

John

1:1. The last phrase should not be translated, “the Word was God.” Moffatt has “the *logos* (#3056 λόγος) was divine.” The New English Bible has, “what God was, the Word was,” which perhaps best carries the sense.

1:3, 4. The pronoun refers to the *logos*, which is an “it” not a “him.”

1:5. The first phrase can be translated either as “The darkness did not understand it,” or “The darkness did not overcome it.” C. K. Barrett comments: “*Kathlambanein*, ‘to seize,’ may mean ‘to overcome’ or, especially in the middle [voice], ‘to grasp with the mind’, ‘to understand.’ Here it seems probable that John is (after his manner; see on 3:3) playing on the two meanings.... Since the Greek word itself bears both meanings... The darkness neither understood nor quenched the light.” (*The Gospel According to St. John*, second edition, p. 158. It seems that, of the two meanings, “understood” or “overcome,” given that given the conflict between good (light) and evil (darkness) that has occurred since Genesis, and since the Devil had been trying to overcome the light since before the creation of man, “overcome” seems to be the sounder translation.

1:7. “for testimony.” Most versions translate this phrase, “He came as a witness, to testify.” However, this does not bring out the emphasis in the Greek. The Greek phrasing here is *eis marturian*, composed of the preposition *eis* (#1519 εἰς), which here means “for the purpose of,” and *marturia* (#3141 μαρτυρία) meaning “testimony,” or “confirmation based on personal knowledge” (BDAG). John came for the purpose of testimony, that he may testify. To say that John came “as a witness” places emphasis on the personhood of John as the one giving testimony, when the emphasis in the Greek is on the *purpose* of John’s coming. He came “for testimony, so that he may testify.” (The repetition of both noun and verb forms together is the figure of speech polyptoton [Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*]. See also 1 John 5:10).

1:12. “name.” See 1 John 3:23 note “on the name of his son Jesus Christ.”

1:13. This verse is speaking of the birth of Jesus Christ, not the new birth of Christians (see footnote on John 1:13 in *The Christian’s Hope: The Anchor of the Soul*.)

“not of bloods.” The only time in the NT that blood is used in the plural. Jesus was not born of the mixture of two human “bloods,” i.e., the contribution of two humans. God contributed the sperm (via creation) that impregnated Mary. Although many Christians believe that Jesus Christ was “incarnated,” into the flesh, in other words, placed in Mary as a complete baby at some form of development, it seems clear that the Bible makes the case that Mary was the true mother of Jesus Christ, not just a surrogate mother for God. How could Jesus be a true descendant of David if there were no actual genetic link to the line of David? Furthermore, what would be the point of the genealogy in Matthew? The link between Mary and Jesus in Matthew 1:16 would not be a genetic link at all. If the Queen of England cannot have children, and has a surrogate mother who is a peasant from a long line of peasants carry her baby, the baby is still a prince and not a peasant. If God simply had Mary “carry” Jesus, then his only genealogy is from God, not in any way from David.

“the desire of the flesh” The word “desire” is the same word as “will” in “will of man” in the next phrase, but the flesh does not “will” so much as it “desires.” We are well aware of the “desires” that our flesh have for sleep, food, sex, etc. Christ was not born “accidentally” as it were, because of the “desire of the flesh.”

“the will of man.” Man’s will did not bring the Messiah.

1:18. “has made him known.” See note on “related,” Luke 24:35.

“only begotten son.” In John 1:18 (KJV) there is a controversy involving transmission. At some point of time the Greek text was changed, and either “only begotten Son” or “only begotten God” is original. The manuscript evidence is quite evenly divided, showing that the controversy, even early on in the Christian era, ran very deep. We have concluded to our satisfaction that “only begotten son” was the original text in John 1:18 based on several facts. First, our study of the scope of Scripture reveals that Jesus is not God. Second, there is no other reference anywhere in the Bible to the “only begotten God,” while there are other Johannine references to the “only begotten son” (John 3:16; 18; 1 John 4:9). Furthermore, there is no evidence that anyone in the culture of the time of John would have understood the concept of a “begotten God.” To both Jews and Christians, God was never born. That makes the “only begotten son” a more standard, and thus more likely, biblical phrase. Furthermore, the context is about truth being revealed by Jesus (John 1:17) and that no one had ever seen “God.” To call Jesus in that context “the only begotten God” would not help, because as God, why would he be more visible? The point is that the “Son” is contrasted with the “Father,” and thus can make known the Father.

1:23. Quoted from Isaiah 40:3.

1:39. “(it was about *the* tenth hour).” The figure of speech, Epitrechon (see Bullinger, *Figures*), is a type of parenthesis.

“the tenth hour.” This is 4 o’clock in the afternoon.

1:41. The word “first” is debated in the text. Lenski does a good job with it. Andrew was the first of the two disciples of John to find his brother. The other disciple of John, the one not mentioned by name, would have been either James or John (the author of John), and he also found his brother, thus being the “second” to bring his brother, Andrew being the “first.”

2:4. This puzzling verse is explained well by Lenski. Of course Jesus’ mother is putting pressure on him to do something in the situation, but as it is in English the verse seems to make Jesus disrespectful and uncaring of the situation entirely. This verse has both Greek idiom and the figure of speech ellipsis. This makes it difficult to translate the Greek into English in an understandable way without taking serious liberty with the text.

Keys to the meaning can be found in the context, especially verse 5. Not only is Mary not upset with Jesus’ response to her, but she expects Jesus will do something to help the situation. Jesus’ statement, “what *is that* to you and me” is not an insult to Mary, or a statement of disregard of the situation. Rather it is a statement that Jesus *himself* is Messiah and Lord, and that he and Mary are not a team. The verse should be read something like: “what is that to you **and** me, I will deal with it alone.” He alone would take care of the situation now, just as he alone would take care of the situation when “his hour” had come, at the time of his torture and death. Mary understood his communication, and went to the servants and told them that whatever “he” said, do it.

2:17. Quoted from Ps. 69:9.

2:20. The Temple, and the complex around it, took many years to build. Then it stood in its completed form for less time than it took to build because it was destroyed in 70 AD. The saying in Jewish tradition was, “He that has not seen the Temple of Herod has never known what beauty is” (Edersheim, *Life and Times*, Book II, p. 120).

2:22. “out from among the dead.” See Romans 4:24. Wuest: “out from among those who are dead.”

“believed the scripture.” What scripture? Very likely Psalm 16:10, as per Acts 2:31 and 13:35, but they also may have believed Isaiah 53, Psalm 22, etc.

2:23. “name.” See 1 John 3:23 note “on the name of his son Jesus Christ.”

3:4. The Jews had no knowledge of what we refer to as the “new birth” (1 Pet. 1:3) or being “born again” (1 Peter 1:23). Through the times of the Old Testament and Gospels, God gave His gift of holy spirit conditionally, so He could take it away. This happened to King Saul (1 Sam. 16:14), and after sinning with Bathsheba, David prayed it would not happen to him (Ps. 51:11). After the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2), God gave holy spirit in birth; it is incorruptible seed (1 Pet. 1:23), is “sealed” in Christians (Eph. 1:13) and is a “guarantee” of Christian salvation (2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:14). In the Grace Administration in which we live, a Christian cannot lose his guarantee of salvation (see John Schoenheit, *The Christian’s Hope: The Anchor of the Soul*, appendix C, “The Permanence of Christian Salvation”). Today, Christians get “born again” while they are still alive. This doctrine was never mentioned in the Old Testament and therefore the Jews knew nothing of it. It was part of the Administration of the Sacred Secret (Eph. 3:1-10).

The Jews were supposed to know about the “birth” from above that Jesus spoke about, which is the birth of their body from the ground which will happen at the resurrection (Isa. 26:19 (NIV); Ezek. 37:12-14; Dan. 12:2). However, for the most part the Jews were ignorant about the resurrection from the dead and entrance into the Messianic Kingdom. The Sadducees did not even believe in a resurrection (Matt. 22:23). The Pharisees, on the other hand, of which Nicodemus was one, generally believed in immediate life after death, like the Greeks. So when Jesus told Nicodemus about being born from above, he did not understand what Jesus was speaking of. Nicodemus, who had read the Old Testament many times, should have known what Jesus was talking about. Instead, however, he was confused by the “birth” terminology.

The Jews believed that God opened the womb allowing childbirth, or closed it causing barrenness (Gen. 20:18; 29:31; 30:2; 1 Sam. 1:5; Ps. 127:3; Isa. 66:9; Hos. 9:14). Thus, when Jesus spoke of being “born from above” Nicodemus would have correctly thought of Jesus’ words in terms of “being born with the help of God.” However, instead of correctly thinking that the dead are born from the ground by the power of God, he incorrectly thought about how a person could once again be born from his mother’s womb with God’s help. Jesus’ words are actually quite simple, but they were completely outside any theology that Nicodemus understood. In order to “see” (i.e., enter) the Kingdom of God, the Messianic Kingdom that will be set up on earth (Dan.2:44; 7:14), the dead will have to be resurrected by the power of God. No one will see God’s Messianic Kingdom unless he is “born from above.”

3:5. “born of water.” This phrase refers to the birth of the person from his mother’s womb. There are some who say that this phrase means a person has to be water baptized to be saved, but that cannot be the case. When Jesus spoke to Nicodemus, no one had to be baptized to be saved. There in Judea John and Jesus both baptized as a sign of recommitment to obedience to the Law, and there is evidence that proselytes to Judaism were water baptized, but in no case did the Word of God, or John or Jesus, say it was a requirement for salvation. If that were true that people had to be baptized to be saved,

then all the OT believers would have had to have been baptized to be saved, which is clearly not the case. Or if God made a new requirement that starting with the ministry of John people had to be baptized to be saved, then that would have been both clearly stated and openly practiced. However, it is never stated that baptism was a new requirement for salvation, and it was not universally practiced by Jesus or his disciples. When he sent out the 12 (Luke 9:1-5) and when he sent out the 72 (Luke 10:1-12), in neither case did he tell any of his disciples to baptize those who listened and believed the message. This fact is made even clearer when the rich man came to Jesus and specifically asked how to be saved (Matt. 19:16ff). Jesus answered: “If you want to enter life, obey the commandments.” Jesus did not mention baptism because it was not essential in order to be saved.

For Jesus to use the phrase “born of water” when speaking to Nicodemus, it must have meant something that he could understand without much commentary, because Jesus just said it, he did not explain it. Based on that, the best conclusion is that the words are literal, and should be understood literally, which is always the first place to start in Bible interpretation anyway. In the context in which Jesus was speaking, before the Church Age, in order to be saved a person had to be 1) born of water (when he is born from his mother) and 2) born of the spirit (when the earth gives birth to him: Ezek 37:12-14; Isa. 26:19.) For a more thorough understanding of Nicodemus and John 3, see Appendix H, in *The Christian’s Hope: The Anchor of the Soul*, by John Schoenheit **3:8**. “Spirit” with a capital “S” because the one who will give birth is “the Spirit” (revealed as God in the Old Testament and further revealed as God (the Spirit) through the Son (also called “The Spirit” in the New Testament). See Appendix H in *The Christian’s Hope*, by Schoenheit. This is not referring to the gift of holy spirit in the Administration of the Sacred Secret.

3:13. “who is in heaven.” This last phrase of this verse as it appears in the KJV and REV is omitted in the Nestle Aland Greek text, but is still hotly debated. Omitting the phrase as the modern Greek texts and most modern versions do is now generally accepted, but this shorter reading is supported textually only by Egyptian texts (the Alexandrian text family, etc.). Although the Egyptian witnesses carry a lot of weight, they are not the final word on the originality of any verse. The phrase is included in the texts of every other text family. However, a more important question in this case is, “Why would any scribe add the phrase ‘who is in heaven’ to the text?”

