

John

INTRODUCTION

The Gospel of Mark, action-packed as it is, was written for quick absorption and understanding, but John has the opposite end of the spectrum in mind: people who enjoy peeling off layer after layer of dramatic, insightful symbolism, and people who want nothing more than extensive, detailed teaching sessions led by the Master Teacher.

The Gospel of John exists mainly to convince us to have faith in what he cannot possibly explain. The unexplainable is that Jesus and God are one, and that when Jesus lived on earth, He was both truly God and truly human. John doesn't try to explain how this could be—he simply reports that it is. He provides testimony from an intriguing array of witnesses, including Jesus Himself and leaves us with a convincing string of miracles that bear the unmistakable signature of God. We are left with a deep and sincere hope that we will have faith enough to believe.

John shows us that Jesus is the power of God, whose signature is stamped on the universe but he also takes us further. Just as a word reveals a thought, Jesus is the expression of God, physically revealing the invisible, spiritual presence of God.

John does not focus on the day-by-day history of Jesus, nor on His parables, but instead focuses on certain miracles and teachings that prove He is the Son of God. The signs and miracles Jesus did “are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (John 20:31).

John 1:1, 2

“In the beginning.” This expression reverts back to Genesis 1:1, and there it means the moment when the created universe came into existence. At this moment John declares Jesus Christ already was, and therefore had been in the previous eternity before any created existence had come into being. It implies His preexistence. This is the truth which the Apostle Paul expresses so forcibly in Colossians 1:17, “He is before all things,” and again, “the firstborn over all creation” (1:15), literally: “born before the whole creation.”

His relation to the Father, as the Image and Revealer of God. This is expressed by the term “the Word.” The Greek term, *logos*, was a familiar word in philosophical discussion in the days of John, both as understood in these discussions as the word itself naturally means. It fittingly expresses the truth that Jesus Christ is the great Revealer of the Father, conveying to us God’s highest and kindest thought, and exhibiting to us His nature and character. It is the same truth elsewhere expressed by John himself: “No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known” (John 1:18); and also in the later epistles of the New Testament: “He is the image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15); “The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being” (Hebrews 1:3).

In answer to all man’s questionings and cries, and all the heart’s deep needs, God speaks to us. God does not speak to us merely words of truth and promise, but sends the living answer, Jesus Himself, as the one great all-expressive Word, which contains in the substance of all other words and thoughts. He is to us, not only the realization of God’s purity, power and wisdom, but the expression of God’s love.

(The Christ in the Bible, A. B. Simpson)

The Scriptures abundantly reveal to mankind who God is; they also reveal His mind and His will, and that which is on His heart, in order for us to be instructed and enlightened. **Who is the Eternal Word of God?**

Ps. 2:6-8 Prov. 8:22-31 John 1:18 Rom. 8:22, 29 1 Cor. 1:24 Eph. 3:8-11 1 Tim. 3:16 Titus 2:13 Heb. 1:1-4 Rev. 11:11-16

What did the Word add to what had already been revealed in Scripture?

Ps. 23 Ps. 40:6-8 Isa. 42:6-8 Isa. 60:1, 2 Isa. 61:1 Isa. 64:6 Matt. 5:17, 18 Matt. 10:40 Luke 1:74,75 Luke 4:18, 19 Luke 12:15 Luke 16:25 John 1:3,4 John 8:37-44 John 14:9 John 14:12-21 John 14:23 Acts 26:15-18 Rom. 3:11 Rom. 5:13-15 Rom. 6:14-18 Rom. 7:18 Rom. 8:1 2 Cor. 4:4 2 Cor. 4:6 Gal. 4:4-7 Gal. 5:1 Col. 1:10 Col. 1:13 Col. 1:13-19 Heb. 2:14, 15 Heb. 4:14-16 Heb. 10:14 2 Pet. 1:2-4 Rev. 21:5, 6

John 1:3

Christ is the organ or medium by which God goes forth in creation, providence, and redemption.

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

Col. 1:16-17 states: “For by Him all things were created that are in Heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.” **If Christ has done, and is doing, all that these verses depict, what is the role of the Father?**

Luke 2:52 Rom. 8:27-30 Col. 1:12, 13 1 John 1:3-5

Should our prayers be directed to God the Father or to the Son?

Matt. 11:25-28 John 6:55-57 John 7:16-18 John 8:26-29
John 12:49 John 14:10-26 Col. 2:9, 10

John 1:4, 5

Whatever spiritual life and light Adam and Eve possessed before the fall, was from Christ. Whatever deliverance from sin and spiritual death any child of Adam has ever enjoyed since the fall, whatever light of conscience or understanding any one has obtained, all has flowed from Christ. The vast majority of mankind in every age have refused to know Him, have forgotten the fall, and their own need of a Savior. The light has been constantly shining “in darkness.” The most have “not comprehended the light.” But if any men and women out of the countless millions of mankind have ever had spiritual life and light, they have owed all to Christ.

(Expository Thoughts on John, J. C. Ryle)

The life of God was stored in the human nature of Jesus, when the Word became flesh, that it might more readily pass into us. True life is always light, as the minute *infusoria* of the ocean are phosphorescent. When we receive Christ's life, we shine. (F. B. Meyer) **Explain how the "Life was the Light of men".**

John 1:6-8

The description of John the Baptist: "He came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe." (John 1:7) Christian ministers are not priests, nor mediators between God and man. They are not agents into whose hands men may commit their souls, and carry on their religion by deputy. They are witnesses. They are intended to bear testimony to God's truth, and specially to the great truth that Christ is the only Savior and Light of the world. This was Peter's ministry on the day of Pentecost: "With many other words did he *testify*." (Acts 2:40) This was the whole tenor of Paul's ministry: "*Testifying* both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts 20:21) Unless a Christian minister bears a full testimony to Christ, he is not faithful to his office. So long as he does testify of Christ, he has done his part, and will receive his reward, although his hearers may not believe his testimony. Until a minister's hearers believe on that Christ of whom they are told, they receive no benefits from the ministry. They may be pleased and interested; but they are not profited until they believe. The great end of a minister's testimony is "that through him, men may believe."

(Expository Thoughts on John, J. C. Ryle)

John the Baptist was a man sent from God to bear witness of the Light: "He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light." (John 1:8). **Give Old Testament reference(s) that predicted such a witness.**

John 1:9-10

"That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not." (John 1:9-10)

These words refer to Christ's relation to the rational life and reason of man, and God's manifested Presence in the Old Testament revelations, which He made successfully under the patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations. He is "the true light that gives light to every man" (John 1:9), in the sense of giving reason and intelligence to the human race. And "he was in the world" (1:10), not only in the rational nature which He gave to men, but especially in the manifestations of His will which He made to the Old Testament patriarchs and prophets. And yet, with a very few exceptions, "the world did not recognize him" (1:10). The very intelligence which He gave to the human mind was prostituted to intellectual pride and idolatrous worship.

The successive revelations made to Abraham, Moses and the prophets were all connected with the person of Christ, the great Angel of the Covenant, whom we can trace through all the stages of former dispensations, and He is ever recognized in these revelations as the Son of God.

(The Christ in the Bible, A. B. Simpson)

The fact that the Savior is termed "the Light" teaches us what?

John 1:11

He came to the Jews, whom He had separated from other nations, and to whom He had revealed Himself by the prophets. He came to those very Jews who had read of Him in the Old Testament Scriptures, seen Him under types and figures in their temple services, and professed to be waiting for His coming. And yet, when He came, those very Jews received Him not. They even rejected Him, despised Him, and slew Him. Well may the natural heart be called "desperately wicked!"

(Expository Thoughts on John, J. C. Ryle)

If Israel's only true salvation was in Jesus Christ, why did they reject Him?

Isa. 53:3 Hos. 8:3 Matt. 17:5 Matt. 21:42 Luke 17:25 John 3:36 John 4:24 John 4:39-42 John 8:28-44

John 1:12, 13

Christ will never be without some servants. If the vast majority of the Jews did not receive Him as the Messiah, there were, at any rate, a few who did. To them He gave the privilege of being God's children. He adopted them as members

of His Father's family. He reckoned them His own brethren and sisters, bone of His bone, and flesh of His flesh. He conferred on them a dignity which was ample recompense for the cross which they had to carry for His sake. He made them sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. Privileges like these, be it remembered, are the possession of all, in every age, who receive Christ by faith, and follow Him as their Savior. They are "children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:26.) They are born again by a new and heavenly birth, and adopted into the family of the King of kings. Few in number, and despised by the world as they are, they are cared for with infinite love by a Father in heaven, who, for His Son's sake, is well pleased with them. In time He provides them with everything that is for their good. In eternity He will give them a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

(Expository Thoughts on John, J. C. Ryle)

What does John 1:12 teach concerning what a sinner must do to be saved?

What is the exact meaning of each clause in 1:13?

John 1:14

But while we do not pretend to explain the union of two natures in our Lord Jesus Christ's Person, we must not hesitate to fence the subject with well-defined cautions. While we state most carefully what we *do* believe, we must not shrink from declaring boldly what we do *not* believe. We must never forget, that though our Lord was God and man at the same time, the divine and human natures in Him were never confounded. One nature did not swallow up the other. The two natures remained perfect and distinct. The divinity of Christ was never for a moment laid aside, although veiled. The manhood of Christ, during His life-time, was never for a moment unlike our own, though by union with the Godhead, greatly dignified. Though perfect God, Christ has always been perfect from the first moment of His incarnation. He that is gone into heaven, and is sitting at the Father's right hand to intercede for sinners, is man as well as God. Though perfect man, Christ never ceased to be perfect God. He that suffered for sin on the cross, and was made sin for us, was "God manifest in the flesh." The blood with which the Church was purchased, is called the blood "of God." (Acts 20:28) Though He became "flesh" in the fullest sense, when He was born of the Virgin Mary, He never at any period ceased to be the Eternal Word. To say that He constantly manifested His divine nature during His earthly ministry, would, of course, be contrary to plain facts. To attempt to explain why His Godhead was sometimes veiled and at other times unveiled, while He was on earth, would be venturing on ground which we had better leave alone. But to say that at any instant of His earthly ministry He was not fully and entirely God, is nothing less than heresy."

(Expository Thoughts on John, J. C. Ryle)

Explain the value of having a mediator that is all God and all man.

Rom. 8:3 2 Cor. 5:21 1 John 2:6

In John 1:14 the word "dwelt" signifies "tabernacled." The Word tabernacled among men. It points back to the Tabernacle of Israel in the wilderness. **In what respects did the Tabernacle of the old typify and foreshadow Christ?**

"We beheld his glory" (1:14): what is meant by this?

John 1:15-17

There is laid up in Him, as in a treasury, a boundless supply of all that any sinner can need, either in time or eternity. The Spirit of Life is His special gift to the Church, and conveys from Him, as from a great root, sap and vigor to all the believing branches. He is rich in mercy, grace, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Out of Christ's fullness, all believers in every age of the world, have been supplied. They did not clearly understand the fountain from which their supplies flowed, in Old Testament times. The Old Testament saints only saw Christ afar off, and not face to face. But from Abel downwards, all saved souls have received all they have had from Jesus Christ alone. Every saint in glory will at last acknowledge that he is Christ's debtor for all he is. Jesus will prove to be all in all.

(Expository Thoughts on John, J. C. Ryle)

What is the meaning of 1:16?

"For the Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." (John 1:17) **Explain the differences between living under the law, and living according to grace (and truth).**

Deut. 28:1-6 Rom. 3:21-24 Rom. 4:3, 5 Rom. 4:15 Rom. 8:21-24 Rom. 10:4-10 Rom. 11:6 2 Cor. 3:6-9
Gal. 2:16 Gal. 3:24 Eph. 2:8, 9 Phil. 3:9 Titus 3:4, 5, 7 Heb. 9:9

John 1:18

John 1:18 states, “no man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.”

The eye of mortal man has never beheld God the Father. No man could bear the sight. Even to Moses it was said, “Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see Me, and live.” (Ex. 33:20) Yet all that mortal man is capable of knowing about God the Father is fully revealed to us by God the Son. He, who was in the bosom of the Father from all eternity, has been pleased to take our nature upon Him, and to exhibit to us in the form of man, all that our minds can comprehend of the Father’s perfections. In Christ’s words, and deeds, and life, and death, we learn as much concerning God the Father as our feeble minds can at present bear. His perfect wisdom,—His almighty power,—His unspeakable love to sinners,—His incomparable holiness,—His hatred of sin,—could never be represented to our eyes more clearly than we see them in Christ’s life and death. In truth, “God was manifest in the flesh,” when the Word took on Him a body. “He was the brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express image of His person.” He says Himself, “I and my Father are one.” “In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” (Col. 2:9) These are deep and mysterious things. But they are true. (1 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 1:3; John 10:30; 14:9)

(Expository Thoughts on John, J. C. Ryle)

Who is the person that appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre? And whose back did Moses see on Mt. Sinai when He was given the Ten Commandments?

Gen. 18:1 Ex. 33:23

In Ex. 33:20 God told Moses that no man can see God and live. **Is that to be considered only in the physical realm—or is there a spiritual application?**

John 1:19-28

John the Baptist was an eminent saint of God. There are few names which stand higher than his in the Bible calendar of great and good men. The Lord Jesus Himself declared that “Among them that are born of woman there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist.” (Matt. 11:11) The Lord Jesus Himself declared that he was “a burning and shining light.” (John 5:35) Yet here in this passage we see this eminent saint; lowly, self-abased, and full of humility. He puts away from himself the honor which the Jews from Jerusalem were ready to pay him. He declines all flattering titles. He speaks of himself as nothing more than the “voice of one crying in the wilderness,” and as one who “baptized with water.” He proclaims loudly that there is One standing among the Jews far greater than himself, One whose shoe-latchet he is not worthy to unloose. He claims honor not for himself but for Christ. To exalt Christ was his mission and to that mission he steadfastly adheres.

(Expository Thoughts on John, J. C. Ryle)

Why did the Jews ask John if he were Elijah, 1:21?

What “prophet” did they refer to in 1:21?

What Christian quality stands out the most in John the Baptist’s life?

Luke 14:11 1 Pet. 5:5

John 1:29-31

These Jews professed to be waiting for the appearance of Messiah. Like all the Pharisees they prided themselves on being children of Abraham, and possessors of the covenants. They rested in the law, and made their boast of God. They professed to know God’s will, and to believe God’s promises. They were confident that they themselves were guides of the blind, and lights of them that sat in darkness (Rom. 2:17-19). And yet at this very moment their souls were utterly in the dark. “There was standing among them,” as John the Baptist told them, “One whom they knew not.” Christ Himself, the promised Messiah was in the midst of them, and yet they neither knew Him, nor acknowledged Him, nor believed Him. And worse than this, the vast majority of them never would know Him! The words of John the Baptist are a prophetic description of a state of things which lasted during the whole of our Lord’s earthly ministry. Christ “stood among the Jews,” and yet the Jews knew Him not, and the greater part of them died in their sins.

(Expository Thoughts on John, J. C. Ryle)

What are the thoughts suggested by the Savior's title "The Lamb of God," 1:29?

There were many in Israel (Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes) who diligently studied the Word of God, yet they could not perceive who John was, nor that the One He was proclaiming would come. **Do you think it possible that churches today could depreciate into such a blinded state that they also would miss the distinctive message of grace and truth? What factors do you believe would cause this?**

Rom. 3:10-20 Rom. 10:4 Gal. 3:10-25

John 1:32-34

Let us notice, lastly, in this passage, *the peculiar office which John the Baptist attributes to Christ*. He speaks of Him as Him "which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." The baptism here spoken of is not the baptism of water. It does not consist either of dipping or sprinkling. It does not belong exclusively either to infants or to grown up people. It is not a baptism which any man can give, Episcopalian or Presbyterian, Independent or Methodist, layman or minister. It is a baptism which the great Head of the Church keeps exclusively in His own hands. It consists of the implanting of grace into the inward man. It is the same thing with the new birth. It is a baptism, not of the body, but of the heart. It is a baptism which the penitent thief received, though neither dipped nor sprinkled by the hand of man. It is a baptism which Ananias and Sapphira did not receive, though admitted into church-communion by apostolic men. Let it be a settled principle in our religion that the baptism of which John the Baptist speaks here, is the baptism which is absolutely necessary to salvation. It is well to be baptized into the visible Church; but it is far better to be baptized into that Church which is made up of true believers. The baptism of water is a most blessed and profitable ordinance, and cannot be neglected without great sin. But the baptism of the Holy Ghost is of far greater importance. The man who dies with his heart not baptized by Christ can never be saved.

Let us ask ourselves, as we leave this passage, whether we are baptized with the Holy Ghost, and whether we have any real interest in the Lamb of God? Thousands, unhappily, are wasting their time in controversy about water baptism, and neglecting the baptism of the heart. Thousands more are content with a head-knowledge of the Lamb of God, or have never sought Him by faith, that their own sins may be actually taken away. Let us take heed that we ourselves have new hearts, and believe to the saving of our souls.

(Expository Thoughts on John, J. C. Ryle)

Why did the Holy Spirit descend on Christ as a "dove," in John 1:32 which is very different from the way the Holy Spirit came to the disciples on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2:3?

John 1:35-51

These verses ought always to be interesting to every true Christian. They describe the first beginnings of the Christian Church. Vast as that Church is now, there was a time when it consisted of only two weak members.

