Lord for everything He did. We can say in this case that the resuscitation (not resurrection) of Lazarus did gain particular public prominence (cf. Jn.12:9-10; 12:17).

John 11:6 (NASB)

6 So when He heard that he was sick, He then stayed two days longer in the place where He was.

*Q: Why did Jesus stay "two days longer in the place where He was" having heard that Lazarus was sick? The "so" at the beginning of the verse seems to suggest that He stayed longer exactly because He heard that Lazarus was sick, whereas we would expect a different reaction. I read commentators' views on this and it seems a hard verse to explain.

*A: If our Lord had gone immediately, He may have found Lazarus still alive, and of course would have healed him, but the purpose of the illness was "for the glory of God" (Jn.11:4). If our Lord had come before three days were over, it would have been "before decay" and the miracle of his revival would have been less in the eyes of some. But revival to life after being "long dead"

was a miracle no one had ever seen before, and proved beyond all argument that Jesus was the Christ.

John 11:8-10 (NASB)

8 The disciples *said to Him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone You, and are You going there again?" 9 Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. 10 But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him."

I) NIV SB: 11:9 twelve hours. Enough time for what must be done, but no time for waste.

*Q: This note seems quite general, I'm not sure how it should be interpreted.

*A: Sometimes commentators say things just to have something to say. I suppose it's better than completely misinterpreting a passage (an even more common occurrence). Our Lord is telling the disciples here that we cannot let fear or opposition or anything else in this world get in the way of doing what we are supposed to be doing for the Lord day by day. We are only given one day at a time and no one knows whether or not each day will be his/her last. So we need to see each one as a precious opportunity to "redeem the time" for the Lord, building on the eternal reward He has given us the chance to earn as part of the spoils we are due as soldiers in His cause (Eph.5:16; Col.4:5).

John 11:16 (NASB)

16 Therefore Thomas, who is called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, so that we may die with Him."

NIV SB: 11:16 Thomas ... Didymus. The Aramaic word from which we get "Thomas" and the Greek word Didymus both mean "twin." Usually remembered for his doubting (see 20:24-25), he was also capable of devotion and courage, as here.

*Q: Regarding Thomas' words you wrote that they express "a lack of faith", but both the NIV SB and Meyer have a completely different take on Thomas' words, one which I actually find harder to accept. NIV SB sees "devotion and courage" in his words.

*A: Thomas had a particular bent of character and personality which is obvious here and also when he refused to believe that Christ had risen because he had not yet seen Him with his own eyes. That is not exceptional faith. That is what today we would probably call extreme pessimism. For an unbeliever, this is realistic (i.e., life is grim and bad things do happen all the time); for a believer this manifests a lack of faith that in spite of the bleak appearance of things, God has it all in hand. Our Lord was not going to die before His time – and none of the disciples were not going to die at this time, even after the crucifixion (except for the betrayer who died at his own hand). Thomas' words speak to me of a bitterness of skepticism rather than a zeal for God. The best that can be said for him here is that at least he wasn't a coward – but he was not acting like a hero of faith either.

John 11:17 (NASB)

17 So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days.

*Q: These four days are differently counted. Which is more likely to be correct in your view?

*A: See on John 11:4 above. The "problem" is generated by lack of understanding of inclusive counting and also when days begin and end. Simply put, their method of reckoning where 1) a partial day counts as a full day – on either end (so, for example, Friday afternoon until Sunday morning early equals "three days"). The one thing we can say for certain is that the accounts here in the gospel of John are not inconsistent with each other; that being the case, I see no reason to become exercised over details that are not provided.

John 11:22-24 (NASB)

22 Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You." 23 Jesus *said to her, "Your brother will rise again." 24 Martha *said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day."

I) NIV SB: 11:22 whatever you ask. This comment seems to mean that Martha hoped for an immediate resurrection, in spite of the fact that Lazarus's body had already begun to decay. Nothing is too difficult for God to do (see Ge 18:14; Jer 32:17, 27 and notes).

*Q: Do you agree that Martha hoped for immediate resurrection?

*A: Not at all. She expresses faith that the Lord can do anything – and this must have included the fact that He could bring back the dead to life for He had done so previously and Martha must surely have been aware of that. She is within her rights not to have imagined that our Lord was going to do so in Lazarus' case since 1) He had not come immediately (so perhaps it was her brother's time), and 2) all previous instances had involved near immediate resuscitation – but Lazarus was on his "fourth day" at the point. Finally, our Lord tells Martha that Lazarus "will arise", and the way this is said in Greek does (usually) refer to the resurrection, the eternal "rising" which no one had yet experienced. But the distinction we make today based upon our further knowledge of these matters made clear through the progressive revelation contained in the epistles was not one that could be expected to be understood at the time: being brought back from the dead was rare enough, after all, even if all such cases before our Lord's resurrection were not permanent involving the transformation of the present body into something entirely new.

*Q: Commentators opinions on her and our Lord's words are divided. Our Lord often spoke of those risen as living, so when He says that "he will rise again", it would seem possible that He could have meant immediate resuscitation? What do you think?

*A: Our Lord was gently letting Martha know without actually saying so – because that would have been inappropriate before the miracle itself – that He was about to do something unexpected. In replying to her, He used the opportunity to teach her and us all a very important truth, namely, that "life and death" as we see them are not truly important and are only fraught

with ultimate significance because of the superficial way in which we see things with fleshly eyes in this temporary world. In fact, no one ever "dies" in the sense of going out of existence, and even "the dead" if they are "in Christ" are alive now and forever – it is just that we cannot see them at present. So while Martha was grieving – and we all grieve the loss of those we love – the fact was and is that Lazarus was fine . . . more than fine. He was "alive to God" and that is the only "life" that really matters. Bringing her brother back to physical life was a great miracle and a cause for rejoicing at the time, but the eternal life Lazarus had/has and was already beginning to experience was in fact far more important and more blessed than his temporary resuscitation. Even if a person could be brought back to physical life many times, what good would that be if the person were not saved? And if saved, what would the need of such a thing be? So I've always felt a little bit sorry for Lazarus because I think I can say with a measure of confidence that given the choice he would much rather have stayed in heaven because that is "better by far" (Phil.1:23).

John 11:25-26 (NASB)

25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?"

I) NIV SB: 11:25 I am. See note on 6:35. life. See note on 1:4. Jesus was saying more than that he gives resurrection and life. In some way these are identified with him, and his nature is such that final death is impossible for him. He is life (see 14:6 and note; Ac 3:15; Heb 7:16 and note). The one who believes in me will live. See note on 1:7. Jesus not only is life, but he also conveys life to believers so that death will never triumph over them (cf. 1Co 15:57 and note).

*Q: What does the NIV SB mean here by saying "Jesus was saying more than that he gives resurrection and life"?

*A: Being the resurrection and the life means that He is God and also God's solution to death and damnation as the One about to die for the sins of the world. I'm not sure that is what SB means but that is what our Lord's statement means.

John 11:27 (NASB)

27 She *said to Him, "Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are [a]the Christ, the Son of God, even [b]He who comes into the world."

a. John 11:27 I.e. the Messiah

b. John 11:27 The Coming One was the Messianic title

*Q: The footnote says that "The Coming One" was a Messianic title - has it got any specific scriptural origins, or was it just based on the fact that Jews believed that Messiah was to come?

*A: The same phraseology is used in the LXX in its translation of Psalm 118:26a: "Blessed is *He who comes* in the name of the Lord!" (quoted by the crowd on palm Sunday: Matt.21:9; cf. Hab.2:3; Mal.3:1; Dan.7:13). John the baptist also refers to the Lord in this way (Jn.1:15; 1:27); n.b., the same phrasing is used of the Messiah also in Jn.6:14, so it seems to have been a common contemporary way to describe Him (cf. also Matt.11:3; Lk.7:19-20).

*Q: A lot has been written about Martha's understanding of who Messiah was and many claim that she was not fully aware of the import of her confession - what do you think? In any case her faith seems genuine, even if there could have been truths that she was yet to fully comprehend.

*A: I'm not sure what is ambiguous about "Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world". We can't get "into the heads" or the hearts even of people today with whom we converse; we can only go by their words and whether or not their character gives us confidence to believe their words. I'm not sure what more Martha could have said or done to convince the skeptical.

John 11:28 (NASB)

28 When she had said this, she went away and called Mary her sister, saying secretly, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you."

NIV SB: 11:28 The Teacher. A significant description to be given by a woman. The rabbis would not teach women (see 4:27 and note), but Jesus taught them frequently (see, e. g., Lk 10:38-42).

*Q: Do you agree that Martha's calling our Lord "Teacher" was significant?

*A: This just shows that Martha has been paying attention:

"You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am."

John 13:13 NIV

John 11:30 (NASB)

30 Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha met Him.

*Q: Many commentators, including Meyer, propose that our Lord stayed where He met with Martha so as to avoid publicity, also when speaking with Mary. I'm not sure what you think of that and it's not stated in the text, although this conjecture seems probable given the way our Lord did things.

*A: I agree. Our Lord was ministering first and foremost to those who responded to His ministry – and that meant Mary and Martha, with whom He wished to speak privately before He accomplished Lazarus' resuscitation.

John 11:33 (NASB)

33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and was troubled,

*Q: Meyer provides a lengthy explanation why *enebrimesato* should be taken as an expression of anger on our Lord's part, rather than sorrow, as many suggest. What is your take on this? Some commentators have a similar view, others oppose it.

*A: Etymologically the word means "snort" and generally refers to the expression of indignation

about a particular person or circumstance. From the secular Greek point of view, *orge*, "anger", is the fundamental emotion. From the biblical point of view, anger and fear constitute the two emotional poles representing respectively emotion that wants to reach out versus emotion that wishes to pull back (cf. "greed and fear" which are often opposed to each other in contemporary analysis). Our Lord's reaction is clearly of the former type, but that does not mean that He was "angry" – clearly not. But He was emotionally moved and motivated to reach out and "do something". Unlike us, however, our Lord was always fully in control of His emotions and never did anything that was incorrect. He gives us the perfect example of absolutely correct interpretation and use of the emotions – something we can only approach through considerable spiritual growth and consistent application of the truth in ruling ourselves correctly.

John 11:35 (NASB)

35 Jesus wept.

*Q: Jesus knows better than anyone else that Lazarus is about to be resuscitated and yet weeps - why? Most commentators explain it as an expression of deep emotion on our Lord's part, but the remark regarding the "misery of human race" at the end of Meyer's note is interesting.

*A: We have all lost loved ones. We probably have all lost loved ones who were believers. We know that they are happy – beyond measure with the Lord. We know that we will be with them in His presence forever. We know – through faith and trusting the Lord – that it is all being worked out for the good. And we know that these wonders are close, merely the blink of an eye away. And yet we cry. Why? Does it mean that we lack faith? In many cases not at all. Death, the loss of a loved one, occasions grief, and grief brings tears. Our Lord shows in this reaction that He is every bit as human as we are – while also being God. That is a marvelous affirmation of the goodness and grace of God, and we should not seek to complicate it by trying to make it something other than what it is. He endured what we endure – only perfectly so. He is, in His humanity, as we are – and what He now is in resurrection, so we too shall be . . . without tears for ever more (Rev.7:17; 21:4).

John 11:41-42 (NASB)

41 So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised His eyes, and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. 42 I knew that You always hear Me; but because of the people standing around I said it, so that they may believe that You sent Me."

*Q: Which words does our Lord refer to when He says "but because of the people standing around I said it"? Is the thanksgiving to the Father from the previous verse meant here?

*A: Greek very often leaves out obvious objects, both direct and indirect, in places where in English we would need at least a pronoun as a place-holder. Here the best English place-holder would be "this", not "it", because "this" is more immediate and would make it clear that our Lord is referring to everything He has just said.

John 11:45-46 (NASB)

45 Therefore many of the Jews who came to Mary, and saw what He had done, believed in Him.

46 But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them the things which Jesus had done.

*Q: Meyer makes an interesting point that the Jews who went to Pharisees believed also, I assumed they went there with an evil intent. Others, however, consider the other option as possible too.

*A: I agree with your initial idea. Verse 46 states only that "some" went and "told". I.e., "many" believed, but only "some" went and told. There is nothing in the Greek here to necessitate that we understand "some" as being a subset of the "many"; rather, they are deliberately separated by scripture: "of them" refers the entire group as a whole.

John 11:47-48 (NASB)

47 Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, "What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs. 48 If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."

*Q: Meyer makes an interesting point when commenting on these two verses that the Pharisees were also egoistically concerned about losing their own position of power in the nation - would you agree that could be one of their motives here?

*A: That is what "our place" means.

John 11:49-50 (NASB)

49 But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, 50 nor do you take into account that it is expedient for you that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish."

NIV SB: 11:49 Caiaphas. High priest c. AD 18-36. He was the son-in-law of Annas (see 18:13; Mt 26:3; Lk 3:2 and notes), who had been deposed from the high priesthood by the Romans in AD 15. high priest that year. Probably means simply that he was high priest at that time. You know nothing at all! A remark typical of Sadducean rudeness (Caiaphas, as high priest, was a Sadducee). Josephus says that Sadducees "in their dealings with their peers are as rude as to foreigners." For Sadducees, see note on Mt 3:7.

*Q: Do you agree that these words stem from Sadducean rudeness? Could they not be taken as being a result of God's anger aimed at Caiaphas' listeners hardness of heart, since he prophesied?

*A: We only know what is in a person's heart – to the extent that we know anything about that at all – from what they say and do. Clearly, Caiaphas was not only an unbeliever but an arrogant man. That comes through in all the biblical information given about him. The prophecy in the second sentence is made, obviously, in spite of himself.

NIV SB: 11:50 better. Caiaphas was concerned with political expediency, not with guilt and innocence. He believed that one man, no matter how innocent, should perish rather than that the nation be put in jeopardy. Ironically in AD 70 the nation still perished.

*Q: Was Caiaphas really concerned only with political expediency? This is also how Expositor interprets these words:

Caiaphas enounced an unquestionably sound principle (see Wetstein's examples); but nothing could surpass the cold-blooded craft of his application of it. He saw that an opportunity was given them of at once getting rid of an awkward factor in their community, a person dangerous to their influence, and of currying favour with Rome, by putting to death one who was claiming to be king of the Jews. "Why!" he says, "do you not see that this man with His éclat and popular following, instead of endangering us and bringing suspicion on our loyalty, is exactly the person we may use to exhibit our fidelity to the empire? Sacrifice Jesus, and you will not only rid yourselves of a troublesome person, but will show a watchful zeal for the supremacy of Rome, which will ingratiate you with the imperial authorities."

So the meaning would be that God made into a prophecy his selfish and corrupt proclamation. Is that correct?

*A: Your conclusion is absolutely correct. What people think may be expedient is often the reverse, since no one is omniscient and thus can only have a foggy idea of how present actions will affect future events – the future being entirely in God's hands, after all. Those who trust God don't worry about such things. Those who function as if there were no God worry about them all the time. A good principle for any Christian to keep in mind whenever contemplating getting upset over politics – or worse yet getting involved in "social action".

John 11:51-52 (NASB)

51 Now he did not say this on his own initiative, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, 52 and not for the nation only, but in order that He might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.

*Q: I find this event difficult to understand. Caiaphas later contributed to our Lord's death on the cross, proving that he was an unbeliever. And yet God has spoken through him - could you explain this?

*A: God uses all manner of means to proclaim His truth. He uses the natural phenomena of the heavens He created (Ps.19:1ff.); He used an ass to correct Balaam (Num.22:28ff.; 2Pet.2:16); and he used an ass (of another sort) to give this prophecy in full irony of the ignorance of the one who made it.

Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee.
Psalm 76:10a KJV

John 11:55-56 (NASB)

55 Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up to Jerusalem out of the country before the Passover to purify themselves. 56 So they were seeking for Jesus, and were saying to one another as they stood in the temple, "What do you think; that He will not come to the feast at all?"

*Q: The "so" at the beginning of verse 56 seems to suggest that what is about to be said results from the previous verse, but I'm not clear how this is the case in this instance.

*A: As Abbott-Smith points out (*s.v. οὐν*), use of this conjunction for "continuing a narrative or resuming it after a digression . . . [is] very frequent in [John's] Gospel". To translate that, beginning verse 56 with *oun* brings the focus from the parenthetical information given in verse 55 back to the main flow – what all this has to do with our Lord. Therefore the "so" doesn't mean that they were looking for our Lord because of the information in verse 55; rather, the totality of the circumstances described earlier is summed up with *oun* and introduces what comes next: "The fact that our Lord was no longer walking openly on account of the plots led many to wonder – once they had gotten to Jerusalem and began to discuss these matters – whether or not He was going to show up at the festival".