One of the most basic principles of textual criticism is that when a verse has come down to us in several variations, the most difficult reading, or the least likely reading, is most often the original text. That is due to the fact that scribes generally were uncomfortable with verses that did not make sense, or that seemed to differ from what they already believed. Since traditionally, the words in verse 13 were believed to be spoken by Jesus to Nicodemus (although that is not actually true), and since Jesus was not in heaven but was in Jerusalem, the fact that the verse says “who is in heaven” created a huge problem. How could the Bible say Jesus was in heaven when he was on earth speaking with Nicodemus? Given that information, there just does not seem to be any clear reason why an early scribe would add, “who is in heaven,” to a verse that read much more clearly without it. On the other hand, it can be easily seen why scribes would omit the phrase “who is in heaven,” because it seemed so out of place. This would have been even more true in Egypt, where huge debates about the Deity of Christ were going

on, and where many scribes did not believe in the Trinity. It would make no sense at all to a Unitarian scribe that Jesus could be on earth and in heaven at the same time. In contrast to Unitarian scribes, the Trinitarian scribes believed that Jesus could be on earth and in heaven at the same time, so they would not have seen as much need to modify the verse (Cp. Lenski's comment on this verse, p. 252: "...he is both here and is still in heaven.").

We assert that the phrase is original, and that Unitarian scribes removed the phrase about the Son of Man being in heaven because they misunderstood it, and they saw it as a contradiction in the text. The fact is that Jesus did not say he was in heaven while he was standing in Jerusalem. Jesus is not speaking at all. Jesus stops speaking (and the red in red-letter Bibles should also stop) at the end of verse 12. Verse 13 is part of the narrative of the Gospel of John, just as 3:1, which opens the chapter, is. *The Companion Bible* by Bullinger has notes that make a good case for the fact that it is after verse 12 Jesus' speaking ends and John, the narrator, begins. Verses 14 and 16 agree with this entirely. See the notes there.

It is worth asking a final question. Why would verse 13 (and also 14-21) be traditionally ascribed to Jesus (and thus appear in red in red-letter Bibles)? The answer is that it was generally believed in Christendom after Augustine that no one went to heaven before Christ ascended to heaven, but after Christ ascended to heaven then all the Christians who died went to heaven. Given that scenario, if verse 13 was Christ speaking to Nicodemus, then he had not ascended to heaven yet, so the verse could say "...no one has gone up to heaven." However, if verse 13 were the words of John the narrator, then they were written long after Jesus had ascended to heaven, when, according to orthodox theology, lots of Christians (like Stephen: Acts 7) would have been in heaven. However, the verse says that no one is in heaven. This leaves Christians with two choices: 1) dead Christians go to heaven, so John 3:13 was spoken by Jesus, or 2) the verse was part of John's narrative, so we can conclude that dead Christians do not go to heaven.

We assert that #2 is correct. This verse is one of many verses in the Bible that teaches that no one is in heaven. The dead are asleep until Jesus comes and raises them up at the Rapture, the First Resurrection, or the Second Resurrection.

3:14. Although almost all the versions treat Jesus' lifting up as if it is future, a quick look at the Greek text shows that, from the writers standpoint, it is in the past. The translators ignore this, being sure that since Jesus is speaking it must be future, but the fact is that Jesus was not saying it, John was, and it was in the past when John was writing.

3:16. Jesus did not say this to Nicodemus. He told the rich young ruler that to have everlasting life he had to keep the commandments. He would not have told different people different ways to have everlasting life. This is part of the narrative of the Gospel of John, like the first chapter is narrative, written by John after Jesus' death and resurrection. The teaching of John 3:16 was the case when John wrote his Gospel (salvation is attained by faith in the Grace Administration). Furthermore, God's giving his Son was still future when Jesus spoke. The argument of verses 17-21 reads as it would after Christ's resurrection.

"so that." *Hina* + subjunctive purpose-result clause, see Matthew 2:15 entry, "resulting in...what was spoken being fulfilled." By giving his Son, God both intended to and resulted in saving those who believe.

3:18. "name." See 1 John 3:23 note "on the name of his son Jesus Christ."

3:20. “worthless.” The Greek is *phaulos* (#5337 φαῦλος), and means, worthless, good for nothing. It is not necessarily that the works are “evil,” but just worthless. We are created to do good works (Eph. 2:10), and if we waste our lives in that which is worthless to God, there is a consequence for that.

3:28. “*can* testify.” John’s point here is not that his disciples were in fact testifying that he did not claim to be the messiah, but that they could. He calls on them to be witnesses on his behalf. The Greek reads, “You all testify for me,” using the dative of advantage.

4:6. “just as he was.” Cp. Darby’s translation. The Greek is *houtōs* (#3779 οὕτως), which means, “thus, in this manner.” The NASB, for instance, reads, “being wearied from His journey, [Jesus] was sitting thus by the well.” As Robinson points out, the “thus” refers to his weary state (*Word Pictures*). Jesus came and sat by the well thus wearied. Jesus was human, and got tired like all of us do. Yet even in his tired state he draws energy from his faith and conviction, and speaks with the woman at the well, then the Samaritans.

“the sixth hour.” Noon. There has been much discussion about the chronology John uses, but there is no genuine reason to not use the standard chronology and timekeeping that exists in all the Gospels. The reason the timekeeping in John has been called in question is to try to explain how the Gospel of John can say that Jesus was still with Pilate about noon, the 6th hour, (John 19:14) when other Gospels have him being crucified at the third hour, 9 AM, (Mark 15:25), and darkness coming over the land at noon (Luke 23:44). The answer is that Jesus was not arrested Thursday night and crucified Friday, as most Christians suppose, but rather he was arrested Monday night, on trial and being tortured Tuesday and crucified Wednesday morning at 9 AM.

4:10. “living water.” In Jewish terminology, “living water” is flowing water, especially water that flows from a source such as a spring or river, and is not stagnant, such as well water.

4:11. “Lord.” One of the uses of “Lord” was a title of polite address, like we today say “Sir.” This woman did not know who Jesus was at this time.

“nothing to draw with.” Many wells of the time were just a hole in the ground, or a hole with a short wall of rocks to keep dirt from being kicked in. Each person who wanted water had a rope and bucket of some sort. The most common “buckets” were skin bags or “buckets” that would not break if they hit the sides of the well, although clay jugs were used as well, but great care had to be taken with them.

4:15. “come all the way here.” A brief look at how much work it took to live before modern water pumps and pipes. Just getting water to drink and cook with was hard work.

4:20. “the Place.” The word “place” was a designation of the Temple, see note on *topos* at Matt. 24:15.

4:26. “I...am he.” A clear indication of Christ’s love. He clearly reveals himself to this woman, whose heart is pure and simple, so that she can believe. To others he veiled his identity and had them search (cp. John 10:24-26).

4:28. “left her water jar.” The woman believed that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah, so she left the mundane things of her life behind in order to share the news. Many of us would do well to do the same. How much “life” consumes our time and energy such that we cannot share the Messiah with others? The text notes that she left the water jar she was going to bring her water back to town in, but there were other things, such as her rope (which would have been very valuable) that she must have left also which are not mentioned. The point was not to give a laundry list of what she left behind. A reader

familiar with biblical life, upon hearing she left the water she came for, would realize she left the other stuff as well.

4:29. “all things.” Of course Jesus did not tell the woman everything she ever did. However, it is often the effect of personal prophecy that a person feels very connected to God and the one who gives the prophecy.

4:32. It was the custom that people did not usually eat and talk. Meals were customarily eaten in silence. Thus Jesus did not want to start eating when the people were coming to talk to him.

4:35. “white to harvest.” While it was true that the grains turned from green to a pale golden-white color as they were ripe to harvest, that was not what Jesus was referring to. The men of the city were coming to meet him, and their robes would have been the whitish color of the standard robe of the day.

5:4. This verse was added as an explanatory note, it was not part of the original text, and is omitted in the earliest and best manuscripts. For more information, see Metzger, *Textual Commentary*.

5:17. “is always working.” Lenski calls this the durative present. Jesus’ point is this: Neither God nor he takes a break from doing good, even on the Sabbath.

5:19. “the son does likewise.” Cp. NRSV. The Greek for “likewise” is *homoios* (#3668 ὁμοίως), meaning, “likewise, so, similarly, in the same way” (BDAG).

5:20. “is a friend to.” The Greek is *phileō* (#5368 φιλέω). It is hard to translate the verb *phileō* in this context and keep the English as a verb. If we say “the Father loves the Son,” as most versions do, we lose the meaning of *phileō* here. We could say, the Father is friendly to the Son,” or “the Father is fond of the Son,” but these seem too weak. We meet “friendly” people all the time, but they are not friends. We could say the father “befriended” the Son, but the verb in Greek is in the present tense, and “befriended” seems to be a past action. We think “is a friend to” is the best way to carry the meaning of the Greek text into the English. For a more complete understanding of *phileō*, and how it is different from *agape* love, see the note on John 21:15.

“so that.” Purpose-result clause. See matt. 2:15 commentary, “resulting in... what was spoken being fulfilled.” These works are done for the purpose of marveling, and are preformed with the result that people marvel.

5:24. “...hears my word and believes him who sent me...” Not “believes in him who sent me, but believes him who sent me. By hearing and believing Jesus we are hearing and believing God. John 5:30 and 14:10 teaches us that Jesus’ words are God’s words.

5:28. “in the tombs.” This verse, among many others, clearly shows that when a person dies, he is dead in the ground. Jesus did not think, or teach, that when a person died only his body went into the ground, but his soul (or spirit) went to “heaven” or “paradise.” The people are in the tombs, and they will be resurrected to life from being dead in the ground.

5:29. “worthless.” The Greek is *phaulos* (#5337 φαῦλος), and means, worthless, good for nothing. It is not necessarily that the works are “evil,” but just worthless. We are created to do good works (Eph. 2:10), and if we waste our lives in that which is worthless to God, there is a consequence for that.

5:47. The Greek word “if” often has the meaning, “since.”

6:10. “sit.” The Greek word literally means “recline,” *anapipto* (#377 ἀναπίπτω). The Jews of this period followed the Greek custom of reclining, or leaning on one’s side to

eat. Here Jesus commands the disciples to have the people recline, which, functionally, would mean *get ready to eat*. Contrary to popular artistic renditions, Jesus himself and the disciples were reclining at the Last Supper (Luke 22:14; John 13:12).

6:31. Quoted from Exod. 16:4, Ps. 78:24.

6:45. Quoted from Isaiah 54:13.

6:54. When Jesus spoke of eating his flesh and drinking his blood, he was using idioms that were common enough in his day that he should have been understood. Nevertheless, people did not understand, not because they did not understand the idiom, but because they did not believe Jesus was the Messiah, or that being committed to him was the way to everlasting life. Therefore, when he spoke of eating his flesh and drinking his blood, they were confused. Eating and drinking were common activities that required personal involvement, so it is easy to see why they became idioms for involvement and commitment. For example, Jeremiah 15:16 (KJV) says, “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.” By saying he ate the Word, Jeremiah portrays his enjoyment of it and commitment to it. Of course, the idiom “eat” can be used in a destructive sense too, such as when Psalm 53:4 (ESV) says evildoers “eat up” God’s people like bread (cp. Micah 3:3). To eat the bread of sorrow (Ps. 127:2 KJV) is to have or receive sorrow. To eat the fruit of your way (Prov. 1:31) is to receive consequences for your actions (cp. Isa. 3:10).