We are told of a man, named Philip, being added to the little company of Christ's disciples. He does not appear to have been moved, like Andrew and his companions, by the testimony of John the Baptist. He was not drawn, like Simon Peter, by the outspoken declaration of a brother. He seems to have been called directly by Christ Himself, and the agency of man seems not to have been used in his calling. Yet in faith and life he became one with those who were disciples before him. Though led by different paths, they all entered the same road, embraced the same truths, served the same Master, and at length reached the same home.

The fact before us is a deeply important one. It throws light on the history of all God's people in every age, and on every tongue. There are diversities in operations in the saving of souls. All true Christians are led by one Spirit, washed in one blood, serve one Lord, lean on one Savior, believe one truth, and walk by one general rule. But all are not converted in one and the same manner. All do not pass through the same experience. In conversion, the Holy Ghost acts as a sovereign. He calleth every one severally as He will.

Let us pray that we may be of the same spirit as Nathanael. An honest, unprejudiced mind,—a child-like willingness to follow the truth, wherever the truth may lead us,—a simple, hearty desire to be guided, taught, and led by the Spirit,—a thorough determination to use every spark of light which we have,—are possessions of priceless value. A man of this spirit may live in the midst of much darkness, and be surrounded by every possible disadvantage to his soul. But the Lord Jesus will take care that such a man does not miss the way to heaven. "The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach His way." (Psalm 25:9)

(Expository Thoughts on John, J. C. Ryle)

We follow after, or are drawn toward Christ, for varying reasons. **What are the compelling, drawing points that made His first disciples follow Him?**

John 5:30 John 6:44 John 6:68 John 14:1-6, 12-26 John 17:3 Titus 1:2 Titus 2:11-15

John 2:1-11

In the entrance hall six stone waterpots were standing, “after the manner of the purifying of the Jews.” Their superstitious dread of uncleanness made it necessary to have large supplies of water ever at hand. Without washing no one ate (Mark 7:3). The feet of each guest were washed on arrival (Luke 7:44). The washing of cups and jugs and bottles, says the Talmud, went on all day. And in this we have a symbol of that religion which consists in external rites, and is content if only these are maintained. But the Master turned the water of outward ceremonial washing into wine for inward drinking.

(Gospel of John, F. B. Meyer)

What is the symbolic meaning of changing the water into wine?

Ps. 51:16, 17 Isa. 1:13 Micah 6:6-8 Matt. 23:25 Luke 11:37-41 Acts 2:38 Acts 10:11-15 Heb. 9:8-15

John 2:12-25

It was in the temple that He who was Himself the temple of God, spake of the body as a temple. And there was a special fitness in the coincidence. The temple had three divisions. The outer, which lay beneath the gaze of Israel; the inner, or Holy Place, where the white-robed priests went to and fro on their sacred ministries, awed by the sense of the nearness of God’s manifested presence; and the innermost, or Most Holy Place, where the Shekinah, in Solomon’s temple, shone between the bending forms of the cherubim. Similarly tripartite is the nature of man. The body is its outer court. Next to that is the soul, the seat of consciousness, of thought and will, of emotion and imagination, a family of priests meant to minister to God, in robes of stainless purity, under the sense of His presence, their every movement music, their every act worship. But beyond this wondrous play of soul life is the spirit; that in which man is most like God, and by which he is capable of becoming God-filled and God-possessed. For it is through the spirit that man’s nature opens out into the world of spirit, of the infinite and eternal, and becomes the residence and shrine of God (1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 4:12).

(Gospel of John, F. B. Meyer)

Why did not Christ drive out “the doves?” (2:16)

What solemn warning does verse 23 point?

What does verse 25 prove concerning Christ?

John 3:1-13

It is more than knowledge, and it is essential to all true spiritual knowledge. Nicodemus can say “We know” (3:2), but Jesus replies, “No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again” (3:3). The very first glimpse of spiritual truth is impossible without the new birth. Nicodemus was, undoubtedly, a man of superior morality, but morality without spiritual life can no more lift the soul into the kingdom of God than nature and pruning can change a bramble into a man, or even into an apple tree.

A poor man once brought the two hands of a clock to a watchmaker to be repaired, complaining that they would not keep time. The watchmaker laughed at his ignorance and told him to go home and bring the clock, or, at least, the works of the clock. The man explained that the clock was all right, the trouble was all in the hands, that they would not keep proper time. He went away complaining that the tradesman wanted to draw him into an unnecessary bill for the repairing of the clock and trying to find some other workman that would repair his irregular clock hands.

A good many people are like the poor man, trying to repair the hands of their poor broken-down human nature, not knowing or thinking that the fatal ruin is in the deeper springs of the heart, and that what they need is not reformation, but regeneration.

It is described as a new birth; elsewhere it is called a new creation. It is the addition of a new element in human nature, namely, spiritual life—spoken of in the latter Scriptures as nothing less than a new man. It is not the creation of new intellectual faculties or physical powers, but a new spiritual principle. Here it is contrasted with John’s baptism, “born

of water" (3:5). This is more, being born from above and of the Spirit. Again, it is contrasted with being born of the flesh. This term flesh includes not only the physical, but also the psychological nature.

It is not always possible to perceive the processes, any more than it is to follow the viewless wind, but we may know the reality and power of both by their effects.

Regeneration is not complete sanctification; it is the birth, not of an Adam, full grown, but of a feeble infant; but it will mature into all the fullness of the stature of a man in Christ, and it is real and complete in all its parts, in its infancy, as in its manhood, just as the babe is as perfectly human as its grandfather, though not as old or as fully developed.

He is the source of all life, and His highest work is to bring souls into the life of God. The regeneration of the soul is as divine as a result as the creation of a world, and involves the putting forth of a mightier effort of omnipotence (John 3:5, 8).

(The Christ in the Bible, A. B. Simpson)

How does the transforming act of being born again give us the mysterious, yet glorious life of God, which is entirely different from the natural life of the flesh?

Matt. 23:9 Rom. 8:5-13 1 Cor. 2:14 2 Cor. 5:17-21 1 Thess. 5:21 James 1:17, 18 2 Pet. 1:2-4

What divine attribute of Christ is affirmed in John 3:13?

John 3:14, 15

By being "lifted up," our Lord meant nothing less than His own death upon the cross. That death, He would have us know, was appointed by God to be "the life of the world." (John 6:51) It was ordained from all eternity to be the great propitiation and satisfaction for man's sin. It was the payment, by an Almighty Substitute and Representative, of man's enormous debt to God. When Christ died upon the cross, our many sins were laid upon Him. He was made "sin" for us. He was made "a curse" for us. (2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13) By His death He purchased pardon and complete redemption for sinners. The brazen serpent, lifted up in the camp of Israel, brought health and cure within the reach of all who were bitten by serpents. Christ crucified, in like manner, brought eternal life within reach of lost mankind. Christ has been lifted up on the cross, and man looking to Him by faith may be saved.

(Expository Thoughts on John, J. C. Ryle)

Why was a "serpent" selected by God to typify Christ on the cross?

Num. 21:4-9

Why must the Son of Man be lifted up as the brass serpent was in Numbers 21:9?

Gen. 6:5-8 Acts 10:39 Rom. 8:3 2 Cor. 5:21 Gal. 3:13 Titus 3:5 1 John 4:9, 10 Rev. 1:18

John 3:16-21

"God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." There is no unwillingness on God's part to receive any sinner, however great his sins. God has sent "light" into the world, and if man will not come to the light, the fault is entirely on man's side. His blood will be on his own head, if he makes shipwreck of his soul. The blame will be at his own door, if he misses heaven. His eternal misery will be the result of his own choice. His destruction will be the work of his own hand. God loved him, and was willing to save him; but he "loved darkness," and therefore darkness must be his everlasting portion. He would not come to Christ, and therefore he could not have life. (John 5:40)

(Expository Thoughts on John, J. C. Ryle)

There are many people who choose to stay neutral about believing in a supernatural God; therefore they try to keep out of any observance or conversation regarding views and requirements pertaining to "religion" (spiritual life) or faith. **What does John 3:18 say about those who fail to make a commitment; example, do not give their hearts to the Lord?**

John 3:22-36

The greatest saint in the sight of God is the man who is most thoroughly "clothed with humility." (1 Peter 5:5) Would we know the prime secret of being men of the stamp of Abraham, and Moses, and Job, and David, and Daniel, and Paul, and John the Baptist? They were all eminently humble men. Living at different ages, and enjoying very different degrees of light, in this matter at least they were all agreed. In themselves they saw nothing but sin and weakness. To God they

gave all the praise of what they were. Let us walk in their steps. Let us covet earnestly the best gifts; but above all, let us covet humility. The way to true honor is to be humble. No man ever was so praised by Christ as the very man who says here, "I must decrease,"—the humble John the Baptist.

(Expository Thoughts on John, J. C. Ryle)

What is the meaning of John 3:27?

In what ways are we to decrease, and allow Him to increase in our lives?

Eph. 4:20-24 Eph. 4:31, 32 Col. 3:5-10

What is meant by the last half of John 3:34?

John 4:1-42

Samaritans

In the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, these mongrel Samaritans had sought to be included with the Jewish people; a proposal which met with strong rebuffs. They resented the affront; built a temple of their own at Gerizim to rival that at Jerusalem; claimed for their mountain a superior holiness to that of Zion; favored the Romans because the Jews hated them; and even defiled the Jewish temple by scattering bones there at the time of the Passover. The Jews therefore had no dealings with the Samaritans, and held that salvation was only from themselves.

(Gospel of John, F. B. Meyer)

The woman of Samaria, or the wisdom that wins souls.

For a moment let us still glance at it as a lesson in soul-winning. The first thing that strikes us about it is the incidental character of His work in saving this woman. It was one of those opportunities which come to us constantly by the way, and which He was always ready to meet and improve. Much of our best work should be unstudied and spontaneous.

The real secret of His usefulness in this and in every case, was His intense love for souls. He could truly say to His disciples, "My food . . . is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work" (4:34). Work like this was His very life and joy. And so, if we are to win souls, it must be our delight, and we must be watching for them. The literal translation of the word, "welcomes" (Luke 15:2), is, "this man lies in wait for sinners."

We also see in this case the finest tact in His interesting the woman before He attempts to impress her. He awakens her interest and confidence by meeting her in an easy and friendly manner and asked a little favor of her. He stooped to her level, and even surprised her by His entire freedom from all the prejudices which she expected from a Jewish rabbi. If we would save people we must come near them. The earliest Moravian missionaries to the West Indies became slaves that they might win the confidence of the degraded natives.

Then He awakens her curiosity and spiritual hunger by hinting at the needs of her own sad heart, and the blessings He is able to give in return, if she but knew. There is always a sore place in every human heart that a loving hand can touch and find in it a point of contact with the gospel. To speak of the living water is often enough to awaken the thirst.

But there is a deeper need, and that is her sin. It would not do to tell her of it, for this might offend her; she must see it herself, and so a simple question, "Go, call your husband" (John 4:16), becomes the occasion of wakening her conscience and bringing from her lips the frank confession that lays her poor guilty heart at the feet of the Savior. But now she tries for a moment to turn aside and evade her conscience and the leadings of God's Spirit by a spirit of controversy about the difference between Jewish and Samaritan worship.

The Master refuses to enter into the controversy further than to use it to awaken her own sense of God's spirituality and her need of a personal acquaintance with Him in her secret heart. She feels the lack of this, and her soul instinctively cries out for someone to lead her to God, and she exclaims, "'I know that Messiah' (called Christ) 'is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us' " (4:25). She has been led thus step by step up to the very portals of faith, and all that is necessary now is to draw aside the veil and reveal Himself to her heart. No human language can express all that is meant in that little sentence that follows, "I who speak to you am he" (4:26). We must go back to the moment when He revealed Himself to us to understand it. It is proper that a curtain should here fall upon the scene, and she be left, with the secret of her new and eternal joy. She is saved, she has found her Lord, but she cannot keep the secret, and she, too, in turn, becomes a messenger of love, to bring her countrymen to the same wondrous Teacher that has searched and saved her own soul.

(The Christ in the Bible, A. B. Simpson)

Why do you think the Lord moved quickly over her attempted diversions, and instead, offered her Living Water?

John 6:35, 55-57 John 7:37, 38

John 4:43-54

We learn, lastly, from this passage, that Christ's word is as good as Christ's presence. We read that Jesus did not come down to Capernaum to see the sick young man, but only spoke the word: "Thy son liveth." Almighty power went with that little sentence: that very hour the patient began to amend. Christ only spoke, and the cure was done: Christ only commanded, and the deadly disease stood fast.

The fact before us is singularly full of comfort. It gives enormous value to every promise of mercy, grace, and peace, which ever fell from Christ's lips. He that by faith has laid hold on some word of Christ, has got his feet upon a rock. What Christ has said, He is able to do; and what He has undertaken, He will never fail to make good. The sinner who has really reposed his soul on the word of the Lord Jesus, is safe to all eternity. He could not be safer if he saw the Book of Life and his own name written in it. If Christ has said, "Him that cometh to Me, I will in nowise cast out," and our hearts can testify, "I have come," we need not doubt that we are saved. In the things of this world, we see that seeing is believing. But in the things of the gospel, believing is as good as seeing. Christ's word is as good as man's deed. He of whom Jesus says in the Gospel, "He liveth," is alive for evermore, and shall never die.

(Expository Thoughts on John, J. C. Ryle)

What does the word "yesterday" in verse 52 tell us about the nobleman?

John 5:1-15

We are taught the *lesson that recovery from sickness ought to impress upon us*. That lesson is contained in the solemn words which our Savior addressed to the man He had cured: "Sin no more, lest a worst thing come unto thee." Every sickness and sorrow is the voice of God speaking to us. Each has its peculiar message. Happy are they who have an eye to see God's hand, and an ear to hear His voice, in all that happens to them. Nothing in this world happens by chance.

And as it is with sickness, so it is with recovery. Renewed health should send us back to our post in the world with a deeper hatred of sin, a more thorough watchfulness over our own ways, and a more constant purpose of mind to live to God. Far too often the excitement and novelty of returning health tempt us to forget the vows and intentions of the sick-room. There are spiritual dangers attending a recovery! Well would it be for us after illness to grave these words on our own hearts, "Let me sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto me."

(Expository Thoughts on John, J. C. Ryle)

Why did Christ ask the impotent man such a question as is recorded in verse 6?

What is the worst thing that could come upon the cured man?

John 5:16, 17

Our Lord's reply to the Jews is very remarkable. "My Father," he says, "worketh hitherto, and I also work." It is as though he said:—"Though my Father rested on the seventh day from His work of creation, He has never rested for a moment from His providential government of the world, and from His merciful work of supplying the daily wants of all His creatures. Were He to rest from such work, the whole of nature would stand still. And I also work works of mercy on the Sabbath day. I do not break the fourth commandment when I heal the sick, any more than my Father breaks it when He causes the sun to rise and the grass to grow on the Sabbath."

(Expository Thoughts on John, J. C. Ryle)

What lesson is there for us concerning the Sabbath day?

John 5:18-23

All is *of* the Father—all is *by* the Son. Did the Father create the universe? So did the Son. Does the Father uphold the universe? So does the Son. Does the Father govern the universe? So does the Son. Is the Father the Savior of the world? So is the Son. Surely the Jews did not err when they concluded that our Lord made Himself "equal with God." Surely He who is so intimately connected with God that He does what God does, does all God does, does all in the same manner in which God does it; surely such a person cannot but be equal with God."

(The Four Gospels, John Brown)

If the Son is equal with God, why is it that He can only do what He sees the Father do?

Isa. 9:6, 7 Dan. 7:9-13 Acts 10:36-43 Col. 2:9, 10 Heb. 2:10 Heb. 5:5-10 Heb. 12:2-4 Rev. 21:6

John 5:24-39

Our Lord tells us that “the hour is coming when all that are in the grave shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation.”

The passage is one of those that ought to sink down very deeply into our hearts, and never be forgotten. All is not over when men die. Whether they like it or not, they will have to come forth from their graves at the last day, and to stand at Christ’s bar. None can escape His summons. When His voice calls them before Him, all must obey. When men rise again, they will not all rise in the same condition. There will be two classes—two parties—two bodies. Not all will go to heaven. Not all will be saved. Some will rise again to inherit eternal life, but some will rise again only to be condemned. These are terrible things! But the words of Christ are plain and unmistakable. Thus it is written, and thus it must be.

(Expository Thoughts on John, J. C. Ryle)

Does verse 30 speak of Christ’s humanity or deity?

How many witnesses are there here to the deity of Christ?

John 5:40-47

This passage concludes our Lord Jesus Christ’s wondrous defense of His own divine mission. It is a conclusion worthy of the defense, full of heart-searching appeals to the consciences of His enemies, and rich in deep truths. A mighty sermon is followed by a mighty application.

Let us mark in this passage, *the reason why many souls are lost*. The Lord Jesus says to the unbelieving Jews, “Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life.”

These words are a golden sentence, which ought to be engraven in our memories, and treasured up in our minds. It is want of will to come to Christ for salvation that will be found, at last, to have shut the many out of heaven. It is not men’s sins: all manner of sin may be forgiven. It is not any decree of God: we are not told in the Bible of any whom God has only created to be destroyed. It is not any limit in Christ’s work of redemption: He has paid a price sufficient for all mankind. It is something far more than this: it is man’s own innate unwillingness to come to Christ, repent, and believe. Either from pride, or laziness, or love of sin, or love of the world, the many have no mind, or wish, or heart, or desire to seek life in Christ. “God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.” (1 John 5:11) But men stand still, and will not stir hand or foot to get life. And this is the whole reason why many of the lost are not saved.

