

# John

## 1

**Summary:** *John 1 opens with one of the most theologically dense passages in the New Testament: the Prologue (1:1-18), which identifies Jesus as the eternal Word (logos) who was with God, was God, and became flesh to dwell among humanity. The chapter then introduces John the Baptist as a witness to the light, narrates the Baptist's testimony before the priests and Levites, and concludes with the calling of the first disciples — Andrew, Simon Peter, Philip, and Nathanael — as they begin to recognize Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God, and the King of Israel.*

**What Makes This Remarkable:** *The Prologue draws on both Jewish Wisdom tradition (Proverbs 8, Sirach 24) and Greek philosophical vocabulary to present Jesus as the pre-existent, creative, and revelatory Word of God. The Greek logos carried immense weight in both traditions — for Jews, the word of God was the agent of creation (Genesis 1, Psalm 33:6); for Greeks, logos was the rational principle ordering the universe. John's genius is to take this loaded term and declare that it 'became flesh' — a claim that would have shocked both audiences. The 'I am' language that will dominate the Gospel appears implicitly in the Baptist's self-identification as 'not the Christ' and his pointing to 'one standing among you whom you do not know.'*

**Translation Friction:** *The relationship between the Prologue's logos theology and the narrative that follows requires careful handling. We render logos as 'Word' (capitalized) to preserve its theological weight as a title for Christ. The Baptist's denial sequence (1:19-28) requires attention to the political and religious expectations surrounding messianic figures. Nathanael's skepticism about Nazareth (1:46) reflects a real geographical prejudice in first-century Judaism. The title 'Son of Man' in verse 51 draws on Daniel 7:13 and will require expanded treatment.*

**Connections:** *The Prologue connects to Genesis 1:1 ('In the beginning'), Proverbs 8:22-31 (Wisdom as God's companion in creation), and Isaiah 40:3 (the voice in the wilderness). The 'Lamb of God' title (1:29, 36) connects to the Passover lamb of Exodus 12 and the suffering servant of Isaiah 53. Jacob's ladder (Genesis 28:12) is explicitly referenced in 1:51. The entire chapter establishes the identity claims that the rest of the Gospel will develop through signs and discourse.*

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things came into being through him, and apart from him not one thing came into being that has come into being. <sup>4</sup>In him was life, and the life was the light of humanity. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. <sup>6</sup>There

e came a man sent from God; his name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness, to testify about the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light, but he came to testify about the light. <sup>9</sup>The true light, which gives light to every person, was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not recognize him. <sup>11</sup>He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. <sup>12</sup>But to all who received him — to those who believe in his name — he gave the right to become children of God, <sup>13</sup>Which were brought into the world, not of lifeblood, nor of the will of the physical nature, nor of the will of man, but of God. <sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory — glory as of the only Son from the Father — full of grace and truth. <sup>15</sup>John testified about him and cried out, saying, "This is the one of whom I said, 'The one coming after me has surpassed me, because he existed before me.'" <sup>16</sup>For from his fullness we have all received grace upon grace. <sup>17</sup>For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>No one has ever seen God. The only God, who is at the Father's side — he has made him known. <sup>19</sup>This is John's testimony, when the Jewish leaders sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" <sup>20</sup>He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." <sup>21</sup>They asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No." <sup>22</sup>So they said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" <sup>23</sup>He said, "I am 'a voice crying out in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said. <sup>24</sup>Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. <sup>25</sup>They questioned him, "Then why are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" <sup>26</sup>John answered them, "I baptize with water, but among you stands one whom you do not know — <sup>27</sup>He it is, who coming following me is preferred prior to me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. <sup>28</sup>These things took place in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing. <sup>29</sup>The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look — the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" <sup>30</sup>This is the one about whom I said, 'A man is coming after me who has surpassed me, because he existed before me.' <sup>31</sup>I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was so that he might be revealed to Israel." <sup>32</sup>And John testified, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. <sup>33</sup>I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The one on whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining — he is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' <sup>34</sup>And I have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God." <sup>35</sup>The next day John was standing again with two of his disciples, <sup>36</sup>Looking upon Jesus as he walked, he says, take notice the Lamb of God! <sup>37</sup>The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. <sup>38</sup>Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" <sup>39</sup>He said to them, "Come and you will see." So they came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about the tenth hour. <sup>40</sup>Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard John and followed Jesus. <sup>41</sup>He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated Christ). <sup>42</sup>He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter). <sup>43</sup>The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." <sup>44</sup>Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. <sup>45</sup>Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and the prophets wrote about as well — Jesus son of Joseph, from Nazareth." <sup>46</sup>Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." <sup>47</sup>Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, "Look — a true Israelite, in whom there is no deceit!" <sup>48</sup>Nathanael said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, while you were under the fig tree, I saw you." <sup>49</sup>Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" <sup>50</sup>Jesus answered him, "Do you believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these." <sup>51</sup>And he said to him, "Truly, truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

## TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The phrase *en arche* ('in the beginning') deliberately echoes the opening of Genesis (*bereshit* in Hebrew, *en arche* in the Septuagint). The imperfect verb *en* ('was') denotes continuous past existence, not a point of origin — the Word already existed when the beginning occurred.

1. The preposition *pros* ('with') in 'the Word was with God' suggests not merely proximity but relational orientation — face-to-face communion. The Word was directed toward God, in dynamic relationship.
1. In the final clause, 'God' (*theos*) appears without the article, which in Greek grammar indicates qualitative force — the Word shared the nature and essence of God. This is distinct from saying 'the Word was the God' (which would conflate the persons) or 'the Word was a god' (which would diminish the claim). The rendering 'the Word was God' preserves the theological precision of the Greek.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 1:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The pronoun *houtos* ('this one, he') personalizes the *logos* — no longer 'it' but 'he.' This verse reaffirms what verse 1 stated, functioning as a summary transition before the creation theme of verse 3. The repetition is characteristic of John's literary style, where key ideas are restated with slight variation for emphasis.
3. The verb *egeneto* ('came into being') contrasts with the *en* ('was') of verses 1-2. The Word 'was' (eternal existence); all things 'came into being' (originated existence) through him. The preposition *dia* ('through') identifies the Word as the agent of creation, echoing Proverbs 8:30 and Colossians 1:16.
3. The punctuation of the final phrase *ho gegonen* ('that has come into being') is disputed. The SBLGNT places it with verse 3 as the conclusion of the creation statement. Some manuscripts and church fathers attach it to verse 4: 'What has come into being in him was life.' We follow the SBLGNT punctuation.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Proverbs 8:30 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The Greek *zoe* ('life') in John always carries theological weight beyond mere biological existence — it points toward the 'eternal life' (*zoe aionios*) that becomes a central theme of the Gospel. The chain of identification — Word, life, light — establishes the conceptual framework for the entire book. 'Of humanity' renders *ton anthropon* more inclusively than the KJV's 'of men,' reflecting the universal scope of the claim.
5. The verb *katelaben* (from *katalambano*) carries a double meaning: 'to comprehend/understand' (as the KJV renders it) and 'to seize/overcome/extinguish.' Both senses are likely intended — the darkness neither understood the light nor was able to overpower it. We render 'overcome' as the primary sense, since the light-versus-darkness imagery suggests conflict rather than mere cognition.
5. The present tense *phainei* ('shines') amid past-tense narration may indicate that the light's shining is an ongoing reality, not merely a past event.
6. The verb *egeneto* ('there came, there appeared') contrasts with the *en* ('was') used of the Word in verses 1-2. John the Baptist 'came into being' — he is a creature, not the eternal Word. The participle *apestalmenos* ('sent') is from *apostello*, the root of 'apostle,' emphasizing John's divinely commissioned role.
7. The word *martyria* ('witness, testimony') and its verb *martyreo* ('to testify') appear prominently throughout John's Gospel. The Baptist's role is defined entirely in terms of witness — he is not the light but the one who points to it. The purpose clause 'so that all might believe' establishes that faith (*pistis/pisteuo*) is the intended response to testimony, a theme John develops throughout.
8. The emphatic *ekeinos* ('that one, he himself') underscores the distinction between the Baptist and the light. This careful distancing may reflect a historical situation in which some followers of John the Baptist continued to venerate him as a messianic figure (cf. Acts 19:1-7). John's Gospel consistently subordinates the Baptist to Jesus.
9. The adjective *alethinon* ('true, genuine, real') does not merely mean 'not false' but 'the authentic reality of which all other lights are shadows.' The participle *erchomenon* ('coming') can modify either 'light' (the true light was coming into the world) or 'person' (every person coming into the world). We attach it to 'light,' following the flow of the Prologue's narrative about the Word entering the world.
10. The threefold repetition of *kosmos* ('world') creates a devastating irony: the world that owed its very existence to the Word failed to recognize its maker. The verb *egno* ('knew, recognized') implies relational knowledge, not merely intellectual awareness — the world failed to acknowledge or receive the one through whom it was made.
11. The Greek shifts from neuter *ta idia* ('his own things/domain') to masculine *hoi idioi* ('his own people'). He came to his own place — Israel, the covenant people — and his own people rejected him. This verse encapsulates the tragic theme of the Gospel: the divine Word comes home and is turned away by those who should have recognized him.
12. The Greek *exousia* means 'right, authority, power' — not merely ability but authorized status. 'Children' (*tekna*) rather than 'sons' (*huioi*) is John's deliberate word choice, emphasizing the intimacy of the relationship rather than legal standing. The present tense 'believe' (*pisteuousin*) suggests ongoing faith, not a one-time act. 'In his name' means trusting in the person and character that the name represents.
13. The plural 'bloods' (*haimaton*) is unusual and may refer to the mixture of parental blood thought in antiquity to produce offspring. The threefold negation — not from blood, not from physical desire, not from human decision — systematically eliminates every natural means of generation. This divine birth is entirely God's initiative. Some early church fathers read the singular ('who was born') referring to Christ's virgin birth, but the plural is better attested in the manuscripts.