John 12:1-12

*Q: In his note to verse 17 Meyer points the apparent difficulty in reconciling the synoptic account of our Lord's entry to Jerusalem and the one given in John. Luke describes our Lord's stay with Zaccheus before He enters Jerusalem, but according to John He entered Jerusalem the day after His stay at Bethany (John 12:12). Perhaps it could seem that events described in John 12:1-11 were not described in detail by the synoptics, who only mention Jesus' approaching to Bethany, for example in Luke 19:29. What is your take on this?

*A: Rightly understood, they sync perfectly. This is all reconciled at the link in BB 4A: "The Last Passover": https://ichthys.com/4A-Christo.htm#The_Last_Passover:

John 12:7 (NASB)

7 Therefore Jesus said, "Let her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of My burial.

*Q: This verse has exercised commentators. Firstly, there is a difference of opinions as to what our Lord means by "the day of My burial" - does he mean his actual coming burial, for which the remainder of the perfume was to be kept, or does He mean this day when Mary anointed Him, as a day foreshadowing His death?

*A: While our Lord was not placed in the tomb until after the crucifixion, clearly, Mary's act symbolizes that burial. The important thing therefore is that Mary is the only one who realized that His death was imminent, and wanted to act on that knowledge out of her deep love for the Lord – so she did so.

*Q: Another difficulty is how to reconcile our Lord's words from this verse with Matthew 26:12, where Jesus says (NASB):

12 For when she poured this perfume on My body, she did it to prepare Me for burial.

So in John Mary is to be left alone to keep the perfume for the day of burial, but in Matthew she has poured this perfume to prepare Jesus for burial. What is your take on this issue?

*A: The two verses express the same thing. The perfume is not kept (none of it is); it is all expended in order to symbolize the coming death of our Lord which Mary alone had understood – by listening to our Lord's words and actually taking them to heart. This is why the event is to be remembered as part of the gospel forever (and why she is to be "left alone" to do what she is doing / had done without being troubled for her good witness).

John 12:13 (NASB)

13 took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet Him, and began to shout, "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel."

NIV SB: 12:13 palm branches. See note on Mk 11:8. They were used in celebration of victory and were symbols of Jewish nationalism. John saw a multitude with palm branches in heaven (Rev 7:9). Hosanna! See NIV text note; see also note on Mt 21:9. name. See note on 2:23. Blessed is the king of Israel! The people's addition to the words of the psalm, which John alone records. It reflects his special interest in Jesus' royalty, which he brings out throughout the passion narrative.

*Q: Was using palm branches as symbols of victory a biblically based tradition? How did it come about that they've become symbols of Jewish nationalism?

*A: The symbolism has to do with the feast of booths, the festival symbolizing the Millennium which the returning Messiah ushers in. The quote, "Hosanna!" is from Psalm 118:25; the branches also occur in this context at Psalm 118:27, where *'abhath* can mean both ropes = 1st advent; or boughs = 2nd advent. The people were focused on the 1st and oblivious to the 2nd, wanting the crown but without the cross – which is impossible.

John 12:16 (NASB)

16 These things His disciples did not understand at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him.

*Q: Does by "and that they had done these things to Him" John mean the things done to Jesus during crucifixion?

*A: No, this is referring specifically to the events of the triumphal entry. The dative may equally be translated "done these things *for* Him" (i.e., out of respect and anticipation, although short-lived on the part of most of the fickle people).

John 12:19 (NASB)

19 So the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you are not doing any good; look, the world has gone after Him."

*Q: When the Pharisees say "You see that you are not doing any good", do they mean it in the sense of not doing enough to seize him?

*A: This remark sums up all of the prior efforts of those in power to refute, deflect, disparage, suppress, and stop the Lord's ministry. The only thing left to do (these words imply) is to murder Him.

John 12:20 (NASB)

20 Now there were some Greeks among those who were going up to worship at the feast;

NIV SB: 12:20 Greeks. Probably "God-fearers," people attracted to Judaism by its monotheism and morality, but repelled by its nationalism and requirements such as circumcision. They worshiped in the synagogues but did not become converts to Judaism (cf. note on Ac 16:14).

*Q: This is an interesting point - do you agree with the note? Were those Greeks worshipping true God without becoming converts to Judaism? Were they true believers?

*A: There is no basis for the note's assumption that these are not Jewish proselytes. While it is not impossible that they were merely tourists (for want of a better word), generally speaking only those interested in celebrating the Passover as converts would be in Jerusalem to do so. There were proselytes from many gentile backgrounds; these individuals happened to be Greek. The text says they went to worship, so I would consider them converts.

John 12:21 (NASB)

21 these then came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and began to ask him, saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus."

*Q: Why did Jewish disciples have Greek names?

*A: In multi-cultural, multi-lingual societies, it is not uncommon for people to have names for each culture/language. The best contemporary example I know of is the phenomenon of many Chinese-Americans who are first generation immigrants having both a "Chinese name" and an "American name" – since it is too difficult for most Americans to pronounce, spell or even remember the Chinese name.

John 12:23-26 (NASB)

23 And Jesus *answered them, saying, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 24 Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. 25 He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal. 26 If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.

*Q: Please let me know if my interpretation of these verses is correct:

John 12:23: The hour has come for Jesus to be glorified, both among the Jews and Greeks.

John 12:24: Jesus will be glorified through His death on the cross and resurrection. His death is necessary to redeem the sin and resurrection to prove that He is the Messiah and that all the sin has been paid for. This is the central act of Christian faith which will be proclaimed through the whole world and so bear the fruit.

John 12:25-26: Just as I need to die to bear this fruit, so must everyone who follows me - a true follower needs to hold this current world in contempt and if he hates his life in this world, he will keep it for life eternal. And if anyone serves me, He will follow me and so obtain salvation and eternal life in the New Jerusalem, where I will be also.

*A: I don't see anything to disagree with here. Our Lord was clearly using this incident and this request to demonstrate that His death would be for all and that it was necessary for all to be saved.

*Q: There seems to be no agreement among the commentators who our Lord directs His words from verse 23 to - whether it's Andrew and Philip, or whether the Greeks followed them and were stood nearby to hear the answer.

*A: In light of the above, just as His death is for all, so His answer is for all and applies to all: salvation is made available to all by the death of Christ to sin – His spiritual death on the cross – and all must respond to Him in accepting the Gift in order to obtain it. He is our pattern, and to please Him we need to follow Him in His example of putting the will of God in front of our own will, both in responding to Him in the first place, and also in following Him after salvation so as to grow, progress and produce for Him, putting Him and His truth before the world and before ourselves.

John 12:27 (NASB)

27 "Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour.

Meyer: The hour of suffering is regarded as present, as though He were already at that hour. To take the words interrogatively: shall I say: save me? etc. (so Chrysostom, Theophylact, Jansen, Grotius, Lampe, and many others, including Lachmann, Tholuck, Kling, Schweizer, Maier, Lange, Ewald, Godet) yields the result of an actual prayer interwoven into a reflective monologue, and is therefore less suitable to a frame of mind so deeply moved.

*Q: If my understanding is correct, Meyer doesn't seem to take our Lord's words interrogatively here, but isn't this the most natural way to translate the text, in which a deliberative subjunctive introduces a hypothetical prayer?

*A: You are a better man than I if you can understand this gibberish. It exemplifies everything I dislike about commentaries. The Bible's words are very clear whether in English or in the Greek. They are clearly said for our benefit (as in the case of Matt.26:39; Mk.14:36; Lk.22:42), to help us understand that our Lord knew very well what was coming but was willing to undergo the most intense suffering to get to the cross – and then to be judged in the fiery darkness for all our sins – that we might be saved. These words show His absolute courage.

John 12:30-34 (NASB)

30 Jesus answered and said, "This voice has not come for My sake, but for your sakes. 31 Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. 32 And I, if I am lifted

up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself." 33 But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die. 34 The crowd then answered Him, "We have heard out of the Law that the Christ is to remain forever; and how can You say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this Son of Man?"

I) NIV SB: 12:31 judgment on this world. The cross was God's judgment on the world. prince of this world. Satan (see 16:11). The cross would seem to be his triumph; in fact, it was his defeat. Out of it would flow the greatest good ever to come to the world.

*Q: How much did Satan know about what was to happen on the cross? Was it the case that until the last moment he thought that it was going to be his victory?

*A: I wouldn't be surprised. The devil spent eons in the presence of the Lord Himself and in the most privileged position of all. If anyone should have been under no illusions about the folly of fighting the Lord it was him. But arrogance is a great blinder and hardener of the heart. It is an awesome thing to consider that God had to arrange things in precisely that way so that the true free will choice of us all might come to the fore.

*Q: There is a debate among the commentators as to how the words "if I am lifted up from the earth" were to be understood. Meyer, if my understanding of His explanation is correct, takes it to refer to exaltation through the crucifixion.

*A: This refers to the cross (as the next verse unequivocally states); for the cross is the focal point of all history. Cf.:

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."
John 3:14-15 NKJV

*Q: When it comes to the logical sequence of our Lord's words in verses 30-32, would you say the following summary is correct:

John 12:30: This voice has not come for me, but for you, so that you may believe. You have another divine attestation to the truth of my testimony.

John 12:31: And it is important that you make this free will decision to believe in me now, because it is now that the judgment of this world will take place - the judgment of condemnation of those who don't believe in me (John 3:17-19). Now the devil will be cast out - although His final condemnation is still future, the cross will be the point when his power is broken.

John 12:32: And when I have ascended to heaven having been crucified, I will draw everyone to myself (I'm not exactly sure how to understand "draw all men" here).

Also, I wonder if it is possible to take "the judgment" not in the sense of condemnation, but rather the division between believers and unbelievers.

*A: Apart from the ascension being added, I am fine with this. "Drawing" refers to the offer of

the Gift of life eternal which will be proclaimed around the world to everyone (cf. Mk.13:10):

"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day."

John 6:44 NIV

He went on to say, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled them."

Jn.6:65 NIV

On "the judgment", this is the "decision" or "decisive moment" which is our Lord being judged on the cross for all sin – an event which does indeed divide all humanity into one camp or the other, depending upon our response to the cross.

*Q: I'm not sure how to understand "all men". Meyer takes it as literally referring to everyone, not just the elect.

*A: As our Lord says at Matthew 22:14, "many are called, but few chosen" (NKJV). The truth is available to all – through natural revelation and also through an ever-widening presentation of the gospel itself; but not all respond.

John 12:35-36 (NASB)

35 So Jesus said to them, "For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. 36 While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light." These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them.

*Q: There seems to be an agreement among the commentators that our Lord doesn't respond to crowd's question, but rather redirects their attention to what really matters - walking in the light of His truth, which they can now witness. This appears to me a reasonable explanation.

*A: It is a direct response – for those willing to receive it. They are doubting that He is the Christ on the grounds that He has told them that He is departing – and more important from their point of view not setting up the millennial Kingdom immediately (out with the Romans, in with the milk and honey, is what they want). Our Lord lets them know that they should take advantage of the truth He is giving them while He is still present with them – and believe. Because while physical life in the Millennium will be blessed indeed, eternal life in the New Jerusalem is better by far, especially if the former is not combined with faith so as to result in the latter.

John 12:38 (NASB)

38 This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet which he spoke: "Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?"

*Q: Commentators don't seem to be taking "the arm of the Lord" as referring to our Lord, but rather His power?

*A: There is no accounting for commentators. Just as the Spirit of the Lord is the Holy Spirit, the Arm of the Lord is the One who carries out the Father's plan (as arms do work), namely, the Son of Go. Also from Isaiah:

Awake, awake, put on strength,
O arm of the LORD!
Awake as in the ancient days,
In the generations of old.
Are You not the arm that cut Rahab apart,
And wounded the serpent?
Isaiah 51:9 NKJV

Here "Arm of the Lord" is indisputably a personal title (neither literal arms or concepts such as power can "wake up" or be addressed as if they were individuals). The same is the case in the quote in context for all those who are willing to see it.

John 12:39-40 (NASB)

39 For this reason they could not believe, for Isaiah said again, 40 "He has blinded their eyes and He hardened their heart, so that they would not see with their eyes and perceive with their heart, and be converted and I heal them."

*Q: Why does John say "they could not believe"? Since God doesn't deprive us of free will, I'm not sure why John expresses things in such a way.

*A: They had so hardened their hearts that this has become impossible. It is possible to use one's free will to put oneself in a position where options are foreclosed. It is possible to indulge in drugs or alcohol to such a deleterious degree that certain physical or mental functions are no longer possible – at least at that moment. It may be possible to recover if a person completely turns themselves around. So with hardened hearts, nothing is impossible for the Lord. But apart from recovering first, their hearts were past the point of – at least at that moment – letting the truth in. In spite of being contrary to the principle of free will inherent in the image of God, this ability to harden oneself is absolutely necessary to the plan of God and the preservation of the free will principle. That is because otherwise the genuine desire of the person in question might not come to the fore (in this case, to blot out the knowledge of God so as to be a god to oneself and live life accordingly). When unbelievers see the Son of God in His glory at the last judgment, unbelief will be impossible – and faith thus no longer an issue. These individuals had no desire to accept the Lord, but without being able to harden their hearts the brilliance of His witness and the amazing nature of His miracles would have left them no choice but to believe. As with the case of Pharaoh – who had to be allowed to harden his heart even beyond normal human parameters, so great was the divine pressure leveled upon him – so in this case the object is to allow choice. The choice these individuals made / were making is indisputably the worst possible one, but without being able to harden themselves past the point of receptibility, how could anyone observe our Lord's miracles and hear His words of truth and see His perfect personal witness and not believe? That was only possible by them being allowed to harden themselves past the point of belief.

John 12:41 (NASB)

41 These things Isaiah said because he saw His glory, and he spoke of Him.

I) NIV SB: 12:41 saw Jesus' glory. Isaiah spoke primarily of the glory of God (Isa 6:3; see notes on Eze 1:28; 43:2). John spoke of the glory of Jesus and made no basic distinction between the two, attesting Jesus' oneness with God (cf. Heb 1:6, 10 and notes). The thought of glory here is complex. There is the idea of majesty, and there is also the idea (which meant so much to John) that Jesus' death on the cross and his subsequent resurrection and exaltation show his real glory. Isaiah foresaw the rejection of Christ, as the passages quoted (Isa 53:1; 6:10) show. He spoke of the Messiah both in the words about blind eyes and hard hearts, on the one hand, and about healing, on the other. This is the cross and this is glory, for the cross, resurrection and exaltation portray both suffering and healing, rejection and triumph, humiliation and glory.

*Q: I know that you understand that John here spoke of our Lord as being described in Isaiah 6, but according to the NIV SB Isaiah "spoke primarily of the glory of God"? What is your take on this note?

*A: Qualifications can change everything: "You have eternal life – maybe". But there is no qualification, no "primarily" present in the biblical text here which in fact puts the matter as starkly as straightforwardly as it is possible to put it: "because He saw [Christ's] glory and spoke *of Him*." We might add that even if "primarily" were a correct interpretation, it would still mean that Christ is being spoken of, so why the hedging – except as a result of an unwillingness to accept the clear biblical testimony and its implications (that is always a big mistake). And by the way, all who believe in Him have eternal life (no "maybes").

*Q: I would appreciate if you could explain what Meyer means here, because I'm not clear about it.

*A: Meyer is deft at "quarreling about words" (1Tim.6:4; 2Tim.2:14), especially when the point is of little moment. The best I can tell is that he means the same thing the SB means (which is incorrect as just demonstrated).

John 12:42-43 (NASB)

42 Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; 43 for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.

*Q: Was it genuine belief if they were not confessing Jesus?

*A: One either believes in Christ or not. Peter believed in Christ, yet he denied Him three times. The judgment to come will reveal who believed and who did not. Some believe only for a time and then fall away (Lk.8:13); the text says they did believe, but the behavior indicated here does not give me confidence that they endured and persevered in their faith (opposition on account of the Word is one reason expressly stated for losing faith: (Matt.13:20-21; Mk.14:16-17).

John 12:44 (NASB)

44 And Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me.

NIV SB: 12:44 cried out. The words are given special emphasis by being spoken in a loud voice. believes in me. John ends his story of the public ministry of Jesus with an appeal for belief (see notes on 1:7; 20:31; see also Introduction:Purpose and Emphases). He does not say when Jesus spoke these words (they may have been uttered earlier), but they are a fitting close to this part of his account. the one who sent me. Jesus' mission, as well as the inseparability of the Father and the Son, are stressed throughout this Gospel (see note on 4:34).

*Q: Were these words not spoken at the same time as they are put in the gospel?

*A: The text clearly indicates that they were spoken at this point in the sequence.

John 12:47-50 (NASB)

47 If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. 48 He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day. 49 For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak. 50 I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me."

*Q: Why does Jesus say "I do not judge him" if eventually all judgment will be His, as indicated, for example, in John 5:22-29 and other passages also? Should this be taken as "I do not judge him now", as some commentators propose?