The word “drink” was also used idiomatically for involvement. Proverbs 4:17 says the wicked will drink the wine of violence, meaning they will be committed to violence and be intoxicated by it. Jeremiah 2:18 has a great example of using “drink” to show commitment. God asks the “house of Jacob” (Jer. 2:4), “And now what do you gain by going to Egypt to drink the waters of the Nile? Or what do you gain by going to Assyria to drink the waters of the Euphrates?” No one would travel from Israel to Egypt or Assyria just to drink from their rivers. God is reproving His people from going to those pagan lands to “drink,” i.e., be committed to, their pagan ways. Job 21:20 speaks of drinking the wrath of God in the sense of being involved with it, i.e., receiving it (cp. Ps. 75:8; Isa. 51:22; Jer. 9:15; 25:15-17; 49:12; Ezek. 23:32). Psalm 36:8 speaks of godly people who drink of the river of God’s delights. 1 Corinthians 12:13 says that Christians have been made to “drink” of the spirit of God, we have received it and are involved with it in our daily activities. Eating and drinking are also used idiomatically in English to describe mental activities. If someone really liked something, we say he “ate it up.” If someone believes something without properly thinking it over, we say he “swallowed it,” or “swallowed it whole.” If we have learned something, but have not had time to fully comprehend it, we say we “have not digested it yet.”

By asking people to eat his flesh and drink his blood, Jesus was asking people to be committed to him, and the response of the people is telling. They said Jesus’ words were hard, many disciples turned from him (John 6:60, 66).

6:62. This verse does not refer to the ascension but the resurrection. See *One God & One Lord*.

6:68. “words of life.” The possibilities for understanding this genitive are multiple. Words about, words leading to, words relating, associated with life in the age to come. These are all possible. We think, however, that though multiple meanings are possible, the primary meaning is an objective genitive: words about the life in the Age.

7:8. Jesus said he was not going up to the feast, but then he went. There is an apparent contradiction here, which is solved by understanding the subject being discussed. The brothers wanted him to go up to the feast to make himself known as the Messiah because they did not believe in him (v. 5). He was going, but not as they asked, i.e., to make himself known as Messiah.

7:10. There is a textual debate surrounding the originality of the particle *hos* (#5613 ὥς) in this verse. *Hos* means “like,” “as,” or “as though.” Some translations such as the NASB keep it in the text, “He Himself also went up, not publicly, **but as if**, in secret” (emphasis added); others leave it out: “he went also, not publicly, but in secret” (NIV). The textual sources that include the “as if” are better, but the transcriptional probability of *hos* being added is also very likely; the evidence is divided (Metzger, *Textual Commentary*). We believe the particle is original, however. It is not that Christ went to feast in secret, but his late arrival at the feast was *as though* he came in secret; that is, everyone else had already arrived and he came in *like* one who would come in secretly. The *hos* softens the meaning. After the roads had cleared, Jesus came so as not to make a show of himself to the world as his brothers would have liked (vv. 3-8).

7:28. “on my own *initiative*.” Greek is *ap’ emautou*, literally, “from myself.” The word *ap’* is a contracted form of the preposition *apo* (#575 ἀπό), which in this case indicates the idea of *agency* (see appendix on Greek prepositions). Jesus is saying he does not stand as his own representative; he is not an agent, as it were, sent from himself, but rather it was the father who sent him. To communicate this denial of self agency, we followed the NET with the translation, “on my own initiative,” with the word “initiative” in italics to indicate its addition to the text.

7:38. “He who believes in me,...out of his belly....” This is the figure of speech, Anacoluthon, in which the flow of a sentence is abruptly changed (Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*).

“As the scripture has said” does not have to be a formula for a direct quotation from the Old Testament (there is no such verse), but rather an introduction of scriptural thought, i.e., the essence of what Scripture teaches. As long as what is being spoken reproduces the essential meaning of the biblical text, it is “as the scripture has said.” Modern preachers and teachers do this all the time. They say, “The Bible says...” but give the essence, rather than a quotation. Isaiah 58:11b states, “You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.” Zechariah 14:8, mentions that living waters will flow from Jerusalem, and it is thought by many that Jesus was relating this to what he was saying, because that verse was one of the traditional readings at the Feast of Tabernacles. The Scripture foretold that the spirit would be poured out into the believer (cp. Isa. 44:3-5; 59:21; Joel 2:28, 29; Ezek. 11:19; 36:26, 27; 37:14). Jesus here adds that the ones who receive the spirit of God are those who believe in him.

“Out of his belly.” Theologians have disputed whether or not “his” refers to the Messiah or the believer. In the Old Testament, God was the fountain of living water, the source of spiritual and physical sustenance, and Christ then became the source of holy spirit after he was glorified. However, the Greek text naturally refers “his” to the believer, not the Messiah (cp. Lenski, C.K. Barrett). Although the believer is the most obvious “him,” it is not impossible that the Messiah is also being indirectly referred to. In John 4:14 Jesus speaks of spiritual water, and makes the point that he is the source,

although it comes “springing up” (NASB) or “gushing up” (NRSV) from within the believer.

“belly” The Greek word is *koilia* (#2836 κοιλία), and it means 1) the whole belly, 2) the lower belly, the lower region, the receptacle of the excrement 3) the gullet 4) the womb, the place where the fetus is conceived and nourished until birth 5) the innermost part of a man as the seat of thought, feeling, choice. The exact meaning is determined by the context. It seems obvious that “living water” will not flow out of a person’s belly, so what is the verse saying? Scientists are now discovering that the gut, the belly, plays a very important part in the emotional life of a person. The gut, also called the enteric nervous system, has as many nerve cells as the brain, and studies are now showing that it can react, or “think,” independently of the brain. This is why we have a “gut feeling” about something, or a “gut reaction,” or why we get an upset stomach when we are afraid or anxious. In contrast to the “heart” (Greek is *kardia*, where we get “cardiac”), which is more closely related to what we “think,” the belly, kidneys (Rev. 2:23) and bowels (2 Cor. 6:12) are more closely related to how we “feel,” our emotions and emotional state. The point being made in John 7:38 is that the person relates to the spirit on an emotional “gut level,” and not just a mental one, although the mind is certainly involved in our spiritual walk. But our emotional connection to our spiritual life is important too, and highlighted here. Although some versions read “heart,” it misses the point, and to make the vague reference, “within him,” as some versions do, is to water down the teaching so much no point can be made of it. Other verses that refer to the “belly” in a way that relates to the emotional life are Romans 16:18 and Philippians 3:19. For the note on “kidneys” see Rev. 2:23, and for the note on bowels see 2 Cor. 6:12.

7:39. The Greek text says “...for as yet there was no Spirit...” This clearly indicates that holy spirit in the Millennial Kingdom, which Christ knew about and understood, was going to be so completely different from holy spirit that God gave in the OT that the promised holy spirit did not exist yet. We have today what was promised to Israel. The obvious presence of holy spirit in the Old Testament and people’s not realizing that this “spirit” was the gift of God that would be different in the Millennial Kingdom (and for us) than it had been in the Old Testament, had a serious consequence. Wanting it to “make sense,” to them, men who copied the Bible added to this verse as they copied it. Therefore, among the thousands of Greek texts in existence, there are several different later renditions, among them that the spirit “was not yet given,” “was not yet upon them,” and “not yet came.” See Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (United Bible Societies, Germany, 1975), p. 218.

7:53-8:12. A lot has been written from a textual point of view about the record of the woman caught in adultery. Every indication is that it was not part of the original text. The oldest and best manuscripts do not include it. Furthermore, it is absent from a diverse number of manuscripts from different manuscript families (see Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on The Greek New Testament*)

One of the signs that shows scholars the record is not original is different scribes put it in the Bible in different places. For example, in the Greek manuscripts that do have the record, it occurs in four different places in John, and even occurs in the Gospel of Luke. If the record were original but taken out of some manuscripts by zealous scribes who did not like the idea of Jesus letting adultery go unpunished, the manuscripts that still contained the record would always have it in the same place. That the record of the

woman caught in adultery occurs in different places is very good evidence it is not original.

Lastly, the record breaks the flow of Jesus' presentation in the Temple during the Feast of Tabernacles. This is the most compelling reason for removing the record from John 8 and moving it to the end of the book of John, and why we do so in our version. Jesus began his teaching in John 7 during the Feast of Tabernacles, which was the longest of the three feasts of the Mosaic Law that every Jewish male was commanded to attend (Ex. 23:14-17). By the first century, many people did not journey to Jerusalem three times a year, which was a three-day walk from Galilee. Many people would come only one time a year, and if they live much further, not even that often. When they would make the journey for the Feast of Tabernacles, it often made sense to stay for the entire festival season, which, in the Jewish calendar, was longest in the month of Tishri (our September/October). The month of Tishri had the Feast of Trumpets (Tishri 1), the Day of Atonement (Tishri 10), and the Feast of Tabernacles (Tishri 15-22). After the Feast of Tabernacles, the festival season came to a close and people started to return home.

Jesus started his powerful presentation in John 7 inside the Temple, about midway through the Feast of Tabernacles (7:14) by confronting the Jews about trying to kill him and saying to judge rightly (7:17-24). He was accused of being demon-possessed (7:20).

On the last and most important day of the Feast (7:37), Jesus taught about holy spirit coming to those who believed in him (7:37). This caused some to believe he was the Christ (7:41) and the Jews to try to arrest him (7:45-52). Undaunted by the apparent danger, Jesus continued to try to wake up the huge crowd that would be gathered at that last day of the Feast. He told them he was the light of the world (8:12), and was contradicted at every turn by the Jewish leaders. Finally, he addressed those who believed in him about being his disciples and being set free (8:31) while directly confronting his Jewish adversaries and telling them plainly they were from the Devil (8:41-47). The intense debate continued until the Jews finally picked up stones to kill Jesus, and he left the Temple area (8:59). There is no way to tell how large the crowd would have been who heard Jesus reveal in quite clear ways that he was the Messiah, but it would have been well into the thousands.

If John 7:53-8:11 is left in place, then it ends the Feast of Tabernacles, and begins a new "regular day" at the Temple (John 7:53-82). Thus, not only is the debate between Jesus and the Jews interrupted, but the huge crowd that would have heard him speak about being the Messiah and how the Jews were of the Devil would have not been present because they would have gone home the day before. Thus, we feel compelled to do more than just put the record of the woman caught in adultery in brackets, but to move the record to the end of John to preserve the powerful presentation of Jesus on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles.

In spite of the textual evidence that the record was added, we keep it in John because it has all the earmarks of being a true story. It is likely that it was an amazing event in Jesus' life that was well remembered by his followers and at some point written down and then inserted into the Gospel of John (and Luke), but scribes could not agree where to put it.

8:25. "You—who are you." The second person singular of "to be" makes the "you" at the beginning of the phrase emphatic. The Jews were asking and asking who Jesus was, but not accepting his answer (cp. 7:19ff; 7:30ff; 8:13ff). Jesus' answer in this verse is

difficult in the Greek, and Lenski writes, “The reply of Jesus constitutes one of the most disputed passages in the New Testament....” Nevertheless, Lenski gives an excellent explanation of it. First, *ten archen* does not have the force of “the beginning,” but rather “in general,” or “altogether” (Lenski; Thayer on *arche*). Second, the word *lalo* (from *laleo*) is a present active, although almost all versions translate it as a past tense. Christ was telling the Pharisees who he was even as they were asking him who he was, so he answered, “I am what I am [presently] telling you.” Christ had just told them (v. 12) that he was the light of the world, an obvious Messianic reference (“a light for the Gentiles” (Isa. 42:6) and the glory of Israel). Because they did not know that Jesus was speaking of the Father (v. 26) then they certainly did not understand that he, the one sent by the Father was obviously the Messiah.