This is a painful and solemn truth, but one that we can never know too well. It contains a first principle in Christian theology. Thousands, in every age, are constantly laboring to shift the blame of their condition from off themselves. They talk of their inability to change. They tell you complacently, that they *cannot help* being what they are! They know, forsooth, that they are wrong, but they *cannot* be different!—It will not do. Such talk will not stand the test of the Word of Christ before us. The unconverted are what they are because they have no will to do better. “Light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light.” (John 3:19) The words of the Lord Jesus will silence many: “I would have gathered you, and ye would not be gathered.” (Matt. 23:37)

Let us mark, secondly, in this passage, *one principal cause of unbelief*. The Lord Jesus says to the Jews, “How can ye believe which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that come of God only?” He meant by that saying, that they were not honest in their religion. With all their apparent desire to hear and learn, they cared more in reality for pleasing man than God. In this state of mind they were never likely to believe.

“A deep principle is contained in this saying of our Lord’s and one that deserves special attention. True faith does not depend merely on the state of man’s head and understanding, but on the state of his heart. His mind may be convinced: his conscience may be pricked: but so long as there is anything the man is secretly loving more than God, there will be no true faith. The man himself may be puzzled, and wonder why he does not believe. He does not see that he is like a child sitting on the lid of his box, and wishing to open it, but not considering that his own weight keeps it shut. Let a man make sure that he honestly and really desires first the praise of God. It is the want of an honest heart which makes many stick fast in their religion all their days, and die at length without peace. Those who complain that they hear, and approve, and assent, but make no progress, and cannot get any hold on Christ, should ask themselves this simple question,—“Am I honest?—Am I sincere?—Do I really desire first the praise of God?”

(Expository Thoughts on John, J. C. Ryle)

Those who were against Him have had the witness of John, Christ’s teachings and miracles, the witness of the Father and the Holy Spirit, and the Scriptures to show them that Jesus is very God. And yet, Jesus turns to his accusers and tells

them they will accept another (leader), but not (accept) Him. **Who is referred to in the second half of verse 43? Select words in Jesus' accusations to the Jews that definitely indicate why they do not believe.**

John 5:38-44, 46, 47

John 6:1-14

We have, for one thing, in this miracle, *a lesson about Christ's almighty power*. We see our Lord feeding five thousand men with "five barley loaves and two small fishes." We see clear proof that a miraculous event took place in the "twelve baskets of fragments" that remained after all had eaten. Creative power was manifestly exercised. Food was called into existence that did not exist before. In healing the sick, and raising the dead, something was amended or restored that had already existed. In feeding five thousand men with five loaves, something must have been created which before had no existence.

Such a history as this ought to be specially instructive and encouraging to all who endeavor to do good to souls. It shows us the Lord Jesus "able to save to the uttermost." He is one who has all power over dead hearts. Not only can He mend that which is broken,—build up that which is ruined,—heal that which is sick,—strengthen that which is weak, He can call it out of nothing. We must never despair of any one being saved. So long as there is life there is hope. Reason and sense may say that some poor sinner is too hardened, or too old to be converted. Faith will reply, "Our Master can create as well as renew. With a Savior who, by His Spirit, can create a new heart, nothing is impossible."

(Expository Thoughts on John, J. C. Ryle)

Christ tested Philip by asking Philip what they should do (John 6:5-7) even though Christ knew what he would do.

Knowing that God may choose to test us at any given time, in what ways should we prepare ourselves?

Ps. 43:5 Prov. 3:5, 6 Matt. 25:14-30 1 Cor. 15:58 Gal. 6:10-18 Phil. 4:8 Phil. 4:19 1 Thess. 5:16-22,24

John 6:15-21

We are told that they were sent over the lake by themselves, while their Master tarried behind. And then we see them alone in a dark night, tossed about by a great wind on stormy waters, and, worst of all, Christ not with them. It was a strange transition. From witnessing a mighty miracle, and helping it instrumentally, amidst an admiring crowd, to solitude, darkness, winds, waves, storm, anxiety, and danger, the change was very great! But Christ knew it, and Christ appointed it, and it was working for their good.

Trial, we must distinctly understand, is part of the diet which all true Christians must expect. It is one of the means by which their grace is proved, and by which they find out what there is in themselves. Winter as well as summer, cold as well as heat, clouds as well as sunshine,—are all necessary to bring the fruit of the Spirit to ripeness and maturity. We do not naturally like this. We would rather cross the lake with calm weather and favorable winds, with Christ always by our side, and the sun shining down on our faces. But it may not be. It is not in this way that God's children are made "partakers of His holiness." (Heb. 12:10) Abraham, and Jacob, and Moses, and David, and Job were all men of many trials. Let us be content to walk in their footsteps, and to drink of their cup. In our darkest hours we may seem to be left,—but we are never really alone.

(Expository Thoughts on John, J. C. Ryle)

Beside the Lord being the creator of the world, is He also the sustainer having control over the waves, wind, and weather?

John 6:22-27

We should mark first, in this passage, *what knowledge of man's heart our Lord Jesus Christ possesses*. We see Him exposing the false motives of those who followed Him for the sake of the loaves and fishes. They had followed Him across the Lake of Galilee. They seemed at first sight ready to believe in Him, and do Him honor. But He knew the inward springs of their conduct, and was not deceived. "Ye seek Me," He said, "not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled."

The Lord Jesus, we should never forget, is still the same. He never changes. He reads the secret motives of all who profess and call themselves Christians. He knows exactly why they do all they do in their religion. The reasons why they go to church, and why they receive the sacrament,—why they attend family prayers, and why they keep Sunday holy,—all are naked and opened to the eyes of the great Head of the Church. By His actions are weighed as well as seen. "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh at the heart." (1 Sam. 16:7)

(Expository Thoughts on John, J. C. Ryle)

Show how all things in our life are open to Him.

John 21:17 Matt. 6:33

John 6:28-34

We should observe, for one thing, in these verses, *the spiritual ignorance and unbelief of the natural man*. Twice over we see this brought out and exemplified. When our Lord bade His hearers “labor for the meat which endureth to eternal life,” they immediately began to think of works to be done, and a goodness of their own to be established. “What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?” (John 6:28) Doing, doing, doing, was their only idea of the way to heaven.—Again, when our Lord spoke of Himself as the one sent of God, and the need of believing on Him at once, they turn round with the question, “What sign showest Thou? What dost thou work?” (John 6:30) Fresh from the mighty miracle of the loaves and fishes, one might have thought they had had a sign sufficient to convince them. Taught by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, one might have expected a greater readiness to believe. But alas! There are no limits to man’s dullness, prejudice, and unbelief in spiritual matters. It is a striking fact that the one thing which our Lord is said to have “marveled” at during His earthly ministry, was man’s “unbelief.” (Mark 6:6.)

(Expository Thoughts on John, J.C. Ryle)

This is what God asks of you—give up your own doings and receive that of My beloved Son. But are you ready to do this? Are you willing to abandon your own doings, your own righteousness, and to accept His? You will not till you are thoroughly convinced that all your doings are faulty, that all *your* efforts fall far short of God’s demands, that all your own righteousness is tarnished with sin, yea, is as “filthy rags.” What man will renounce his own work in order to trust to that of another, unless he be first convinced that his own is worthless? What man will repose for safety in another till he be convinced that there is no safety in trusting to himself? It is impossible. Man cannot do this of himself; it takes “the work of God.” It is the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, and that alone, which brings the sinner to *renounce* his own works and *lay hold* on the Lord Jesus for salvation.”

(Gospel of John, A. W. Pink)

What is the greatest work you could do?

Is there anything meritorious in believing?

John 6:35-40

Our Lord would have us know that He Himself is the appointed food of man’s soul. The soul of every man is naturally starving and famishing through sin. Christ is given by God the Father, to be the Satisfier, the Reliever, and the Physician of man’s spiritual need. In Him and His mediatorial office,—in Him and His atoning death,—in Him and His priesthood,—in Him and His grace, love, and power,—in Him alone will empty souls find their wants supplied. In Him there is life. He is “the bread of life.”

(Expository Thoughts on John, J. C. Ryle)

What comforting truth is found in verse 39?

John 6:41-51

We find our Lord saying, “No man can come unto Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him.” (John 6:44) Until the Father draws the heart of man by His grace, man will not believe.

The solemn truth contained in these words is one that needs careful weighing. It is vain to deny that without the grace of God no one ever can become true Christian. We are spiritually dead, and have no power to give ourselves life. We need a new principal put in us from above. Facts prove it. Preachers see it. The Tenth Article of our own Church expressly declares it: “The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God.” This witness is true.

But after all, of what does this inability of man consist? In what part of our inward nature does this impotence reside? Here is a point on which many mistakes arise. Forever let us remember that the *will* of man is the part of him which is in fault. His inability is not physical, but moral. It would not be true to say that a man has a real wish and desire to come to Christ, but no power to come. It would be far more true to say that a man has no power to come because he has no desire or wish. It is not true that he would come if he could. It is true that he could come if he would. The corrupt will,—

the secret disinclination,—the want of heart, are the real causes of unbelief. It is here the mischief lies. The power that we want is a new will. It is precisely at this point that we need the “drawing” of the Father.

(Expository Thoughts on John, J. C. Ryle)

How does John 6:44 rebuke their “murmuring”?

Who are the “all” that are “taught of God” in John 6:45?

What is meant by “not die” in John 6:50?

What are the various thoughts suggested by “eat” in John 6:51?

What movement takes place in your soul when being drawn to the Lord Jesus?

Since God drew souls to Him to be willing to believe, will those not drawn still be held accountable?

John 6:52-71

This address, as we have already seen, was given in Galilee at the close of His ministry there, and immediately after the feeding of the 5,000 and perhaps on the Sabbath of the Passover which was then being celebrated in Jerusalem. Its one great theme, the revelation of Jesus Christ in His person, as the satisfaction of all the soul's needs, stands in contrast with their earthly expectations of a Messiah, who was to give them mere human bread and relieve them from their temporal burdens and disasters. They were eager to make Christ their king if He would always feed them with such bread as His great miracle had furnished, but when He came to lead them to a closer fellowship with Himself and to require a deeper and more spiritual apprehension of Him, they turned away and rejected Him altogether.

This life must be received through vital union with the Person of Christ and living communion with Him.

More and more His hearers become perplexed with this idea of eating His flesh. He now adds to it the other expression, drinking His blood. These together express most perfectly the idea of an actual participation in His death and risen life. Like many since, they understood it literally, and naturally asked, how can this man give us His flesh to eat? Jesus, however, now explains that what He means is such a union with Him as He has with the Father, by virtue of which His life is constantly sustained not by natural means alone, but by the constant impartation of the divine life. “Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me” (6:57). And then He adds, to show how close the union thus involved is, “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him” (6:56). This was the constant support of His own physical and spiritual life, so that when tempted by the devil in the wilderness to make the stones into bread, He answered, “Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4). This was not only for Himself, but it is implied in the expression “man,” not the Son of Man only.

This can be fully understood and realized through the Holy Spirit's teaching and after His death, resurrection and ascension.

Not in His present life among them as they see Him with their eyes and touch Him with their hands can He become to them fully the Living Bread. But after He has ascended to His Father's right hand and sent forth the Holy Spirit to be the teacher and revealer of His truth and grace, and to lead His disciples to know and receive Him in His fullness, then shall these words be understood and appreciated. “What,” He says, “if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life” (John 6:62-63). Therefore Mary Magdalene, as she clasped His feet with her loving arms, must be taught that there was a higher touch and a more spiritual communion to which she must rise: “Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God’” (20:17).

This was too spiritual for their carnal hearts, and so we read, “many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him” (6:66). And this is the reason today that the multitudes of professing Christians know little of these great spiritual mysteries. They bring them too close to Christ, and require too pure an element of living for their earthly tastes and aspirations.

Summing up the Teachings of this Chapter

- a. The earthly bread is the type of the higher needs and supplies of our being, which Jesus comes to bring.
- b. Jesus Christ, in His own person, is the Supply of all our needs and is able and willing to impart His own very life as the strength and support of our entire being, spirit, soul and body. God has put into this one ideal Man all that man needs and needs to be, and He offers Himself to each one of us as the very Substance of our life.
- c. This divine provision began with His death for us as our ransom. His flesh was given for the life of the world in the sense of substitution, first. This therefore, is the primary meaning of drinking His blood, namely, partaking of the benefits of His death and atonement.
- d. But there is a far deeper meaning. Not only His death, but His risen life becomes for us the source of life—not only did He give His life for us, but He also gives it to us. His blood represents His life, and His flesh represents, especially, His physical life. And both together express the facts that Jesus Christ, in His entire humanity, offers Himself to His people as their imparted life and strength; His holiness, love, joy, power and even His physical vitality will be the support and supply of our every spiritual and physical need.
- e. In order to receive Him thus, there must be a very intimate union with Him expressed by the language “Whoever . . . remains in me, and I in him.” There must also be a habitual receiving of Him, expressed by the figure of eating and drinking, and also by the less figurative expressions, “he who comes to me,” “he who believes in me” (6:35), etc.
- f. Not in His earthly, but in His ascension life was this to be realized, and there, since Christ’s resurrection, He has been real to His people as He could not be before (6:62).
- g. We must be led into this knowledge of Christ and this best fellowship with Him by divine teaching. No man can thus come without the Father’s drawing and the Spirit’s revealing (6:44, 63, 65).
- h. But the Father is always drawing and the Spirit always teaching, and the Son always ready to receive all that come. Nowhere in all His teachings, do we find such an assurance of the willingness of Christ to receive the soul that comes to Him as in the very midst of these present teachings. This is not the exclusive privilege of a favored class, but without limitation it is said of all who are willing to come, “Whoever comes to me I will never drive away” (6:37). This is true not only of the soul that comes to Christ for salvation, but just as true of every advancing stage of our Christian life; and, especially, of this deeper experience into which the Lord is ever waiting and willing to lead His hungry and thirsty children.
- i. The climax of all this experience will be reached in the future resurrection. Therefore Christ adds repeatedly in this passage, “I will raise him up at the last day” (6:40). Then shall we know all that is involved in perfect union and fellowship with the person of our Lord, as we share both in our body, our spirit and our future glory, all the fullness of His life and all the riches of His glory.

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

What is the meaning of the Lord’s words in John 6:53-54?

John 6:63

What is the difference in thought between John 6:53 and 56?

What is meant by “I live by the Father” in John 6:57?

What is the meaning of John 6:63?

What is the force of the “therefore” in John 6:65?

Why did Christ challenge the twelve in John 6:67?

Do Peter’s words in John 6:68 give us encouragement when we are discouraged or confused and want to give up? What was the assurance of Peter based on?

Why was there a Judas in the apostolate?

John 7:1-9

The chapter we now begin is divided from the preceding one by a wide interval of time. The many miracles which our Lord wrought, while He “walked in Galilee,” are passed over by John in comparative silence. The events which he was specially inspired to record, are those which took place in or near Jerusalem.

We should observe in this passage *the desperate hardness and unbelief of human nature*. We are told that even our Lord’s “brethren did not believe in Him.” Holy and harmless and blameless as He was in life, some of his nearest relatives, according to the flesh, did not receive Him as the Messiah. It was bad enough that His own people, “the Jews, sought to kill Him.” But it was even worse that “His brethren did not believe.”

That great Scriptural doctrine, man's need of preventing and converting grace, stands out here, as if written with a sunbeam. It becomes all who question that doctrine to look at this passage and consider. Let them observe that seeing Christ's miracles, hearing Christ's teaching, living in Christ's own company, were not enough to make men believers. The mere possession of spiritual privileges never yet made any one a Christian. All is useless without the effectual and applying work of God the Holy Ghost. No wonder that our Lord said in another place, "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him." (John 6:44)

(Expository Thoughts on John, J. C. Ryle)

What is the main reason why many hate Christ?

John 7:7, 18, 24 1 Kings. 22:8

In view of John 7:1 and 8, why and how did Christ go to the feast?

John 7:10

John 7:10-53

We see in these verses, *the obstinate blindness of the unbelieving Jews*. We find them defending their denial of our Lord's Messiahship, by saying, "We know this man from which place He is: but when Christ cometh no man knoweth from which place He is." And yet in both these assertions they were wrong!

They were wrong in saying that they "knew from which place our Lord came." They meant no doubt to say that He was born at Nazareth, and belonged to Nazareth, and was therefore a Galilean. Yet the fact was, that our Lord was born at Bethlehem, that He belonged legally to the tribe of Judah, and that His mother and Joseph were of the house and lineage of David. It is incredible to suppose that the Jews could not have found this out, if they had honestly searched and inquired. It is notorious that pedigrees, genealogies, and family histories were most carefully kept by the Jewish nation. Their ignorance was without excuse.

They were wrong again in saying that "no man was to know from which place Christ came." There was a well-known prophecy, with which their whole nation was familiar, that Christ was to come out of the town of Bethlehem. (Micah 5:2; Matt. 2:5; John 7:42) It is absurd to suppose that they had forgotten this prophecy. But apparently they found it inconvenient to remember it on this occasion. Men's memories are often sadly dependent on their wills.

The Apostle Peter, in a certain place, speaks of some as "willingly ignorant." (2 Pet. 3:5) He had good reason to use the expression. It is a sore spiritual disease, and one most painfully common among men. There are thousands in the present day just as blind in their way as the Jews. They shut their eyes against the plainest facts and doctrines of Christianity. They pretend to say that they do not understand, and cannot therefore believe the things that we press on their attention, as needful to salvation. But, alas, in nineteen cases out of twenty it is a willful ignorance! They do not believe what they do not like to believe. They will neither read, nor listen, nor search, nor think, nor inquire honestly after truth. Can any one wonder if such persons are ignorant? Faithful and true is that old proverb, "There are none so blind as those who will not see."