14. The verb *eskenosen* ('tabernacled, pitched his tent') is one of John's most theologically loaded words. It echoes the Hebrew *shakan* ('to dwell'), from which *Shekhinah* derives — God's indwelling presence in the tabernacle and temple. The Word does not merely visit but takes up residence in human flesh.
14. *Monogenous* ('only, unique, one-of-a-kind') is rendered 'only Son' rather than the KJV's 'only begotten.' The Greek does not emphasize manner of origin (begetting) but uniqueness of relationship. The Word is God's one-of-a-kind Son.
14. The pairing 'grace and truth' (*charitos kai aletheias*) corresponds to the Hebrew *chesed ve'emet* of Exodus 34:6, where God reveals himself as 'abounding in faithful love and truth.' John claims that this divine self-revelation is now embodied in a person.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 34:6. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The perfect tense *kekragen* ('has cried out') indicates that John's testimony continues to resonate. The paradox is deliberate: the one who comes 'after' John in time (born later, began ministry later) 'was before' him in preexistence. The Greek *protos mou en* ('he was first/before me') points to the eternal existence affirmed in verse 1.
16. The phrase *charin anti charitos* ('grace upon grace') is notoriously difficult. The preposition *anti* can mean 'in place of,' 'in return for,' or 'upon.' The sense is likely wave upon wave — one expression of grace replaced and exceeded by the next, an inexhaustible supply. 'Fullness' (*pleroma*) indicates that the incarnate Word lacks nothing of the divine nature.
17. John does not set Moses and Jesus in opposition (note the absence of 'but' — the Greek has no adversative conjunction here, though the KJV adds one). The law was given (passive, from God) through Moses; grace and truth came (active, from their source) through Jesus Christ. The comparison is one of escalation, not contradiction. This is the first time the name 'Jesus Christ' appears in the Gospel.
18. The SBLGNT reads *monogenes theos* ('the only God' or 'the unique one, God') rather than the variant *monogenes huios* ('the only Son') found in later manuscripts. This is one of the strongest christological statements in the New Testament — the Word is not merely the only Son but 'the only God,' a second use of *theos* applied to the Word (cf. 1:1c).
18. The verb *exegesato* ('has made known, has explained') is the root of 'exegesis.' The Son 'exegetes' the Father — he is the authoritative interpretation and revelation of the invisible God. The image of being 'at the Father's side' (*eis ton kolpon*, literally 'in the bosom') conveys the most intimate possible relationship.
19. The term *hoi Ioudaioi* ('the Jews') in John's Gospel almost always refers to the religious authorities in Jerusalem, not the Jewish people as a whole. We render 'the Jewish leaders' to reflect this. The delegation of priests and Levites indicates an official inquiry from the temple establishment — John's activity in the wilderness had attracted enough attention to prompt an investigation.
20. The emphatic double statement — 'confessed and did not deny' — uses a literary device (*litotes*: affirming by negating the opposite) to stress the forcefulness of John's declaration. The *ego ouk eimi* ('I am not') is a deliberate contrast with Jesus's *ego eimi* ('I am') statements that will follow throughout the Gospel.
21. Three messianic expectations are probed: the Christ, Elijah (expected to return before the Messiah, per Malachi 4:5), and 'the Prophet' (the prophet like Moses promised in Deuteronomy 18:15-18). John denies all three. The synoptic Gospels identify John as Elijah (Matthew 11:14, 17:12-13), but John's Gospel has the Baptist himself deny this identification — a tension scholars have long noted. 'The Prophet' with the definite article indicates a specific expected figure, not just any prophet.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Malachi 4:5. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 18:15-18. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
22. The delegation's frustration is evident — they need a report for the authorities in Jerusalem. The question 'What do you say about yourself?' forces John to define his own identity positively after three negative denials.
23. John identifies himself not with a title but with a function — he is a voice, nothing more. The quotation is from Isaiah 40:3 (Septuagint), which in its original context announced the end of the Babylonian exile and God's return to his people. John applies this to Jesus's coming. In the Hebrew of Isaiah 40:3, 'in the wilderness' modifies 'prepare the way' (prepare in the wilderness a way for the LORD), but the Septuagint (and John) attach it to 'crying' — a voice crying in the wilderness.
23. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 40:3 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
24. This parenthetical note identifies the theological party behind the inquiry. The Pharisees, who were deeply concerned with ritual purity and proper religious practice, would have been particularly interested in an unauthorized baptizer operating in the wilderness. This explains the question that follows in verse 25 about John's authority to baptize.
25. The logic is clear: if John holds none of the recognized eschatological offices, by what authority does he perform a rite of purification? Baptism (immersion) was known in Judaism — proselyte baptism, Qumran immersions — but an unauthorized figure calling all Israel to repentance through baptism was unprecedented.