8:53. The “Surely” is implied by the *me* (not) which expects a negative answer.

8:54. Early manuscripts say “He is our God,” and early manuscripts say “He is your God.” It is more likely that the “our” was changed to “your” as the scribes would not like to possibly imply that the Jews were saying that God was Jesus’ God also. The punctuation that makes the reading clear was not in the early texts.

8:58. The exact same phrase as it translated “I am” in this verse is translated “I am he” or some other way in Matt. 14:27; Mark 6:50; 13:6; Luke 21:8; John 6:20; 8:24,28; 13:19; 18:5,6,8. See *One God & One Lord*.

9:2. “so he was born blind.” *Hina* + subjunctive result clause, see Matthew 2:15 entry, “resulting in...what was spoken being fulfilled.” The disciples assumed that someone’s sin unintentionally resulted in this man’s blindness. Jesus specifically rejects this thinking in verse 3. His response takes the disciples’ thoughts away from who is to blame, and leads them to think only of working the healing works of God in this man’s life.

9:3. “Neither this man sinned nor his parents.” Here Jesus specifically refutes common thought of his day, that a child could sin in the womb and bad things happen to people because of sin.

“let the works of God be revealed in him.” This phrase is open to several different translations. The translator’s understanding of the passage, how he believes it fits into the context and the scope of scripture, in accordance with his theology, will determine his opinion as to how it is best brought into English. The Greek reads, *hina phanerōthē ta erga tou theou en autō*. The controversy surrounds the use of the particle *hina* (#2443 ἵνα) with *phaneroō*, the verb for “revealed” (#5319 φανερόω), in the subjunctive mood. The question is whether this use of *hina* with the subjunctive is to be understood here to indicate *purpose* or *command*. This same Greek construction can be used in purpose and command clauses, with purpose clauses being the more common of the two (Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, p. 471-72, 476-77). A purpose clause indicates *why* something happened, it shows the intention behind the action: e.g., “Children were being brought to him in order that he might lay [Greek=*hina*+subjunctive] his hands on them and pray” (Matt. 19:13). A command clause, on the other hand, *issues an order* or command: e.g., “Come and lay [Greek=*hina*+subjunctive] your hands on her, so that she may be made well and live” (Mark 5:23). (For more on result clauses, see Matt. 2:15 commentary “resulting in...what was spoken being fulfilled”).

Because it is the same Greek form of *hina* with the subjunctive, there can be disagreement as to whether purpose or command is meant. This disagreement shows up in the varying translations of Mark 5:12 for instance, when the demons plead to go into

the herd of swine. Some versions translate the second part of their plea as purpose, “Send us into the pigs *so that* we may enter them” (cp. NASB; HCSB; KJV; ASV), while most modern versions translate it as a command: “Send us into the pigs. *Let us* enter them” (cp. ESV; NIV; NRSV; NET; NAB; NJB). Interestingly, we see precisely the same split between the translations with regard to Titus 3:13, “see that they lack nothing” (command: ESV; NIV; NRSV; NET; NAB; NJB) as opposed to “so that they lack nothing (purpose-result: NASB; HCSB; KJV; ASV). (See also Revelation 14:13 for similar disagreement between translations).

Since John 9:3 has *hina* with the subjunctive, we must ask whether it is meant to be a purpose or command clause. It is rendered as a purpose clause in most translations, “He was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him” (NRSV); however, this translation has serious consequences to the meaning of the text. It makes the man’s blindness intentionally brought upon, so that he could not see for the better part of his life, simply for the purpose of being healed this day—that “God’s works” may be manifest by his healing. Such an interpretation goes against the teaching of scripture, that God is love (1 John 4:16), has plans not to harm us (Jer. 29:11), and that it is Satan who is our enemy, the god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4) who has the power of death (Heb. 2:14). Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8), his ministry was to heal those oppressed by Satan (Acts 10:38). The Gospels nowhere portray this warfare mindset of Jesus as going about healing those *oppressed by God* (See Boyd, *God at War*, pp. 231-34).

Accordingly, a number of scholars agree that John 9:3 should be read as a command clause, “But let the works of God be revealed in him.”¹² In this way, the Greek is understood just like Ephesians 5:33, which has the same construction: “let [Gk=*hina*+subjunctive] the wife see that she respects her husband.” (For other command clauses see also: Matt. 20:33; Mark 5:23; 10:51; 12:19; 1 Cor. 7:29; 16:16; 2 Cor. 8:7; 2 Cor. 8:7; 1 John 3:11; 3:23). This translation fits best with the context of the verse, as well as the rest of the gospels and the scope of scripture. In the context, the disciples falsely assume that someone’s sin resulted in this man being born blind. Jesus corrects this wrong thinking, saying it was not the result of anyone’s sin, and then he points them to the proper response of seeing such a man. He models what he came to do—to destroy the work of the devil and heal those oppressed by him—“Let the works of God be manifest in him,” he says, showing compassion for the man. Then he turns to his disciples and reminds them that they must work the works of God while it is day. Rather than painting a picture of a capricious God who makes a man blind for the purpose of healing his blindness, this passage reveals the son of a loving God, who makes the works of his Father manifest by healing a man oppressed by the devil.

There are two other grammatical options for understanding this verse, which we feel are less likely than the command clause but are worth mentioning here. First, it is also possible that Jesus’ words should read as a result clause. On this understanding the verse would not be speaking of the purpose of the man’s blindness, but only of its result, “he was born blind with the result that the works of God are manifest in him.” This

¹² Boyd, *God at War*, pp.231-34; Boyd also notes M. Zerwick, *Biblical Greek*, trans. J. Smith (Rome: Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 1963), pp. 141-42; C.F.D. Moule, *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 144-45; Nigel Turner, *Grammatical Insights into the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1965), p. 145ff.

understanding, like the purpose clause reading, requires that the phrase, “he was born blind” be supplied since it is not in the original Greek. This view has for it the fact that the disciples used a result clause in verse 2, asking Jesus whose sin resulted in the man’s blindness. To this Jesus reverses their thinking from whose sin resulted in the blindness to how the blindness can result in the manifestation of the works of God.

Secondly, there is the option that the phrase is in fact a purpose clause, but nevertheless is not to be read that he was born blind for a purpose. Rather, it should be read with what follows. In that case it would read: “Jesus answered, “Neither did this man sin, nor his parents. But in order that the works of God be revealed in him, we must work the works of him who sent me while it is day.” But this is highly unlikely, for there is no other clear instance of a purpose clause gathering its main verb from what follows, usually the action comes from what precedes the *hina* clause not after. Romans 7:13 is a near parallel, but it is a result clause, not purpose.

9:4. “We.” There are texts that read “I,” but the better textual support is for “we.” It is understandable that the copyists, particularly early in the Christian era, would be uncomfortable with “we,” wanting to put all the focus and power upon Jesus. Nevertheless, the true reading is very empowering to those who work for the Lord. “We” must all work, if work is to get done for the Lord. The “night” that Jesus referred to would be during the Tribulation period, after the Rapture, when not much work will be done for God. That will be a dark time indeed.

9:5. “a light of the world.” Although almost every translation reads, “the” light of the world, the Greek text does not read that way. John 8:12 says Jesus is “the” light, but not this verse. In the context of “we” must work the work of God, Jesus is “a” light, and we are lights also.

9:17. Here “the blind man” is used as a commonly known designation for the man. He was actually no longer “the blind man” since he could see.

9:34. After at first not believing that he was blind (v. 18, which would give healing credit to Jesus), they now refer back to the fact that he was “born” blind, and accuse him of being wholly in sins even when he was born. They are obviously blindly groping for a basis of accusation against him.

9:38. “bowed down before him.” See note on Matt. 2:2. When he was healed, this man believed that Jesus was a prophet (v. 17). It is clear from the record that the man does not believe Jesus is God. He spoke of God not hearing sinners, but hearing this “man,” Jesus. Jesus, however, sought him out, and asked if he believed on “the Son of Man,” a Messianic title. The man answered, “Who is he, Lord (in this case, “Lord” is the cultural equivalent of “sir.”). When Jesus identified himself as the Son of Man, the man said, in clear terms, “I believe you,” thus accepting Jesus as the Messiah. At that point it would have been appropriate and cultural for him to bow (or fall on his face) before Jesus. This is where the exact action that accompanies *proskuneo* is not clear. What is clear is the act of homage the man paid to Jesus.

10:4. “he goes before them.” This is a custom of shepherds in biblical times. The Western shepherd drives his sheep, the Eastern shepherd leads them.

10:6. “veiled language” = *paroimia* (3942) occurs 5 times in the NT. BDAG lexicon = “a brief communication containing truths designed for initiates, *veiled saying*, *figure* of speech, in which esp. lofty ideas are concealed.” Also translated “proverb” in 2 Pet. 2:22.

10:10. “Kill.” The word is from the Greek word *thuo* (#2380 θύω), meaning “to sacrifice.” Elsewhere in the Old and New Testaments it is used nearly exclusively to refer to the killing of animals (for ritual sacrifice or celebration). There were several other Greek words for kill (e.g., *apokteino*, *anaireo*, *diaxeirizomai*, *phoneuo*), so it is very telling that the Lord used this word to describe the Thief (the devil). The choice to employ *thuo* shows us that humans are just like animals to the devil, and he seeks to kill us with no regard, just like animals. (See Acts 10:13 for another interesting usage of this word).

10:26. “of my sheep.” This is the partitive use of the preposition *ek* (#1537 ἐκ) and the genitive case. The partitive usage indicates a part of some greater whole; in this case, Jesus denies that these Jews were a part of the larger group of “his sheep.”

10:33. The Greek word *Theos* (2316 θεός), God or god, does not have the definite article and should be translated “a god” or divine. Since the Jews would never believe a man could be Yahweh, and since it was common in the Aramaic and Hebrew to call an important man “god,” that is the way we translated it.

10:34. Quoted from Ps. 82:6.

John 10:38. “the Father is united with me, and I am united with the Father.” In most versions, though not all, this phrase is rendered, “the Father is in me, and I am in the Father.” Trinitarian theology understands this to mean the Son and Father are unified in essence; to be “in” one another, it is claimed, is to be mystically one-and-the-same in being, though remaining as separate, individual persons. This understanding of the phrase is biblically unsustainable, however. Such an understanding can come only when this verse is taken in isolation and infused with Trinitarian preunderstanding, rather than allowing the entirety of Jesus’ teaching on this subject to guide our interpretation. There are two other passages in John where Jesus speaks of the same thing, John 14:10-23 and John 17:21-23, and these shed light on his meaning here. When we study these passages we see that the Lord has in mind being unified in purpose, and his words completely fall apart if they are understood in a Trinitarian sense.

In John 14 Christ makes the same appeal for the Jews to believe on account of the works themselves, stating again that “I am in the Father, and the Father in me” (v. 10, 11). He goes on to say, “In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you” (v. 20). Christ thus applies the same co-indwelling to his disciples. Likewise in John 17 Jesus prays that the disciples “may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us... that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one” (vv. 21-23). From these two passages we can see what the Lord means when he speaks of being “in” one another—he equates this with being “one,” that is unified, and he prays that the disciples would be “in” too, so they can be perfectly one. He uses the word *kathos* (#2531 καθως) to say “in the exact same manner” that (“just as,” “even as”) the father is in Christ, so too the disciples can be in God and Christ. On the Trinitarian interpretation, this would mean Christ was praying that his disciples could join the godhead.