The Lord Jesus says, "If any man thirst" (John 7:37). These words no doubt were meant to have a spiritual meaning. The thirst before us is of a purely spiritual kind. It means anxiety of soul,—conviction of sin,—desire of pardon,—longing after peace of conscience. When a man feels his sins, and wants forgiveness—is deeply sensible of his soul's need, and earnestly desires help and relief—then he is in that state of mind which our Lord had in view, when He said, "If any man thirst." The Jews who heard Peter preach on the day of Pentecost, and were "pricked in their hearts,"—the Philippian jailer who cried to Paul and Silas, "What must I do to be saved?" are both examples of what the expression means. In both cases there was "thirst."

Such thirst as this, unhappily, is known by few. All ought to feel it, and all would feel it if they were wise. Sinful, mortal, dying creatures as we all are, with souls that will one day be judged and spend eternity in heaven or hell, there lives not the man or woman on earth who ought not to "thirst" after salvation. And yet the many thirst after everything almost except salvation. Money, pleasure, honor, rank, self-indulgence,—these are the things which they desire. There is no clearer proof of the fall of man, and the utter corruption of human nature, than the careless indifference of most people about their souls. No wonder the Bible calls the natural man "blind" and "asleep" and "dead," when so few can be found who are awake, alive, and athirst about salvation.

(Expository Thoughts on John, J. C. Ryle)

How does John 7:17 help us to carry out 1 John 4:1?

What is the difference between "the law of Moses" (John 7:23) and the "law of God" (Rom. 7:22, 25)?

What comforting truth is illustrated in John 7:30?

John 8:1-11

Our Lord's enemies brought before Him a woman guilty of adultery, and asked Him to say what punishment she deserved. We are distinctly told that they asked the question, "tempting Him." They hoped to entrap Him into saying something for which they might accuse Him. They fancied perhaps that He who preached pardon and salvation to "publicans and harlots," might be induced to say something which would either contradict the law of Moses, or His own words.

Our Lord knew the hearts of the malicious questioners before Him, and dealt with them with perfect wisdom, as He had done in the case of the "tribute money." (Matt 22:17) He refused to be "a judge" and lawgiver among them, and especially in a case which their own law had already decided. He gave them at first no answer at all.

But "when they continued asking," our Lord silenced them with a withering and heart-searching reply.—"He that is without sin among you," He said, "let him first cast a stone at her." He did not say that the woman had not sinned, or that her sin was a trifling and venial one. But He reminded her accusers that they at any rate were not the persons to bring a charge against her. Their own motives and lives were far from pure. They themselves did not come into the case with clean hands. What they really desired was not to vindicate the purity of God's law, and punish a sinner, but to wreak their malice on Jesus Himself.

(Expository Thoughts on John, J. C. Ryle)

How should we go about speaking to someone who is deep in sin?

Deut. 18:18 Matt. 12:36, 37 John 3:1-21 Rom. 10:8-10 2 Cor. 5:17-19 Eph. 2:4-9 2
Tim. 1:9, 10

According to which of the divine attributes was Christ acting in John 8:11?

What do the words "go and sin no more" (John 8:11) evidence?

John 8:12-20

Let us notice, for one thing, in these verses *what the Lord Jesus says Himself*. He proclaims, "I am the light of the world."

These words imply that the world needs light, and is naturally in a dark condition. It is so in a moral and spiritually point of view: and it has been so for nearly 6,000 years. In ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome, in modern England, France, and Germany, the same report is true. The vast majority of men neither see nor understand the value of their souls, the true nature of God, nor the reality of a world to come! Notwithstanding all the discoveries of art and science, "darkness still covers the earth, and gross darkness the people." (Isa. 60:2)

(Expository Thoughts on John, J. C. Ryle)

What is meant by "the world" in John 8:12? What kind of *light* does "the world" enjoy? What is "the light of life"?

To what "witness of the Father" was Christ referring to in John 18:18?

Matt. 3:16, 17 Luke. 1:34, 35 John. 3:22-27

John 8:21-30

"Ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins." (John 8:21) It is unspeakably solemn that these words have a present application. How dreadful! that the Savior may be sought, but *sought in vain*. A man may have religious feelings about Christ, even weep at the thought of His Cross, and yet have no saving acquaintance with Him. Sickness, the fear of death, a serious financial reverse, the drying up of creature-sources of comfort — these frequently draw out much religiousness. Under a little pressure a man will say his prayers, read his Bible, become active in church work, profess to seek Christ, and become quite a different character; but only too often such an one is but reformed, and not transformed. And frequently this is made apparent in this world. Let the pressure be removed, let health return, let there be a change or circumstances, and how often we behold the zealous professor returning to his old ways. Such an one may have "sought Christ, but because his motive was wrong, because it was not the effect of a deep conviction of being lost and undone, his seeking was in vain.

"Where I go, ye cannot come" (8:21). Not "ye shall not come," but "ye *cannot* come." Cannot because the *holiness* of God makes it impossible: that which is corrupt and vile cannot dwell with Him; there can be no communion between light and darkness. Cannot because the *righteousness* of God makes it impossible. Sin must be punished; the penalty of the

broken law must be enforced; and for the reprobate "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." Cannot because they have *no character* suited to the place where Christ has gone. In the very nature of the case every man must go to "his own place" (Acts 1:25), the place for which he is fitted. If, by grace, he has the nature of God, then later on he will go and dwell with Him (John 13:36); but if he passes out of this world "*dead in sins*" then, of necessity, he will yet be cast into the Lake of Fire, "which is the second death" (Rev. 20:14). If a man *dies* "in his sins" he *cannot* enter heaven. How completely this shatters the "Larger Hope"!

(Gospel of John, A. W. Pink)

What does "die in your sins" (John 8:21) prove concerning the atonement?

John 8:31-36

"Ye shall be made free (8:33). This signifies that the natural man is in bondage. But this is a truth that the natural man cannot tolerate. The very announcement of it stirs up the enmity within him. Tell the sinner that there is *no* good thing in him, and he will not believe you; but tell him that he is completely the slave of sin and the captive of Satan, that he *cannot* think a godly thought of himself (2 Cor. 3:5); that he *cannot* receive God's truth (1 Cor. 2:14), that he *cannot* believe (John 12:39), that he *cannot* please God (Rom. 8:8), that he *cannot* come to Christ (John 6:44), and he will indignantly deny your assertions. So it was here in the passage before us. When Christ said "the truth shall make you free," the Jews replied "We be Abraham's seed, and were *never in bondage* to any man."

(Gospel of John, A. W. Pink)

What is the meaning of John 8:31?

In what ways is the natural man (and woman) under bondage?

Job 40:4 Ps. 39:5 Prov. 22:15 Isa. 40:28-31 Isa. 61:1 Isa. 64:6 John 15:5 Rom. 3:11 Rom. 5:6 Rom. 7:18 Eph. 2:2 Col. 1:13 2 Pet. 2:14, 19

What does the truth make free from (John 8:32)? If you, yourself, are not totally free within your spirit, then from the above Scriptures, what do you consider the problem might be?

John 8:34

What does John 8:36 teach about the will of the natural man?

John 8:37-59

"Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?" (8:52, 53). What a striking exemplification was this of what our Lord had said in v. 43: they understood not His speech and heard not His words. Devoid of discernment, they had no capacity to perceive the spiritual import of what He said. Such is the awful condition of the natural man: the things of God are foolishness to him, (1 Cor. 2:14). What is revealed to babes in Christ is completely, hidden from those who are wise and prudent in their own estimation and in the judgment of the world (Matt. 11:25). No matter how simply and plainly the truths of Scripture may be expounded, the unregenerate are unable to understand them. Unable because their interests are elsewhere. Unable because they will not humble themselves and cry unto God for light. Unable because their hearts are estranged from Him. Christian reader, what abundant reason have you to thank God for giving *you* an understanding (1 John 5:20)!

"Jesus answered, if I honor myself, my honor is nothing; it is my Father that honoreth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God" (8:54). "It is my Father that honoreth me": precious words are these and worthy of prolonged study and meditation. To "honor" is to do or speak that of a person which shall not only manifest our own esteem for him, but shall lead others to esteem him too. The Father's esteem for the Son is evidenced by His love and admiration for Him, as well as His desire to make Him the loved and admired of others. God honored Him at His birth, by sending the angels to herald Him as Christ the Lord. He honored Him during the days of His infancy, by directing the wise men from the east to come and worship the young King. He honored Him at His baptism, by proclaiming Him His beloved Son. He honored Him in death, by not suffering His body to see corruption. He honored Him at His ascension, when He exalted Him to His own right hand. He will honor Him in the final judgment, when every knee shall be made to bow before Him and every tongue confess that He is Lord. And throughout eternity He shall be honored by a redeemed people who shall esteem Him the Fairest among ten thousand to their souls. Infinitely worthy is the Lamb to receive honor and glory. Let then the writer and reader see to it that our daily lives honor Him who has so highly honored us as to call us "brethren."

What is the force of “of God” in John 8:47?

To what was Christ referring in John 8:56?

John 9:1-12

Grace would be no more grace if fallen men had any claims upon it. God is under *no* obligations to men: every title to His favor was forfeited forever when they, in the person of their representative, rebelled against Him. Therefore does He say, "I will have mercy on whom I *will* have mercy" (Rom. 9:15). It is *this* side of the truth which receives such striking illustration in the passage which is to be before us.

In John 8 we are shown the utter ruin of the natural man—despising God's goodness, hating His Christ. Here in John 9 we behold the Lord dealing in grace, acting according to His sovereign benignity. This, this is the central contrast pointed by these two chapters. In the former it is the Light testing human responsibility; in the latter, the Light acting in sovereign mercy after the failure of human responsibility had been demonstrated. In the one we see the sin of man exposed, in the other we behold the grace of God displayed.

"And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth" (9:1). That which is dominant in this passage is intimated in the opening verse. The *sovereignty* of divine grace is exemplified at once in the actions of our Lord and in the character of the one upon whom His favors were bestowed. The Savior saw a certain man; the man did not see Him, for he had no capacity to do so, being blind. Nor did the blind man call upon Christ to have mercy upon him. The Lord was the one to take the initiative. It is ever thus when sovereign grace acts.

(Gospel of John, A. W. Pink)

What did Jesus mean when He said, “The night cometh when no man can work?” (John 9:4)

John 4:34 Acts 4:12 2 Cor. 6:2 Eph. 5:16 Jude 13

John 9:13-41

No sooner was the poor blind man cast out of the Jewish synagogue than Jesus finds him and speaks words of comfort. He knew full well how heavy an affliction excommunication was to an Israelite, and at once cheered him with kind words. He now revealed Himself more fully to this man than He did to anyone except the Samaritan woman. In reply to the question, "Who is the Son of God?" He says plainly, "Though hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee."

We have here one among many beautiful illustrations of the mind of Christ. He sees all that His people go through for His sake, and feels for all, from the highest to the lowest. He keeps account of all their losses, crosses, and persecutions. "Are they not all written in His book?" (Ps. 56:8) He knows how to come to their hearts with consolation in their time of need, and to speak peace to them when all men seem to hate them. The time when men forsake us is often the very time when Christ draws near, saying, "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee: yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." (Isa. 41:10)

(Expository Thoughts on John, J. C. Ryle)

We not only see in this chapter the sovereignty of God in bringing the blind man to see, but we can also see the responsibility of men to live up to the light that they have been given. **How did the blind man live up to the light he was given when questioned by the Pharisees?**

How did his parents live up to the light they had?

And, finally, how well do we live up to the light we have?

What is the meaning of John 9:39?

John 3:17

John 10:1-18

Few images could better express the relationship between our Lord and His people than that of Shepherd and sheep, so often applied to God in the Old Testament, and appropriated by Christ Himself in the New. He had already shown that

references to Himself underlay the manna, the water, and the fire-cloud. And now He shows that beneath the sweet pastoral imagery of the prophets He was ever the glorious substance and reality.

Let Jesus Christ stand between you and everything—between you and circumstances; between you and dreaded trials; between you and temptation; between you and your attainments in the blessed life; between you and your projects of Christian usefulness. Follow Him, i.e., let Him go first. If He does not go forward, wait for Him. Every step taken apart from Him, or in front of Him, will have to be retraced with bitter tears.

(Gospel of John, F. B. Meyer)

What is the sheepfold?

Who are the sheep?

Who is the porter or doorkeeper?

Who or what is the Door?

Who are the thieves and robbers?

Who is the Good Shepherd?

Who is the stranger?

Who is the hireling?

Who is the wolf?

Who are the other sheep?

John 10:19-42

In the first part of John 10 it is Christ in "the form of a servant" which is before us. He gains entrance to the sheepfold by "the porter opening to him" (v. 3). He is the "door" into God's presence (v. 9), the *Way* unto the Father. There, He is seen as the One who was to "give his life for the sheep" (v. 11). There, we behold Him in the place of obedience, in subjection to the "commandment" of the father (v. 18). But mark the contrast in the second half of John 10. Here, He presents Himself as the One endowed with the sovereign right to "give eternal life" to His own (v. 28); as One possessed of almighty power, so that none can pluck them out of His hand (v. 28); as *one* with the Father (v. 30); as "the Son of God" (v. 36). It seems evident then that the central design of the passage before us is to display the *essential* glories of the person of the God-man. It is not so much the Godhood of Christ which is here in view, as it is the Deity *of the One* who humbled Himself to become man.

I (Christ) have declared that I and the Father are one—one in power and operation. I do not call on you to believe this merely because of My testimony, but I do call on you to believe on My testimony *supported by* the miracles I have performed, works which nothing but a Divine power could accomplish. These works are the voice of God, and its utterance is distinct: it speaks plainly, it utters no dark saying. You cannot refuse to receive the doctrine that I and the Father are one, that the Father is in Me, and I in Him, without contradicting His testimony and calling *Him* a liar."

(Gospel of John, A. W. Pink)

Enumerate the seven proofs of the believer's security found in John 10:27-29.

Trace out the seven things said about "the sheep" in John 10.

Trace out the seven things said about the "shepherd."

What is the meaning of "sanctified" in John 10:36?

John 11:1-46

No man's voice is able to pierce the depths of the tomb. But it was One who was more than man, who now spoke, and He said, "Come forth" not because Lazarus was *capable* of doing so, but because it was *life-giving* Voice which spoke. The same omnipotent lips which called a world into existence by the mere fiat of His mouth, now commanded the grave to give up its victim. It was the Word of *power* which penetrated the dark portals of that sepulcher. And here, dear reader, is the comforting, inspiring, and satisfying truth for the Christian worker. We are sent forth to preach the Word to lost and dead sinners, because, under the sovereign application of the Holy Spirit, that Word is "the word of *life*." Our duty is to cry unto God daily and mightily that He may be pleased to make it such to some, at least, of those to whom we speak.

(Gospel of John, A. W. Pink)

Why did the Lord wait so long before He went to where Lazarus was?

What does John 11:30 reveal to us about Christ?

Why did Jesus weep in John 11:35?

How does loosing Lazarus of the grave cloths give us a picture of what Christ has done for us?

Rom. 7:18-25 1 Cor. 13:12 1 Cor. 15:54-57 2 Cor. 5:1-8 Heb. 12:2

John 11:47-57

Let us beware of supposing that miracles alone have any power to convert men's souls, and to make them Christians. The idea is a complete delusion. To fancy, as some do, that if they saw something wonderful done before their eyes in confirmation of the Gospel, they would at once cast off all indecision and serve Christ, is a mere idle dream. It is the grace of the Spirit in our hearts, and not miracles, that our souls require. The Jews of our Lord's day are a standing proof to mankind that men may see signs and wonders, and yet remain hard as stone. It is a deep and true saying, "If men believe not Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." (Luke 16:31)

(Expository Thoughts on John, J. C. Ryle)

How do you explain the different actions of the spectators in John 11:45-46?

Describe these religious leaders who said, "If we let Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him." (John 11:48)

What does John 11:51-52 teach about the Atonement? "Gather together" in one what, verse 52?

What is meant by "to purify themselves," verse 55?

John 12:1-11

This beautiful incident is the highest expression of love to Jesus that we meet with during His earthly life.

We have already seen that it was from one who best of all understood the meaning of His death, and that it was an act of faith quite as much as a gift of love. It was this that inspired Mary's love, that she understood so well that He at whose feet she sat with delight was about to die for her. And so our love must still draw its inspiration from the cross. But the chief lesson of this scene is that Jesus appreciates and requires our personal and highest love directly for Himself. Judas, like many people still, thought that the ointment was wasted because it had not been given to the poor. Christ replies that there is something even more than giving to the poor, namely, the offering that is placed directly at His feet and offered only to Himself. Each of us has a vessel we can break and a fragrance we can pour at those sacred feet, namely, our own heart with all its treasures of love. It is possible to do much work and even give all our goods to feed the poor, and yet be strangers to true love to Jesus. Nothing can be a substitute for love to Jesus. The very perfume of Christianity has ever been the incense of fervent pity and personal love to Christ. The world may call it waste, but Jesus treasures it in vials full of odors sweet before the throne.

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

What is intimated by Mary wiping Christ's feet with her "hair" in John 12:3? What spiritual truth is suggested by the last clause of this verse?