26. John deflects the question about his own authority by pointing to a greater figure already present but unrecognized. The verb *hesteken* ('stands,' perfect tense) suggests a settled, ongoing presence — the one they seek is already there. The irony is characteristic of John's Gospel: the religious authorities are investigating the wrong person.
27. Untying a master's sandal was considered too menial even for a Jewish slave — it was reserved for Gentile slaves. John declares himself unworthy of even the lowest servant's task in relation to the coming one. The image is vivid and culturally specific, conveying radical self-abasement.
28. This Bethany is distinct from the Bethany near Jerusalem (11:1). The SBLGNT reads 'Bethany' (Bethania) rather than 'Bethabara,' which is an early emendation by Origen, who could not locate a Bethany east of the Jordan in his day. The location 'beyond the Jordan' places the events in Perea or Transjordan.
29. The title 'Lamb of God' (*ho amnos tou theou*) is unique to John's Gospel and carries multiple Old Testament resonances: the Passover lamb (Exodus 12), the lamb led to slaughter in Isaiah 53:7, and possibly the daily *tamid* offerings in the temple. The verb *airon* ('takes away, bears, removes') can mean both 'to carry' and 'to remove,' and both senses may be intended — the lamb both bears sin and removes it.
29. The scope is universal — 'the sin of the world' (*tou kosmou*), not merely Israel. This fits the Prologue's universal vision of light for 'every person' (1:9).
29. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 12. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
29. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 53:7. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
30. This repeats the testimony of verse 15, now spoken in narrative context rather than within the Prologue. The paradox remains: Jesus comes 'after' John chronologically but existed 'before' him eternally. The word *aner* ('man') is significant — the eternal Word (1:1) is now identified as a specific human being.
31. John's confession 'I did not know him' (*ouk edein auton*) is striking — even the forerunner required divine revelation to identify the one he was preparing for. His entire baptizing ministry had a single purpose: to create the occasion for Jesus's public unveiling to Israel. The passive 'might be revealed' (*phanerothe*) implies God as the agent of revelation.
32. John's Gospel does not narrate the baptism of Jesus directly but presents it through the Baptist's eyewitness testimony. The perfect tense *tetheamai* ('I have seen, I have observed') indicates a vivid, lasting impression. The dove imagery and the Spirit's descent connect to Genesis 1:2 (the Spirit hovering over the waters) and Isaiah 11:2 (the Spirit resting on the Messiah). The key detail is that the Spirit 'remained' (*emeinen*) — not a temporary empowerment but a permanent anointing.
32. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 1:2. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
32. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 11:2. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
33. John's recognition of Jesus depended on a prior divine sign — the Spirit's descent and remaining. The description of Jesus as 'the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit' defines his ministry in contrast to John's water baptism. The verb *menon* ('remaining') is a key Johannine word (*meno*, 'to remain, abide') that will become central to the Gospel's theology of relationship with God.
34. The perfect tenses *heoraka* ('I have seen') and *memartyrika* ('I have testified') indicate completed action with continuing relevance — John's witness is settled and permanent. Some manuscripts read 'the Chosen One of God' (*ho eklektos tou theou*) instead of 'the Son of God,' which would echo Isaiah 42:1. The SBLGNT reads 'Son of God,' which we follow.
34. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 42:1. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
35. This marks the third day in John's opening sequence (day 1: vv. 19-28; day 2: vv. 29-34; day 3: vv. 35-42). The progressive narrative builds toward Jesus's gathering of his first followers. That these are John's own disciples who will leave him for Jesus underscores the Baptist's role as a transitional figure.
36. The verb *emblemsas* ('having looked intently at') suggests a fixed, penetrating gaze — John does not casually glance but stares with recognition. The declaration is shorter than in verse 29, omitting 'who takes away the sin of the world,' as if the title alone now suffices. This is the second and final time John identifies Jesus as the Lamb.
37. The verb *ekoloutheesan* ('followed') carries both the literal sense of walking after someone and the theological sense of becoming a disciple. The Baptist's testimony achieves its intended purpose — his disciples transfer their allegiance to the one he has been pointing toward.
38. Jesus's first words in John's Gospel are a question — 'What are you looking for?' (*ti zeteite*) — which functions on multiple levels: practically (what do you want?), spiritually (what are you seeking in life?). John translates 'Rabbi' for his Greek-speaking audience as 'Teacher' (*didaskalos*). The verb *meneis* ('are you staying/remaining') connects to the Johannine theme of 'remaining/abiding' (*meno*) that pervades the Gospel.
39. Jesus's invitation 'Come and you will see' (*erchesthe kai opseste*) becomes a pattern in the Gospel — seeing leads to believing. The 'tenth hour' is approximately 4 PM by Roman reckoning (or 10 AM by Jewish reckoning, counting from sunrise). The precise time detail is the kind of eyewitness memory that suggests the narrator was one of the two disciples present.