*A: Jesus says that He is "not judging them" during this His first advent when the purpose is to provide salvation; the second advent and its preliminaries will begin the time of judgment.

c) NIV SB: 12:47 to judge. Not the purpose of Jesus' coming (3:17-18), but judgment is the other side of salvation. It is not the purpose of the sun's shining to cast shadows, but when the sun shines, shadows are inevitable.

*Q: What do you think of the sun comparison?

*A: It is unfortunate since in scripture shadows refer to the pre-cross representations of the Savior, not to post-cross revelation of Him (cf. Col.2:17; Heb.8:5; 10:1).

*Q: Could you clarify the whole verse 48? Jesus says that He doesn't judge, but His word does - how is it that it doesn't amount to the same thing? Meyer takes the word here as being "the determining rule of the last judgment", Expositor says that "nothing personal enters into the judgment: the man will be judged by what he has heard".

*A: The judgment of the Word is one that is taking place in the hearts of the hearers as the Spirit

"convicts" them of the truth they then accept or, in all too many cases, reject. The final judgment will occur for unbelievers at the end of time – based on how they responded to the Spirit and the Word convicting them of the truth in their hearts.

*Q: Many commentators link the beginning of verse 49 with verse 48 - "the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day, because I didn't speak of my own, but the commandment given by my Father which is divine". This seems logical.

*A: The conjunction *hoti* at the beginning of verse 49 explains the statement in verse 48.

*Q: Meyer with some other commentators distinguish between the content and form in the words "as to what to say and what to speak", but I'm not sure if there is any substance to this conclusion.

*A: I'm not even sure what it means. If it means anything, it is a distinction without a difference.

John 13:1-17:26

13:1-17:26 John has by far the longest account of the upper room, though curiously he says nothing about the institution of the Lord's Supper. Still we owe to him most of our information about what our Lord said to his disciples on that fateful night. One feature of the farewell discourses is Jesus' emphasis on love. The Greek noun *agape* ("love") and the verb *agapao* ("love") occur only 8 times in chs. 1-12 but 31 times in chs. 13-17. Chs. 13-14 take place at the Last Supper, while the discourses in chs. 15-16 are probably uttered on the way to Gethsemane (note "let us leave" in 14:31 [see note there]).

*Q: That's an interesting point - why do you think John says nothing about Lord's supper? Is it because he thought that this has been covered in other accounts (assuming that his comes last, which I'm not sure about)?

*A: John's gospel was most definitely the last gospel, and, yes indeed, there are many things that the Spirit does not guide him to write, no doubt at least in part because of prior coverage in the synoptic gospels. This allows John time and space to give us new information and insights in this precious book we wouldn't otherwise have. The Bible is the perfect size with just enough of everything we need. If it included comprehensive treatments and footnote type explanations and caveats and cross-references to the degree that some folks would have preferred, it would be as large as the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, cost more than most could afford and be portable by no one – and actually be less easy to understand.

John 13:8 (NASB)

8 Peter *said to Him, "Never shall You wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me."

I) NIV SB: 13:8 Characteristically, Peter objected, though apparently no one else did. His actions reflect a mixture of humility (he did not want Jesus to perform this lowly service for him) and pride (he tried to dictate to Jesus; see also Mt 16:21-23). Unless I wash you. Jesus' reply looks beyond the incident to what it symbolizes: Peter needed a spiritual cleansing. The external

washing was a picture of cleansing from sin.

I take it that, as you explained it, it is the washing from the sin which inevitably we become guilty of in our Christian walk that is symbolized here rather than the spiritual cleansing which comes at the moment we become believers? Such an interpretation seems further confirmed in verse 10:

John 13:10 (NASB)

10 Jesus *said to him, "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you."

This distinction between being freed of sin at the moment of belief and then cleansing needed throughout our lives isn't evident in the note.

II) Similarly Meyer here doesn't provide a very clear explanation and it is hard to agree that the cleansing "From the sinful nature still adhering" to Peter here is what is meant:

Hence the thought of Jesus divested of this symbolical wrapping is: If I shall not have purified thee, just as I now would wash thy feet, from the sinful nature still adhering to thee, thou hast no share with me (in the eternal possession of salvation). When Hengstenberg here takes the washing as the symbol of the forgiveness of sins (according to Psalm 51:4), this is opposed to John 13:12 ff.

*A: The note is problematic. I stand by my interpretation: the bath is salvation; the footwashing is repentance / confession, aided by the ministry of the apostles (and all believers) who help each other get back "in the game" when tripped up:

Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.
Galatians 6:1 NKJV

But others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.
Jude 1:23 NKJV

John 13:14-15 (NASB)

14 If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you.

I) NIV SB: 13:14-15 Some Christians believe that Christ intended to institute a foot-washing ordinance to be practiced regularly. Most Christians, however, interpret Christ's action here as providing an example of humble service. Cf. 1Ti 5:10 and note.

Do you think that Jesus did have instituting this practice in mind? It seems there are two meanings to what our Lord is doing:

1. His taking away of our sins which we commit daily, so that we walk with Him and have our part with Him.

2. His humble service, so that while being the Lord, he washed the disciples feet.

I assumed that verses 14 and 15 apply only to this second point, particularly as the first one is beyond our power and a prerogative of God only. But this is not so according to Meyer, who applies both:

This moral essence, however, consists not in lowly and ministering love generally, in which Jesus, by washing the feet of His disciples, desired to give them an example, but, as John 13:10 proves, in the ministering love which, in all self-denial and humility, is active for the moral purification and cleansing of others. As Jesus had just set forth this ministering love by His own example, when He, although their Lord and Master, performed on the persons of His disciples the servile duty of washing their feet,-as an emblem, however, of the efficacy of His love to purify them spiritually,-so ought they to wash one another's feet; i.e. with the same self-denying love to be reciprocally serviceable to one another with a view to moral purification.

*A: Our Lord's rebuke of Peter and His explanation make it clear that you are correct, and that this has to do with spiritual recovery, not salvation: leaders in the Church, apostles and nowadays pastor-teachers, are responsible to help bring the lost sheep back, correct misguided approaches, lead into truth and out of mistaken or false teaching, and generally restore through patience, reproof and sound teaching those who need their feet washed (2Tim.2:15; 4:2). Our Lord put up with the twelve to a degree that defines the word "patience" for precisely this reason, ever repeating and explaining the truth. We who have been entrusted with the truth need to do likewise.

John 13:18 (NASB)

18 I do not speak of all of you. I know the ones I have chosen; but it is that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'He who eats My bread has lifted up his heel against Me.'

D) NIV SB: 13:18 not referring to all of you. Jesus was leading up to his prediction of the betrayal (see v. 21 and note). shared my bread. To eat bread together was a mark of close fellowship (see note on Ps 41:9). turned against. Lit. "lifted up his heel against." The idiom may be derived from a horse's preparing to kick, or perhaps something like shaking off the dust from one's feet (see Lk 9:5 and note).

*Q: What is the origin of this phrase in your view?

*A: This phrase from Psalm 41:9 only occurs there and in our passage. The Hebrew actually says "made great his heel against me". One can only speculate, but because the verb *'aqabh* to which this noun is related often has to do with deception, the phrase here most likely means "acted in an outrageously deceptive way against me". If it does come from association with the verb (as I believe it does), then any derivation of imagery would be secondary.

John 13:19-20 (NASB)

19 From now on I am telling you before it comes to pass, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am He. 20 Truly, truly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me;

and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me."

NIV SB: 13:19 so that ... you will believe. See note on 12:44. Jesus' concern was for the disciples, not himself. I am who I am. An emphatic form of speech, such as that in 8:58 (see note there). Cf. Ex 3:14-15 and notes.

*Q: NASB renders *ego eimi* as "I am He", but NIV SB says "I am who I am" - which one is better in your view?

*A: The former is more literal; the latter is "out there on the edge" in terms of translation, but it does reflect the fact that *ego eimi*, "I am", is a Greek translation of the tetragrammaton which our Lord is deliberately using to establish His deity.

*Q: In the monologue preceding verse 20 Jesus explains what the washing of the feet meant and makes the point about Judas betraying Him, but in verse 20 there seems to be a shift in the subject - could you clarify this? Commentators struggle to provide a good link and perhaps the best explanation I have come across is that it's an encouragement for them to keep their eyes on their mission, so that they are not broken by the just announced treachery originating from their midst.

*A: Commentators have a tendency to find and create problems where they do not exist. Perhaps that is because they have very little true understanding of the Bible beyond superficialities and are groping for something to talk about. I don't see any problem that requires comment. Our Lord was instructing the disciples about what to do when He was separated from them after the ascension, so to me it seems quite natural that He would then focus on the fact that one of them was not really a believer but rather a traitor, and, connected to that, preparing them for what was going to happen immediately. The sequence makes perfect sense. If our Lord had told them about Judas first, they would have had zero concentration on the lesson about helping others recover through ministry - which is why He gave it to them first.

John 13:21 (NASB)

21 When Jesus had said this, He became troubled in spirit, and testified and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me."

*Q: Should we take Jesus' grief as a sign of His humanity?

*A: Absolutely. It shows that normal emotions are very human, even for someone who did not have a sin nature, and it shows that our Lord was human in all the ways we are "yet without sin" (Heb.4:15)

John 13:22 (NASB)

22 The disciples began looking at one another, at a loss to know of which one He was speaking.

NIV SB: 13:22 at a loss. The disciples' astonishment shows that Judas had concealed his contacts with the high priests. No one suspected him (see v. 28), but all seem to have thought that the

betrayal would be involuntary (see Mk 14:19).

*Q: I've not looked at this issue in the way presented in the NIV SB - do you think that disciples could have perceived the coming betrayal as involuntary?

*A: This is yet another indication of the relative spiritual immaturity of the eleven – even though they had been with the Lord for all this time (Mk.6:52; 8:17). It makes us realize the tremendous advantage we have in being gifted with the Holy Spirit, just as our Lord predicted (Jn.16:7). They certainly ought to have had enough faith and trust in Him and enough understanding of the truth to recognize that they – each of them individually – was not the traitor. I think this is sufficient to explain their reaction without resorting to a bizarre theory of assumed involuntary treachery.

John 13:23 (NASB)

23 There was reclining on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.

NIV SB: 13:23 the disciple whom Jesus loved. Usually thought to be John, the author of this Gospel (see Introduction:Author). The expression does not, of course, mean that Jesus did not love the others but that he had a special bond with this man. reclining. At a dinner, guests reclined on couches, leaning on the left elbow with the head toward the table (cf. note on Mk 14:18).

*Q: Would you agree that Jesus had a special relationship with John? Could not be that calling himself "a disciple whom Jesus loved" is a sign of humbly concealing one's identity?

*A: Yes to both: I don't believe they are mutually exclusive. This is a very important point, also. I don't believe we can say that John was "greater than Peter". It's not for us to rank them, and John's contribution to the Bible in the end is much more voluminous than Peter's, but Peter does seem to be much more of the leader for all of his life we are given to read about in scripture. So this tells us that it is normal, natural, and very human to prefer one person to another, even as we strive to treat them the same in terms of fairness and Christian love. We just naturally get along better with some people than with others and enjoy the company of some more than that of others. Our Lord has this same human tendency – but without any sinfulness connected to it at all. He was ever completely fair. So it is good for us to recognize that we too have this proclivity, precisely so that we may AVOID being partial in the way we behave towards others. We can like brother A more than brother B, but if we favor B over A in any meaningful way as a result (i.e., appointing B to some post in the church when A would objectively be better at doing it), then we are allowing our innocent proclivity to become evil partiality.

John 13:24-25 (NASB)

24 So Simon Peter *gestured to him, and *said to him, "Tell us who it is of whom He is speaking."25 He, leaning back thus on Jesus' bosom, *said to Him, "Lord, who is it?"

*Q: I'm not sure what the correct rendering of verse 24 should be. Most versions have that Peter both gestured and said, and then the quotation starts with "tell us", but there are no two verbs

here for speaking and telling (i.e., "gestured and said" and then starting the words with "tell us"), but only the infinitive. Would a translation that doesn't quote Peter be better here? Why doesn't Peter, who has shown himself as not lacking the courage to speak, ask the question himself, but tells John to do so?

*A: It is not a direct but an indirect question in the Greek (so NKJV's "Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke" is more accurate). Perhaps Peter felt that it would be rude or out of place for Him to be so blunt in this formal social situation (but we do note that he is not willing to let the matter go and that is why he gestures / nods to John to prod him to get the answer).

John 13:26-27 (NASB)

26 Jesus then *answered, "That is the one for whom I shall dip the morsel and give it to him." So when He had dipped the morsel, He *took and *gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. 27 After the morsel, Satan then entered into him. Therefore Jesus *said to him, "What you do, do quickly."

*Q: Many commentators take this gesture as a final act of our Lord's love, even towards Judas. Do you agree with that? Is it not possible that it's only an act to show who the traitor was? It's hard for me to know if our Lord really loved Judas or not. NIV SB, takes it as a "final appeal":

*A: This act makes it clear to Judas that our Lord was well aware of his treachery. For anyone who took that to heart, it definitely should have caused a reappraisal. On the other hand, all human beings are aware of God's existence, His righteous character, and the terror of death absent reconciliation with Him (Rom.1:18-20) – and yet most choose to harden their hearts and ignore these fundamental truths. Judas is thus an archetype of all unbelievers, ignoring the truth and persevering in behavior contrary to it out of selfish motives and out of an unwillingness to acknowledge and submit to God in Jesus Christ.

NIV SB: 13:27 As soon as Judas took the bread. Evidently the critical moment. If the giving of the bread to Judas was a mark of honor, it also seems to have been a final appeal-which Judas did not accept. Satan. The name is used only here in John (cf. v. 2; see notes on Job 1:6; Zec 3:1; Rev 12:9-10). do quickly. Jesus' words once more indicate his control. He would die as he directed, not as his opponents determined.

*Q: Do you agree with Meyer that after the Morsel Judas was "given up" by Christ, which explains the possession taking place?

*A: After Judas receives the sop, Satan is said to enter into him. That was not the first time (cf. Lk.22:3). No one can be possessed by the devil or one of his demons without allowing it to happen in the first place, and even after someone has allowed this horrible possession, it does not eradicate free will entirely. The Gadarene demoniac was able to throw himself at the feet of Christ in a desperate plea for deliverance, even though a legion of demons monopolized his powers of speech; his response resulted in his salvation and his deliverance from possession. So blaming this on Christ (in effect) is wrong-headed in the extreme.

John 13:29 (NASB)

29 For some were supposing, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus was saying to him, "Buy the things we have need of for the feast"; or else, that he should give something to the poor.

*Q: Meyer uses this verse as another piece of evidence for his view that this was not the Passover meal, otherwise the disciples wouldn't have said that our Lord could have asked Judas to buy something needed for the feast.

*A: Well, they were entirely wrong about their assumption on the one hand, and had seen enough from our Lord not to question actions which were non-traditional on the other, so this would seem to be a very slender reed to use to support that flimsy hypothesis. And what did our Lord say?

Then He said to them, "With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer."

Luke 22:15 NKJV

John 13:30 (NASB)

30 So after receiving the morsel he went out immediately; and it was night.

NIV SB: 13:30 night. In light of John's emphasis on the conflict between light and darkness, this may have been more than a time note-picturing also the darkness of Judas's soul (cf. notes on 1:4; 8:12; Isa 60:2).

*Q: Would you agree that night also has a symbolic meaning here rather than just being a description of the time of the events?

*A: It is more than symbolic:

"When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness."

Luke 22:53 NKJV

John 13:31 (NASB)

31 Therefore when he had gone out, Jesus *said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him;

Meyer: "It is the glory of His death, the splendour of His *tetelstai* which He contemplates, feels, declares as already begun."

*Q: Do you agree with the explanation by Meyer?

*A: The glorification of our Lord begins after He is resurrected, ascends to heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father, but it is completed at the second advent when He takes up His rule. We can see from the next verse that this is the sense – and incipient future – in which our

Lord says these words. This phrasing makes it clear to us that 1) for the Lord everything ordained is absolutely certain, even if it hasn't happened yet, and even if it doesn't look that way to human eyes, and 2) while we see temporal matters from the human point of view, things yet future (over two thousand years in the future at the time our Lord said this) are seen and felt as immediate by God – because they are absolutely certain. Our Lord had completed His ministry, and His victory at the cross was likewise in no doubt (as massive and majestic as it would be), but to the Lord, a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years as but a day (Ps.90:4; 2Pet.3:8).

John 13:32 (NASB)

32 [a]if God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and will glorify Him immediately.

a. John 13:32 Most early mss do not contain this phrase

*Q: Is it the phrase "if God is glorified in Him" that is not included in early manuscripts? Should it be a part of the scripture? I'm not sure who is meant by Him in "if God is glorified in Him" - whether it refers to Christ, which I thought before, or to God Himself, as Meyer explains.

*A: This is definitely a late addition and not part of the Bible.

John 13:33 (NASB)

33 Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, now I also say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.'