Phil. 4:18

John 12:12-19

We must settle in our minds that the plain, literal meaning of the Bible is generally the true and correct meaning. Here is a prediction of Zechariah literally and exactly fulfilled. Our Lord was not merely a very humble person, as some spiritualizing interpreters would have explained Zechariah's words to mean, but He literally rode into Jerusalem on an ass. Above all, such fulfillments teach us what we may expect in looking forward to the second advent of Jesus Christ. They show us that we must look for a literal accomplishment of the prophecies concerning that second coming, and not for a figurative and a spiritual one.

(Expository Thoughts on John, J. C. Ryle)

What picture of Christ is portrayed here versus the picture portrayed of Him in Rev. 19:11-16?

Why did the people joyfully praise Him?

Matt. 20:20, 21 Matt. 21:8-11, 15, 16

John 12:20-26

"He that hateth his life shall keep it." (John 12:25) He that would be saved must be ready to give up life itself, if necessary, in order to obtain salvation. He must bury his love of the world, with its riches, honors, pleasures, and rewards, with a full belief that in doing so he will reap a better harvest, both here and hereafter. He who loves the life that now is so much that he cannot deny himself anything for the sake of his soul, will find at length that he has lost everything. He, on the contrary, who is ready to cast away everything most dear to him in this life, if it stands in the way of his soul, and to crucify the flesh with its affections, and lusts, will find at length that he is no loser.

(Expository Thoughts on John, J. C. Ryle)

Explain what it means to die in order to bring forth fruit (John 12:24).

Matt. 12:50 Rom. 6:2-12 2 Cor. 5:14-21 2 Cor. 10:3-5

John 12:27-33

The world of which we have been speaking is the stratagem by which the devil holds the souls of men in thrall. He does not obtrude himself, as that would alarm them and defeat his purpose; but he conceals himself beneath the course of this world, with which he is identified by the Apostle (Eph. 2:2). The world is to Satan what the web is to the spider, the bait to the angler, the lure to the fowler. Very specious and attractive were the appearances and the religious professions of the world; but Christ tore the veil from it and revealed its true nature, so that we might be no longer cajoled by its appearances.

But it behooved God to do more than expose the hollowness of the world; it was needful that He should assume our nature, so as to meet and vanquish the devil on his chosen battle ground, and in the race that he had seduced. This is the clue to the Incarnation. This explains the conflict which raged so fiercely throughout the Lord's brief early ministry. This throws light on the extraordinary way in which the devil was permitted to possess the bodies of men, like so many garrisoned castles. This may cast a light also on much of the agony through which our Lord passed; the evidence of conflict with a hidden foe, as the beach is strewn with wreckage after a night of storm.

Mark the point which had to be decided. I suppose the devil never doubted for a moment that God was stronger than he; but it had to be settled in actual conflict whether God were strong enough to expel him from men who accepted and loved his rule, and whether man could ever be made strong enough to withstand and vanquish him. Was the devil to be forever supreme over man; or could man ever become supreme over the devil, his hosts, and the world through which he wrought?

(Gospel of John, F. B. Meyer)

The age, not He, was being judged. It was standing before Him for His verdict; not He before the world for its judgment. Caiaphas and Pilate, and all the course of this world whom they represented, were passing in long procession before His judgment throne, and were being manifested and judged. And as for the casting out—that was the precise penalty being meted out to the Prince of the World, who wrought beneath those scenes of hate, and treachery, and blood. He, not Christ, was being cast out; cast out potentially, though perhaps the fullness of his sentence has not been meted out to him in actual suffering. Little as they guessed it, the day of Calvary and its cross was the crisis and turning point of the history of earth and hell, of men and devils; and settled for evermore the question of supremacy between darkness and light, death and life, hate and love."

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

When the devil tries to cause us to fear, reminding us of our past, we can remind him of his future. **From the Scriptures below, describe what will definitely be his future.**

Col. 2:15 Heb. 2:14,15 Rev. 12:10 Rev. 20:3,10

John 12:34-50

"He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them" (12:40). This was God's response to the wicked

treatment which Israel had meted out to His beloved Son. They had refused the light, now darkness shall be their dreadful portion. They had rejected the truth, now a heart which loved error should be the terrible harvest. Blinded eyes and a hardened heart have belonged to Israel ever since; only thus can we account for their continued unbelief all through these nineteen centuries; only thus can we explain Israel's attitude toward Christ today.

"All through His Divine ministry in this Gospel, the Lord had been acting in grace, as the 'son of the Father' and as 'the light of the world.' His presence was *daytime* in the land of Israel. He had been shining there, if haply the darkness might comprehend Him, and here, at the close of His ministry (12:35, 36) we see Him still as the light casting forth His last beams upon the land and the people. He can but shine, whether they will comprehend Him or not. While His presence is there it is still daytime. The night cannot come till He is gone. 'As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world!' But here, He *'departed and did hide himself from them'* (12:36); and then God, by His prophet, brings the *night* upon the land: 12:40" (J. G. Bellett).

Fearfully solemn is it to remember that what God did here unto Israel He will shortly do with the whole of unbelieving Christendom: "And for this cause *God shall send them* strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2:11, 12). Just as in the days of Nimrod God "gave up" the entire Gentile world because they despised and rejected the revelation which He had given them (Rom 1); just as He abandoned Israel to their unbelief, through the rejection of His Son; so in a soon-coming day He will cause unfaithful Christendom to receive the Antichrist because "they received not the love of truth, that they might be saved." (2 Thess. 2:10). Oh, dear reader, be warned by this. It is an unspeakably solemn thing to trifle with the overtures of God's grace. It is written, "How shall *we escape* if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. 2:3). Then, "Seek ye the Lord *while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near*" (Isa. 55:6).

(Gospel of John, A. W. Pink)

Why was it "they could not believe" (John 12:39)?

Whose "glory" is referred to in John 12:41?

Had those mentioned in John 12:42 *saving* faith?

How would you define unfaithful Christendom, and what is to be its final end?

Rom. 1:18-32 Gal. 1:4 Gal. 4:2 Gal. 5:19-21 Eph. 5:4, 5 2 Thess. 2:6-10 2 Tim. 3:1-5 Rev. 19:20, 21 Rev. 20:11-15

John 13:1-17

The first lesson taught by this picture is that of Christ's humility. Like Him, we cannot truly stoop until we have learned our high calling and know that we are indeed the sons of God. Then we shall not fear the most menial service or think that the lowliest place can degrade our true dignity, but shall prove that we are the chief by becoming the servants of all. The next lesson is love, that, instead of exposing the stains of one another, seeks to wash them away. But the deepest spiritual teaching of these words is the unfolding of Christ's own constant cleansing as our ever-living Advocate and High Priest. Still He is girded with the towel, and still He stoops to cleanse the stains of defilement from our feet day by day.

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

What is meant by the last clause of John 13:1?

What is the symbolic significance of Christ's actions in John 13:4?

Explain what Jesus meant when He said to Peter, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." (John 13:8)

Ex. 30:19, 21 1 Cor. 6:10, 11 Eph. 5:25-27 Titus 3:5

State what the water represents.

Mal. 3:16 Matt. 27:24 John 3:5 John 4:14 John 7:38-39

Believers today need cleansing—how frequently, and by what means?

Ex. 30:19 Ps. 139:23, 24 Col. 1:12 Heb. 10:14

John 13:18-30

“And ye are clean, but not all. For He knew who should betray Him; therefore said He, Ye are not *all* clean.” (13:10, 11). Christ here referred to Judas, though He did not name the traitor. Judas must have known what He meant, but his conscience was seared as with a red-hot iron, and his heart was harder than the nether millstone. Even this touching exhibition of the condescending love and grace of Christ toward His disciples made no impression upon him. In less than an hour he went forth to sell his Master. In his case it was not a matter of *losing* spiritual life, but of *manifesting* the fact that he never had it. It was not a sheep of Christ becoming unclean, but of a dog returning to his vomit. Unspeakably solemn warning is this for those who, for a time, maintain an *outward* form of godliness, but are strangers to its *inward* power.”

(Gospel of John, A. W. Pink)

Speak to the inner conflict in Judas’ life, and why, in his case, evil overcame the good.

Matt. 26:41 John 3:3 Rom. 8:12-14 Phil. 3:3

Although the disciple is not named, there is no reason to doubt that it was John whom was spoken of in John 13:23. **Why did not Peter ask the Lord directly but motioned to John to ask (John 13:24)? Do we have that same blessed privilege John had?**

John 13:31-36

The crucifixion brought glory to the Father. It glorified His wisdom, faithfulness, holiness, and love. It showed Him wise, in providing a plan whereby He could be just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly.—It showed Him faithful in keeping His promise, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head.—It showed Him holy, in requiring His law's demands to be satisfied by our great Substitute.—It showed Him loving, in providing such a Mediator, such a Redeemer, and such a Friend for sinful man as His co-eternal Son.

The crucifixion brought glory to the Son. It glorified His compassion, His patience, and His power. It showed Him most compassionate, in dying for us, suffering in our stead, allowing Himself to be counted sin and a curse for us, and buying our redemption with the price of His own blood.—It showed Him most patient, in not dying the common death of most men, but in willingly submitting to such pains and unknown agonies as no mind can conceive, when with a word He could have summoned His Father's angels, and been set free.—It showed Him most powerful, in bearing the weight of all the transgressions of the world, and vanquishing Satan, and despoiling him of his prey.

(Expository Thoughts on John, J. C. Ryle)

In how many respects was the Son of man glorified at the Cross (John 13:31)?

What attributes of God were glorified at the Cross (John 13:31)?

In what sense was it a “new commandment” (John 13:34)?

What is the meaning of John 13:36?

John 13:37-38

“We fancy sometimes, like Peter, that there are some things we could not possibly do. We look pityingly upon others who fall, and plume ourselves in the thought that at any rate we should not have done so. We know nothing at all. The seeds of *every* sin are latent in our hearts, even when renewed, and they only need occasion, or carelessness, or the withdrawal of God's grace for a season, to put forth an abundant crop. Like Peter, we think we can do wonders for Christ, and like Peter, we learn by bitter experience that we have no might and power at all. A humble sense of our own innate weakness, a constant dependency on the Strong for strength, a daily prayer to be held up, because we cannot hold up ourselves—these are the true secrets of safety” (Bishop Ryle). Surely the outstanding lesson for us in connection with the fall of Peter is this: “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10:12).

(Gospel of John, A. W. Pink)

Why was Peter so bold as to say, “I will lay down my life for thy sake”?

John 15:5 Rom. 7: 14-23 1 Cor. 10:12

Why was it that Peter could not follow Him then, but later, after Christ ascended, he would faithfully follow Him?

Rom. 8:5-7 Heb. 12:14

John 14:1-4

"I go to prepare a place for you." Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people: a place which we shall find Christ Himself has made ready for true Christians. He has prepared it by procuring a right for every sinner who believes to enter in. None can stop us, and say we have no business there.—He has prepared it by going before us as our Head and Representative, and taking possession of it for all the members of His mystical body. As our Forerunner He has marched in, leading captivity captive, and has planted His banner in the land of glory.—He has prepared it by carrying our names with Him as our High Priest into the holy of holies, and making angels ready to receive us. They that enter heaven will find they are neither unknown nor unexpected.

(Expository Thoughts on John, J. C. Ryle)

Although Jesus was a carpenter, we don't believe that now in heaven He is constructing physical homes for us to live in. We do believe He is making intercession for us now so that we will be complete in Him and spiritually prepared for Eternity. **How does Christ make us fit to live in His Father's house?**

Rom. 12:1, 2 1 Cor. 1:10 Heb. 10:19-24

John 14:5-11

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life" (14:6). Before sin entered the world Adam enjoyed a threefold privilege in relation to God: he was in communion with his Maker; he knew Him, and he possessed spiritual life. But when he disobeyed and fell, this threefold relationship was severed. He became alienated from God, as the hiding of himself painfully demonstrated; having believed the Devil's lie, he was no longer capable of perceiving the truth, as the making of fig-leaf aprons clearly evidenced; and he no longer had spiritual life, for God's threat "*In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*" was strictly enforced. In this same awful condition has each of Adam's descendants entered this world, for "that which is born of the flesh is flesh"—a fallen parent can beget nought but a fallen child. Every sinner, therefore, has a threefold need—reconciliation, illumination, regeneration. This threefold need is perfectly met by the Savior. He is the Way to the Father; He is the Truth incarnate; He is the Life to all who believe in Him.

(Gospel of John, A. W. Pink)

How is the relationship that you now have with God different from what Adam and Eve originally had?

Gen. 1:26-28 Gen. 2:7-9 Gen. 2:15-17 Gen. 3:1-24 John 10:10

John 14:12-14

We have first in this passage, a striking promise about *the works that Christians may do*. Our Lord says, "He that believeth on Me, the works that I do, shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father."

The full meaning of this promise is not to be sought in the miracles which the Apostles wrought after Christ left the world. Such a notion seems hardly borne out by facts. We read of no Apostle walking on the water, or raising a person four days dead, like Lazarus. What our Lord has in view seems to be the far greater number of *conversions*, the far wider spread of the Gospel, which would take place under the Ministry of the Apostles, than under His own teaching. That this was the case, we know from the Acts of the Apostles. We read of no sermon preached by Christ, under which three thousand were converted in one day, as they were on the day of Pentecost.

(Expository Thoughts on John, J.C. Ryle)

Answer true or false. God does not call us to attempt to produce more, but to ask and believe Him for more.

John 14:15-20

This is the first time that the Holy Ghost is mentioned as Christ's special gift to His people. Of course we are not to suppose that He did not dwell in the hearts of all the Old Testament saints. But He was given with peculiar influence and power to believers when the New Testament dispensation came in, and this is the special promise of the passage before us. We shall find it useful, therefore, to observe closely the things that are here said about Him.

The Holy Ghost is spoken of as "a Person." To apply the language before us to a mere influence or inward feeling, is an unreasonable strain of words.

The Holy Ghost is called “the Spirit of truth.” It is His special office to apply truth to the hearts of Christians, to guide them into all truth, and to sanctify them by the truth.

The Holy Ghost is said to be one whom “the world cannot receive and does not know.” His operations are the strongest sense “foolishness to the natural man.” (1 Cor. 2:14) The inward feeling of conviction, repentance, faith, hope, fear, and love, which He always produces, are precisely that part of religion which the world cannot understand.

The Holy Ghost is said to “dwell in” believers, and to be known to them. They know the feelings that He creates, and the fruits that He produces, though they may not be able to explain them, or see at first from where they come. But they all are what they are,—new men, new creatures, light and salt in the earth, compared to the worldly, by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Ghost is given to the Church of the elect, “to abide with them” until Christ comes the second time. He is intended to supply all the need of believers, and to fill up all that is wanting while Christ’s visible presence is removed. He is sent to abide with and help them until Christ returns.

(Expository Thoughts on John, J.C. Ryle)

Answer true or false. The Comforter (Helper, Spirit) of truth spoken of here is one just like Christ who will do in His absence just as if He were physically present with you.

John 14:21-26

“He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him” (John 14:21). There are three different senses in which Christians may be considered as objects of the loving favor of the Father and of the Son: as persons *elected* in sovereign grace to eternal life; as persons actually *united* to Christ by believing; and as persons *transformed* by the sanctifying work of the Spirit. It is in this last sense that Christ here speaks. Just as the Father is said to love the Son because of His obedience (John 10:17, 18), so is He said to love the believer for the same reason. It is the love of complacency, as distinguished from the love of compassion. The Father was well pleased with His incarnate Son, and He is well pleased with us when we honor and glorify His Son by obeying His commandments.

(Gospel of John, A.W. Pink)

What should our part be in order that our Father is honored to give us His love?

John 17:6 John 21:7 2 Cor. 8:11 Phil. 1:6 Phil. 3:2 Heb 7:25 1 John 2:1

John 14:27, 28

“My Father is greater than I.” This is the favorite verse with Unitarians, who deny the absolute Deity of Christ and His perfect equality with the Father—a truth which is clearly taught in many Scriptures. Those who use these words of our Lord in support of their blasphemous heresy, wrest them from their context, ignoring altogether the connection in which they are found, because He was going to the Father, and then advances this reason, “For my Father is greater than I.” Let this be kept definitely before us and all difficulty vanishes. The Father’s being greater than Christ was the reason assigned why the disciples should rejoice at their Master’s going to the Father. This at once fixes the meaning of the disputed “greater,” and shows us the sense in which it was here used. The contrast which the Savior drew between the Father and Himself was not concerning *nature*, but official character and position.

Christ was not speaking of Himself in His essential Being. The One who thought it not robbery to be “*equal with God*,” had taken the servant form, and not only so, had been made in the likeness of men. In both these senses, namely, in His official status (as Mediator) and in His assumption of human nature, He was inferior to the Father. Throughout this discourse and in the Prayer which follows in chapter 17, the Lord Jesus is represented as the Father’s Servant, from whom He had received a commission, and to whom He was to render an account; for whose glory He acted, and under whose authority He spake. But there is another sense, more pertinent, in which the Son was inferior to the Father. In becoming incarnate and tabernacling among men, He had greatly humiliated Himself, by choosing to descend into shame and suffering in their acutest forms. He was now the Son of man that had not where to lay His head. He who was rich had for our sakes become poor. He was the Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. In view of this, Christ was now contrasting His *situation* with that of the Father in the heavenly Sanctuary. The Father was seated upon the throne of highest majesty; the brightness of His glory was unclipped; He was surrounded by hosts of holy beings, who worshipped Him with uninterrupted praise. Far different was it with His incarnate Son—despised and rejected of men, surrounded by implacable enemies, soon to be nailed to a criminal’s cross. In *this* sense, too, He was inferior to the Father. Now in going to the Father, the Son would enjoy a vast improvement of situation. It would be a gain unspeakable. The contrast then was between His present state of humiliation and His coming state of exaltation to the Father! Therefore, those who really loved Him should have rejoiced at the tidings that He *would* go to the Father, because the Father was greater than

He—greater both in official status and in surrounding circumstances. It was Christ *owning* His place as Servant, and *magnifying* the One who had sent Him.