40. Andrew is identified through his relationship to Simon Peter, who was evidently better known to the audience. The other unnamed disciple is traditionally identified as the author of the Gospel (the 'beloved disciple'), though the text does not say so explicitly.
41. This is one of only two places in the New Testament where the Hebrew/Aramaic title *Messias* ('Anointed One') is transliterated into Greek (the other is John 4:25). John translates it as *Christos* for his Greek audience. The adverb *proton* ('first') implies that Andrew found Simon before doing anything else — the discovery was too important not to share immediately.
42. The verb *emblemsas* ('having looked intently') is the same word used of the Baptist in verse 36 — a penetrating gaze that sees beyond the surface. Jesus demonstrates supernatural knowledge by naming Simon before being introduced. 'Cephas' is Aramaic (*kepha*, 'rock'); John translates it into Greek as *Petros* ('rock, stone'). The SBLGNT reads 'son of John' (*Ioannou*) rather than the variant 'son of Jonah' (*Iona*) found in some manuscripts.
43. This marks the fourth day in John's opening sequence. Unlike Andrew and the unnamed disciple who came to Jesus through the Baptist's testimony, Philip is called directly by Jesus. The command 'Follow me' (*akolouthei moi*) is the standard call to discipleship in the Gospels — a summons to leave one's current path and walk with Jesus.
44. Bethsaida ('house of fishing') was located on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee. The note connecting Philip to Andrew and Peter's hometown suggests a pre-existing social network that facilitated the chain of recruitment: John the Baptist to Andrew, Andrew to Peter, and now the connection extends to Philip.
45. Philip's identification of Jesus draws on the full breadth of Jewish Scripture — both the Torah (Moses) and the Prophets. The phrase 'Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth' presents Jesus in purely human terms — his legal parentage and hometown. The irony is that the reader already knows from the Prologue that Jesus's true identity far transcends these categories. Nathanael is traditionally identified with Bartholomew in the Synoptic lists of the Twelve.
46. Nathanael's skepticism reflects a real geographical prejudice — Nazareth was a small, insignificant village in Lower Galilee with no prophetic associations. The Old Testament nowhere mentions Nazareth. Philip's response echoes Jesus's own invitation in verse 39 ('Come and you will see'), turning the method of encounter into a chain: come, see, and judge for yourself.
47. The phrase 'a true Israelite in whom there is no deceit' (*dolos*, 'guile, treachery, deceit') alludes to Jacob/Israel, whose name means 'supplanter/deceiver.' Nathanael is everything his ancestor Jacob was not — an Israelite without the craftiness. The allusion prepares for the Jacob's ladder reference in verse 51. The adverb *alethos* ('truly, genuinely') emphasizes that Nathanael embodies the ideal of Israel.
48. Sitting under a fig tree was associated in Jewish tradition with studying Torah (cf. Micah 4:4; Zechariah 3:10). If Nathanael was engaged in prayer or Scripture study, Jesus's supernatural knowledge of this private moment would be deeply startling. The verb *eidon* ('I saw') implies more than physical sight — Jesus perceived Nathanael's character and activity from a distance.
48. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Micah 4:4 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
48. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Zechariah 3:10 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
49. Nathanael's confession moves from skepticism ('Can anything good come from Nazareth?') to the highest christological titles in a single encounter. 'Son of God' and 'King of Israel' are parallel messianic titles drawn from Psalm 2:6-7 and Zephaniah 3:15. The rapid escalation of faith through personal encounter is characteristic of John's narrative theology.
49. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 2:6-7. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
49. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Zephaniah 3:15. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
50. Jesus's response affirms Nathanael's faith but points beyond it — the sign that prompted belief (supernatural knowledge) is only the beginning. 'Greater things' (*meizo touton*) anticipates the signs that will follow throughout the Gospel: water to wine, healing, raising the dead. Faith based on signs is accepted but will be surpassed by deeper revelation.
51. The double 'Amen, amen' (*amen amen*) is unique to John's Gospel and marks solemn, authoritative declarations — Jesus is speaking with the authority of God himself. The imagery draws directly from Jacob's dream at Bethel (Genesis 28:12), where a ladder connected heaven and earth with angels ascending and descending. Jesus replaces the ladder — he is the point of connection between heaven and earth.
51. The shift from singular 'you' (*soi*, verse 50) to plural 'you' (*hymin*) indicates that this promise extends beyond Nathanael to all disciples. 'Son of Man' (*ho huios tou anthropou*) is Jesus's preferred self-designation, drawing on Daniel 7:13 where the 'one like a son of man' receives dominion from the Ancient of Days.
51. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 28:12. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
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## 2