*Q: Does by the place where the disciples "cannot come" our Lord mean the cross? Or does He mean the third heaven, as verse 36 could suggest, where Jesus says that Peter "will follow later"?

*A: While it is true that neither the disciples nor any other human being was capable of going into the darkness on Calvary and expiating our sins – only Christ was capable of doing so and only He was worthy to do so – I take this reference to mean to be going to be with the Father.

John 13:34 (NASB)

34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

I) NIV SB: 13:34 A new command. In a sense it was an old one (see Lev 19:18 and note), but for Christ's disciples it was new, because it was the mark of their special bond, created by Christ's great love for them (cf. Mt 22:37, 39; Mk 12:31; Lk 10:27 and notes). As I have loved you. Our standard is Christ's love for us.

*Q: How should it in your view be explained that Jesus says it's a "new command", what is the key difference from the old one, contained in the Law? There seems to be a general consensus among the commentators, that the commandment is new because it is based on Christ's love, which sets the standard.

*A: In light of, e.g., Matthew 22:36-40, this commandment is "new" in the sense that it clarifies all believer behavior into one single decree: we are to love each other (once we come to love God by putting our faith in His Son). There is of course no difference in underlying truth between the Old and New Covenants. They, along with all of God's words, point to the same thing: obedience to Him in entering His family (faith in the Person and work of Jesus Christ through whom we are saved) and in how we behave in His family thereafter (the Law was all about that in terms of regulations, but love encapsulates them all, rightly understood).

John 14:1 (NASB)

Jesus Comforts His Disciples

14 "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me.

a. John 14:1 Or you believe in God

*Q: Meyer makes a good case for taking both these verbs as imperatives.

*A: I disagree with NASB and Meyer. The eleven disciples already were believers and did have faith in God; but they were as yet not solid in their faith in Christ, their trust in Him (cf. Mk.6:52; 8:17). So the command is appropriate in the second case but not in the first (this is born out by the context which is all about reassuring the disciples with the truth):

"Don't be upset by what is happening and soon will happen. You do believe in God the Father, so have some faith in me as well!"

John 14:1

John 14:2 (NASB)

2 In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.

*Q: What specifically does our Lord mean by "prepare a place for you"? Should we understand it as opening the access to God?

*A: Yes indeed, and the "place" has to do with the place we have in New Jerusalem and the status and rewards that are part and parcel of that "place" based upon our response to the Lord here and now.

John 14:3 (NASB)

3 If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.

NIV SB: 14:3 I will come back. Jesus comes in several ways, but the primary reference here is to his second advent (cf. Rev 22:7, 12, 20).

*Q: It seems a correct conclusion here that Second Advent is in view.

*A: Yes (and not a pre-Trib "rapture").

John 14:4-6 (NASB)

4 And you know the way where I am going." 5 Thomas *said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?" 6 Jesus *said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

*Q: Meyer's note on our Lord's words in verse 4 doesn't clarify them to me and other commentaries didn't help either. Your input here would be appreciated. I'm not clear about the way in which our Lord's answers Thomas. In verse 4 Jesus says that the disciples know the way where He is going and, if I understand it correctly, it doesn't seem that He here means Himself which would amount to saying "You know the way where I am going - I am the way where I am going". And yet when Thomas says "how do we know the way", Jesus says that He is the Way.

*A: On the contrary, Peter had said to Him:

But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

John 6:68-69 NKJV

That was early on in the ministry. At this late date, with the crucifixion hours away, the disciples certainly "knew" that salvation was through Christ alone – the point of His words here. What they have hardened their hearts against is the fact of His coming sacrifice and the necessity for it.

John 14:7 (NASB)

7 If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him."

*Q: Why does Jesus say "from now on"?

*A: Because this is the point (the cross, the resurrection, the temporary infusion of the Spirit, and the gift of the Spirit soon hereafter) where the disciples are about to come to understand fully who Jesus is – and therefore who the Father is.

John 14:12 (NASB)

12 Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father.

D) NIV SB: 14:12 Very truly I tell you. See note on Mk 3:28. greater things. These depended on Jesus' going to the Father, because they are works done in the strength of the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus would send from the Father (see vv. 16-17; 15:26 and notes). Cf. Col 1:6 and note.

*Q: Could you clarify this whole verse? What does our Lord here mean by "greater works" Why is His going to the Father given as a reason for it? NIV SB gives the imparting of the Holy Spirit

which follows our Lord's ascension as a reason, but I'm not sure if this is the correct explanation - our Lord was given Spirit without measure (John 3:34), so it's hard for me to understand how the disciples perform greater works than Jesus, even with the help of the Spirit. Meyer here proposes that what is meant is the expansion of the apostolic teaching, going into the entire world and beyond the scope of our Lord's, which took place in Israel. I'm not sure what you think of such an interpretation.

*A: A previously posted response to this question:

In line with the above, Jesus' words at John 14:12, "greater things", must mean that ministering the completed Word is greater than performing miracles. That is not the perspective of the immature, but the more we advance the more we realize that nothing is more powerful or more important than the truth. And, after all, even during our Lord's ministry (and also in those of the apostles), the purpose of miracles and signs is to call attention to and gain a hearing for the truth. That in most cases even so the truth was not received is telling. But for those of us who are open to it, it is more powerful than any miracle our eyes could ever behold.

John 14:13 (NASB)

13 Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

NIV SB: 14:13 in my name. Not simply prayer that mentions Jesus' name but prayer in accordance with all that the person who bears the name is (see note on 2:23). It is prayer aimed at carrying forward the work Jesus did-prayer that he himself will answer (see also v. 14).

*Q: What is meant by "prayer in accordance with all that the person who bears the name is"? I'm not sure what specifically is referred to here and how it can be applied in prayer.

*A: I'm not sure I'm able to get into the heads of the folks who wrote this. It seems to me pretty clear what "in My Name" means, but it is perhaps hard to explain to those who don't find it clear. This particular explanation, however, makes things very much less clear. Obviously, we can't expect special response to our prayer just because we are intoning the words "In Jesus' Name"; but if we mean from the heart that we are basing our confidence in coming before the throne of grace on our relationship with Him, these words do indicate that we understand and accept His authority before the Father as He has expressed it here – very clearly, in my book.

John 14:14-15 (NASB)

14 If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.

15 "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

*Q: I'm aware that the words of verse 15 are always applicable, but I'm still unsure about why they are spoken in this particular place and what is their link to what has just been said?

*A: From the beginning of the chapter, the topic has been faith, and particularly the need for the disciples to "step up their game" in terms of believing the truth. Prayer is both more effective for

those who believe that they will receive not doubting (e.g., Jas.1:5-8), and our Lord's words here to the effect that calling upon Him will receive a positive reply is an encouragement to believe and to pray.

John 14:16-17 (NASB)

16 I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; 17 that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.

*Q: According to Meyer we should translate "Advocate" rather than "Comforter" - you agree with the linguistic analysis he presents?

*A: The word *parakletes* is difficult to render into English by a single word. It does mean Comforter, also Advocate, also Counselor. We know from scripture that the Spirit does all three things, so what we have here is a deficit in English (or German), but we should not seek to try and restrain the truth because our language does not have identical vocabulary. When translating, obviously we have to make a choice – but when teaching we can explain our choice and also the fact that the Spirit comforts and encourages us (2Cor.1:3-6), advocates and intercedes for us (Rom.8:26-27), counsels and helps us (context) – as well as performing so many other blessed ministries on our behalf.

*Q: Since the Spirit was not yet given to the apostles on the Pentecost, why does Jesus say that "He abides with you"?

*A: The Spirit has always been omnipresent and has always been the One who makes the truth perceptible to our human spirits. Having Him on our *inside*, however, is a most blessed advantage, never to be underestimated.

NIV SB: The world. Which takes no notice of the Spirit of God (see notes on 1:9; 1Co 2:14). But the Spirit was "with" Jesus' disciples and would be "in" them. Many believe the latter relationship (indwelling) specifically anticipates the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (see Ac 1:2; 2:4, 17, 38 and notes; cf. Ro 8:9 and note).

*Q: I take it that the "in" is a reference to Pentecost?

*A: Yes, that first Pentecost after the resurrection was the point at which the Spirit was initially "poured out" so that believers began to be indwelt by Him – and in very short order all believers would have the Spirit, with new believers being indwelt from the point of salvation (e.g., Rom.8:9).

John 14:18 (NASB)

18 "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

*Q: Meyer, together with most other commentators, takes this verse as referring to our Lord coming to the disciples through the Advocate the Holy Spirit, rather than it being a reference to

His post-resurrection appearances. Do you also subscribe to this interpretation, or could the resurrection be meant here?

*A: Not the gift of the Spirit alone, but also the indwelling of the Lord we are blessed to enjoy (as seen a few verses later):

Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him."
John 14:23 NKJV

To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.
Colossians 1:27 NKJV

John 14:19 (NASB)

19 After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me; because I live, you will live also.

*Q: I have read commentaries on this verse, but it remains unclear. I would appreciate your input as to what specifically our Lord here means by "you will see me", which I assumed to be a reference to post-resurrection appearances, but often is taken to Jesus' spiritual presence through the Spirit. The end of the verse - "because I live, you will live also" has been punctuated and interpreted in a number of ways too.

*A: NASB punctuation is an accurate reflection of the Greek. These words are true on every level: the disciples would physically and literally see the Lord after His resurrection; and they would see Him spiritually through the help of the Spirit thereafter. They have eternal life in principle / positionally, something only possible because our Lord came into the world; and they will live eternally with Him because of His death and resurrection:

John 14:20 (NASB)

20 In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

*Q: You stated about this: "Because it will only be with the coming of the Spirit that the disciples are brought to understand any of the new and important spiritual realities (compare Peter in Acts chapter one versus Peter in Acts chapter two)." It is true that in verses 16-17 our Lord refers to the coming of the Spirit, but are not His post-resurrection appearances meant in verses 18 and 19, which could mean that "on that day" refers to Jesus being seen by His disciples after His resurrection?

*A: That is true, but His "coming to us" is not fulfilled entirely until the second advent, and "not leaving us as orphans" has to do with the gift of the Spirit, not His temporary post-resurrection sojourn with the disciples. It is very clear to see, from chapter two in the book of Acts onward, that the "spiritual I.Q." of the disciples increased dramatically immediately after the Spirit fell upon them.

John 14:21 (NASB)

21 He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him."

*Q: What does Jesus mean by "disclose Myself to him"?

*A: As we grow in the truth we grow closer to the Lord through believing His Word and we end up walking closer to Him day by day, seeing Him ever more clearly with the eyes of faith. That is how He discloses Himself to us: through spiritual growth.

John 14:22-24 (NASB)

22 Judas (not Iscariot) *said to Him, "Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?" 23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. 24 He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.

I) Meyer: John 14:22. Judas expects a bodily appearance of Christ in Messianic glory, has in this view misunderstood Jesus, and is therefore surprised that He has spoken of this as having reference only to the man who loves Him, and not also to the world of the unbelieving, on whom the Messiah when He appeared was in truth to execute judgment.

*Q: Do you agree that it's our Lord's spiritual presence in the disciples through the Spirit, which is Meyer's interpretation of the whole passage, that is meant here, rather than post-resurrection appearances?

*A: I'm not sure that is what Meyer means but that is what I believe: we enjoy ever closer fellowship with the Father and the Son as we draw closer to them through the truth, listening to it, believing it, applying it:

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

James 4:8a NKJV

John 14:27 (NASB)

27 Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.

NIV SB: 14:27 Peace ... my peace. A common Hebrew greeting (see 20:19, 21, 26 and note on 20:19), which Jesus uses here in an unusual way. The term speaks, in effect, of the salvation that Christ's redemptive work will achieve for his disciples-total well-being and inner rest of spirit, in fellowship with God. All true peace is his gift, which the repetition emphasizes. I do not give ... as the world gives. In its greetings of peace the world can only express a longing or wish. But Jesus' peace is real and present (see 16:33 and note). troubled. See note on v. 1.

*Q: Do you agree with the points made about peace here?

*A: I don't find the note wrong but I also don't find it helpful. Having a sense of warmth and security, absence of mental or spiritual disruption through confidence in the Lord, "peace" by any measure, is indeed a gift given by the Lord, and one of the most important ones we are given. We cannot always be expressively joyful (when under pressure or grief or pain), but we can always have the "the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding", and which will, even in times of trouble, "guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil.4:7 NKJV). This peace is only fully appropriated by mature believers who are aggressively applying and engaging the truth placed in their hearts through spiritual growth by means of the Holy Spirit when they endeavor to grow.

John 14:28 (NASB)

28 You heard that I said to you, 'I go away, and I will come to you.' If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.

*Q: Could you explain why our Lord here uses such conditional sentence? Does by "if you loved Me" he mean that they don't love Him?

*A: This is a reproach, but one given in love to help the disciples cope with the prospect of being soon bereft of Him: "If you were really loving Me as you should, you would be happy for Me". So the actual scriptural emphasis is on the fact that being with the Father is better, not on the fact that the disciples haven't fully appreciated this.

*Q: Meyer takes the Father to be greater than Logos in John 1:1-3, so I'm not clear what he means by "the absolute monotheism of Jesus". I read other commentaries and the notion of our Lord's subordination to the Father, also as a member of the Godhead, seems quite widely accepted.

*A: The subtle distinctions of theologians often make simple things complicated when they are really simple, and complicated things simple when they really need some explanation. The Father is God; so is the Son. The titles Father and Son express a relationship which we all understand because the family is a divine invention for our benefit. In His humanity, the Son has come into the world to carry out the divine mandate of salvation, and that is by definition a willing acceptance of subordination to do so, one that does not compromise Christ's coequal divinity:

(6) Since He already existed in the very form of God, equality with God was [certainly] not something He thought He had to grasp for. (7) Yet in spite of this [co-equal divinity He already possessed], He deprived Himself of His status and took on the form of a slave, [and was] born in the likeness of men. (8) He humbled Himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even [His] death on [the] cross [for us all].

Philippians 2:6-8

John 14:30-31 (NASB)

30 I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me;31 but so that the world may know that I love the Father, [a]I do exactly as the Father

commanded Me. Get up, let us go from here.

*Q: Could you clarify why our Lord specifies here that Satan has got nothing in Him and provides it as a reason why He will not speak much more with the disciples?

*A: That He does so is significant. Principle: there is no point in trying to convince unbelievers who have hardened their hearts or explain things to the rulers of this cosmos, seen or unseen. The truth is the precious province of those who have chosen to respond to the One who is the very truth.

*Q: Since our Lord says "Get up, let us go from here", does it mean that from chapter 15 onwards the discourse is continued in the garden of Gethsemane? Meyer proposes a different solution: After the summons, we are to think of the company at table as having risen. But Jesus, so full of that which, in view of the separation ever drawing nearer, He desired to impress on the heart of the disciples, and enchained by His love for them, takes up the word anew, and standing, continues to address chap. 15 and 16 to the risen disciples, and then follows the prayer of chap. 17, after which the actual departure, John 18:1, ensues.

*A: John 18:1 clearly shows that chapters fifteen through seventeen were not spoken in the garden. I take John 14:31 as an anticipatory command, one which is not fulfilled until our Lord is finished speaking, but one that brings home to the disciples the critical nature of what is said next. N.b., this seems more jarring to English readers because of the chapter break between our chapters fourteen and fifteen. But there is no such break in the original Greek (chapter divisions are an invention for convenience which only date back to the mid-17th century). In the best and oldest Greek ms., Sinaiticus, John 14:31 is followed by a colon mark, which in Greek merely indicates a full stop.

John 15:7-8 (NASB)

8 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.

*Q: I have so far assumed that the meaning of this verse is that God the Father is glorified by the disciples bearing fruit, but Meyer, together with other commentators, propose that the reference here is not to what follows, but to what precedes.

*A: When John says "in this", typical of his writing the antecedent is not altogether delineated the way we might prefer, but there is a reason for everything. Taking the "in this" with what precedes only would be as wrong as taking it only with what follows. The Father is clearly glorified by the entire process that our Lord outlines here: our obedience which results in answered prayer and also in our proper production and Christian life. It would be wrong to try and disaggregate these things and would only result in sophistic confusion about these important words in a way only scholars might appreciate (and that is intellectual *gnosis* only and not the faith-based *epignosis* which results in precisely the growth that glorifies God spoken of in these verses).

John 15:15 (NASB)

15 No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.

*Q: There seems to be no agreement between the commentators as to what our Lord refers to when He says "for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you".

*A: Modern people, especially "scholars", have trouble with the word and the concept "all". But we are hypocritical in thinking we have a "higher standard" regarding absolutes when in reality ours is just different from the way they expressed themselves in the ancient world. Our Lord is saying that unlike slaves, He treats the disciples as intimate associates so that He is not hiding anything from them – as He was in need of speaking in parables to those who did not accept the truth. Absolutely everything that it was the Father's will to be shared with these men at this time was shared with them. That is a privilege which only intimate associates receive – and, God be praised, we too now have that blessing as members of the Body of Christ being instructed by the Holy Spirit.