We can see from these passages that when John writes of being “in the father” he cannot mean it in any Trinitarian sense of having the same essence; rather, from reading the verse in its context within John, the phrase is best understood as being “one,” that is, being completely unified. Meyer, himself a Trinitarian, says that the unity referred to in John 10:38 is not “essential unity,” as in the Trinitarian understanding, which Meyer

identifies as the “old orthodox explanation,” but rather it is a “dynamic unity.” He identifies this “dynamic unity” as “nothing else than that of inner, active, reciprocal fellowship.”

Several other translations understand that the Lord has in mind this dynamic unity in the sense of “reciprocal fellowship.” Williams (The New Testament: a Translation in the Language of the People), as well as the NWT (New World Translation), translates the phrase, “the Father is in union with me and I am in union with the Father.” And the CJB (Complete Jewish Bible) reads, “the Father is united with me, and I am united with the Father.” The reading “united” is better than “in union,” which can be easily misunderstood to mean a metaphysical union of some sort. The translation “united” clearly communicates the heart of Jesus’ meaning, that he and his Father are perfectly one in purpose.

11:3. “a friend to.” The Greek is *phileō* (#5368 φιλέω). It is hard to translate the verb *phileō* in this context and keep the English as a verb. Jesus had a special attachment to Lazarus. For a similar construction see note on “is a friend to,” in John 5:20, and for a more complete understanding of *phileō*, see the note on John 21:15.

11:5. “loved.” The Greek verb is *agapaō* (#25 ἀγαπάω), and is very important here. *Agape* love (*agape* is the noun form), is a love that often runs against the feelings. God so loved that He gave His Son when He did not want to. Christ so loved he gave his life when he did not want to. We are told to love our enemies. In this case, Jesus knew he had to let Lazarus die without coming to him, which was very hard on Mary and Martha, and perhaps many others as well. Nevertheless, Jesus loved them with *agape* love, and did the difficult, but loving, thing, following the revelation he got from the Father.

11:26. “through the Messianic Age.” A translation of *eis ton aiona*, “to (and through) the Age.” The Greek word *eis* does not just mean *to*, but *fully into*, and in this case, by inference, *through it*. The preposition *dia* might have been used, but *dia* has the added meaning of through and passing out of (Bullinger, *Companion Bible*, Appendix #104.) No resurrected person dies in the middle of the Messianic Age. In the mind of Jesus’ audience, the Messianic Age that was to come was established on earth and lasted forever. The details of it coming to an end and an eternal kingdom following it were not revealed in the Old Testament (Cp. John Schoenheit, *The Christian’s Hope*).

11:33. “was deeply angered.” The Greek is *embrimaomai* (#1690 ἐμβριμάομαι), and it occurs 5 times in the New Testament. It has the overtone of anger or indignation, and can mean to sternly warn (Matt. 9:30; Mark 1:43) to harshly scold because of anger or indignation (Mark 14:5), or be moved with anger or indignation. Robertson (*Word Pictures*) writes, “First aorist middle indicative of *embrimaomai*, old verb (from *en*, and *brimê*, strength) to snort with anger like a horse. It occurs in the LXX (Da 11:30) for violent displeasure. The notion of indignation is present in the other examples of the word in the N.T. (Mr 1:43; 14:5; Mt 9:30). So it seems best to see that sense here and in verse 38. The presence of these Jews, the grief of Mary, Christ's own concern, the problem of the raising of Lazarus--all greatly agitated the spirit of Jesus (locative case *tôi pneumati*). He struggled for self-control.” The New Living Testament translates this phrase, “a deep anger welled up within him,” which catches the sense very well. Most modern versions say something such as Jesus was “deeply moved.” However, to our modern ears this seems like a touching sympathy, not an anger and indignation about what the Devil had been able to do in the situation, causing such pain and hopelessness.

When faced with the pain of the sisters and even some of the crowd, and the realization that they thought that Jesus could have saved Lazarus if he were just sick but could do no more once he died, a deep anger and indignation arose within Jesus. Often that is what happens to men and women of God who are faced with not only the effect of the Devil's work (destruction and death) but also the fact that the people are confused and deceived and thus faithless and hopeless. A deep resolve born of righteous anger wells up, and the sword of the Lord is bared to do its work as the believer steps forth to do the will of God.

“Was troubled” (*etaraxen heauton*). First aorist active indicative of *tarassô*, old verb to disturb, to agitate, with the reflexive pronoun, "he agitated himself" (not passive voice, not middle). "His sympathy with the weeping sister and the wailing crowd caused this deep emotion" (Dods). Some indignation at the loud wailing would only add to the agitation of Jesus.

11:36. “was a friend to him.” The Greek is *phileō* (#5368 φιλέω). It is hard to translate the verb *phileō* in this context and keep the English as a verb. Jesus had a special attachment to Lazarus. See note on “is a friend to,” in John 5:20 and 11:3, and for a more complete understanding of *phileō*, see the note on John 21:15.

11:38. “deeply angered.” See verse 33. The anger that Jesus initially felt when he saw the pain and weeping of Mary and the Jews subsided (as emotions do) as they all walked to Lazarus' tomb. However, upon arriving at the tomb, the anger was rekindled.

11:48. “our Place.” The word “place” was a designation of the Temple, see note on *topos* at Matt. 24:15.

11:51. “Now this he said not of himself.” Before the Day of Pentecost God could place His gift of holy spirit upon people so that they would accomplish His work. This is a good example. Caiaphas, though not a godly man, was still High Priest and God placed holy spirit upon him at least so that he could give an accurate prophecy about Jesus, which then became a prime motivator for them to seek his death (see v. 53). This is an example of how God works in history to bring about His purposes without the need of perfect foreknowledge. God, by His power, can influence things He wants accomplished.

11:53. “plans together.” The middle voice of the verb indicates they worked together (cp. NASB).

11:56. “were seeking.” *zeteō* (#2212 ζητέω), to seek. The verb is in the imperfect active, so the Jews were seeking Jesus. Caiaphas had given a prophecy that one man should die for the nation instead of the nation being destroyed, and so the Jews were now zealously seeking to kill Jesus.

“Surely he will not come to the feast?” The form of the question assumes strongly that Jesus will absolutely not (*ou mē*, double negative) dare to come this time (Robertson, *Word Pictures*). The translation in many modern versions loses the fact that the question expects a “no” answer. This shows that the people knew their leaders were trying to arrest and kill Jesus, and so they assumed that he would know that too, and not show up at Passover.

12:1. “out from among the dead.” See Romans 4:24. Wuest: “out from among the dead.”

12:3 A Roman pound was 12 ounces, three-quarters of our English pound.

“Spikenard” is a plant native to northern India and was a favorite perfume in the ancient world. The prefix “spike” refers to the shape of the plant. The best nard was imported from India in sealed alabaster boxes, which were only opened on special occasions. The

Roman historian Pliny commented on the expensive nature of Indian nard (Nat. Hist. 12. 24-26 [41-46]). For “perfume of pure nard” see Lenski.

12:6. The Greek word, *glossokoman* is from *glossa*, “tongue” and *komeo*, “to keep, to preserve.” It technically referred to a small box or container in which reeds for wind instruments were kept, but, as with all boxes, eventually all kinds of things are kept there. “Money box” is probably better than “money bag” since the reeds would never be kept in a bag.

12:7. The similar records in Matthew 26:12 and Mark 14:8 are clearer, and from them we build the full meaning of this record. Lenski does a wonderful job. “...it was that...” see Robertson’s Word Pictures. We added *until now* for clarity sake. Versions such as the NASB, “...Let her alone, in order that she may keep it for the day of My burial...,” make no sense—she had just poured out the oil, how could she now keep it? Or, “Leave her alone. *It was intended* that she keep this for the day of my burial,...

In other words, she had intended to keep this for Jesus’ burial anyway, but had poured it out now. In either way it would have been used on Jesus, so do not give Mary a hard time about using the oil on Jesus.

12:9. “a crowd of the Jews” This is the partitive use of the preposition *ek* (#1537 ἐκ) and the genitive case. The partitive usage indicates a part of some greater whole; in this case, it is a *part* of the whole group of Jews that have gathered in a crowd.

“out from among the dead.” See Romans 4:24. Wuest: “out from among the dead.”

12:10. This is religion at its worst. Kill an innocent man to protect your power and doctrine. The Devil’s way is to steal, kill and destroy, and you know his followers by their fruit.

12:13. Quoted from Ps. 118:25, 26.

12:15. Quoted from Zech. 9:9.

12:17. “meanwhile.” Cp. HCSB. The Greek word is *oun* (#3767 οὐν), it is understood to be used here as a continuation of narrative (BDAG, def. 2), which the translation “meanwhile” captures beautifully here.

“out from among the dead.” See Romans 4:24. Wuest: “out from among the dead.”

12:18. A different multitude than the multitude in verse 17.

12:19. The religious leaders had been looking for Jesus to arrest him. They can find him now easily enough! But they dare not to take him.

12:20. “worship.” See note on Matt. 2:2.

12:25. “is overly attached to.” The Greek is *phileō* (#5368 φιλέω). Although most versions say “love his life,” in doing so we confuse *agape* love (“love” in the REV) and *phileo* love. *Phileo* love has an attachment, and it the attachment between good friends. However, we would not say, “If anyone is a friend of his life...” We could say, “is attached to his life,” but that would be confusing because there is an appropriate attachment to life that we must all have or we would commit suicide during difficult times. For a more complete understanding of *phileo*, see the note on John 21:15.

12:31. “Now the prince of this world will be cast out.” The Adversary had been able to go into heaven, into the presence of God (Job 1) when he wanted, and thus he “accuses them before our God day and night” (Rev. 12:10). However, before Amageddon, the Adversary was cast out of heaven by Michael and his army (Rev. 12:7-10). The ruler of

the world will first be cast out of heaven (Revelation 12:8 and 9) and then out of the world as we know it when he is chained in the Abyss (Rev. 20:1-3). Christ was anticipating that event not many years after his death. He did not know the Sacred Secret. **12:34.** “We have heard from the law that the Christ lives forever.” In this verse, the people are using the word “law” in its broader sense of the entire Old Testament, not just the five books of Moses. There is no verse that specifically says that the Messiah would live forever and not die. However, that doctrine was being taught, based on all the prophecies that his kingdom would never end, such as Psalm 110:4 (“You are a priest forever”), Isaiah 9:7; Ezekiel 37:25; Daniel 2:44; 7:14. There were Jewish teachings that the Messiah would die, so what the crowd is voicing here was not the only Jewish teaching, but was probably the predominant one, and the one that had to be overcome for the people to understand what happened to Jesus.

12:38. Quoted from Isaiah 53:1.

“with the result.” The Greek is a *hina* + subjunctive result clause, see Matthew 2:15 entry, “resulting in...what was spoken being fulfilled.” For commentary on this passage see entry on Matthew 13:13. To fully understand this passage, we must see how Matthew’s record portrays the human side of the events, John’s the spiritual side, and Mark and Luke’s records combine the two into one.

Their decision of unbelief resulted in the word of Isaiah being fulfilled. The decision to believe or disbelieve was the free choice of those present. Hence, the verse should not be translated as a purpose clause: “they did not believe in him, in order that the word which Isaiah the prophet spoke might be fulfilled...” (NAB). Those who were unbelieving did not intend on fulfilling the passage in Isaiah, neither did God overstep their freewill and control their belief with the purpose of fulfilling the word. Rather, this is a result clause, indicating that these Jews unbelief, their own free decision of unbelief, resulted in this passage’s fulfillment. See also John 15:25 entry on “but let the word...be fulfilled” for a similar passage employing a command clause.

12:39. “for this reason.” The reason refers to what was spoken in verse 37: they still did not believe in him. It was because of this persistent unbelief that they were hardened. See commentary below, and on Matthew 13:13.