*Summary: John 2 presents two dramatically different scenes that together establish Jesus's authority over both celebration and worship. At the wedding in Cana, Jesus performs his first sign — transforming water into wine — revealing his glory and prompting his disciples to believe. In Jerusalem, he enters the temple and drives out the merchants and money changers, provoking the authorities to demand a sign of his authority. Jesus responds with a cryptic prophecy about destroying and raising 'this temple' in three days, which the narrator explains refers to his body and resurrection.*

*What Makes This Remarkable: John identifies the Cana miracle as the 'beginning of signs' (archen ton semeion), using his distinctive word semeion ('sign') rather than the Synoptic dynamis ('mighty work'). A sign in John is not merely a display of power but a revelation of identity — each sign points beyond itself to who Jesus is. The six stone water jars 'for Jewish purification rites' symbolically represent the old order that Jesus transforms. The temple action, placed at the beginning of Jesus's ministry rather than at the end as in the Synoptics, signals John's theological rather than chronological arrangement.*

*Translation Friction: Jesus's address to his mother as 'Woman' (gynai) sounds harsh in English but was a respectful form of address in Greek. His statement 'My hour has not yet come' introduces the 'hour' motif that runs through the Gospel, pointing to his death and glorification. The temple cleansing's placement differs from the Synoptics — scholars debate whether this represents a different event, a theological rearrangement, or a literary convention. We render without harmonizing.*

*Connections: The wine miracle connects to Old Testament imagery of wine as a sign of the messianic age (Isaiah 25:6, Amos 9:13-14, Joel 3:18). The temple action connects to Psalm 69:9 ('Zeal for your house will consume me'), Malachi 3:1-3 (the Lord suddenly coming to his temple), and the destruction/rebuilding motif that recurs at Jesus's trial (Mark 14:58). The pattern of sign followed by controversy will structure the entire first half of the Gospel.*