John 15:16 (NASB)

16 You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.

NIV SB: 15:16 I chose you ... bear fruit ... ask. Disciples normally chose the particular rabbi to whom they wanted to be attached, but it was not so with Jesus' disciples. He chose them, and for a purpose—the bearing of fruit (see v. 2 and note). We usually desire a strong prayer life in order that we may be fruitful, but here it is the other way around. Jesus enables us to bear fruit, and then the Father will hear our prayers. in my name. See notes on 2:23; 14:13.

*Q: I have not come across this point before and I'm not entirely clear about it - do you agree that bearing fruit precedes prayer? Should we understand the relationship as reciprocal?

*A: The conjunction *hina*, "so that", is most likely an addition. As a result, it is better to understand "Whatever you ask" as standing on its own. Even if we were to prefer the change penciled in in Sinaiticus, we should take the clause to be dependent not on the later part of the sentence, i.e., "fruit-bearing", but on the appointment of the apostles. For we know that our Lord hears all prayers offered by those who belong to Him. It is true, of course, the that closer we walk to Him, the more effective our prayers are.

John 15:22 (NASB)

22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin.

I) NIV SB: 15:22 no excuse. Privilege and responsibility go together. The Jews had had the great privilege of having the Son of God among them—in addition to having received God's special

revelation in the OT. Those who rejected him were totally guilty and without excuse. If he had not come to them, they would still have been sinners, but they would not have been guilty of rejecting him directly (see v. 24).

*Q: Do you agree with the NIV SB take on this issue? Why does our Lord say that "they would not have sin" if He had not come and spoken, if the hardness of heart would still have been there, only if wouldn't have been expressed in rejecting our Lord directly, but rather, for example, in persevering in unbelief? The same could be asked of verse 24.

*A: The "sin" in context is that of rejecting our Lord and His message personally, and thus rejecting those who are His as a result.

John 15:25-27 (NASB)

25 But they have done this to fulfill the word that is written in their Law, 'They hated Me without a cause.' 26 "When the [a]Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, 27 [b]and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

- a. John 15:26 Gr Paracletos, one called alongside to help; or Comforter, Advocate, Intercessor
- b. John 15:27 Or (imperative) and bear witness

*Q: What OT verse is our Lord quoting in verse 25? According to NIV SB there is some ambiguity regarding this: [hate me without reason. See 69:4. It is not known which of these passages is referred to in Jn 15:25. Both psalms reflect circumstances applicable also to Jesus' experience (but see introduction to Ps 69).]

*A: Our Lord is referring to all of the places in Psalms in particular where the psalmist as a type of Christ is said to be the object of antipathy "without cause" (Heb. *chinam*; Gk. *dorean*).

*Q: It seems the change of subject from verse 25 to verse 26 is quite sudden - could you clarify the link between the two?

*A: The back half of chapter fifteen is all about the opposition believers face through belonging to Jesus Christ. It was blessedly appropriate for our Lord to end this section by encouraging us with the reminder that we have the Holy Spirit to help us through whatever troubles and opposition we may face in service to our Lord.

NIV SB: goes out from the Father. Probably refers to the Spirit's being sent to do the Father's work on earth rather than to his eternal relationship with the Father. testify. See note on 1:7.

*Q: Do you agree with this point?

*A: The point of "from the Father" is that the Spirit can only be given in the special way that we have Him indwelling us after our Lord's victory on the cross and ascension into the Father's presence. While of course the Spirit is omnipresent and was certainly instrumental in the

spiritual success of every godly individual before the cross, nevertheless He was not indwelling them except in exceptional cases such as the non-permanent anointing of Saul initially and of David for most of his life (cf. His "stepping out of the way" during the Tribulation: 2Thes.2:6-7; see the link).

*Q: Would you say that indicative or imperative mood is more suitable for the beginning of verse 27?

*A: Well, it's present tense, but this statement is effectively a prediction of what would happen in the course of the apostles doing what the Lord led them to do in the future (so the mood is indicative – i.e., a statement and not a command).

John 16:4 (NASB)

4 But these things I have spoken to you, so that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told you of them. These things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you.

*Q: There seems to be no agreement between the commentators with regard to how this verse should be reconciled with verses such as Matthew 5:10ff., Luke 6:22ff., Matthew 10:16ff. And others. What is your take on this?

*A: If commentators all agree then it is usually a case of 1) something so obvious that there is no need to comment in the first place, or 2) a case of them ALL being wrong. In the first two passages, our Lord pronounces "blessed" in the beatitudes those who are persecuted. Believers have always been persecuted, so that is not special information that occasions the quote here in John chapter 16. Matthew 10:16ff. has to do with sending forth the twelve, and it is true that the 12 and also the 72 sent out are types of the 144,000 who will be subject to persecution, and also that our Lord did warn prophetically of that later, tribulational persecution in giving these two groups their marching orders. But such persecution as recorded as prophetic therein did not happen to the 12 or the 72. When our Lord says these words to the disciples in John chapter 16, they are still unclear about the cross, about the first vs. the second advent, about the fact that they will be left to continue in the world and manage the transition from the age of Israel to the age of the Church, and that in the process they will indeed undergo great opposition and persecution. This was information they were not prepared to receive before, and indeed even now they do not understand it – but they soon will, when the Spirit comes after our Lord's ascension and session. So there is no conflict between this and similar passages, and all three categories of passages in the gospels are important and necessary. For the disciples here to be given a "heads up" as to what is about to occur was very necessary and a loving thing for our Lord to do for them, even though it was but dimly received. Later, it would be remembered, and that would be an encouragement in the difficult times ahead. We should remember that we too can all look back and see that we were slow on the uptake about different truths of the Word which we found difficult to understand or accept. But they were necessary, every one of them, and when they did "fit" our circumstances, we can smile and remember our Lord's words here, "See, I have told you beforehand" (Matthew 24:25).

John 16:5 (NASB)

5 "But now I am going to Him who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?'"

*Q: Why does Jesus say that none of the apostles asks Him where He is going if Peter seems to have done just that?

John 13:36 (NASB)

36 Simon Peter *said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered, "Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you will follow later."

Similarly, could Thomas' question from John 14:5 also not be taken in this sense?

John 14:4-5 (NASB)

4 And you know the way where I am going." 5 Thomas *said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?"

*A: Peter does use the same Greek words as at John 13:36. The problem is that none of the disciples was willing to accept the answer. So none of them is asking the right way, and as a result the Lord is not able to explain to them the reason for and the meaning of the cross along with the distinction between the first and second advents, because they are not yet willing and able to receive it.

John 16:7 (NASB)

7 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.

NIV SB: 16:7 Unless I go away. Jesus did not say why the Spirit would not come until he went away but clearly taught that his saving work on the cross was necessary before the sending of the Spirit.

*Q: Do we know the answer to this question - why the Spirit would not come until Jesus went away?

*A: God is absolutely just and righteous, and for that reason, even though the cross was inevitable and foreordained, certain things had to await the actual propitiation of the justice of God by the blood of Christ, our Lord's spiritual death for our sins (cf. Rom.3:25). The gift of the Spirit is one of these cases. There can be no dividing of the spoils taken from the enemy until the victory is actually accomplished. It was accomplished on the cross (Col.2:15). It was at the cross that the Lord won His Bride for Himself (Eph.5:23-32; cf. 1Cor.6:19-20), and it is through the baptism of the Spirit that we become one with Him. All this, therefore, had to follow His glorification.

Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

John 7:39 NIV

John 16:8-9 (NASB)

8 And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; 9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me;

*Q: You translated this verse, together with an explanation: *(9) regarding sin, because they do not believe in Me[, the only One who can forgive their sins]*. I'm wondering if the explanation offered by Meyer could also be considered correct here: The sense would be this: in reference to sin He will convince them that unbelief is the true essence of sin. It seems that both interpretations are akin, but you take the meaning of our Lord's words a step further - "regarding sin, because they do not believe in Me - and this is the essence of all sin - and through this they are not forgiven". Another way, similar to both of the above, I would try to put it would be "He will convict the world concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me - and being in this unbelief they are not forgiven by God and the Spirit will show them this lack of forgiveness and fellowship with God which can only be attained to by belief in Me". So the Spirit would convict the unbeliever of His sin, because by not believing in Christ, He has God's wrath abiding on him.

*A: The gospel is the point of this three fold conviction by the Spirit. For an unbeliever to understand his/her predicament with clarity, he/she must be led to understand that he/she is imperfect (therefore liable to be judged), that God is perfect (therefore intolerant of imperfection), and that future judgment is certain (given that even the devil has already been judged) – and the result of that coming future judgment is also not in doubt because of our imperfection and God's perfection. So the dilemma is a perfect one with no way out whatsoever . . . except through obedience to the gospel. The Spirit's ministry of conviction, therefore, takes away all excuses and destroys all wishful thinking regarding the possibility of avoiding eternal judgment absent faith in Jesus Christ.

John 16:10 (NASB)

10 and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me;

*Q: There is no agreement among the commentators with regard to this verse. I would appreciate if you could just briefly comment on some of the key ideas here. One idea that I found quite reasonable here is that our Lord is here referring to His resurrection and ascension, which would furnish the proof of His righteousness, despite all the false convictions of the hostile unbelievers during His ministry. But that would in a sense be the opposite to what you wrote:

(10) regarding righteousness, because I am going to my Father and you are not going to be seeing Me any longer [as the standard of righteousness];

Since you wrote that the world will no longer be able to see Christ as the standard of righteousness, whereas the explanation above proposes the exact opposite - our Lord's resurrection, ascension prove His righteousness, so in a sense His departure shows His righteousness even more clearly. What is your take on this?

*A: While the Lord was on earth, He was the standard of righteous, clear to see for all who listened to Him and saw Him. The Spirit witnesses to Him and His sacrifice now that He has ascended to heaven to await the time when all His enemies will be made His footstool. God has

never left Himself without a witness (e.g., Acts 14:17; cf. Matt.5:45), but those who rejected the Son Himself, and those who reject the powerful witness to the Son, the Spirit of God Himself, have even less excuse for not responding to the perfect righteousness which makes our imperfection stand out in such stark clarity. Our spiritual death to which our sins witness leads to inevitable physical death, an inevitable outcome which all the world can see but which so many put their heads in the sand to avoid contemplating. And on the other side of physical death lies the judgment, eternal death, the second death . . . for all those who do not respond to this conviction of the Spirit so as to accept the Gift, Jesus Christ, so as to be saved.

John 16:11 (NASB)

11 and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

*Q: Your input would be greatly appreciated here also. I understand and agree with your explanation here: 11) *regarding judgment, because the ruler of this world has been convicted [already, demonstrating that all who do not believe are destined for judgment].*" The point being that just as the Spirit convicts an unbeliever of sin and just as He vindicates Christ's righteousness, so also He shows that there is a judgment and the devil is judged. But the question is what judgment specifically is our Lord referring here to? Many commentators say that this is reference to our Lord's victory at the cross. If this interpretation be correct, my question here would be why our Lord speaks of Satan's judgment as accomplished here, if he won't be thrown into the lake of fire until much later?

*A: The judgment is the last judgment, the result of our sinfulness in the face of God's perfection, and our lack (in the case of all before salvation) of righteousness in the face of God's perfect righteousness. Many people try to console themselves with the idea that somehow this judgment won't happen – maybe God will forgive all, regardless of their attitude towards Christ; maybe all will be saved; maybe some good works will suffice; maybe the fact that "some haven't heard the gospel" or some other argument will suffice to prevent condemnation; maybe "I'm not perfect but not as bad as person X and therefore won't be condemned". But the Lord assures us here that judgment is already a reality. The devil has already been condemned. Just as he is enjoying a stay of execution, so also unbelievers alive on this earth have a stay of execution until such time as death arrives and the final judgment comes thereafter. The Spirit's ministry of conviction takes away these false defenses and "happy lies" in the heart of hearts of the unbeliever. Of course, unbelievers can reject the truth the Spirit makes clear to them – that is what most people do with most truth. But is a measure of the grace and the goodness and mercy and the love of God that He goes to such lengths to provide a chance even for those who have no intention of bending their will to His. At the last judgment, I am sure that each such unbeliever will be reminded of when and where the lies they are at that point vainly depending on to save them were completely refuted by the Holy Spirit Himself (Jude 1:15).

John 16:12 (NASB)

12 "I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

*Q: Does Jesus say these words because the Spirit has not yet come upon the apostles?

*A: His statement is true and it is also true that they will be able to understand and accept everything the Lord has for them after the Spirit is given. Theoretically, that would have been possible had they responded to the truth better at the time, since the Spirit was "with them" though not "in them" – how blessed we are to have Him indwelling us today!

John 16:13 (NASB)

13 But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

NIV SB: 16:13 Spirit of truth. See note on 14:17. only what he hears. We are not told whether he hears from the Father or the Son, but it obviously does not matter, for the verse stresses the close relationship among the three. what is yet to come. Probably means the whole Christian way or revelation (presented and preserved in the apostolic writings), still future at the time Jesus spoke.

*Q: How should we understand "what is yet to come"?

*A: Everything (neuter) coming in the future. This refers to eschatology, primarily, information about the end times, but does not exclude information about the Church Age which the apostles, the agents of the transition between the Age of Israel and the new age, would need to know.

John 16:16 (NASB)

16 "A little while, and you will no longer see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me."

*Q: There seems to be no agreement among the commentators what our Lord is here referring to by saying "and again a little while, and you will see Me" - whether His resurrection is in view, or the Pentecost, which in Meyer's view refers to the "spiritual vision of Christ in the ministry of the Paraclete, which they experience, and that without any double meaning".

*A: To me it seems beyond obvious that the resurrection is meant.

John 16:20-22 (NASB)

20 Truly, truly, I say to you, that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will grieve, but your grief will be turned into joy. 21 Whenever a woman is in labor she has pain, because her hour has come; but when she gives birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy that a child has been born into the world. 22 Therefore you too have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you.

*Q: What is your take on this issue? Should we only understand the comparison to a woman giving birth as depicting the sorrow and joy of the disciples, or is there a reference to death too?

*A: This is referring to the resurrection and the grief of the apostles destined to be turned into joy when they see the resurrected Lord face to face again. It certainly also applies to the "blessed hope" we all have of the resurrection and victory over death for ourselves and our loved ones.

John 16:23 (NASB)

23 In that day you will not question Me about anything. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you.

*Q: What does Jesus mean about apostles not questioning Him? And could you briefly comment on NIV SB note on this verse: 16:23 you will no longer ask me anything. Seems to mean asking for information (rather than asking in prayer), which would not be necessary after the resurrection. Jesus then moved on to the subject of prayer. However, Jesus may have been saying that though his disciples previously had been praying to him, after his death and resurrection they were to go directly to the Father and pray in his (Christ's) name (see vv. 24, 26-27 and notes). name. See notes on 2:23; 14:13.

*A: Our Lord means that when they see Him in resurrection, they will not need to ask Him about these issues which now they do not understand and which presently cause them grief, for they will see Him alive and, while not yet glorified, in His eternal body (the discussion about prayer which follows should be taken as separate from this idea).

John 16:25 (NASB)

25 "These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; an hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but will tell you plainly of the Father.

*Q What does our Lord refer to by "these things"? Commentators' opinions seem to be divided. Meyer takes it as a reference to John 16:17-18, but many others apply these words to greater portions of the discourse. Do you agree with Meyer that the coming hour when our Lord would no longer speak to the disciples figuratively is the coming of the Spirit?

*A: It refers to everything our Lord said indirectly in the past. I do mainly agree with Meyer here, but would not cut out the portion of time our Lord spent with the disciples before the ascension (cf. Jn.20:22).

John 16:26 (NASB)

26 In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I will request of the Father on your behalf;

*Q: I'm not clear how to reconcile this passage with Romans 8:34, Hebrews 7:25 and 1 John 2:1, which speak of intercession. What is your take on this?

*A: Our Lord intercedes for us and is our Advocate. That is true whether or not we are praying. We also as believer priests have the right of access to the Father (Eph.2:18; 3:12; Heb.4:16), and of course may also offer prayer to the Son (Jn.14:13-14), and the Spirit intercedes for us too (Rom.8:26). None of these things is somehow restrictive. All of these things represent rather blessings that fall to the lot of the believer in Christ.

John 16:31-32 (NASB)

31 Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe? 32 Behold, an hour is coming, and has already

come, for you to be scattered, each to his own home, and to leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.

*Q: Does you agree that the point here is that their faith, although genuine, is not strong enough to stand with Him in the hour of trial, as NIV SB suggests: 16:32 you will be scattered. The disciples had faith, but not enough to stand firm in the face of disaster. Jesus knew they would fail (see Mt 26:31 and note; cf. Zec 13:7 and note); however, his church is not built on people's strength but on God's ability to use people even after they have failed.