“they were not able to believe.” The people were “not able to believe” because they had allowed their heart to become hardened to the possibility that Jesus could be the Messiah. They had let their interpretation of the Law blind them to the truth being revealed through Jesus’ teaching and actions. For example, they decided that healing on the Sabbath was wrong, but God never said it was, and Jesus proved that it was not (Matt. 9:12-14; Luke 13:14-17). So when Jesus healed on the Sabbath, instead of being open to the possibility they were wrong, and adjusting their doctrine, they arrogantly held to their doctrine and concluded Jesus was a sinner (John 9:24). Eventually their hearts were so hard and blind that they were not able to believe based on the signs that Jesus did. When a person’s heart becomes that hard, it takes much love and prayer to change it.

12:40. Quoted from Isaiah 6:10.

“he has blinded...he hardened.” Quoted from Isaiah 6:10. We need to realize this was a Semitic way of saying that God permitted the people to be blinded, and permitted their hearts to be hardened. This is the idiom of permission, just the same as Exodus 4:21. (Bullinger; *Figures of Speech*; “idiom”). “Active verbs were used by the Hebrews to express, not the doing of the thing, but the permission of the thing which the agent is said

to do” (p. 823. Cp. *Don't Blame God*, chapter five). Rotherham's Emphasized Bible translates Exodus 4:21 as, "...but I will let his heart wax bold [hard], and he will not suffer [allow] the people to go." Then his marginal note reads, "...the translation... is thoroughly justifiable on the two grounds (1) of the known character of God, and (2) the well-attested latitude of the Semitic tongues, which are accustomed to speak of *occasion* as *cause*." God has given mankind freedom of will, and when we make up our minds to do something, God respects the free will we have and allows us to make bad choices. That is why He so often in His word reminds us, even commands us, to make good choices. These people who were blinded and hardened had made a series of bad choices in their lives, and even held to their error when they could have repented and changed. However, not everyone was so hardened. Only two verses later (12:42) we read about leaders of the Jews who were not hardened and who believed on Jesus.

12:46. "...a light" not just "light" as some translations have, although the Greek could be read that way. Jesus was "the light, and "a light," because other prophets were light too (John 5:35).

12:49. The English does not do justice to what is being communicated here. The difference between "say" and "speak" is that "say" in the Greek refers to the communication, the message, but "speak" can, in the range of the word, refer to the utterance itself. Thus, Jesus got even the tone of what he said from God (Cp. Lenski).

12:50. "His commandment is life in the Age." The "commandment" is not in and of itself life, but the relationship between the commandment and life is so intrinsic that the commandment is said to be "life." This is the figure of speech Metonymy, whereby the commandment, the thing itself, is substituted by metonymy for obeying the commandment, which is what produces the effect of having everlasting life.

13:18. Quoted from Ps. 41:9.

"let the scripture be fulfilled." Judas was not fatalistically damned to fulfill this passage (see also commentary on John 17:12, "resulting in the scripture being fulfilled"). Rather than a purpose clause, "so that the scripture might be fulfilled," the phrase should be understood as a command clause. (For more on command clauses, see entries on John 9:3, "let the works of God be revealed in him," and John 15:25, "but let the word... be fulfilled"). The HCSB translates this phrase as a command, but uses the word "must." See comments on John 15:25 for why "let" is a better translation of the command clause. See also Nigel Turner, *Grammatical Insights into the New Testament*, p. 147-48 as cited in Boyd, *God at War*, p. 379.

13:24. "nods" The Greek is clear, and means to signal with a nod of the head. "...to give a nod; to signify by a nod... followed by an infinitive of what one wishes to be done, John 13:24; Acts 24:10. (From Homer down; the Septuagint Prov. 4:25) (Thayer). Peter was not close enough to John to whisper, and if he spoke it loudly, Jesus would have heard also. The intimate connection between Peter and John shows clearly here. Peter simply nods his head and John knows what he should do.

13:26. The word "morsel," used in many versions, in today's English communicates a very good tasting bite of something. The Greek does not necessarily mean that the piece tasted good, just that it was a small piece. So we used "piece."

13:27. Luke 22:3 tells us the Adversary entered in Judas earlier, and he had gone to the priests to betray Jesus, thus starting the process of betrayal, which is why Jesus says "What you are doing..." The verb "do" is a "conative present" (Roberson, *Grammar*,

p.880; Lenski) thus it means “are doing.” The words usually translated “do quickly” are actually “do more quickly.” Lenski writes, “The adverb *tachion* is comparative and does not mean “quickly” (our versions) but “more quickly.” Robertson writes, “Sometimes the comparative form is used absolutely...that is because the context makes the point perfectly clear. “...(Jo. 13:27) may mean more quickly than Judas would have done [betrayed Christ] it but for the exposure” (Robertson, *Grammar*, p. 664).

13:31. “now is the Son of Man glorified.” Jesus was not yet literally glorified when this was spoken, yet it is said in the present tense. This is the idiom of the prophetic present, when something certain to happen (usually in the immediate future) is said as though it were already happening. For more on the prophetic present, see Luke 3:9 commentary, “is cut down.”

13:32. Hyperbolic use of “immediately.” It would be very soon.

13:38. Jesus can make this statement, knowing that God would back him up. God backed up Joshua when the sun stood still (Josh. 10:14), and He backed up Samuel when he called upon Yahweh (1 Sam. 12:17). Our relationship with God and Jesus is one of fellow-laborers. We can make requests of God, and He can answer them (we should be praying, asking, all the time). Jesus could make this statement, knowing that God would honor it. It is not hard for God to make a rooster crow, or keep a rooster from crowing.

13:34. “you also are to love one another.” The Greek is a *hina* + subjunctive command clause. For an explanation of this construction, see John 9:3 entry, “let the works of God be revealed in him.”

14:2. The word translated “mansions” (KJV), or “rooms” (NIV) is translated “dwelling places” in the NASB and is a place to live or dwell. In God’s “house” (i.e., kingdom) are many places to live.

14:10, 11. “I am in the Father, and the Father in me.” See John 10:38 commentary “the Father is united with me, and I am united with the Father.”

14:11. “Keep on believing...keep believing.” The Greek is *pisteuō* (#4100 πιστεύω) in the imperative present active. Robertson notes that this stresses, especially in this verb, the continuance of the faith (*Grammar*). Jesus was not asking for short lived belief, but continued belief in what he was saying and teaching. It is important to note that Jesus says “or else keep believing me for the very works sake.” In other words, if you cannot believe in me (what I am saying) on its own, believe what I am saying based on the works that I do. The works are a witness to the teaching, and vice versa. Many people today want to “just do good works,” if that were enough. But that does not point to right doctrine, only to the kind heart of a good person. We must, like Jesus, let our good works testify to what we are saying.

14:12. “he who believes on me.” That means, the one who believes in the person of Jesus, that he is who he says he is.

“he will do also.” The Greek is *poieō* (#4160 ποιέω) in the indicative future, so there is no question or argument: the one who is believing in Jesus will do what he did.

“because I go to my father.” Jesus would not be on earth, so if good works are going to be done, believers must do them. Furthermore, Jesus knew that the gift of holy spirit would be poured out (Joel 2). Jesus did not know about the Christian Church at that time (the Sacred Secret), and that holy spirit would be poured out as it was on the day of Pentecost, but he did know that holy spirit would be poured out after he was raised.

14:18. “I am coming to you.” Cp. NRSV; Lenski.

14:19. “will see... will see.” The Greek text has the verb for “see” in the present tense, so literally it reads, “Yet a little while and the world sees me no more, but you see me.” This is a clear example of the figure of speech *heterosis* of tense (Cp. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*). In the Greek the present is used in place of the future.

14:22. “how is it that.” An alternate translation could be, “what happened that?” (Cp. NASB; NET; NAB; NJB).

15:2. Some argue that “to take away” here means “to lift up.” Although that could be the case grammatically, it does not fit contextually. Verse 6 makes it clear that if a person does not bear fruit, he is cast into the fire. This parable parallels the parable of the servants in the talents. If a servant does not bear fruit with his talents and buries it in the ground, he is wicked and lazy, and is thrown out into the darkness.

15:7. “Wish.” The Greek means want, wish, desire.

15:19. “befriend you.” The Greek is *phileō* (#5368 φιλέω). Although most versions say “love,” doing so confuses *agape* love (“love” in the REV) with *phileō* love. *Phileō* love has an attachment, and it the attachment between good friends. The world “befriends” those who are of the world. For a more complete understanding of *phileō*, see the note on John 21:15.

15:22. This is a good example of how important it is to get the scope of Scripture and not “proof-text” to make a point. Jesus is not speaking of sin in general, as if the religious leaders would have had no sin at all unless Jesus had spoken to them. Rather he is speaking in the context of his life, and particularly being the last supper, his death, and saying that the sin of not believing and not obeying Jesus would now be reckoned to them, because they heard him, but turned away.

15:25. Quoted from Ps. 69:4.

“but let the word... be fulfilled.” We feel this is a command clause rather than a purpose clause (see John 9:3 entry, “let the works of God be revealed in him”). In the Greek there is no phrase “they have done this” which must be supplied for it to read as a purpose clause: e.g., “But *they have done this* to fulfill the word that is written in their Law” (NASB). Rather than being an ellipsis, we feel the verse is easier read as a command clause. Why would these men hate *with the purpose* of fulfilling Old Testament prophecy? On the other hand, if it is God who instigates the purpose behind their hatred of the Messiah, sticky issues of freewill arise. The most commonsensical reading—and most grammatically fluent—is that Christ was making a simply statement in reaction to the men’s hatred, since they deem to hate the Messiah, “let the word that is written in their law be fulfilled, ‘they have hated me without a cause.’”

Like our translation, the ESV renders the phrase as a 3rd person command but uses the word “must”: “The word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled.” This is a possible rendering of the command, just as “let the word be fulfilled” is possible. Compare the translation of *hina* + subjunctive command in Eph. 5:33: “Let the wife see that she respects her husband” (ESV) and “the wife must respect her husband” (NIV). We feel to best gain the sense of a command the “let” translation is better, for in English the word “must” could be misunderstood to be implying some metaphysical necessity for fulfillment, which is not being communicated by the Greek grammar of the command clause. See also entry on John 13:18, “let the scripture be fulfilled.”

15:27. The verb “to testify” is in a form that can be either indicative (you *will* testify,” picking up “will” from the context), or imperative (“you must testify,” picking up “must”

from the imperative form of the verb). The key to which is in the sentence itself. The word “because” dictates the imperative. Anyone could testify of Christ, whether they had been around since the beginning of his ministry or not. However, these apostles had been given much, and now much was required. “Because” they had been with Jesus since the beginning, they must now testify of him (or suffer severe consequences). This verse is also good evidence that the helper, holy spirit, will be poured out during the tribulation.

16:11. This is the prophetic perfect, when something in the future is so certain it is spoken of in the past tense (see note on “seated,” in Ephesians 2:6). Lenski writes, “Jesus speaks of the devil’s final judgment as having already been effected because his own death and resurrection, which pronounced the final judgment on the devil, are already at hand, are as certain as though they had already been completed.” See Appendix E in Schoenheit, *The Christian’s Hope*.

16:14. “it will take from what is mine, and will declare *it* to you.” This is describing a function of the gift of holy spirit, Christ proclaims that it will deliver messages to his disciples by means of taking them from him and declaring the messages to his disciples. The words “from what is mine” in the Greek is *ek tou emou*, “out from the thing of me.” It is the partitive use of the preposition *ek* (#1537 ἐκ), where the spirit takes a part of the things (messages) of Christ, and then heralds, *anagello* (#312 ἀναγγέλλω), it to the disciples. By using the phrasing, “what is mine,” Jesus naturally raises the question, “Do not these messages ultimately come from God, and not you, so why do you say, ‘what is mine?’” Jesus anticipates this concern and explains in verse fifteen: “All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you” (NIV).