<sup>1</sup>On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. <sup>2</sup>Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. <sup>3</sup>When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." <sup>4</sup>Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does that have to do with me? My hour has not yet come." <sup>5</sup>His mother said to the servants, "Whatever he tells you, do it." <sup>6</sup>Now six stone water jars were standing there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding two or three measures. <sup>7</sup>Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them to the brim. <sup>8</sup>Then he said to them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast." So they took it. <sup>9</sup>When the master of the feast tasted the water that had become wine — not knowing where it came from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew — he called the bridegroom <sup>10</sup>Says to him, Every man at the beginning does set forth good wine. And when men have well drunk, then that which is worse — but you have kept the good wine until now. <sup>11</sup>Jesus did this as the first of his signs in Cana of Galilee, and he revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him. <sup>12</sup>After this he went down to Capernaum — he, his mother, his brothers, and his disciples — and they stayed there a few days. <sup>13</sup>The Passover of the Jewish people was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup>In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. <sup>15</sup>So he made a whip out of cords and drove them all out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. <sup>16</sup>To those selling doves he said, "Take these things away from here! Do not make my Father's house a marketplace!" <sup>17</sup>His disciples remembered that it is written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." <sup>18</sup>The Jewish leaders then responded and said to him, "What sign do you show us as your authority for doing these things?" <sup>19</sup>Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." <sup>20</sup>The Jewish leaders said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and you will raise it up in three days?" <sup>21</sup>But he was speaking about the temple of his body. <sup>22</sup>So when he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken. <sup>23</sup>Now while he was in Jerusalem during the Passover festival, many believed in his name when they saw the signs he was performing. <sup>24</sup>But Jesus himself did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people <sup>25</sup>Needed not that any should testify of man — since he recognized what