(Gospel of John, A.W. Pink)

Give verses to show the lowly position He took on earth that would make the Father greater than He.

John 14:29-31

We find Him saying, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me."

The meaning of these remarkable words admits of only one interpretation. Our Lord would have his disciples know that Satan, "the prince of this world," was about to make his last and most violent attack on Him. He was mustering all his strength for one more tremendous onset. He was coming up with his utmost malice to try the second Adam in the garden of Gethsemane, and on the cross of Calvary. But our blessed Master declares, "He hath nothing in Me."—"There is nothing he can lay hold on. There is no weak and defective point in Me. I have kept my Father's commandment, and finished the work He gave Me to do. Satan, therefore, cannot overthrow Me. He can lay nothing to my charge. He cannot condemn Me. I shall come forth from the trial more than a conqueror."

Let us mark the difference between Christ and all others who have been born of woman. He is the only one in whom Satan has found "nothing." He came to Adam and Eve, and found weakness. He came to Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and all the saints, and found imperfection. He came to Christ, and found "nothing" at all. He was a Lamb "without blemish and without spot," a suitable Sacrifice for a world of sinners, a suitable Head for a redeemed race.

(Expository Thoughts on John, J.C. Ryle)

Give verses to show we have a perfect, sinless Savior who led a blameless life.

John 15:1

The union between the branch of a vine and the main stem, is the closest that can be conceived. It is the whole secret of the branch's life, strength, vigour, beauty, and fertility. Separate from the parent stem, it has no life of its own. The sap and juice that flow from the stem are the origin and maintaining power of all its leaves, buds, blossoms, and fruit. Cut off from the stem, it must soon wither and die.

The union between Christ and believers is just as close, and just as real. In themselves believers have no life, or strength, or spiritual power. All that they have of vital religion comes from Christ. They are what they are, and feel what they feel, and do what they do, because they draw out of Jesus a continual supply of grace, help, and ability. Joined to the Lord by faith, and united in mysterious union with Him by the Spirit, they stand, and walk, and continue, and run the Christian race. But every jot of good about them is drawn from their spiritual Head, Jesus Christ.

(Expository Thoughts on John, J.C. Ryle)

Explain the function of the branch.

Jer. 23:5 Jer. 33:15 Zech. 3:8 Zech. 6:12 Matt. 24:32

John 15:2a

"Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away." If then, it is a real believer who is in view here, and if the "taketh away" does not refer to perishing, then what is the force and meaning of our Lord's words? First of all, notice the tense of the first verb: "Every branch in Me not *bearing* fruit He taketh away" is the literal translation. It is not of a branch which *never* bore fruit that the Lord is here speaking, but of one who is *no longer* "bearing fruit." Now there are three things which cause the branches of the natural vine to *become* fruitless: either through running to leaf, or through disease (a blight), or through old age, when they wither and die. The same holds good in the spiritual application. In 2 Peter 1:8, we read: "For if these things be in you, and *abound*, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." The inescapable inference from this is that, if the "these things" (mentioned in 2 Peter 1:5-7) do not abound in us, we *shall be* "barren and unfruitful"—compare Titus 3:14. In such a case we bring forth nothing but leaves—the works of the flesh. Unspeakably solemn is this: one who has been bought at such infinite cost, saved by such wondrous grace, may yet, in this world, fall into a barren and unprofitable state, and thus fail to glorify God.

(Gospel of John, A.W. Pink)

Regarding the above statement, explain how this does not mean that a Christian would be cut off from eternal life with the Father.

John 15:2b

"Every branch," it is written, "that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bear more fruit."

The meaning of this language is clear and plain. Just as the vine-dresser prunes and cuts back the branches of a fruitful vine, in order to make them more fruitful, so does God purify and sanctify believers by the circumstances of life in which He places them.

Trial, to speak plainly, is the instrument by which our Father in heaven makes Christians more holy. By trial He calls out their passive graces, and proves whether they can suffer His will as well as do it. By trial He weans them from the world, draws them to Christ, drives them to the Bible and to prayer, shows them their own hearts, and makes them humble. This is the process by which He "purges" them, and makes them more fruitful. The lives of the saints in every age, are the best and truest comment on the text. Never, hardly, do we find an eminent saint, either in the Old Testament or the New, who was not purified by suffering, and, like His Master, a "man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." (Isaiah 53:3)

(Expository Thoughts on John, J.C. Ryle)

How does the Husbandman purge the branches that He loves?

Ps. 51:7, 10 Isa. 6:7 Matt. 3:3 2 Tim. 3:14-17 Heb. 1:3

John 15:3-6

"Severed from Me ye can do nothing." (John 15:5) There are many who believe this in a general way, but who fail to apply it in detail. They know that they cannot do the important things without Christ's aid, but how many of the *little* things we attempt in *our own* strength! No wonder we fail so often. "Without Me ye can do *nothing*." "Nothing that is spiritually good; no, not anything at all, be it little or great, easy or difficult to be performed; cannot think a good thought, speak a good word, or do a good action; can neither begin one, nor when it is begun, perfect it." (Dr. John Gill). But mark it well, the Lord did not say, "Without you I can do nothing." In gathering out His elect, and in building up His Church, He employs human instrumentality; but that is not a matter of necessity, but of choice, with Him; He *could* "do" without them, just as well as with them. "Severed from Me ye can do nothing." Urgently do we need this warning. Not only will the allowance of any known sin break our fellowship with Him, but concentration on anything but *Himself* will also surely do it. Satan is very subtle. If only he can get us occupied with ourselves, our fruit-bearing, or our fruit, his purpose is accomplished. Faith is nothing apart from its *object*, and is no longer in operation when it becomes occupied with itself. Love, too, is in exercise only while it is occupied with its beloved.

(Gospel of John, A.W. Pink)

Explain the term "*abiding*." Why is it so necessary?

John 6:56 1 Cor. 10:16 2 Cor. 4:7 1 John 1:3-7 1 John 2:6

John 15:7-15

"If ye abide in Me. . . ask what ye will" (John 15:7). We are in Christ by the grafting of the great Husbandman, who took us out of the wild vine of nature, and incorporated us with Christ. That union is for ever; but its conscious enjoyment and helpfulness arise only in so far as we keep his commandments.

If you abide in Christ in daily fellowship, it will not be difficult to pray aright, for He has promised to abide in those who abide in Him; and the sap of the Holy Ghost, securing for you fellowship with your unseen Lord, will produce in you, as fruit, desires and petitions similar to those which He unceasingly presents to his Father. Throughout the ages Christ has been asking of God. This is the perpetual attitude of the Son to the Father. He cannot ask what the Father may not give. To get, then, into the current of his prayer is to be sure of success. Abide in Him, that He may abide in you; not only in the activities of holy service, but in the intercessions and supplications of the hour of private prayer.

(Gospel of John, F.B. Meyer)

What is required of us in order for God to grant us what we ask for, and also for us to be included in His joy and friendship (John 15:7, 11, 14)?

Gen. 18:17-19 Isa. 41:8-10 Rom. 12:2 2 Cor. 10:5 Jas. 2:23 1 John 5:5, 14 Jude 20

John 15:16

Election to eternal life is a truth of Scripture which we must receive humbly, and believe implicitly. Why the Lord Jesus calls some and does not call others, quickens whom He will, and leaves others alone in their sins, these are deep things which we cannot explain. Let it suffice us to know that it is a fact. God must begin the work of grace in a man's heart, or else a man will never be saved. Christ must first choose us and call us by His Spirit, or else we shall never choose Christ. Beyond doubt, if not saved, we shall have none to blame but ourselves. But if saved, we shall certainly trace up the beginning of our salvation to the choosing grace of Christ. Our song to all eternity will be that which fell from the lips of Jonah: "Salvation is of the Lord." (Jonah 2:9)

Election is always to sanctification. Those whom Christ chooses out of mankind, He chooses not only that they may be saved, but that they may bear fruit, and fruit that can be seen. All other election beside this is a mere vain delusion, and a miserable invention of man. It was the faith and hope and love of the Thessalonians, which made St. Paul say, "I know your election of God." (1 Thess. 1:4) Where there is no visible fruit of sanctification, we may be sure there is no election.

(Expository Thoughts on John, J.C. Ryle)

Comment on Ryle's last statement concerning how the fruit in one's life relates to whether the person is saved.

Matt. 7:15-20 John. 15:4

John 15:17-27

The passage before us opens with a renewed exhortation to brotherly love. For the third time in this discourse our Lord thinks it needful to press this precious grace on the attention of His disciples. Rare, indeed, must genuine charity be, when such repeated mention of it is made! In the present instance the connection in which it stands should be carefully observed. Christian love is placed in contrast to the hatred of the world.

We are shown first, in this passage, *what true Christians must expect to meet in this world,—hatred and persecution.* If the disciples looked for kindness and gratitude from man, they would be painfully disappointed. They must lay their account to be ill-treated like their Master.—"The world hateth you. Be not moved or surprised. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also."

Facts, painful facts in every age, supply abundant proof that our Lord's warning was not without cause. Persecution was the lot of the Apostles and their companions wherever they went. Not more than one or two of them died quietly in his bed.—Persecution has been the lot of true believers throughout the eighteen Christian centuries of history. The doings of Roman Emperors and Roman Popes, the Spanish inquisition, the martyrdoms of Queen Mary's reign, all tell the same story.—Persecution is the lot of all really godly people at this very day. Ridicule, mockery, slander, misrepresentation, still show the feeling of unconverted people against the true Christian. As it was in Paul's day, so it is now. In public and in private, at school and at college, at home and abroad, "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Tim 3:12) Mere churchmanship and outward profession are cheap religion, of course, and cost a man nothing. But real vital Christianity will always bring with it a cross.

To know and understand these things is of the utmost importance to our comfort. Nothing is so mischievous as the habit of indulging false expectations. Let us realize that human nature never changes, that "the carnal mind is enmity against God," and against God's image in His people. Let us settle it in our minds that no holiness of life or consistency of conduct will ever prevent wicked people hating the servants of Christ, just as they hated their blameless Master. Let us remember these things, and then we shall not be disappointed.

(Expository Thoughts on John, J.C. Ryle)

Why does the world hate dedicated Christians? Did Jesus have any comforting words for the persecuted Christian?

Matt. 5:10, 12 Matt. 10:22 Luke 6:22 John 3:11-13, 20 John 15:18-21 2 Cor. 4:8-12 Phil.
3:10 2 Tim. 3:12

What is the force of "had not had sin" in John 15:22 and 24?

John 16:1-6

The opening verses of this chapter contain three important utterances of Christ, which deserve our special attention.

For one thing, we find our Lord *delivering a remarkable prophecy*. He tells His disciples that they will be cast out of the Jewish Church, and persecuted even to the death:—"They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service."

How strange that seems at first sight! Excommunication, suffering, and death, are the portion that the Prince of Peace predicts to His disciples! So far from receiving them and their message with gratitude, the world would hate them, despitefully use them, and put them to death. And, worst of all, their persecutors would actually persuade themselves that it was right to persecute, and would inflict the cruelest injuries in the sacred name of religion.

How true the prediction has turned out! Like every other prophecy of Scripture, it has been fulfilled to the very letter. The Acts of the Apostles show us how the unbelieving Jews persecuted the early Christians. The pages of history tell us what horrible crimes have been committed by the Popish Inquisition. The annals of our own country inform us how our holy Reformers were burned at the stake for their religion, by men who professed to do all they did from zeal for pure Christianity. Unlikely and incredible as it might seem at the time, the great Prophet of the Church has been found in this, as in everything else, to have predicted nothing but literal truth.

(Expository Thoughts on John, J.C. Ryle)

Is the persecution which has happened so far only partial and if so, what does scripture say about persecution in the future?

Matt. 24:4-28 Luke 21:5-36

What does the last clause of verse 2 go to prove?

John 16:7

And the Master, in effect, answered thus: I will not leave you without aid. I shall still be with you, though unseen. My presence shall be revealed to your spirits, and made livingly real through the Blessed Comforter. He will be with you, and in you. He will authenticate and corroborate your witness. He shall testify of Me; and when He is come, He will convince the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. You see then that I shall be able to help you better by sending the Holy Spirit than by staying with you Myself. It is expedient for *you* that I go away; for if I go not away the Comforter will not come to you, but if I depart I will send Him unto you.

(Gospel of John, F.B. Meyer)

Give Scriptures that define the role of the Holy Spirit in your life.

If Jesus did not go away, that is die, would all His work have been done in vain?

John 16:8-15

The difficulty of rightly explaining the wondrous sayings of our Lord in this place is undeniably very great. It may well be doubted whether the full meaning of His words has ever been entirely grasped by man, and whether there is not something at the bottom which has not been completely unfolded. The common, superficial explanation, that our Lord only meant that the work of the Spirit in saving individual believers is to convince them of their own sins, of Christ's righteousness, and of the certainty of judgment at last, will hardly satisfy thinking minds. It is a short-cut and unsatisfactory way of getting over Scripture difficulties. It contains excellent and sound doctrine, no doubt, but it does not meet the full meaning of our Lord's words. It is truth, but not the truth of the text. It is not individuals here and there whom He says the Spirit is to convince, but *the world*. Let us see whether we cannot find a fuller and more satisfactory interpretation.

For one thing, our Lord probably meant to show us *what the Holy Ghost would do to the world of unbelieving Jews*. He would convince them "of sin, and righteousness, and judgment."

He would convince the Jews "of sin." He would compel them to feel and acknowledge in their own minds, that in rejecting Jesus of Nazareth they had committed a great sin, and were guilty of gross unbelief.

He would convince the Jews of "righteousness." He would press home on their consciences that Jesus of Nazareth was not an impostor and a deceiver, as they had said, but a holy, just, and blameless Person, whom God had owned by receiving up into heaven.

He would convince the Jews of "judgment." He would oblige them to see that Jesus of Nazareth had conquered, overcome, and judged the devil and all his host, and was exalted to be a Prince and a Savior at the right hand of God.

That the Holy Ghost did actually so convince the Jewish nation after the day of Pentecost, is clearly shown by the Acts of the Apostles. It was He who gave the humble fishermen of Galilee such grace and might in testifying of Christ, that their adversaries were put to silence. It was His reproving and convincing power which enabled them to "fill

Jerusalem with their doctrine." (Acts 5:28) Not a few of the nation, we know, were savingly convinced, like Paul, and "a great company of priests were obedient to the faith." (Acts 6:7) Myriads more, we have every reason to believe, were mentally convinced, if they had not courage to come out and take up the cross. The whole tone of the Jewish people towards the end of the Acts of the Apostles is unlike what it is at the beginning. A vast reproofing and convincing influence, even where not saving, seems to have gone over their minds. Surely this was partly what our Lord had in view in these verses when he said, "The Holy Ghost shall reprove and convince."

(Expository Thoughts on John, J.C. Ryle)

In what ways does the Spirit "reprove the world", verse 8?

What did Christ mean by "you cannot bear them now," verse 12?

What is implied by the word "guide", verse 13? Meditate on it.

What is meant by "He will not speak on His own authority," verse 13?

John 16:16-24

We learn, for one thing, in these verses, that *Christ's absence from the earth will be a time of sorrow to believers, but of joy to the world.* It is written, "Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice." (John 16:20) To confine these words to the single point of Christ's approaching death and burial, appears a narrow view of their meaning. Like many of our Lord's sayings on the last evening of His earthly ministry, they seem to extend over the whole period of time between His first and second advents.

Christ's personal absence must needs be a sorrow to all true-hearted believers. "The children of the bridechamber cannot but fast when the bridegroom is taken from them." Faith is not sight. Hope is not certainty. Reading and hearing are not the same as beholding. Praying is not the same as speaking face to face. There is something, even in the hearts of the most eminent saints, that will never be fully satisfied so long as they are on earth and Christ is in heaven. So long as they dwell in a body of corruption, and see through a glass darkly,—so long as they behold creation groaning under the power of sin, and all things not put under Christ,—so long their happiness and peace must needs be incomplete. This is what Paul meant when he said, "We ourselves, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, that is, the redemption of our body." (Rom. 7:23)

Yet this same personal absence of Christ is no cause of sorrow to the children of this world. It was not to the unbelieving Jews, we may be sure. When Christ was condemned and crucified, they rejoiced and were glad. They thought that the hated reprover of their sins and false teaching was silenced for ever.—It is not to the careless and the wicked of our day, we may be sure. The longer Christ keeps us away from this earth, and lets them alone, the better will they be pleased. "We do not want this Christ to reign over us," is the feeling of the world. His absence causes them no pain. Their so-called happiness is complete without Him. All this may sound very painful and startling. But where is the thinking reader of the Bible who can deny that it is true? The world does not want Christ back again, and thinks that it does very well without Him. What a fearful waking up there will be by-and-by!

(Expository Thoughts on John, J.C. Ryle)

To whom was Christ referring in verse 16?