*A: Our Lord is here expressing relief (a bit ironically) that finally after so long a time the disciples are willing to accept the truth. His mention of the trials to come is an important caveat alerting them to the dangers of assuming that this compliment means they have now somehow crossed the finish line – when instead things were about to become even more difficult.

John 17:9 (NASB)

9 I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours;

*Q: In this verse our Lord says that He doesn't ask on behalf of the world, but couldn't verse 21 be interpreted as Jesus' prayer for the world to believe:

John 17:21 (NASB)

21 that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.

*A: The Lord wants all to be saved, but His prayer here is for those who are believers to be kept safe in the world through the sanctifying power of the truth. That involves us responding to the truth, so in no sense is it applicable to unbelievers who need to come to the truth in the first place (a different sentiment and a different prayer).

John 17:11 (NASB)

11 I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are.

*Q: In what sense does our Lord pray that the disciples are "one"? Do you agree with the NIV SB interpretation: that they may be one. The latter part of the prayer strongly emphasizes unity. Here the unity is already given, not something to be achieved. The meaning is "that they continually be one" rather than "that they become one." The unity is to be like that between the Father and the Son. It is much more than unity of organization, but the church's present divisions are the result of the failures of Christians.

*A: An unfortunate note. This is a purpose clause, not a result clause. It hadn't happened as the language in English or Greek makes clear. Also, we pray for things that have not yet happened, even if we are, as the Lord is, completely confident that they will happen (as we should be too).

Now it is true that in Christ we are "one". But as with many things which relate to believers, there are three perspectives: 1) positional, 2) experiential, and 3) ultimate. That is to say, we have and are certain things now as believers by virtue of our position in Christ, and we will be and have and enjoy those things in every way in eternity; but while we are here on earth, we should be growing in our appreciation, exploitation and application of these things. So for example, we are sanctified, made perfectly holy, in Christ in terms of our position; and in eternity we will be without any spot or blemish forevermore. But here in the world, we need to confess our sins whenever we commit them, and we ought to be improving in our walk, being more sanctified in our behavior day by day, as we grow closer to Jesus through the truth. Similarly, true Christian unity is based on the truth. Ideally, the entire Church "militant" (i.e., fighting the fight here on earth), should be growing closer one to another every day as we all continually learn and believe and apply the truth (and toss out traditions and grounds for separation which are not based on the truth). In practice, however, only believers who have committed to the truth and who are exploiting the means the Lord has given us to learn and believe it, have the potential of drawing closer to each other the way the Lord wants. A unified "church visible" that gets that way by saying truth is unimportant and/or adopting things that are not true is the opposite of the "experiential unity" we should all be pursuing in accordance with our Lord's prayer.

John 17:13 (NASB)

13 But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves.

*Q: Which things specifically is our Lord referring here to that the disciples may have His joy made full?

*A: I wouldn't wish to pare it down. He is speaking about everything He has just said, but by application to everything He has ever said – and to all of the truth in the Bible. Learning, believing and applying all of God's truth is the only path to true joy and peace and hope in this world.

John 17:15 (NASB)

15 I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them [a]from [b]the evil one.

a. John 17:15 Or out of the power of

b. John 17:15 Or evil

*Q: Should it be "evil" or "evil one" here?

*A: The definite article here indicates this is "the evil one" (similarly: Matt.6:13; Lk.11:4).

John 17:18-19 (NASB)

18 As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. 19 For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.

*Q: Do you think it is possible that by "I sanctify Myself" our Lord here means His sacrifice on

the cross? Meyer, together with a number of other commentators, interprets in this way.

*A: That is my understanding too.

*Q: Your explanation of the second clause - "that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth" would also be appreciated.

*A: Believers are sanctified at salvation when we are "born from above/again". But that is positional. We are also finally and ultimately sanctified at the resurrection. But that is still future. This is referring to "experiential sanctification", that is to say, striving day by day (through learning and applying the truth) to live an ever more genuinely holy life. What our Lord says here is critical: such holiness in practice is all about "the truth". The truth, that is, spiritual growth through the truth and the application of the truth we have believed in the power of the Holy Spirit, is the way we become more holy and live in a more holy, sanctified way, abstaining from everything evil and sinful, yes, but also doing the things the Lord would have us to do in this world: becoming His perfect ambassadors, whatever the gifts and ministries we have been given.

John 17:20-21 (NASB)

20 "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; 21 that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may [a]believe that You sent Me.

a. John 17:21 Gr tense indicates continually believe

*Q: Does Jesus mean in verse 21 that the unity of believers will contribute to world believing in Christ? I'm not clear about the points made: I) "that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You" - is it an appeal for the unity of believers, in accordance with the unity between the Father and Son? II) "that they also may be in Us" - is this a result of believers being in unity (previous point), or is that another request, not linked to the one just made? III) "so that the world may believe that You sent Me" - as in the previous question, I'm not sure if the "so that" refers back to the last request made ("that they also may be in us") or all that has previously been said? IV) I'm also not sure in what way specifically the unity of believers results in belief that Christ was sent by God the Father.

*A: As with the previous Q/A, unity is at once real now, complete in the future, and something we need to work at here in the world. But the meaning of our "oneness" is again not to be overlooked. It has to do not with superficial community but with genuinely "thinking the same things" (e.g., Rom.12:16; 1Cor.1:10; Phil.2:2; 4:2) – because we all have received the truth, believed it, and our doing our best to live our lives by it. In other words, true Christian unity is essentially opposed to what passes for ecumenical unity in the church-visible today. In this true unity, the Trinity is indeed the model – for there is not a sliver of "different thinking" between them, nor could there ever be: God IS truth. Greater unity with each other in the truth leads to our collectively being closer to God (again, it is the experiential unity and closeness to God that is being referred to here by our Lord). This unity of believers, presenting a united front in the

truth, what we believe and how we all act perfectly in love (ideally) is the best witness the Church can give to the world at large, and a proof that Christ is who He says He is – because such a witness can only be achieved supernaturally (as any fair observer would conclude; cf. 1Cor.14:24-25).

*Q: Could you clarify the footnote? Do you agree that this is the meaning here?

*A: While the Greek verb here is likely in the present stem and not the aorist stem (it's difficult to tell because the good ms. witnesses are equally divided), this question of verbal "aspect" outside of the indicative mood is generally more one of style than precise meaning. It is somewhat typical of contemporary NT exegesis to make much of such distinctions – while ignoring much meatier ones. Regardless of how we come down on the textual issue, the purpose our Lord is praying for is for the world "to believe", and that, after all, is the point: "For God so loved *the world* that He gave His only begotten Son . . ." (Jn.3:16 NKJV).

John 17:22 (NASB)

22 The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one;

*Q: What specifically does Jesus here mean by glory? Pulpit provides a short summary of the existing views: Verse 22. - Our Lord now proceeds to record how he has already contributed to produce this result. I also - very emphatic - have given to them - that is, to my disciples - the glory which thou gavest me. Numerous interpretations of this "glory" have been suggested, as e.g., the glory into which he is about to enter in his glorified body; but the emphatic perfect in connection with the glory, viz.: "I have given and am now and still giving," renders this improbable. Meyer, who does not accept Baumgarten-Crusius's view that "give" here means "to destine," yet comes very much to the same thought, and regards it as the heavenly glory of which he had eternal experience, and would ultimately share with his people. But the view variously set forth by Oldhausen, Hengstenberg, Maldonatus, Bengel, Tholuck, Moulton, and Godet appears to be in full harmony with the context, viz. the glory of the supernatural life of Divine Sonship and self-sacrificing love as of the very essence of God. This glory that he should taste death for every man, this glory of nature and character as the incarnate Head of a new humanity, I have given to them, in order that they may be one, living in and for each other, even as we are one. The contrast between his own relation to the Father and theirs is most wonderfully maintained. The union between the Father and Son is once more made the type, in his own unique consciousness, of the union among men who have received as his gift the eternal life and glory of a supernatural love. This is more evident from what follows (Jn.17:24).

*A: This refers to the Holy Spirit. That is evident because this particular measure of "glory" is what makes our unity in this world possible – something unthinkable without the Spirit's ministry. As the Son of God, Christ has glory as part of His essence. Only as a human being was He "given glory", and specifically, the means of illuminated God's glory in the world – through the Holy Spirit. It is true that at this moment the disciples seem to have only haltingly taken advantage of our Lord's assurance of the Spirit for those who asked (cf. Lk.11:13), but He is anticipating Pentecost and the gift of the Spirit (and of course He also made arrangements for

them to have a special unction of the Spirit in the time in between: Jn.20:22).

John 17:23 (NASB)

23 I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.

*Q: Could you clarify the point made here by the NIV SB - why is it that the indwelling of the Father in the Son enables the indwelling of the Son in believers?

NIV SB: 17:23 I in them and you in me. There are two indwellings here: that of the Son in believers and that of the Father in the Son. It is because the latter is a reality that the former can take place.

*A: The note makes little sense – unless what it's trying to say is that Christ had to come into the world for believers to receive the indwelling of the Son . . . which is in turn facilitated by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit who sanctifies the temple of our bodies and makes this all possible.

John 17:26 (NASB)

26 and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

*Q: What does Jesus mean by "I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known"?

*A: This refers to the continual and continuing ministry our Lord will provide to believers through the Spirit and the truth throughout the Church Age (cf. "[The Spirit] will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you"; Jn.16:14 NKJV).

John 18:1 (NASB)

18 When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the [a]ravine of the Kidron, where there was a garden, in which He entered with His disciples.

a. John 18:1 Lit winter-torrent

*Q: Could you clarify the expression "winter torrent"?

*A: The word, translated nicely as "brook" in NKJV, is the Greek word *cheimarros* (χειμαρρος); it is derived from the Greek word *cheimon* (χειμων), which means "winter" or "storm" (since winter is a time of storms). Storms, prevalent in winter, produce gullies, ravines, and the brooks that run through them.

John 18:4-6 (NASB)

4 So Jesus, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth and *said to them, "Whom do you seek?" 5 They answered Him, "Jesus the Nazarene." He *said to them, "I am He." And Judas also, who was betraying Him, was standing with them. 6 So when He said to them, "I

am He," they drew back and fell to the ground.

*Q: Do you agree with Meyer and other commentators that the falling to the ground was a supernatural act? His explanation does seem acceptable and the last point also makes a lot of sense - that making known His miraculous power also helps to emphasise the voluntariness of His surrender. I've not come across this observation before.

*A: Of course it was supernatural. They were knocked off their feet by the invisible power of God as soon as our Lord proclaimed that He was YHVH: "I am He" (ἐγώ εἰμι / *ego eimi* in the Greek being the equivalent to the Name).

John 18:9 (NASB)

9 to fulfill the word which He spoke, "Of those whom You have given Me I lost not one."

NIV SB: 18:9 would be fulfilled. Words normally used in quoting Scripture, and Jesus' words are on the same level (see 6:39; 17:12 and notes).

*Q: Do you agree that these words are a fulfilment of John 17:12? It's quite an interesting remark.

*A: Also of John 6:39 (as the note suggests).

John 18:14 (NASB)

14 Now Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was expedient for one man to die on behalf of the people.

NIV SB: 18:14 Caiaphas ... had advised the Jewish leaders. A reference to 11:49-50 (see notes there). For John it was this unconscious prophecy that mattered most about Caiaphas. John may also have been hinting that a fair trial could not be expected from a man who had already said that putting Jesus to death was expedient.

*Q: Could you clarify the point made in the footnote? Do you agree that Caiaphas words were meant to indicate that a fair trial could not be expected?

*A: It's a valid deduction, but the point of the passage is the fulfillment of the prophecy.

John 18:15 (NASB)

15 Simon Peter was following Jesus, and so was another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and entered with Jesus into the court of the high priest,

*Q: Does John mean himself by "another disciple"? Can we surmise from this verse that he was an eye witness of this process?

*A: Yes, and I believe so.

John 18:19-21 (NASB)

19 The high priest then questioned Jesus about His disciples, and about His teaching. 20 Jesus answered him, "I have spoken openly to the world; I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and I spoke nothing in secret. 21 Why do you question Me? Question those who have heard what I spoke to them; they know what I said."

*Q: Pulpit summarises the two key interpretations of the "high priest" in verse 19: We must choose between two difficulties:

(1) Caiaphas is first spoken of as "high priest," who, as we know from the synoptists, conducted the examination-in-chief, and then that Annas, as conducting a preliminary examination, is also styled "high priest" without any explanation;

(2) or we must admit the supposition that after Caiaphas had asked these incriminating questions, Annas (who was not high priest), sent Jesus bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

*A: Annas had been high priest so he is called that in the same way ex-Presidents of the USA continue to be called "President" after leaving office; the analogy was close, because the high priesthood had become a political office and was, essential, the primary magistracy – although at this time beholden to the Romans and the Herodians (because of how the Romans settled things in the east under Pompey).

NIV SB: 18:20 I have spoken openly. It should not have been difficult to find witnesses (v. 21). nothing in secret. Not a denial that he taught the disciples privately, but a denial that he had secretly taught them subversive teaching different from his public message.

*Q: Were Jesus' first words a reference to finding witnesses? Do you agree with the second point made in the NIV SB?

*A: I think our Lord's statements speak very plainly for themselves. He is being put on trial as if He were some sort of conspirator – but conspiracies are hatched in secret while our Lord ministered openly and taught exhaustively in Jerusalem itself.

John 18:22 (NASB)

22 When He had said this, one of the officers standing nearby struck Jesus, saying, "Is that the way You answer the high priest?"

*Q: Meyer provides a citation of Luther here: "This thou shouldest therefore understand, that there is a great difference between these two; to turn the cheek to the one, and with words to punish him who strikes us. Christ must suffer, but nevertheless the word is put in His mouth, that He should speak and punish what is wrong. Therefore, I should separate the mouth and the hand from one another."

What is your take on this? It seems there is some merit in His remark. Could this be interpreted that although we accept the offence, we also have the right to speak, so that whatever it is that we

are suffering can be known by others to be unfair, and so that we can still testify to the truth?

*A: I read this in scripture:

*He will not quarrel nor cry out,
Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets.*
Matthew 12:19 NKJV

And this:

For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;
1st Peter 2:21-23 NKJV

During the Tribulation, we may be called upon to witness to the truth in front of an unfair judicial hearing. If so, we need to remember our Lord's words that it will be the Spirit who is testifying for us – and so take no heed ahead of time as to what we ought to say (Matt.10:20).

John 18:25 (NASB)

25 Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, "You are not also one of His disciples, are you?" He denied it, and said, "I am not."

NIV SB: 18:25 they asked him. Some find a difficulty in that Mt 26:71 says another girl asked this question, whereas Mk 14:69 says it was the same girl and Lk 22:58 that it was a man. But with a group of servants talking around a fire, several would doubtless take up and repeat such a question, which could be the meaning of John's "they." As on the first occasion (v. 17) the question anticipated the answer "No." The servants probably did not really expect to find a follower of Jesus in the high priest's courtyard, but the question seemed worth asking.

*Q: Do you agree with how the NIV SB reconciles the account regarding the questioning of Peter?

*A: Somewhat. I would say rather that the descriptions of the interlocutors are not actually in conflict. Our Lord emphasized the number of times that Peter would deny Him, not those to whom he would be speaking. Even if we are describing a somewhat complicated series of events, we might choose to focus in our retelling of it the comments of one person but not of another. The fact that someone else who was there might choose different facts to relate in order to give the gist would not mean that either of us was being untruthful or inaccurate.

John 18:28-29 (NASB)

Jesus before Pilate

28 Then they *led Jesus from Caiaphas into the Praetorium, and it was early; and they themselves did not enter into the Praetorium so that they would not be defiled, but might eat the Passover.²⁹ Therefore Pilate went out to them and *said, "What accusation do you bring against

this Man?"

*Q: How could the Jews lead Jesus into the Praetorium and yet not enter it?

*A: The distinction would be between the entrance to the Praetorium and the Praetorium itself. Normally, the preposition *pros* would be used for direction towards but not into, but John is making the point that they went right up to the gate.

NIV SB: to eat the Passover. This appears to contradict the Synoptic Gospels, which have Jesus eating the Passover meal the night before. Here are two possible solutions:(1) Some say different Jewish groups ate the Passover meal at different times. (2) The term "Passover" may be used here to refer to the whole festival of Passover and Unleavened Bread, which lasted seven days and included a number of meals.

*Q: How do you understand this apparent contradiction?

*A: There is no contradiction. The Lord and the disciples obviously ate the Passover the night before, but the locals in Jerusalem ate it the following night. Calculating the date of the Passover is not a spiritual matter and there apparently was, as this shows, a difference in calculation between Galilee and Judea on the exact date. It was appropriate for our Lord to celebrate this ritual – which proclaims His spiritual death – with His disciples, something He obviously could not do after the crucifixion. So this discrepancy is used by God to work everything out for good and fulfill all righteousness.