16:21. “Sorrow.” The word means sorrow, grief, or pain. Here “sorrow” is dictated by verse 22. Christ is comparing the childbirth to what was about to happen to him. “The woman” is Israel, in conjunction with “in that day” v. 23, indicates the woman, Israel, in the tribulation. See Companion Bible verse.

“a man.” Biblical custom. Not just “a child.” This was the culture. The birth of a baby boy would bring joy. The birth of a girl would not. See Mackie, p. 92 and 93.

16:24. “keep asking.” The verb for “ask” in this verse is in the present tense—it is what is known as a broadband present, or continuous present (Cp. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, pg. 519-25). This form indicates a continual action that takes place over a long time, rather than a one-time-event. Williams translates the phrase, “But now you must keep on asking.” We are not to just ask once for the things we seek from God, but to repeatedly ask, as the widow asked the unjust judge (Luke 18:1-8). Wallace explains the present tense in Matthew 7:7 this way: “The force of the present imperatives is ‘ask repeatedly, over and over again...seek repeatedly... knock continuously, over and over again’” (Wallace, *Exegetical Syntax*, 521). Cp. Matt. 7:7, Luke 11:9, and commentary on 1 John 3:22.

16:27. “treats you as friends...befriended me.” The two Greek verbs are both forms of *phileō* (#5368 φιλέω). Although most versions say “loves...loved,” doing so confuses *agape* love (“love” in the REV) with *phileō* love. *Phileō* love has an attachment, and it the attachment between good friends. For a more complete understanding of *phileō*, see the note on John 21:15.

16:30. “Question you.” The Greek verb *erōtaō* (#2065 ἐρωτάω), translated elsewhere “to ask,” can mean to ask a question, or to ask a request. In this context Christ has no need for anyone to ask him questions, because he is speaking plainly, i.e., not in parables.

16:33. “I have overcome the world.” This is the prophetic perfect idiom, when something that will happen in the future is spoken of as already being accomplished (see note on “seated,” in Ephesians 2:6).

17:3. “that they know you,” not “that they may know you.” (See Lenski; Robertson, *Grammar*, p. 992).

17:12. “son of destruction.” This is a literal translation of the Greek, *huios tēs apōleias*, composed of the word for “son” (#5207 υἱός) and “destruction” (#684 ἀπώλεια) in the genitive case. It is the genitive of character—he is described as a son characterized by destruction, in this case, his destructive behavior. Judas’ character came first, then the consequences of his character; first he was a son of destruction, then accordingly he went to destruction. In other words, this title does not describe how he was *first* to be destroyed and was thus a “son of destruction” but that he was a son of destruction and thus to be destroyed (Cp. Lenski). Many versions add “the one doomed” (NIV) or “the one destined” (NRSV; NET; NJB), but these words are not in the Greek text.

It was a common Semitic idiom to refer to an aspect of one’s character by referring to him as the “son of” some quality. Thus we have “son of eighty years” means someone eighty years old (Ex. 7:7); “son of stripes” is someone deserving to be beaten (Deut. 25:2); “sons of rebellion” (Num. 17:10); “sons of the army” are soldiers (2 Chron. 25:13); “sons of the pledges” are hostages (2 Kings 14:14); “sons of death” are those who are worthy of death or are going to die (Psalm 79:11); “son of gehenna” (Matt. 23:15); “son of destruction” (2 Thess. 2:3); “son of encouragement” (Acts 4:36); “son of the devil” (Acts 13:10); this custom even applies to animals: “son of the herd” (Gen. 18:7), and objects: “sons of the flame” for sparks (Job 5:7). The exact meaning of the idiom “son of X” has to be determined from the context, as the examples above show.

“resulting in the Scripture being fulfilled.” This phrase should not be translated as a purpose clause, as most translations do: “so that the scripture would be fulfilled.” This would have the consequence of making Judas intentionally lost for the purpose of fulfilling a prophecy about him. But the text in no way requires such a reading. In the Greek it is a *hina* + subjunctive clause, which could be read to indicate a purpose or simply the result with no intention. Here it would be a result clause; Judas of his own free will was lost, resulting in the scripture being fulfilled, his being lost was not for the purpose of fulfilling scripture. For explanation of purpose and result clauses, see Matthew 2:15 entry, “resulting in... what was spoken being fulfilled.” For more on Judas see entry on John 13:18, “let the scripture be fulfilled.”

17:21. “in me, and I in you.” See John 10:38 commentary “the Father is united with me, and I am united with the Father.”

18:3. “Roman cohort.” Not necessarily the traditional 1/10 of a legion, or 600 men. At this time period, the word was sometimes used of a representative number of a cohort. Thus it could have been part of the cohort, but they were Roman soldiers, not just the guard of the High Priest. They were under the command of their “chiliarch”—translated as “military commander”—see verse 12. They would have come from the Antonia fortress. To get the Roman soldiers, the priests would have gone to Pilate, or even just to the chiliarch himself in Antonia under pretence of stopping a fomenting revolution. Some

commentators think the entire group is Jewish, but this is not likely for a number of reasons. First, the vocabulary, especially chiliach, is specific to the Roman army. Second, the cohort and the Temple police are mentioned as separate groups. If they were all Temple police, saying it once would have been enough. Third, the Temple police had already been sent to arrest Jesus once, and failed (John 7:45). The priests would take no chance this time, especially after they paid all that money to Judas to set the arrest up. After the mobs had proclaimed him the Messiah (a great crowd yelled “Hosanna” (Save!), and called him the King of Israel; John 12:12 and 13), it would not have been difficult to persuade the Romans to arrest Jesus to keep a riot from occurring.

“*Temple police.*” The Greek word *huperetai* originally referred to the “under-rowers” in a galley, then it was generalized to mean any servant or underling under a superior. Thus it has a broad usage, and one that may or may not be demeaning, depending on the context. It applies to servants in different capacities: prison guard (Matt. 5:25), minister of Christ (Luke 1:2; 1 Cor. 4:1); Synagogue attendant (Luke 4:20), etc. Here it applies to a police force of sorts that was dedicated to keeping the peace in the Temple, so “Temple” is supplied from the context, and put in italics. See Vincent; Robertson, *Word Pictures*; Lenski.

18:9. “so that the word that he spoke was fulfilled.” The Greek is a *hina* + subjunctive purpose-result clause (see Matt. 2:15 entry, “resulting in...what was spoken being fulfilled”). Jesus said “let the men go” with the *intention* of fulfilling his words in John 17:12, and it also *resulted* in them being fulfilled.

18:11. The *ou me* has been left as a simple “not.”

18:12. “commander.” The Greek word *chiliarchos* (#5506 χιλίαρχος) designates a specific rank, namely, a “chiliarch,” which is the rank of a commander of a cohort; it is equivalent to a Roman tribune. We might say, the platoon and the sergeant. Thus the Romans not only sent soldiers, but the commander came along also.

18:17. “slave-girl.” In this context, the most likely translation of *paidiske* (# 3814 παιδίσκη, the feminine of *paidiskos*, a young boy or slave; a diminutive of *παῖς*. Thayer). She could have been a “servant-girl” or a “slave-girl,” but given the wealth and social status of the family, slave-girl is more probable.

1. *a young girl, damsel* (Xenophon, Menander, Polybius, Plutarch, Lucian; the Septuagint Ruth 4:12).

2. *a maid-servant, a young female slave*; cf. German *Mädchen* (our *maid*) for a young female-servant (Herodotus 1, 93; Lysias, Demosthenes, others): Luke 12:45; Acts 16:16; opposed to ἡ ἐλευθέρᾳ, Gal. 4:22f,30f; specifically, of the maid-servant who had charge of the door: Matt. 26:69; Mark 14:66,69; Luke 22:56; Acts 12:13; ἡ παιδίσκη ἡ θυρωρός, John 18:17; (also in the Septuagint of a female *slave*, often for *הַמַּלְאָכָה*, *הַפְּשָׁעָה*). Cf. Lob. ad Phryn., p. 239. (Synonym: see *παῖς*, at the end.)*

18:18. “servants and Temple guard.” The Greek words are both general. *Douloi* is slaves or servants, and *huperetai* is also servants or underlings. So what are the specifics of these words? The context would indicate the servants and the Temple guards.

18:32. “with the result that.” In the Greek a *hina* + subjunctive result clause. See Matthew 2:15 entry, “resulting in...what was spoken being fulfilled.”

18:37. “You speak *correctly*.” See Matthew 27:11 note on “*It is as you say.*”

In verse 36 and 37 Pilate discovers that, although Jesus is claiming to be some kind of king over something with which he is unfamiliar, the Jews blanket accusation that

Jesus was making himself a king in a sense that would be threatening to Caesar was false. Thus he reports in verse 38 that he finds no cause for death in Jesus.

19:6. “reason for a charge” The Greek is *aitia* (#156 αἰτία), and means that which is responsible for a condition, *cause, reason*; the actual state of affairs, *case, circumstance, relationship*; 3 a basis for legal action, charge, *ground for complaint*; accusation (BDAG). In this verse, Pilate was telling the Jews he found no reason for a charge against Jesus.

19:20. “the place (*topos*) of the city.” The word “place” was a designation of the Temple, see note on *topos* at Matt. 24:15.

19:24. Quoted from Ps. 22:18.

“so that.” In the Greek a *hina* + subjunctive purpose-result, or simply result clause. See Matthew 2:15 entry, “resulting in...what was spoken being fulfilled.” God could have worked in these men—in a way that did not inhibit their free will—to want to draw lots, or it could just be a result clause. The rendering “so that,” is an ambiguous translation in that it could be read as either purpose or result.

“so the soldiers did these things.” The context demands that this phrase goes with verse 24, not verse 25. Parting with the ASV, NASB, and NRSV, we followed the verse pattern of the Nestle-Aland Greek text.

19:28. “in order to.” The Scripture that was fulfilled was Psalm 69:21: “for my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink.” In the Greek a *hina* + subjunctive purpose clause. See Matthew 2:15 entry, “resulting in...what was spoken being fulfilled.” By this time Jesus’ mouth would have been utterly dry, not having had any water for over 24 hours. As scripture says of the suffering Messiah, “my mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death” (Psalm 22:15, NRSV). Now seeing that all things were completed, he had only to die. But in a last act of grace towards those standing near, he desired to quote Psalm 22 to the onlookers, that they may see he is clearly fulfilling scripture. “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me,” quotes Jesus (Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34), but some of those standing by misheard “Eli, Eli” to be a call for “Elias,” due to the difficulty Jesus would have had in speaking. Therefore, Jesus says, “I am thirsty,” not as a statement of fact, but “in order to fulfill the scriptures,” and also for the purpose of wetting his mouth to allow for annunciation. Having received the sour wine and feeling the unconsciousness of death creeping on, Jesus exclaims, “It is finished” (John 19:30), which the other gospels only record as a “loud cry” (Matt. 27:50; Mark. 15:37). Luke 23:46 gives the further information that during this time he also said, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit” (from Psalm 31:5).

19:36. Quoted from Exod. 12:46; Num. 9:12; Ps. 34:20.

“so that.” In the Greek a *hina* + subjunctive purpose-result, or simply result clause. See Matthew 2:15 entry, “resulting in...what was spoken being fulfilled.” God could have brought it about that none of messiah’s bones were broken, or it could just be a result clause. The rendering “so that,” is an ambiguous translation in that it could be read as either purpose or result.