In what "day," verse 23?

What is meant by "ask me nothing," verse 23?

What is the meaning of the first part of verse 24?

John 16:25-29

Our Lord says to His disciples, "The time cometh when I shall show you plainly of the Father." (John 16:25) He does not say, we should remark, "I will show you plainly about myself." It is the Father whom He promises to show.

The wisdom of this remarkable saying is very deep. There are few subjects of which men know so little in reality as the character and attributes of God the Father. It is not for nothing that it is written, "No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son shall reveal Him." (Matt. 11:27) "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." (John 1:18) Thousands fancy they know the Father because they think of Him as great, and almighty, and all-hearing, and wise, and eternal, but they think no further. To think of Him as just and yet the

justifier of the sinner who believes in Jesus,—as the God who sent His Son to suffer and die,—as God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself,—as God specially well-pleased with the atoning sacrifice of His Son, whereby His law is honored;—to think of God the Father in this way is not given to most men. No wonder that our Master says, “I will show you plainly of the Father.”

(Expository Thoughts on John, J.C. Ryle)

When did Christ show them “plainly,” verse 25?

What is the meaning of verse 26?

Did the disciples really understand Christ now, verse 29?

John 16:30-33

“Be of good cheer,” is His parting charge: “Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)

Let us lean back our souls on these comfortable words, and take courage. The storms of trial and persecution may sometimes beat heavily on us; but let them only drive us closer to Christ. The sorrows, and losses, and crosses, and disappointments of our life may often make us feel sorely cast down; but let them only make us tighten our hold on Christ. Armed with this very promise let us, under every cross, come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Let us often say to our souls, “Why art thou cast down, and why art thou disquieted?” And let us often say to our gracious Master,—“Lord, didst not Thou say, Be of good cheer? Lord, do as Thou hast said, and cheer us to the end.”

(Expository Thoughts on John, J.C. Ryle)

In what sense did Christ “overcome the world,” verse 33?

John 17:1-5

“Father, the time has come” (17:1). It was the hour of the world’s destiny, the Father’s glory, and His own consummated work; not only was His work done, but it was all done on time. Each moment had been filled with the Father’s perfect will, and now there was nothing to do but to die.

Oh! That we might all follow Him, not only in the faithfulness, but in the timelines of His finished life.

“For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. . . . I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do” (17:2, 4). He recalls His mighty commission to give eternal life to His people through the knowledge of the Father and the Son, and acknowledges publicly the complete resources which the Father has supplied for this mighty task. You have given Him authority over all people that He might thus administer the great work of salvation. What an unfolding of the purpose of glory of redemption, Christ its mighty administrator, the whole human family its beneficiaries. His own people His especial objects, and eternal life its glorious aim. And this eternal life is not a definite future existence, but is a relation of intimacy and love with God. It is God Himself through Jesus Christ revealed in the soul. This mighty task, He declares, He has fully accomplished. He has revealed the Father, He has made known His Word and stood among men as His Representative and Expression. He has so done this as to glorify His Father on the earth. Not only has He fulfilled His work, but He has fulfilled it for the glory of God. What a pattern to all His followers—a finished task, and God supremely glorified. Oh! That it may be ours to echo.

“Glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. . . . Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you” (17:5). He asks that He may be glorified and raised up from the depths of shame and sorrow to which He is about to stoop. He asks back again, as His right, the glory which, for a little while He had voluntarily laid aside—the glory He had with the Father before the world was. He asks still more the joy of His Father’s heavenly fellowship. “With you” (17:5)—it is the cry of the lonely heart to be again upon the Father’s bosom. How poorly can we understand that loneliness and that love of His great heart. He had said a little before, “If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father” (14:28). But, even then, He did not ask for Himself; still, His true heart turns instinctively to His Father’s glory, and He hallows even this holy prayer by the added request, “that your Son may glorify you” (17:1).

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

What does the “lifting up of eyes” teach us, verse 1?

All through the N.T. our Lord knew that the only way to bring redemption to the fallen race of man was to give His life in death to pay for the sins of all who would trust Him. And before He could go through that final agony—once again, as was

His constant practice, He went into the Father's presence and prayed for Himself, for His disciples, and finally for us. **What did Christ refer to in "glorify thy Son"? (John 17:1)**

How is verse 2 related to Christ's petition?

Does John 17:3 give a definition of "eternal life"?

What was Christ's "glory" before the world, verse 5?

By how many different pleas, in verses 1 and 4, does Christ support His petition in verse 5?

John 17:6-12

That they have received the messages of the Son, knowing surely that He came from God and believing in Him with all their hearts. And in Him they have also recognized the Father, and "know that everything you have given me comes from you" (17:7).

He pleads for them on the ground that they are already His Father's and also His own, and that His glory is linked with their blessing. "They are yours. . . . all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them" (17:9-10).

He refers to His own care and keeping of them hitherto, and commits them from His hands, as He is now about to leave them to His Father's keeping, telling Him that they are all safe, except the one who has wrecked himself, as the Scriptures had already predicted, the wicked son of perdition.

I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled. (17:11-12)

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

How many pleas does Christ here present on behalf of His own, verses 6 and 12?

Of whom is Christ speaking in verse 6?

What important truth is pointed in the "ands" of verse 8?

Why did Jesus pray only for those whom the Father had given Him, choosing not to pray for those of the world?

Ex. 28:29 Isa. 8:18 Ps. 2:8 Ps. 22:22 John 6:37, 39 John 15:16 Rom. 10:1 Rom. 11:28 1 Tim. 2:1 Heb. 2:11-13 1 Pet. 1:2

Did Christ pray for Peter?

Luke 22:32 Heb. 7:25

Did Christ pray for Judas?

Give Scripture references that teach our oneness and unity with one another, verse 12.

Eph. 4:13 1 John 3:14, 16 1 John 4:12

John 17:13, 14

"And the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world" (17:14). The inhabitants of this world are fully under the dominion of its "prince," and led by him are wholly taken up with the things of time and sense, namely, all that is "not of the Father" (1 John 2:16). Therefore do the men of the world bear an implacable hatred to Christ and His people, *because* "they are not of the world." Once Christians *were* "of the world," they followed its "course," and were fully "conformed" to its policy, its principles, its aims, but grace has delivered them from this "present evil world" (Gal. 1:4), so that they now have new affections, new interests, a new Master. They have been separated from the world, and in proportion as they follow Christ their lives *condemn* the world (Heb. 11:7). Therefore does the world hate them: it secretly

plots against them, it inwardly curses them, it says all manner of evil against them, it opposes them, it rejoices when any evil befalls them.

(Gospel of John, A.W. Pink)

What is meant by “my joy fulfilled in themselves,” verse 13?

What is meant by “they are not of the world,” verse 14?

Mark 6:20 John 15:26, 27 John 16:33 Rom. 12:1, 2 1 Cor. 10:13 2 Cor. 5:17 Gal. 6:14 Phil. 3:20 Heb. 2:18 Jas. 1:27 1 John 2:15-17 1 John 3:1-3 1 John 4:17

John 17:15, 16

We need not doubt that our Lord's all-seeing eye detected in the heart of His disciples an impatient desire to get away from this troubled world. Few in number and weak in strength, surrounded on every side by enemies and persecutors, they might well long to be released from the scene of conflict, and to go home. Even David had said in a certain place, “Oh, that I had wings like a dove, then would I flee away and be at rest!” (Ps. 55:6) Seeing all this, our Lord has wisely placed on record this part of His prayer for the perpetual benefit of His Church. He has taught us the great lesson that He thinks it better for His people to remain in the world and be “kept from its evil,” than to be taken out of the world and removed from the presence of evil altogether.

Nor is it difficult on reflection to see the wisdom of our Lord's mind about His people, in this as in every thing else. Pleasant as it might be to flesh and blood to be snatched away from conflict and temptation, we may easily see that it would not be profitable. How could Christ's people do any good in the world, if taken away from it immediately after conversion?—How could they exhibit the power of grace, and make proof of faith, and courage, and patience, as good soldiers of a crucified Lord?—How could they be duly trained for heaven, and taught to value the blood, and intercession, and patience of their Redeemer, unless they purchased their experience by suffering?—Questions like these admit of only one kind of answer. To abide here in this vale of tears, tried, tempted, assaulted, and yet kept from falling into sin, is the surest plan to promote the sanctification of Christians, and to glorify Christ. To go to heaven at once, in the day of conversion, would doubtless be an easy course, and would save us much trouble. But the easiest course is not always the path of duty. He that would win the crown must carry the cross, and show himself light in the midst of darkness, and salt in the midst of corruption. “If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.” (2 Tim. 2:12.)

(Expository Thoughts on John, J.C. Ryle)

Expand on the life of a particular person in the Bible, showing how his or her trial brought glory to God.

John 17:17-26

He solemnly consecrates Himself to them for their sanctification, service and complete salvation, and lays Himself with them in His death as a living sacrifice upon the altar of His Father's will; so that their sanctification does not depend upon their own personal strength and resources, but is pledged by His own love to them, and His own life in them. We think of our consecration as we lay ourselves upon the altar. Let us rather think of that other Sacrifice who lies down beside us, and becomes by His own consecration with us, the strength and the security of our sanctity and service. “For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified” (17:19).

From the little band that are kneeling close to Him, His vision expands until He sees the whole circle of His redeemed, each one of us personally; then He adds this all-comprehensive prayer, “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message” (17:20).

The simple condition which includes us in His prayer, is that we “will believe in [Him] through their message.” If we can meet this, the Master's prayer has been offered for us, and will surely be fulfilled if we will let it. And this prayer not only looks forward to the words which follow, but back also to the words which he has just expressed for the 11 disciples.

Three things He asks for them in the coming ages, and one bequest He bestows upon them.

First, their unity with each other: “that all of them may be one” (17:21).

Second, their union with Him: “Just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us” (17:21).

And, third, the perfecting of each one of them in their personal life, and of the whole body in the one complete Church the Bride of the Lamb: “May they be brought to complete unity” (17:23). This is also the apostle's prayer, as he echoes the Master's thought: “until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13).

This complete unity, He tells the Father, is to be the great evidence through which the world will believe that the Father has sent Him, and will know that He has loved them even as Himself. Christian unity must have its deeper root in divine union, and Christian perfection can come only through such union between the soul and God. There is no self-

perfection, but as God has revealed and ministered to each one of us, and together, so united us in Him, we shall be "made perfect in one" (John 17:23, KJV). Perfection here includes, not only the completeness and maturity of individual character, but also of the Church, as a collective body, at the coming of the Lord.

There is still a deeper, sweeter thought lying in the bosom of His precious words and not yet expressed in this analysis. The issue of this divine union with the Father and the Son shall be that the soul thus linked with God shall enter into the same love which the Father has toward the Son. If Jesus be truly formed in us, the Father will love us in Jesus and as Jesus Himself. These are the two sublime heights in this prayer, so far as we are concerned—the love of Jesus and the love of the Father revealed in us through our union with God.

From this great thought naturally follows the remaining prayer (17:22), which contains His last bequests to His beloved followers. At the table He had bequeathed to them His peace, and now He adds to it His glory, too. All the riches, all the splendor of the infinite and everlasting wealth of His throne and His glory, He shares with them; empties Himself of all but love, and finds His sole inheritance in them and in His Father. "I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one" (17:22). And as though to complete even the very form of a will, and claim for them, by every right of His Sonship, this glorious consummation, He adds, "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world" (17:24).

The closing thoughts and words have reference to the highest of all thoughts and themes.

Apart from Christ, the world has no God. Man's conceptions of the Father are all distorted and false. Jesus alone has revealed Him. "No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known" (1:18). The altars of false religion are dedicated "to an unknown God" (Acts 17:23). "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent" (John 17:3). Nothing is more pathetic than the groping of lofty minds in every age to find out God. Yes, it is true as Christ said, "The world does not know [the Father]" (17:25).

"They know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them" (17:25-26). Jesus is the revelation of God to the world and to the believer, and only as we receive Him can we know God and enter into union with Him through Jesus Christ. When we receive His Son, we at once pass into direct and personal acquaintance with the Father. This was the very purpose of His coming, to "bring us to God" (1 Pet. 3:18, KJV), and one with Him, we become one with the Father also.

Receiving Christ and through Him united to God, there comes to us the stupendous blessing expressed in these words: "that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them" (John 17:26). We become the objects of the very same love which the Father has for His Son. We are recognized as part of Him even as the bride is taken into her husband's family and loved even as her husband. This is, indeed, the mystery of mysteries: that we are permitted to share the intimate and exclusive affection of the eternal Father toward His only begotten Son. He loves us now, not for ourselves, nor in proportion to our personal claims upon His affection, but precisely as He loves Jesus Christ, with infinite complacency and unlimited measure.

The secret of all this is expressed in the last three words in this sublime prayer, "I in them" (17:26, KJV). This is the mystery hid from ages, and at last made known to the saints, "Christ in you, the hope of Glory" (Col. 1:27), "I in them." This explains why God can love us even as He loves His Son, for to the Father we are accepted and counted as sharing His peculiar sonship—"we are like him" (1 John 4:17).

Even the Master's prayer cannot go higher or deeper than this. The curtain falls upon these parting words, and henceforth their echoes keep forever sounding through the ages as the very voices of the ministry of His intercession within the veil and the acknowledgment forever of our high place of unity and fellowship with Him as we, in His name, may come, and come boldly, to the throne of grace.

So near, so very near to God,
More near I cannot be;
For in the Person of His Son
I am as near as He.
So dear, so very dear to God,
More dear I cannot be;
The love wherewith He loves His Son,
That love He bears to me.

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

What is the "sanctification" of verse 17?

What is the meaning of verse 18?

How does Christ "sanctify Himself," verse 19?

What is the “glory” of verse 22?

What is the unity prayed for in verse 23?

What is the connection of verse 24?

Why “righteous” father, verse 25?

What is the meaning of verse 26?

John 18:1

The entrance of Christ into the Garden at once reminds us of Eden. The contrasts between them are indeed most striking. In Eden, all was delightful; in Gethsemane, all was terrible. In Eden, Adam and Eve parleyed with Satan; in Gethsemane, the last Adam sought the face of His Father. In Eden, Adam sinned; in Gethsemane, the Savior suffered. In Eden, Adam fell; in Gethsemane, the Redeemer conquered. The conflict in Eden took place by day; the conflict in Gethsemane was waged at night. In the one Adam fell before Satan; in the other, the soldiers fell before Christ. In Eden the race was lost; in Gethsemane Christ announced, “Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none” (John 18:9). In Eden, Adam took the fruit from Eve’s hand; in Gethsemane, Christ received the cup from His Father’s hand. In Eden, Adam hid himself; in Gethsemane, Christ boldly showed Himself. In Eden, God sought Adam; in Gethsemane, the last Adam sought God! From Eden Adam was “driven”; from Gethsemane Christ was “led”. In Eden the “sword” was drawn (Gen. 3:24); in Gethsemane, the “sword” was sheathed (John 18:11).

(Gospel of John, A.W. Pink)

Explain what the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and the Tree of Life represent within the Garden of Eden.

John 18:2-11

Let us notice, in these verses, *the entire voluntariness of Christ’s sufferings*. We are told that the first time that our Lord said to the soldiers, “I am He, they went backward and fell to the ground.” A secret invisible power, no doubt, accompanied the words. In no other way can we account for a band of hardy Roman soldiers falling prostrate before the voice of a single unarmed man. The same miraculous influence which tied the hands of the angry crowd at Nazareth,—which made the priests and Pharisees powerless at the triumphant entry into Jerusalem,—which stopped all opposition when the temple was purged of buyers and sellers,—that same mysterious influence was present now. A real miracle was wrought, though few had eyes to see it. At the moment when our Lord seemed weak, He showed that He was strong.

(Expository Thoughts on John, J.C. Ryle)

In what character did Jesus speak at the end of verse 8?

What did Jesus mean when he said, “The cup which my Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?” (John 18:11) And why did He call it a “cup” that He had to “drink?”

Ps. 116:13 Isa. 51:17 Matt. 20:22, 23 Matt. 26:38, 39, 40

John 18:12-27

“Peter probably thought he might be brought bound with his Master before the high priest, and had he done so he would probably have stood faithful. But the Devil who was sifting him had a much finer sieve than that to run him through. He brought him to no formal trial, where he could gird himself for a special effort. The whole trial was over before he knew he was being tried. In these battles which we must all encounter, we receive no formal challenge that gives us time to choose our ground and our weapons; but a sudden blow is dealt us, from which we can be saved only by habitually wearing a coat of mail sufficient to turn it, and which we can carry into all companies” (Mr. M. Dods).

(Gospel of John, A.W. Pink)

Although Satan planned this ugly and cruel denial of Christ by Peter, can you see a greater and higher plan within it that was designed by God?

John 18:28-32

We are told that the Jews who brought Christ before Pilate would not go into “the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the Passover.” That was scrupulosity indeed! These hardened men were actually engaged in doing the wickedest act that mortal man ever did. They wanted to kill their own Messiah. And yet at this very time they talked of being “defiled,” and were very particular about the Passover!

The conscience of unconverted men is a very curious part of their moral nature. While in some cases it becomes hardened, seared, and dead, until it feels nothing, in others it becomes morbidly scrupulous about the lesser matters of religion. It is no uncommon thing to find people excessively particular about the observance of trifling forms and outward ceremonies, while they are the slaves of degrading sins and detestable immoralities. Robbers and murderers in some countries are extremely strict about confession, and absolution, and prayers to saints. Fastings and self-imposed austerities in Lent, are often followed by excess of worldliness when Lent is over. There is but a step from Lent to Carnival.