John 18:31-32 (NASB)

31 So Pilate said to them, "Take Him yourselves, and judge Him according to your law." The Jews said to him, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death," 32 to fulfill the word of Jesus which He spoke, signifying by what kind of death He was about to die.

*Q: Why are the words "We are not permitted to put anyone to death" a fulfillment of the prophecy regarding our Lord's type of death?

*A: It leads to that through crucifixion as our Lord was prophesied not to have a single one of His bones broken (Ps.34:20; Jn.19:36), but the standard Jewish means of capital punishment was stoning which no doubt breaks many bones before death occurs.

NIV SB: no right to execute anyone. They were looking for an execution, not a fair trial. The restriction was important, for otherwise Rome's supporters could be quietly removed by local legal executions. Sometimes the Romans seem to have tolerated local executions (e. g., of Stephen, Ac 7), but normally they retained the right to inflict the death penalty.

*Q: Could you clarify what is meant by "The restriction was important, for otherwise Rome's supporters could be quietly removed by local legal executions"?

*A: We would have to ask the SB folks. Keeping the most important legal decision – capital

punishment – in their own hands supported Roman control in a variety of ways. It was just one more element of power retained to further the Roman administration's position.

John 18:33 (NASB)

33 Therefore Pilate entered again into the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?"

*Q: Meyer makes good points about this question: taking a sufficiently inconsistent course, instead of simply persisting in his refusal on account of the want of a definite ground of accusation, and waiting first for some further step on the part of the Jews. Pilate could have simply waited for the Jews to come up with anything substantial, so this inconsistency of not persisting in the refusal is a valid observation.

*A: On the one hand, our Lord is and always was, THE King; on the other hand, during the first advent, He never pushed forward any such claim to temporal rule, and always obeyed legal authority. So the accusation is groundless, because it is only actually an accusation if one assumes that the person in question personally "claims to be king" and is doing so with the purpose of supplanting the present Roman authority.

John 18:34 (NASB)

34 Jesus answered, "Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?"

*Q: It seems unlikely that Pilate was acquainted with the different ideas of Messiahship and on the other hand it would seem that this question does demand a clear response from Pilate and may even be understood as exposing his weakness in yielding to the Jewish demand. Commentators' opinions as to the character of the question vary considerably - some take it as being asked in surprise, others in contempt, etc. What do you think is most likely?

*A: As with all His teaching, our Lord is here guiding Pilate to look at the truth. While you or I would no doubt begin making our defense, this is the farthest thing from our Lord's mind. He wants all to be saved, and since He is in a position to speak with Pilate, He guides him towards the truth (something of course which Pilate eventually demeans: Jn.18:38). Our Lord's question forces Pilate to deal with the question of whether or not our Lord is LORD – rather than his initial stance of approaching this as a judicial process.

John 18:37 (NASB)

37 Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

*Q: Could you explain why Jesus moves from kingship into the truth?

*A: Our Lord always "pivoted" to what was truly important. Establishing and explaining His kingship was less important to Him than was giving Pilate a clear opportunity to be saved – by accepting the true message of Him who is the very Truth.

John 18:38 (NASB)

38 Pilate *said to Him, "What is truth?"

And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews and *said to them, "I find no guilt in Him.

NIV SB: 18:38 What is truth? Pilate may have been jesting and meant "What does truth matter?" Or he may have been serious and meant "It is not easy to find truth. What is it?" Either way, it was clear to him that Jesus was no rebel.

*Q: I think that Meyer's explanation is better here than the NIV SB: Pilate, now fully convinced that he has before him an innocent and harmless enthusiast, asks, with that air of contemptuous deprecation which is peculiar to the material understanding in regard to the abstract and supersensual sphere, What is truth?

*A: Agreed. Pilate was no doubt well-versed in Greek philosophy and contemporary skepticism, and here dismisses out of hand the narrow way which could have delivered him from damnation. Face to face with Him who is the very Truth, that is no small irony – and a reminder that everyone who fails to receive salvation has made a similarly bad choice. By essentially stating that truth is indeterminate, Pilate and all like him have convinced themselves that there is no coming Great White Throne judgment where all of their lies will be swept away by the unapproachable light of the Son of God.

NIV SB: 18:40 Barabbas. A rebel and a murderer (see Lk 23:19 and note on 23:18). The name is Aramaic and means "son of Abba," i. e., "son of the father" in place of this man, the "Son of the Father" died (see note on Mt 27:16).

*Q: Do you agree with the meaning of the name Barabbas given here? Was a comparison between these names really meant by God at this point?

*A: It is an interesting observation. "Barabbas", however, was actually the man's name.

*Q: Do you agree with Meyer on the picture of Pilate's reasoning here - that he is trying to satisfy the Jews with his treatment of our Lord to prevent capital punishment, which He knew Jesus didn't deserve?

*A: Pilate was an intelligent man and wise in the ways of the world. He recognized our Lord's innocence very clearly, and he also very clearly attempted to see that justice was done as a result. But he was also a political creature, and when he was unable to convince the agitators that genuine innocence should result in acquittal, he acquiesced to our Lord's judicial murder for his own benefit and protection – and that is the antithesis of justice.

From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jewish leaders kept shouting, "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar."

John 19:12 NIV

John 19:5 (NASB)

5 Jesus then came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate*said to them, "Behold, the Man!"

*Q: Do you agree with Meyer that these words are "gently and compassionately" spoken? It seems possible that Pilate was well aware that what he was doing wasn't right, but I'm not sure if he would go as far as to speak with a tone of compassion.

*A: Rather, I think this was highly theatrical. Pilate was hoping that presenting our Lord in this ridiculous way would calm the cries for His crucifixion.

John 19:7-8 (NASB)

7 The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by that law He ought to die because He made Himself out to be the Son of God." 8 Therefore when Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid;

NIV SB: 19:8 even more afraid. Pilate was evidently superstitious, and this charge frightened him.

*Q: Do you agree that Pilate's fear comes from superstition?

*A: Rather, I think the deportment of our Lord and our Lord's testimony made clear not only His innocence but also that He was no ordinary human being. No doubt when he heard this statement, Pilate realized that it was true – but like so many unbelievers was reluctant to accept it. Nevertheless, the fact of our Lord's undeniable uniqueness and the fact that this "charge" was the truth on a supernatural level ought to have frightened anyone involved in His judicial murder.

John 19:9 (NASB)

9 and he entered into the Praetorium again and *said to Jesus, "Where are You from?" But Jesus gave him no answer.

NIV SB: 19:9 Jesus gave him no answer. The reason is not clear since Jesus had answered other questions readily. Perhaps Pilate would not have understood the answer or would not have believed it.

*Q: That's an interesting observation - why did our Lord give no answer there?

*A: Our Lord's prior answers were not meant to exonerate Himself – He was ready to die for the sins of the world. Rather, He was witnessing the truth to Pilate (cf. 1Tim.6:13), desiring him to be saved as He desires all to be saved, for He died for all. However, once Pilate rejected our Lord's testimony by calling truth itself into question, there was no more purpose in any further dialogue (Matt.7:6).

John 19:11-12 (NASB)

11 Jesus answered, "You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from

above; for this reason he who delivered Me to you has the greater sin." 12 As a result of this Pilate made efforts to release Him, but the Jews cried out saying, "If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar; everyone who makes himself out to be a king opposes Caesar."

NIV SB: 19:11 Jesus' last words to Pilate. from above. All earthly authority comes ultimately from God (cf. Ro 13:14 and note). greater sin. That of Caiaphas (not Judas, who was only a means). But "greater" implies that there was a lesser sin, so Pilate's sin was also real.

*Q: That's an interesting point - I always thought that it's Judas who our Lord means here, but NIV SB, together with most other commentators says it's Caiaphas - what do you think?

*A: This refers to Judas. The Greek says "betrayed" (*paradidous*), the word always used where Judas' betrayal of our Lord is in view (cf. Mk.14:41-44).

*Q: I'm not entirely clear about the second part of the 11th verse, where our Lord says "for this reason he who delivered Me to you has the greater sin".

*A: Judas' sin is greater because he was one of the twelve with no reason whatsoever to repay our Lord's benefits to him with his horrible betrayal. That is demonstrably worse than judicial malfeasance on the part of a conflicted foreigner.

*Q: Why is it that as a result of these particular words of our Lord did Pilate seek to release Him? Is it to do with him realising that he will be responsible for the murder? It doesn't seem Pilate took any real steps to free our Lord.

*A: Our Lord's courage in replying in the face of death, and His intimation of responsibility and judgment as a result, increased Pilate's fear – as well it should in the case of anyone who had seen even a glimmer of the truth. In the end, however, he fears the crowd and the displeasure of Rome more than God. A most foolish bargain.

John 19:14 (NASB)

14 Now it was the day of preparation for the Passover; it was about the sixth hour. And he *said to the Jews, "Behold, your King!"

*Q: How should we understand the preparation for the Passover? It is another point greatly discussed by the commentators.

*A: Passover – in Judea – began at sundown. The north celebrated the festival the previous day (explaining our Lord and His disciples doing so the night before).

*Q: In the commentaries I read there seems to be no clear reconciliation presented between this verse and Mark 15:25 (NASB): "It was the third hour when they crucified Him." What is the correct interpretation? This issue has clearly caused a lot of difficulty to the commentators.

*A: Mark 15:25 is correct. Actually, Sinaiticus has "third hour" here as a correction. In this

case, the (contemporaneous?) corrector is right.

*Q: There is also no agreement among the commentators as to the character of the proclamation "Behold, your King". With what intent was it said in your view?

*A: The intent is the same as in "behold the man!", but now Pilate attempts to appeal to Jewish nationalism. Given the response, "we have no king but Caesar", it is also possible that Pilate was shrewdly trying to make the best of a bad situation by forcing the crowd to change their attitude or else acknowledge Rome's hegemony.

John 19:21-22 (NASB)

21 So the chief priests of the Jews were saying to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews'; but that He said, 'I am King of the Jews.'" 22 Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written."

*Q: Why does Pilate here insist on the writing remaining what it was? Was he trying to get some false sense of victory over the Jews in his frustration, despite effectively yielding to them?

*A: So it seems. But whatever *his* motivation, God used it to declare the truth about who Jesus really was.

John 19:27 (NASB)

27 Then He *said* to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" From that hour the disciple took her into his own household.

NIV SB: 19:27 took her into his home. And so took responsibility for her. It may be that Jesus' brothers still did not believe in him (see 7:5).

*Q: This is an interesting point - it seems it would have been logical for our Lord's brothers to take responsibility for their mother, yet this is entrusted to John - would you agree it could be to do with their unbelief? Meyer is skeptical.

*A: That is indeed the reason, and it demonstrates that to our Lord spiritual kinship is more important than blood kinship. So should it be to us. We love our families and we do have a responsibility to them, but our brothers and sisters in Christ are our eternal family, and we owe them our complete love in obedience to our Lord's commands (Jn.13:34; cf. 1Jn.2:7-11).

John 19:28 (NASB)

28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, to fulfill the Scripture, *said*, "I am thirsty."

NIV SB: 19:28 I am thirsty. May refer to Ps 69:21 (see note there; cf. Ps 22:15).

*Q: Do you agree?

*A: No, that had been fulfilled before our Lord died for the sins of the world (Matt.27:34; Mk.15:23). This is a fulfillment of Psalm 110:7, the refreshment of the victorious Messiah (and also foreshadowing the refreshment of His victorious troops at Armageddon; see the link: BB 4: Christology, section I.5.L.2.3, "Our Lord's Final Statements of Completion").

John 19:30 (NASB)

30 Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

*Q: Since all the history comes down to Jesus payment for the sins, why doesn't John record the three hours of darkness?

*A: John is given to omit many things the synoptics record (all of which are important) and to record many things which the synoptics omit (all of which are important). Even the synoptics do not delineate the judgment our Lord endured during that time, but scripture is sufficiently clear on that point – for all who are willing to look into it (2Cor.5:21; 1Pet.2:24; cf. Is.53:1ff.). As with many things in the Bible, the deeper truths are revealed only to those who are willing to seek them out.

He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables."

Mark 4:11 NIV

*Q: If we exclude the non-scriptural number one, would you agree with the rest of the order of Westcott's summary of our Lord's utterances from the cross?

(a) Before the darkness -

(1) "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

(2) "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43).

(3) "Woman, behold thy son:... behold thy mother!" (John 19:26).

(b) During the darkness -

(4) "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34).

(c) After the darkness -

(5) "I thirst" (John 19:28).

(6) "It is finished!" (John 19:30).

(7) "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46).

*A: There are some problems with this. For example, as you note, (1) is not part of the Bible; (4) happens afterwards, not during the darkness. I strongly recommend reading the entire section in BB 4: Christology, section I.5.L, "The Crucifixion". All of these issues are covered in detail therein.

John 19:34 (NASB)

34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.

*Q: This verse has exercised commentators a lot and opinions are divided whether the coming out of water is to be taken as a natural phenomenon, for example coming as a result of piercing the heart, or rather miraculous. What is your take?

*A: First, this actually happened. Second, it proves that our Lord was a genuine human being with an actual human body such as we all possess (except without a sin nature on account of His virgin conception and birth and later sinless life). Third, John is given to record this as he does to demonstrate points one and two as a refutation of Gnostic heresy which denied the humanity of Christ. This may seem odd to us today since most heresy nowadays wants to deny the deity of Christ, but the devil attacks on all fronts whenever opportunity offers.

John 19:35 (NASB)

35 And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe.

NIV SB: 19:35 The man who saw it. Either John himself or someone he regarded as reliable. Obviously he considered the incident important and comments that it was well attested. testifies ... believe. See note on 1:7.

*Q: I always thought that John speaks of himself here - could it be that he had a reliable witness in mind?

*A: Of course this is John. SB has been unduly influenced by skeptical schools of scholarship which make it a point of honor not to believe anything or to take anything obvious at face value.

John 19:39 (NASB)

39 Nicodemus, who had first come to Him by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight.

*Q: Was Nicodemus a believer?

*A: This tells me that indeed that our Lord's extensive time of witnessing to him was not in vain. He did put his faith in Christ (when and where we are not told, but we see another indication of this at Jn.7:51); this act is one of faith and is accomplished in company with Joseph of Arimathea, another believer.

b) NIV SB: 19:39 Nicodemus. John alone tells us that he joined Joseph in the burial. seventy-five pounds. A very large amount, such as was used in royal burials (cf. 2Ch 16:14).

*Q: According to NASB it was a hundred pounds, but according to NIV - seventy five?

*A: The Greek says 100 *litras*, which is the Greek for *libra*, the Roman pound (from which the

English abbreviation lb.). So the question is how much a Roman pound weighed at this time. The Roman pound consisted of 12 ounces (not 16), so "75 pounds" seems a fair estimate. NIV is converting to modern equivalents; NASB is translating literally without worrying about the fact that the Roman pound was lighter.

John 20:1 (NASB)

20 Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene *came early to the tomb, while it *was still dark, and *saw the stone already taken away from the tomb.

NIV SB: 20:1 while it was still dark. Mark says it was "just after sunrise" (Mk 16:2). Perhaps the women came in groups, with Mary Magdalene coming very early. Or John may refer to the time of leaving home, Mark to that of arrival at the tomb. Mary Magdalene. See note on 19:25; cf. Mk 16:9.

*Q: What is the best way in your view to reconcile these accounts?

*A: All four gospels emphasize different aspects of the events on resurrection Sunday. Our Lord appeared to Mary Magdalene first, then to the other women, then to Peter (this is all written up in detail at the link in BB 4A: "The Chronology of the Resurrection").

John 20:8 (NASB)

8 So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb then also entered, and he saw and believed.

*Q: What does John mean by "believed" here? I take it he was a believer before this day? According to the NIV SB and several other commentators belief in resurrection is meant here: 20:8 He saw and believed. Cf. v. 29. John did not say what he believed, but it must have been that Jesus was resurrected.

*A: Before the resurrection, it does seem that the disciples did not understand either the need for the cross nor the certainty of the resurrection – which means that their understanding of who Jesus was was somewhat "foggy". It does seem that they were "believers", but before the cross and resurrection and before the gift of the Spirit, they were at the very least weak in their faith – certainly compared to what they would display afterwards. Belief has always been the same, but seeing Jesus as He is and particularly after the resurrection is a great blessing, since He is the object of our faith. Therefore people living after these events have that much less excuse for not embracing Him for who He is, the Savior of the world.

John 20:11 (NASB)

11 But Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping; and so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb;

NIV SB: 20:11 Mary. Perhaps Jesus appeared first to Mary because she needed him most at that time. crying. As in 11:33 (see note there), it means "wailing," a loud expression of grief.

*Q: Do you agree with the note? Is it not to do with the measure of her faith?