19:37. Quoted from Zech. 12:10.

19:40. The “they” in this verse is not Joseph and Nicodemus, but Nicodemus and his servants, who were needed to carry all the spices and to help wrap the body. Joseph was gone when Nicodemus came. The women watched Joseph, and saw that he buried Jesus

without spices (Luke 23:53ff), which is why they went and bought them over the Passover holiday.

20:2. “was a friend.” The Greek is *phileo* (#5368 φιλέω). It is hard to translate the verb *phileo* in this context and keep the English as a verb. If we say, “loved,” as most versions do, we lose the meaning of *phileo* here, and confuse it with agape love. We could say that Jesus was “friendly” or the disciple whom Jesus was “fond of,” but these seem to weak. We meet “friendly” people all the time, but they are not “friends.” It seems that changing the verb “befriended” to the phrase, “was a friend,” is the best way to handle this. For a more complete understanding of *phileo*, see the note on John 21:15.

20:7. “Handkerchief.” The Greek word is *soudarion* (#4676 σουδαριον), a widely used Latin loan-word. The Latin word is *sudarium*, from the Latin root *sudor*, “sweat” (Thayer). As well as being used as a loan-word in Greek, the Romans also introduced it into Palestine where it was picked up and used by the Jews, even appearing in the Mishna and Talmud (*Smith’s Bible Dictionary*; “handkerchief;” BDAG). A *soudarion*, as the name implies, was usually our equivalent to a handkerchief or sweat cloth, and was used for wiping sweat from the body and cleaning the nose. Due to the heat in Palestine, a word that uniquely described a piece of cloth to wipe sweat from the body was readily assimilated into the culture. Besides being used for wiping sweat, it was also useful for wrapping things (Luke 19:20 records a man hiding money in one, but the rabbinical writings show that practice was considered unsafe; ISBE “napkin”). Furthermore, because it was a face cloth, was used to cover the face of a dead body, something apparent from the record of Lazarus (John 11:44), and Jesus (John 20:7).

The facecloth was folded, or rolled up (the Greek word can mean either), apart from the rest of the grave wrappings, but the Bible does not explain why. Two plausible theories have been set forth: the first is that it shows the orderliness of the situation, that things were not done haphazardly or in haste, but that, just as with the rest of God’s creation, things are done in an orderly way. The second is that it was folded as further proof that the body was not stolen. If Thieves had indeed stolen the body, they likely would have stolen the small face cloth too, but even if they did not want to steal it too, they certainly would not have taken the time to fold it up and set it aside.

In recent years a teaching has arisen in Christianity that the “napkin” (KJV) covering the face of Jesus’ dead body was folded by itself as an indication that Jesus Christ would come back. The teaching goes like this: in biblical times if a master was eating at the table and got up to leave, if he was done eating, he would just throw the napkin down in a heap and the servants knew he was completely finished. If, however, the master folded the napkin and left, the servants knew not to clear the table, because he was coming back. So, it is concluded, Jesus carefully folded the napkin to show us he was coming back. Although that rendition seems plausible, there are a number of problems with it. The first and foremost is that there is absolutely no evidence from ancient times that it is true. There is no ancient evidence that there was any such custom associated with eating. Second, people in the East ate with their hands, and after eating they cleansed them by washing in water, not by using a “napkin” (cp. James Freeman, *Manners and Customs of the Bible*, #329). Third, the word “napkin” is used in the KJV, and from that people get the idea of our table napkin. But as we have seen, the people of the East did not use “table napkins,” and the Greek word used in the verse does not mean “table napkin.” This whole new teaching is presented as if it happened in today’s culture.

Even a wealthy man in the ancient Near East would not sit in a chair at a table, use silverware, and wipe his hands with a napkin. He would sit or recline on the floor or a low pillow and eat with his hands. When he was ready to leave the table for any reason, a servant would clean his hands by washing them in water.

This new “urban legend” about Jesus shows what can happen when a word in the Bible is mistranslated in such a way that the meaning chosen in English (in this case, “napkin”), does not accurately represent the meaning of the word in the biblical culture.

20:8. “believed.” Believed what? Not that Jesus was raised, because the next verse says they did not know about that, and they went back home and hid behind closed doors and did not believe the women and were scared when Jesus did show up. They believed the body had been taken, which, since the Romans had posted a guard, would have seemed impossible.

20:9. “out from among the dead.” See Romans 4:24. Wuest: “out from among those who are dead.”

20:28. See note on John 10:33.

20:31. “name.” See 1 John 3:23 note “on the name of his son Jesus Christ.”

21:14. “out from among the dead.” See Romans 4:24. Wuest: “out from among the dead.”

21:15. “do you love me more than these?” Jesus was asking Peter if he loved Jesus more than he loved fishing. Jesus was asking Peter if he would leave the security of his fishing trade to go into ministry full time. Some people think that Jesus was asking Peter if he loved Jesus more than the other disciples. That is not the case. First, that is the kind of question that fosters division between people. It leads to a proud, braggart position of the heart and sometimes then even gets manifested among the people. Jesus never fostered division among the apostles. Second, the extent that someone loves the Lord is a matter of the heart. We cannot look at other Christians and tell whether we love Jesus more than they do. Jesus knew this, and would never ask Peter to evaluate the love that the other apostles had for him. Third, the context makes it clear what Jesus was asking Peter to do: give up fishing and take on full time ministry, because three times Jesus asked Peter to feed his sheep, i.e., the people.

“I am your friend.” This is the best rendition of the Greek we could think of to keep the meaning. To understand this verse, and the ones that follow, it is important to understand the difference between *agapao* love and *phileo* love.

There are four Greek words for love that are important for Christians to understand. They are *agape*, *philos*, *storge*, and *eros*. Three of them appear in the Bible. If we going to understand the Bible and the biblical world, it is important that we understand what these four words mean and how they differ.

The Greek word that refers to the love of God is *agape* (the verb form is *agapao* [#25 ἀγαπάω], the noun form is *agape* [#26 ἀγάπη]). *Agape* love is the very nature of God, for God is love (1 John 4:7-12, 16b). The big key to understanding *agape* is to realize that it can be known from the action it prompts. In fact, we sometimes speak of the “action model” of *agape* love. People today are accustomed to thinking of love as a feeling, but that is not necessarily the case with *agape* love. *Agape* is love because of what it *does*, not because of how it *feels*.

God so “loved” (*agape*) that He gave His Son. It did not feel good to God to do that, but it was the loving thing to do. Christ so loved (*agape*) that he gave his life. He did

not want to die, but he loved, so he did what God required. A mother who loves a sick baby will stay up all night long caring for it, which is not something she wants to do, but is a true act of *agape* love. *Agape* love is not simply an impulse generated from feelings. Rather, *agape* love is an exercise of the will, a deliberate choice. This is why God can command us to love our enemies (Matt. 5:44; Exod. 23:1-5). He is not commanding us to “have a good feeling” for our enemies, but to act in a loving way toward them. *Agape* love is related to obedience and commitment, and not necessarily feeling and emotion. “Loving” someone is to obey God on another’s behalf, seeking his or her long-term blessing and profit.

The way to know that we love (*agape*) God is that we keep His commandments. Jesus said, “Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me (John 14:21a). There are Christians who say they love God, but their lifestyle is contrary to the will of God. These people mistake their feeling of affection for God for true *agape* love. Jesus made this clear: “He who does not love me will not obey my teaching” (John 14:24a). Love is the distinctive character of the Christian life in relation to other Christians and to all humanity. The “loving” thing to do may not always be easy, and true love is not “mushy sentimentalism.” There is often a cost to genuine love. For example, asking someone to leave your Christian fellowship because he persists in flagrant sin is loving, but never easy (1 Cor. 5:1-5). That is not to say the *agape* love cannot have feelings attached to it, and the ideal situation occurs when the loving thing to do also is what we want to do. Christians are to be known for their love to one another (John 13:35).

Phileo, which is translated as “love” in many English versions, is different from *agapao* love (*philos* is the noun from (#5384 φίλος), and *phileo*, (#5368 φιλέω) is the verb form of the root word. *Phileo* means “to have a special interest in someone or something, frequently with focus on close association; have affection for, like, consider someone a friend” (William Arndt and F. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon*). It would probably be helpful if *phileo* were never translated “love” in the New Testament, because it refers to a strong liking or a strong friendship. Of course, we see how *phileo* gets translated “love,” because in modern culture we say we “love” things that we strongly like: “I love ice cream” or “I love my car.” The word *phileo* implies a strong emotional connection, and thus is used of the deep friendship, between friends, and is used of the way people “really like” things, or get mentally attached to them. Thus, you can *agape* your enemies, but you cannot *phileo* them.

The difference between *agape* and *phileo* becomes very important in John 21, but unfortunately it is obscured in most English translations. After being raised from the dead, Jesus met Peter. Here is the short version of what they said to each other.

Jesus: Simon...do you love (*agape*) me more than these [fish?].

Peter: Yes, Lord; you know that I love (*phileo*) you.

Jesus: Simon...do you love (*agape*) me?

Peter: Yes, Lord, you know that I love (*phileo*) you.

Jesus: Simon...do you love (*phileo*) me?

Peter: [Grieved] “Lord, you know that I love (*phileo*) you.”

Why did Jesus use *agape* and Peter use *phileo*? Jesus was asking Peter if he loved him with the love of God, a love that may require sacrifice. After all, Jesus had just gone through something he did not want to do but did anyway because of his *agape* love. In

contrast, Peter avoided possible torture by denying Jesus. Thus, Jesus twice asked Peter, “Do you *agape* me? In other words, “Are you willing to do things for my sake that you do not want to do?” Peter, on the other hand, still felt the sting of having denied Jesus, and was hopeful that their friendship was intact. Peter wondered if Jesus held Peter’s denial against him? Would Jesus still treat Peter as a close friend? Peter was not sure where he stood with Jesus, so he was trying to let Jesus know that he was still a true friend, and had *phileo* love for Jesus.

The third time Jesus spoke to Peter, he came to Peter’s level and asked if Peter were indeed a true friend (*phileo*), which grieved Peter. Nevertheless, it was important, because Jesus knew what Peter did not know—that Jesus would ascend into heaven, and Peter and the others would be left to carry out his work on earth, which would require that they do things they did not want to, even, it turned out, die as a martyr.

The third Greek word for “love,” which refers to sexual love or passionate love is *eros*, and we get English words such as “erotic.” When Eros was used as a proper noun, it referred to the Greek god of love. The Greek word *eros* does not appear in the biblical text, so we will only just mention it here, but it has had such an impact on English and our view of sexual love that it is important to mention.

The fourth Greek word we need to understand is *storge*, which is the love and affection that naturally occurs between parents and children, can exist between siblings, and exists between husbands and wives in a good marriage. It occurs in Romans 12:10, and for more on *storge* see the note on that verse.

If one is going to have a wonderful Christian life, obedient to the voice of God and have rich fellowship with other Christians, he or she will need to exercise all three kinds of love that are in the Bible. We need *agape* love because some of the things that God requires of us are not fun or easy, but need to be done. We need to have *phileo* love because we need true friends to stand with us, people who are emotionally connected to us and with whom we can share our deepest thoughts and feelings. Lastly, we Christians need to have *storge* love between us, a deep family affection that comforts us and helps us feel connected to all our spiritual family.

21:16. “love...I am your friend.” See note on John 21:15.

21:17. “are you my friend...are you my friend...I am your friend.” See the note on John 21:15.

21:22. Jesus did not reveal the Sacred Secret. He still spoke as if his return was immanent.