(Expository Thoughts on John, J.C. Ryle)

What does the second half of verse 31 go to show?

John 18:33-40

Melancholy as it may appear, there are multitudes in every Christian land whose state of mind is just like that of Pilate. Hundreds, it may be feared, among the upper classes, are continually excusing their own irreligion by the specious plea that, like the Roman Governor, they cannot find out “what is truth.” They point to the endless controversies of the Romanists and Protestants, of High Churchmen and Low Churchmen, of Churchmen and Dissenters, and pretend to say that they do not understand who is right and who is wrong. Sheltered under this favorite excuse, they pass through life without any decided religion, and in this wretched, comfortless state, too often die.

But is it really true that truth cannot be discovered? Nothing of the kind! God never left any honest, diligent inquirer without light and guidance. Pride is one reason why many cannot discover truth. They do not humbly go down on their knees and earnestly ask God to teach them.—Laziness is another reason. They do not honestly take pains, and search the Scriptures. The followers of unhappy Pilate, as a rule, do not deal fairly and honestly with their consciences. Their favorite question,—What is truth?—is nothing better than a pretence and an excuse. The words of Solomon will be found true as long as the world stands: “If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.” (Prov. 2:4,5.) No man ever followed that advice and missed the way to heaven.

(Expository Thoughts on John, J.C. Ryle)

Jesus told His disciples, “I am *the way, the truth, and the life*, and no one comes to the Father except through Me.” (John 14:6) We could study His three words, “way” “truth” and “life” for a lifetime and still not exhaust their complete meaning in the spiritual sense. **Speak to your perception of how men now view “truth.” What is the force of the last clause of John 18:37?**

What did God cause Pilate to say in verse 39?

John 19:1-6

“Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe” (19:5). “That our blessed Lord, the eternal Word, should have meekly submitted to be led out after this fashion, as a gazing-stock and an object of scorn, with an old purple robe on His shoulders, a crown of thorns on His head, His back bleeding from scourging, and His head from thorns, to feast the eyes of a taunting, howling, blood-thirsty crowd, is indeed a wondrous thought! Truly such love ‘passeth knowledge’” (Bishop Ryle).

(Gospel of John, A.W. Pink)

Who was responsible for Christ’s being put to death: the Jews, the Romans, Pilate, Judas or us? Can you find verses to substantiate your answer?

John 19:7-10

“He gave him no answer.’ Most men, like Pilate, have a day of grace, and an open door put before them. If they refuse to enter in, and choose their own sinful way, the door is often shut, and never opened again. There is such a thing as a ‘day of visitation,’ when Christ speaks to men. If they will not hear His voice, and open the door of their hearts, they are often let alone, given over to a reprobate mind, and left to reap the fruit of their own sins. It was so with Pharaoh, and Saul, and Ahab; and Pilate’s case was like theirs. He had his opportunity, and did not choose to use it, but preferred to please the Jews at the expense of his conscience, and to do what he knew was wrong. We see the consequence—‘Jesus gave him no answer’” (Bishop Ryle).

(Gospel of John, A.W. Pink)

What is the ultimate destiny of those who are given over to a reprobate mind? Does the Holy Spirit continue to bring conviction and repentance?

Rom. 1:21-24 2 Tim. 3:1-7 2 Pet. 3:3-7

John 19:11-22

Even so temperate a writer as Bishop Ryle says on this verse (19:11): “Thou talkest of power: thou dost not know that both thou and the Jews are *only tools* in the hands of a higher Being: you are both, unconsciously, *mere instruments* in the hands of God!”

(Gospel of John, A.W. Pink)

Pilate was merely a tool in God’s hand to carry out His plans; nevertheless he was responsible for his actions. **Can the foolish and sinful actions of a man be used by God toward higher good for other men, as well as to bring glory to God? Give another Biblical example.**

John 19:23-27

“When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple standing by, whom He loved, He saith unto His mother, Woman, behold thy son!” (19:26). Occupied with the most stupendous work ever done, not only on earth but in the entire universe; under a burden which no mere creature could possibly have sustained; the Object of Satan’s fiercest malignity! about to drain the awful cup which meant separation from God Himself for three hours; nevertheless, even at such a time, the Lord Jesus did not deem natural ties as unworthy of recognition. To the very end He showed Himself both perfect Son of God and perfect Son of man. In boyhood He had “honored” His parents (Luke 2:52), so does He now on the cross. About to leave this world, He first provides a home for His widowed mother. First He had prayed for His enemies; then He had spoken the words of salvation and assurance to the repentant thief, now He addresses His mother.

(Gospel of John, A.W. Pink)

Even in the cruelest suffering known to mankind, Christ did not think of Himself first. **How did Jesus, and also the Apostle Paul, pass this “selfless” teaching to their hearers?**

Matt. 16:24-27 Rom. 6:1-23 2 Cor.4:8-18

John 19:28-33

“For these things were done, that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of Him shall not be broken” (19:36). The Holy Spirit here quotes Ps. 34:20: “*He* keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.” Marvelously had this been fulfilled. God *had* kept all the bones of His incarnate Son. Notwithstanding Pilate’s order, the soldiers broke not *His* legs. All the legions of Caesar could not have broken a single bone: they, too, had “*no* power” except what was given them from above! The preservation of Christ’s bones was the fulfillment of an ancient type; “Neither shall ye break a bone thereof” (Ex. 12:46), i.e., of the paschal lamb. For 1500 years Israel had punctiliously observed this item in the Passover observance, and none of them (so far as we know) had any idea of its meaning. Now the Holy Spirit explains it.

(Gospel of John, A.W. Pink)

The Psalms portrayed the life and death of Christ centuries before He actually came to earth. **From each of the following Scriptures in Psalms, tell what particular event about Christ is being portrayed.**

Ps. 16:10 Ps. 22:1 Ps. 22:7, 8 Ps. 22:16 Ps. 22:18 Ps. 34:20 Ps. 69:21 Ps. 109:4

John 19:34-42

“But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.” Here was the second proof that our Lord *really* died. One of the soldiers determined to make sure work and leave nothing uncertain—in all probability directing his spear at the Savior’s heart. He was singled out from the others even while dead between the dying thieves. “He has a place even here that belonged to Him alone!” (Mr. W. Kelly). “The blood and water signified the two great benefits which all believers partake of through Christ—justification and sanctification. Blood stands for remission, water for regeneration; blood for atonement, water for purification. The two must always go together.” (Matthew Henry)

(Gospel of John, A.W. Pink)

Below are two sets of topics and Scriptures—one pertaining to the blood and the other to water. Choose one or two from each topic and enlarge on them.

Blood

The first blood sacrifice covenant,
Gen. 15:10

No blood, no atonement,
Lev. 17:11

The blood essential for right standing with God,
Gen. 4:1-10

Christ’s sacrifice, once for all,
Heb. 9:12

Water

Cleansing—Ex. 40:7-32

Purification—Ex. 19:10

Baptism—Acts 8:36-39

Sanctification—Eph. 5:26

John 20:1-10

The resurrection of Christ was more than hinted at in the first divine promise and prophecy (Gen. 3:15): if Christ was to bruise the serpent’s head *after* His own heel had been bruised by the enemy, then must He rise from the dead. The passing of the ark through the waters of judgment on to the cleansed earth foreshadowed this same great event (1 Pet. 3:21). The deliverance of Isaac from the altar, after he had been given up to death three days before (see Gen. 22:4), is interpreted by the Holy Spirit as a receiving of him back, in figure, from the dead (Heb 11:19). The crossing of the Red Sea by Israel on dry ground, three days after the slaying of the paschal lamb, was a type of Christians being raised together with Christ. The emergence of Jonah after three days and nights in the whale’s belly forecast the Savior’s deliverance from the tomb on the third day. Prophecy was equally explicit: “Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life” (Ps. 16:9-11).

(Gospel of John, A.W. Pink)

Christ’s resurrection is the mighty foundation and absolute centrality of the Christian’s faith, and apart from it, one has no hope. **State from your heart what our Lord’s rising, to die again no more, means to you personally, and how it has affected your life.**

Acts 2:24-28 Acts 4:10-12 Acts 5:29-32 Acts 10:40-43 Acts 13:30-37 Rom. 8:11 1 Cor. 15:1-4
1 Cor. 15:14, 17-19

John 20:11-16

“And as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulcher” (20:11). Such is ever the effect of uncontrolled grief. When we sorrow, even as others who have no hope, when we walk by sight instead of faith, when we are moved by the flesh instead of the spirit, we stoop down, and are occupied with things below. “Unto thee lift I mine eyes, O Thou that dwellest in the heavens” (Ps. 123:1) should ever be the believer’s attitude. Mary points a timely warning for us. We are living in days when “men’s hearts are failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth” (Luke 21:26), and the more we are occupied with the evil around us, the more will our hearts fail. Heed then the

Savior's admonition, "When these things begin to come to pass, then *look up* and *lift up* your heads; for you redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28). Let us, instead of looking down like Mary, say with the Psalmist, "I will *lift up mine eyes* unto the hills. From whence cometh my help? My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth" (Ps. 121:1, 2).
(Gospel of John, A.W. Pink)

Can you share from your experience a situation in which the power of God's Word and His love and grace helped you look up during a trial instead of down?

John 20:17-18

"But go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend [the proper present "*I am ascending*"] unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (20:17). Mary was to be the *first* witness of Christ's resurrection. This illustrates a truth of great practical importance. A *woman*—more devoted, perhaps, than any of the Twelve—had anointed Him for His burial (John 12), and now a *woman* is the first to whom Christ revealed Himself in resurrection glory. How this tells us that the *heart* leads the mind in the apprehension of God's truth. The men were quicker to grasp, *intellectually*, the meaning of the empty tomb, but Mary was the more devoted, and this Christ rewarded. Mary exemplifies the case of those whose hearts seek Christ, but whose minds are ill informed. It is the *heart* God ever looks at. We may know much truth intellectually, but unless the heart is absorbed with Christ, He will not reveal Himself to such a one in the intimacies of love and communion.

(Gospel of John, A.W. Pink)

In Matthew 12:34, 35 Jesus spoke of evil men as well as good men, stating that both groups are moved to action from the impulses of their hearts. His concern was more for men's hearts than for their intellects. Explain why.

Prov. 4:23

John 20:19-23

There are many Christians who suppose that they cannot rejoice while they remain in *circumstances of sorrow*. What a mistake! Observe here that Christ did not *change* the circumstances of these disciples; they were still "shut in for fear of the Jews," but He drew out their hearts unto Himself, and thus raised them *above* their circumstances! We see the same principle exemplified in 1 Peter 1. There we read of saints of God enduring a great fight of afflictions: they were persecuted, scattered abroad, homeless. But what of their spiritual condition? This—"Wherein ye greatly *rejoice*, though now for a season if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations." And then, having mentioned the person of the Savior, he at once adds, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye *rejoice* with joy unspeakable" (1 Pet. 1:8). Their circumstances had not been changed, but their hearts were lifted above them. This then is the great secret of *joy*—occupation and fellowship with Christ.

(Gospel of John, A.W. Pink)

Just as we can choose to get out of bed and go to work when we don't feel like it, are we not also able to choose *rejoicing in God* rather than sorrowing due to present circumstances? What makes this possible? Give Scriptures to substantiate.

John 20:24-31

"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name" (20:31). Here the Holy Spirit tells why the resurrection signs of Christ mentioned by John *are* recorded in this Gospel. They are written not merely to furnish us with historical information about the Lord Jesus, but that we might *believe* on Him! They are written that we might believe on Him as "the Christ," the Messiah, the anointed One—Him to whom the Old Testament prophets pointed. They are written that we might believe on Jesus as "the Son of God," the second Person of the Godhead incarnate, the One whose divine glories are unfolded more particularly in the New Testament. And they are written that we might believe on Him thus in order that we might have "life through His name." It is *faith* in the *written* revelation which God has given of His Son which brings "life" and all that is included in that word—salvation, immortality, eternal glory.

(Gospel of John, A.W. Pink)

Do you have intellectual knowledge and acceptance of Christ, or do you believe in Him with your whole heart, mind and soul? Is he your Lord- your King, your All in all? Give Scripture backup.

John 21:1-14

This poverty of the Apostles goes far to prove the divine origin of Christianity. These very men who toiled all night in a boat, dragging about a cold wet net and taking nothing,—these very men who found it necessary to work hard in order that they might eat,—these very men were some of the first founders of the mighty Church of Christ, which has now overspread one-third of the globe. These were they who went forth from an obscure corner of the earth, and turned the world upside down. These were the unlearned and ignorant men, who boldly confronted the subtle systems of ancient philosophy, and silenced its advocates by the preaching of the cross. These were the men who at Ephesus, and Athens, and Rome, emptied the heathen temples of their worshippers, and turned away multitudes to a new and better faith. He that can explain these facts, except by admitting that Christianity came down from God, must be a strangely credulous man. Reason and common sense lead us to only one conclusion in the matter. Nothing can account for the rise and progress of Christianity but the direct interposition of God.

(Expository Thoughts on John, J.C. Ryle)

In reading all of John's Gospel, it would seem that chapter 20 could be the final, grand conclusion regarding the life of Christ. **Would you suggest then that chapter 21 might be an introduction into Peter's new powerful life portrayed in the book of Acts? If so, how? And what does fishing speak to in our lives?**

Please fill in the following blanks:

A fisherman catches living fish, but when he gets them, they die. A Christian seeks to catch _____ fish, _____ in their sins, and when he catches them, they are made _____ in Christ!

John 21:15

The first thing recorded in connection with Peter's fall is our Lord's words to him before it *took* place: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22-31,32). This is very solemn and very blessed. Solemn is it to observe that the Lord prayed not to keep Peter from falling. In suffering His apostle *to* fall, the Lord's mercy comes out most signally, for that fall was necessary in order to reveal to Peter the condition of his heart, to show him the worthlessness of self-confidence, and to humble his proud spirit. The need for Satan's "sifting" was at once made manifest by the Apostle's reply, "And he said unto Him, Lord, I am ready to go with Thee, both into prison, and to death" (Luke 22:33). This is a condition which not only exposes one to a fall, but from which the fall itself may be the only remedy. We have to learn that when we are weak only are we strong; and that Christ's strength is made perfect in our weakness. Peter's case is a typical one; and thus it is so valuable for us.

(Gospel of John, A.W. Pink)

At times we all fail in our Christian walk; yet failure can finally prove to be a very good thing. **Can you address this from your own life experience? And what is it that needs to "die" in us in order that the full Christ-life may be seen? Give Scripture.**

John 21:16

"He saith to Him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?" (21:16). The Lord now drops the comparative "more than these" and confines Himself to love itself. This question is one which He is still asking of each of those who profess to believe in Him. "Lovest thou Me?" is, in reality, a very searching question. We may know much, and do much, and talk much, and give much, and go through much, and make much show in our religion, and yet be dead before God for want of love, and at last go down to the Pit. Do we *love* Christ? That is the great question. Without this there is no vitality about our Christianity. We are no better than painted wax figures; there is no life where there is no love. (Expository Thoughts on John, J.C. Ryle)

From all the people you know, or have read about, which one, in your judgment, expresses the truest and greatest Christ-love, and why? Is this the kind of love that you desire also?

John 21:17-24

"Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep." If you love Me, *here* is the way to manifest it. It is only those who truly *love* Christ that are fitted to minister to His flock! The work is so laborious, the appreciation is often so small, the response so discouraging, the criticisms so harsh, the attacks of Satan so fierce, that only the "love of Christ"—His for us and ours for Him—can "constrain" to such work. "Hirelings" will feed the goats, but only those who love Christ can feed His *sheep*. Unto this work the Lord now calls Peter. Not only had Christ restored the disciple's *soul* (Ps. 23:3), but also his official *ministry*; another was not to take *his* bishopric—contrast Judas (Acts 1:20)! "Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep." Marvelous grace was this. Not only is Peter freely forgiven, not only is he fully restored to his apostleship, but the Lord commends to him (though not to him alone) that which was dearest to Him on earth—*His sheep*! There is nothing in all this world nearer the heart of Christ than those for whom He shed His precious blood, and therefore He could not give to Peter a more affecting proof of His confidence than by committing to his care the dearest objects of His wondrous love!

(Gospel of John, A.W. Pink)

Have you been called by God to shepherd and feed His sheep? If so, what is He requiring of you as His "under shepherd?" And since you are unable to do this alone, who is your constant Teacher, Protector and Guide?

John 21:25

If God is in charge, nothing can get beyond Him. His eyes run to and fro throughout the whole earth and no other can anticipate or stay His hand from working. How wonderful it is for us to realize that every moment matters of emergency are pressing upon the attention of our ascended Lord! Every instant He is intensely occupied with the government of the universe and the care of His people. This very hour thousands of His people are calling upon Him from all parts of the world; some are dying; some are pleading for dying friends; some are in instant peril; some are pleading for His mercy and salvation. He is the greatest of all workers and the most occupied of all strenuous lives, and yet He is at leisure to listen to your feeblest whisper or your longest appeal, to enter into every detail of your situation and to go with you through every minute stepping of your perplexing way. Was there ever such a heart of love and such a wise and resourceful mind? Nothing takes Him by surprise. Danger and death have for Him no alarms. Oh, let us come to Him with confidence and ever live in touch with His guiding eye and upholding hand.

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

Explain the reason why the world could not produce enough books to contain what Jesus did while He was on this earth.