*A: To be the very first person addressed by our Lord after His victory on the cross and resurrection is a great honor indeed. Mary was worthy of this since her faith in Him, listening to Him and understanding about His coming death (she anointed Him with myrrh), and listening to Him and believing about the resurrection (she was first to come to the tomb), puts her head and shoulders above the others.

John 20:12(NASB)

12 and she *saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying.

NIV SB: 20:12 two angels. Matthew has one angel (Mt 28:2), Mark a young man (Mk 16:5) and Luke two men who were angels (Lk 24:4, 23). See note on Lk 24:4.

*Q: Again, what is the best way to reconcile these accounts?

*A: The "young man" was an angel. If there were two angels (and there were), then there was one angel (it doesn't say "only one"). One angel rolls away the stone and addresses the women; the two are seated within the tomb. The women collectively see the "young man"; Mary alone sees the two. The gospels give different details, and here different parts of the chronology (see prior link).

John 20:16 (NASB)

16 Jesus *said to her, "Mary!" She turned and *said to Him in [a]Hebrew, "Rabboni!" (which means, Teacher).

NIV SB: Rabboni. A strengthened form of Rabbi, and in the NT found elsewhere only in Mk 10:51 (in the Greek). Although the word means " (my) teacher," there are few if any examples of its use in ancient Judaism as a form of address other than in calling on God in prayer. However, John's explanation casts doubt on any thought that Mary intended to address Jesus as God here.

a. John 20:16 I.e. Jewish Aramaic

*Q: How do we know that Mary spoke in Jewish Aramaic? Could you relate to this note? Why did Mary use this particular title to address our Lord?

*A: This word is often taken to be Aramaic. In fact, there is nothing preventing our understanding of it being a heightened or familiar form of *rabbi* (which the disciples often used of our Lord). Since they and no doubt Mary too had used this term to address our Lord many times, we glean from this that Mary is realizing that it really is Jesus who is addressing her. It is ridiculous to draw conclusions as the SB does here from that. We know from the fact that Mary was the first to come that her faith in our Lord and understanding about Him was greater than the rest.

John 20:11-18

*Q: Why do the angels and our Lord appear to Mary after the disciples have gone, but not beforehand, so that Peter and John could see them too?

*A: Throughout, Mary receive special treatment – both because she merited it but also to let us know the value of true faith.

John 20:17 (NASB)

17 Jesus *said to her, "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.'"

D) NIV SB: 20:17 I have not yet ascended. See 13:3. The meaning appears to be that the ascension was still some time off. Mary would have opportunity to see Jesus again, so she need not cling to him. Alternatively, Jesus may be reminding Mary that after his crucifixion she cannot have him with her except through the Holy Spirit (see 16:5-16). my brothers. Probably the disciples (see v. 18; Mk 3:35 and note). The members of his family did not believe in him (see 7:5 and note on 7:4), though they became disciples not long after this (see Ac 1:14 and note). my Father and your Father. God is Father both of Christ and of believers, but in different senses (see 1:12, 14, 18, 34; 3:16 and note).

*Q: I read numerous interpretations as to why our Lord explains that Mary should stop clinging to Him, since He has not yet ascended to the Father - how should we understand it?

*A: The alternative interpretation given by SB is essentially correct: it would be unfair for our Lord to give Mary the impression – in the naturally emotional state she was in – that He is going to be with her and the disciples as He was in the past. However, telling her that He has not yet ascended is meant to remind her / inform her that He will not be with them for very long, only until the ascension.

*Q: Some commentators offered an interesting observation that Jesus says "My Father and your Father" and "My God and your God" rather than using the pronoun "our" since His relationship to God the Father was unique and different than ours. This seems a valid point - what do you think?

*A: While of course true since Jesus is God, this way of putting it has the effect of emphasizing that the Father is our Father too just as He is Jesus' Father.

John 20:20 (NASB)

20 And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples then rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

*Q: Why does our Lord show His hands and side to the disciples - is it in order for them to see the piercings?

*A: Yes. Throughout the resurrection appearances, while or Lord is recognizable as the Lord, there is clearly something different in His appearance than was the case before (cf. Jn.21:7). So this confirmation – that He was who He appeared to be and was not a spirit but a resurrected human being – was important.

John 20:23 (NASB)

23 If you forgive the sins of any, their sins [a]have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained."

a. John 20:23 I.e. have previously been forgiven

*Q: Could you explain the footnote? Do you agree with the NIV SB take on this verse: 20:23 Lit. "If you forgive anyone their sins, they have (already) been forgiven; if you do not forgive, they have not been forgiven." The intent of this word of Jesus has been much debated, but it seems right to say that God does not forgive people's sins because the apostles (or we) do so, nor does he withhold forgiveness because the apostles (or we) do. However, through the Holy Spirit (v. 22) the apostles and all believers do participate in Christ's saving mission, which has as one of its crucial effects God's forgiveness of the sins of all who repent and believe in Jesus as God's Son and the Savior of the world (cf. Mt 16:19 and note; 18:18 and NIV text note).

*A: The two conclusion verbs are in the perfect tense in Greek, "have been"; that means that the sins are abiding in a status quo of being forgiven or retained. This is just a way of being emphatic about the authority given to the disciples.

*Q: As I understand it from our correspondence, our Lord here gives the apostles declarative power. Since they were preaching the gospel for salvation, through the belief in which one's sins are forgiven, apostles could proclaim the sins of those who believed as forgiven and the sins of those who rejected the gospel as retained.

*A: I agree that this is entirely about the gospel. Our Lord possessed "the keys to the kingdom", and here He gives them to the disciples (Matt.16:19): by faith in the gospel we are saved from our sins and brought safe "into the kingdom of God's beloved Son" (Col.1:13).

*Q: One new observation which came through reading the commentaries on this verse (and, as you can imagine, there is no agreement on the meaning of this verse) is that there may be a close relationship between the Spirit being imparted on the apostles and their power to declare the sins as forgiven or retained. Could it be that they were given the Spirit here straight away so that they could exercise this declarative power with accuracy and guided by the Spirit could discern who really believed and who didn't?

*A: This provision of the Spirit is a temporary bridge-blessing designed to get the disciples to the day of Pentecost. There is no evangelizing recorded in scripture between this time and that point (a matter of a few weeks only). So it is best to take the statement of verse 23 as applying to the Church Age which was about to begin when the Spirit was given to all.

John 20:26 (NASB)

26 [a]After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus *came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you."

a. John 20:26 Or A week later

*Q: Why is it that alternative rendering of "after eight days" is given as "a week later"?

*A: Luke uses inclusive counting so "after eight days" would be exactly one week later. NASB's policy is to go with a literal translation even when it is possible to make things more clear as it would have been in this case.

John 20:29 (NASB)

29 Jesus *said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed."

NIV SB: 20:29 those who have not seen and yet have believed. Would have been very few at this time (see v. 8 and note). All whom John mentions had seen in some sense. The words, of course, apply to future believers as well.

*Q: This is an interesting note - who is our Lord referring here to? According to Meyer we should take it as a general explanation.

*A: Both "see" and "believe" are participles. They are aorist (which usually means antecedent action), but the time anchor is always the main verb to which the participles correspond. Here, our Lord is definitely pronouncing blessed any and all who will fall into this category in the future. Aorists in this sense function roughly like English future perfects (though on my side of the pond, the future perfect is practically extinct). Based on the above, I would translate this part of the verse: "Blessed are those who believe without having seen".

John 20:30-31 (NASB)

30 Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 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.

Meyer:

John 20:30-31. Conclusion of the entire book (not merely of the main portion of it, as Hengstenberg maintains); for chap, 21 is a supplement.

*Q: Do you agree with this note by Meyer?

*A: It is absurd. It is, however, a good example of scholastic attempts to rewrite scripture based upon arrogant theories of composition which have no basis in fact.

John 21:2 (NASB)

2 Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together.

*Q: Nathanael appears also at the beginning of John's gospel - was he also one of the disciples, but not of the 12?

*A: Yes he is one of the twelve; he is apparently one and the same as Bartholomew. From "Mark Questions"

Q: Who is Levi? With regard to the sequence in which his calling is presented, it seems to correspond to the calling of Matthew?

A: Yes, this is Matthew. It seems that all of the disciples had two names, most likely a name given at birth, and another one given to them by the Lord. So not only Levi/Matthew, but also Simon/Peter, Saul/Paul, John and brother James / "Thunderers", Thaddeus/Judas son of James, Bartholomew/Nathaniel, Thomas/Didymus, Simon/Cananeus (zealot). It is true that we do not have alternative names for Andrew or Philip or Judas Iscariot. The last mentioned will be because of the fact that he was never a believer with a "new life" requiring a new name. The other two are simply not recorded for us but we can assume that they probably had them.

John 21:4 (NASB)

4 But when the day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.

*Q: Why did the disciples not recognize Jesus?

*A: As mentioned above, the resurrection body is different, enough so that even though there is an unmistakable resemblance, yet there is also a clear enough difference to produce this sort of reaction, especially at a distance as we have here. Then too, our Lord deliberately withheld recognition on at least one occasion (Lk.24:16).

John 21:7 (NASB)

7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved *said to Peter, "It is the Lord." So when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put his outer garment on (for he was stripped for work), and threw himself into the sea.

NIV SB: 21:7 disciple whom Jesus loved. See note on 13:23. his outer garment. It is curious that he put on this garment (the word appears only here in the NT) preparatory to jumping into the water. But Jews regarded a greeting as a religious act that could be done only when one was clothed. Peter may have been preparing himself to greet the Lord.

*Q: Do you agree that this was the reason why Peter wore the garment?

*A: This exemplifies the cultural differences between the ancient and modern worlds. In antiquity, outdoor work, especially done by fishermen, sailors and athletes, was usually done naked. Whereas being finished with such work resulted in donning clothing. So Peter's actions make perfect sense in his time without resorting to some such explanation. Swimming, it will also be noted, was not a widespread leisure activity with its own customs and costumes as is the case in the modern world. It was done mostly only for practical reasons and hence usually while clothed (as in having to jump off a sinking ship).

John 21:9 (NASB)

9 So when they got out on the land, they *saw a charcoal fire already laid and fish placed on it, and bread.

NIV SB: 21:9 burning coals. Lit. "charcoal," as in 18:18 ("fire" see note on 18:26). Thus the charcoal "fire" is present at both Peter's denials and his restoration.

*Q: Do you agree there is a meaning to the fact that charcoal is present in these two situations?

*A: I don't find any significance in this, especially since the purpose of this fire was to cook whereas the purpose of the other was for warming.

John 21:11 (NASB)

11 Simon Peter went up and drew the net to land, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not torn.

Pulpit Commentary: The remark of Baumgarten-Crusius, that the number is simply an index of the authenticity of the narrative, and of the fact that the fishes were counted on the occasion, is eminently sensible (so Godet and Meyer). The fact that it is not a round number adds to the probability of this statement, and enters a caveat against allegorical interpretation. And for all they were so many, the net was not rent. This is obviously a point of contrast with the first miraculous draught of fishes, when the nets brake and the boats began to sink. This does form a probable allegory of the success with which the final ingathering of souls shall be effected.

*Q: This seems a reasonable explanation, as opposed to some wild allegories proposed.

*A: I essentially agree. But see the link: <https://ichthys.com/mail-153fish.htm>

John 21:14 (NASB)

14 This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples, after He was raised from the dead.

*Q: Meyer again struggles to reconcile accounts here. What is your take on this issue?

*A: This is technically correct when the import of the words "to the [multiple] disciples [meaning the eleven]" is reckoned in (the first two being John 20:19-25 and John 20:26-31). For more details see the link in BB 4A: "The Chronology of the Resurrection".

John 21:15-17 (NASB)

15 So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus *said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" He *said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He *said to him, "Tend My lambs." 16 He *said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" He *said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He *said to him, "Shepherd My sheep." 17 He *said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus *said to him, "Tend My sheep.

NIV SB: 21:15-17 love. The Greek word for "love" in Jesus' first two questions is different from that in his third question and in all Peter's answers. It is uncertain whether a distinction in meaning is intended since John often used synonyms for stylistic reasons (e. g., "Feed my lambs" [v. 15], "Take care of my sheep" [v. 16] and "Feed my sheep" [v. 17]). Also, no distinction is made between these two words elsewhere in this Gospel. The more important point is that Peter's threefold denial of Jesus (18:16-18, 25-27) is now reversed with Peter's threefold affirmation of his love for Jesus.

*Q: Do you agree that there is no difference in meaning between *agapao* and *phileo*? Commentators' views on this are divided, with some drawing conclusions in their interpretations based on the somewhat distinct shades of meaning of these two words, others doing the opposite. The same could be asked of the words that our Lord uses to describe feeding of the flock, which are different each time - should we draw any conclusions based on this? For example, Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges: Tending implies more of guidance and government than feeding does. The lambs, which can go no distance, scarcely require guidance, their chief need is food. The sheep require both.

*A: The critical point for interpretation here is when John writes, "He said to him *the third time*, Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" " and "Peter was grieved because He said to him *the third time*, 'Do you love Me?' " (Jn.21:27). This makes it clear that to the writer the whole point was the threefold repetition so that the varied vocabulary for love is not significant here (e.g., in the verse just cited, John writes, *phileis*, whereas in fact the first two times our Lord had actually said *agapas*). From this we can also conclude that trying to find variations in the mandate is also a mistake. In fact feeding and shepherding are the same thing; and that is doubly true for believers who are shepherded by the provision of spiritual food (and *not* by a shepherd's personal interference in their lives so as to violate the free will choices they are required to make for themselves).

NIV SB: 21:15 more than these. May mean "more than you love these men" or "more than these men love me" or "more than you love these things" (i. e., the fishing gear). Perhaps the second is best, for Peter had claimed a devotion above that of the others (Mt 26:33; Mk 14:29; cf. Jn 13:37). Peter did not take up the comparison, and Jesus did not explain it. Feed my lambs. Cf. "Take care of my sheep" (v. 16) and "Feed my sheep" (v. 17); cf. 1Pe 5:1-4; and notes.

*Q: This is an important point - which one of the three does our Lord mean - "more than you love these men" or "more than these men love me" or "more than you love these things"? So far I

have always assumed that the second meaning is correct.

*A: You are obviously correct as the other two make little sense when exposed to even marginal scrutiny. If Peter were going to be the leader of the remaining disciples, his love for the Lord would have to surpass theirs.

*Q: An interesting point is made by Cambridge Bible for School and Colleges: Jesus recalls this boast by asking him whether he now professes to have more loyalty and devotion than the rest. Do you think that could be the intention of our Lord's here?

*A: This is a wrong way to look at our Lord and His ministry. He is on our side. He is not a legalistic fault-finder. His question to Peter was meant to help Peter going forward, not to reproach Him in having him look backward.

*Q: Several commentaries point that our Lord asks Peter the question three times because of his threefold rejection. What do you think?

*A: I would reject the "because of". This is possibly more than a coincidence, but the common point I would see would be rather that Peter, being who he was, needed to hear and do things more than once to "get it" and "commit to it" respectively. Our Lord was aware of this in both instances and dealt with him perfectly in each case a result. It's a good thing for us to remember. Our Lord always goes the extra mile to help us and to help us "get it right". So we should not be reluctant to "get it" or to see the warnings we graciously given; and as teachers, we should never apologize about repeating ourselves when it comes to the truth – as Peter also saw (2Pet.1:12-15).

John 21:18 (NASB)

18 Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go."

NIV SB: 21:18 Very truly I tell you. See note on Mk 3:28. stretch out your hands. The early church understood this as a prophecy of crucifixion.

*Q: Do you agree that crucifixion is in view here?

*A: Since Peter later asks about John and our Lord couches His response in terms of John potentially abiding on earth longer than Peter, we are right to see this as a prophecy of Peter's death. I don't think we can read "crucifixion" into the picture from the text here. But it is true that this was the standard method of Roman capital punishment for non-citizens.

John 21:24 (NASB)

24 This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true.

I) NIV SB: We know. Evidently written by contemporaries in a position to know the truth.

*Q: Could you clarify this note? Do you agree with Meyer here with regard to the reason why John used the plural here: "but John, as he has avoided throughout in the Gospel, in accordance with his delicate peculiarity, the self-designation by I, here speaks out of the consciousness of fellowship with his readers at that time."

*A: The SB note seems to be the result of a mistaken belief that this was not written by John. It was written by John and by "we" he means "I". Grammatically this is called a plural of modesty. This is essentially what Meyer is trying to say.

John 21:25 (NASB)

25 And there are also many other things which 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.

*Q: Meyer takes this verse to be a gloss by a later hand and apparently it's missing from Sinaiticus - what is your take on the textual issue here?

*A: The verse is indeed present in Sinaiticus. It is sometimes taken to be added by a corrector, but to me it looks like it was done by the original hand. It is part of the Bible.