## was in man.

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### TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The 'third day' continues John's opening day-sequence (1:29, 1:35, 1:43, now 2:1). Some scholars see a symbolic connection to the resurrection 'on the third day.' John never names Jesus's mother — she is always 'the mother of Jesus' or 'woman,' a pattern that may emphasize her role rather than her personal identity.
2. The passive eklethe ('was called, invited') indicates Jesus attended as a guest, not as a host or official. The presence of 'his disciples' shows the group from chapter 1 is already functioning as a recognizable unit.
3. Running out of wine at a wedding was a serious social embarrassment in the ancient Near East, where hospitality obligations were paramount. The mother's statement is not merely informational but implicitly requests action. The Greek *hysteresantos oinou* ('the wine having failed') uses a genitive absolute construction indicating the wine was completely gone, not merely running low.
4. The address *gynai* ('woman') was a respectful form in Greek, comparable to 'ma'am' — not dismissive as it sounds in English. The idiom *ti emoi kai soi* ('what to me and to you?') is a Semitic expression creating distance — 'what concern is that of ours?' or 'why involve me?' The 'hour' (*hora*) is a loaded theological term in John, referring to Jesus's death, resurrection, and glorification (cf. 7:30, 8:20, 12:23, 13:1, 17:1). Jesus's public ministry operates on a divine timetable.
5. Despite Jesus's apparent reluctance, his mother proceeds with confident expectation. Her instruction to the servants (*diakonois*, 'attendants, servants') echoes the language of covenant obedience — 'whatever he tells you, do it' resonates with Israel's response at Sinai (Exodus 19:8, 'All that the LORD has spoken we will do'). The word *diakonos* is the root of 'deacon.'
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 19:8 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The detail that the jars were 'for Jewish purification rites' (*kata ton katharismos ton Ioudaion*) is theologically significant — Jesus transforms the water of ritual cleansing into the wine of celebration. A *metretes* was approximately 9 gallons (34 liters), making the total volume between 108 and 162 gallons — an extraordinary quantity, signaling the abundance of the messianic age. The number six (one short of seven, the number of completion) may symbolize the incompleteness of the old order that Jesus is about to fulfill.
7. The servants' immediate obedience follows the mother's instruction in verse 5. The phrase *heos ano* ('up to the top, to the brim') emphasizes completeness — there is no room for anyone to add wine, eliminating the possibility of fraud. The human action (filling jars) and the divine action (transforming the contents) work together.
8. The *architriklinos* ('master of the feast, head steward') was the person responsible for managing the banquet, including tasting and serving the wine. The verb *antlesate* ('draw out') was used for drawing water from a well — Jesus does not announce a miracle but simply instructs them to serve what they have drawn.
9. John creates a layered irony: the master of the feast has no idea what has happened, the servants know the physical fact but perhaps not its significance, and only the disciples will understand the sign. The word *pothen* ('from where') carries theological weight in John — the question of where Jesus and his gifts come from points to his divine origin (cf. 3:8, 7:27-28, 8:14, 9:29-30, 19:9).
10. The steward's observation follows common banquet logic — after guests have drunk enough to dull their palates, cheaper wine is served. The verb *methysthosin* ('have drunk freely, become intoxicated') is frank about the level of consumption at such feasts. The theological irony is profound: God has saved the best for last. The old covenant provisions (water for purification) are surpassed by the new (wine of the messianic age).
11. John uses *semeion* ('sign') rather than the Synoptic *dynamis* ('mighty work') or *teras* ('wonder'). A sign in John is not merely a display of power but a pointer — it reveals something about who Jesus is. This first sign reveals his 'glory' (*doxa*), connecting back to the Prologue's claim that 'we have seen his glory' (1:14). The sequence — sign, glory revealed, faith — establishes the pattern for the entire 'Book of Signs' (chapters 1-12).
12. The verb *katebe* ('went down') is geographically accurate — Cana is in the Galilean hills, while Capernaum sits on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, which is approximately 680 feet below sea level. The mention of 'his brothers' (*hoi adelphoi autou*) introduces Jesus's biological family, who will later express skepticism about his mission (7:3-5). The brief stay transitions to the Jerusalem scene.
13. This is the first of three Passovers mentioned in John's Gospel (cf. 6:4, 11:55), which is the basis for estimating Jesus's ministry at approximately three years. The verb *anebe* ('went up') is the technical term for pilgrimage to Jerusalem, which sits on a hill — one always 'goes up' to Jerusalem regardless of the starting point. 'Passover of the Jewish people' distinguishes the feast for John's mixed audience.
14. The *hieron* ('temple') refers to the broader temple complex, specifically the Court of the Gentiles where commercial activity took place. The animals were sold for sacrificial use — pilgrims traveling long distances needed to purchase offerings locally. Money changers exchanged foreign currency for Tyrian shekels, the only coinage accepted for the temple tax. The commerce was technically legitimate but had become exploitative.
15. The *phragellion* ('whip') made from *schoinion* ('cords, rushes') was likely improvised from materials at hand. The Greek syntax of *pantas exebalen* ('drove them all out') is ambiguous — 'all' could refer to the animals, the sellers, or both. The violent action recalls prophetic symbolic acts (cf. Jeremiah's breaking of the pot, Ezekiel's siege model). Jesus acts with prophetic authority to purify the place of worship.

- 16.** The dove sellers are addressed separately, probably because doves could not be driven out but had to be carried in their cages. The phrase 'my Father's house' (ton oikon tou patros mou) is a bold claim to filial relationship with God and echoes the boy Jesus's words in Luke 2:49. The word emporion ('marketplace, trading house') is the root of 'emporium.' John's version differs from the Synoptics' quotation of Isaiah 56:7/Jeremiah 7:11 ('den of robbers').
- 16.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 56:7. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 16.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Jeremiah 7:11. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 17.** The quotation is from Psalm 69:9. The Septuagint uses the aorist kataphagen ('consumed/ate'), but John changes to the future kataphagetai ('will consume'), shifting the reference from David's past experience to Jesus's future suffering. The disciples' 'remembering' (emnesthesan) is a characteristic Johannine device — Scripture is understood retrospectively in light of Jesus's actions (cf. 2:22, 12:16).
- 17.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalms 69:9. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 18.** The demand for a semeion ('sign') is ironic — Jesus has just performed a prophetic sign-act, but the authorities want a legitimizing credential. Their question assumes that only someone with recognized authority (the Messiah, a prophet) could act this way in the temple. The request for signs will become a recurring tension in the Gospel (cf. 4:48, 6:30).
- 19.** Jesus uses naos ('temple sanctuary, inner shrine') rather than hieron ('temple complex'), a shift the authorities do not catch. The imperative lysate ('destroy') is not a command but a conditional challenge — 'if you destroy this temple.' The word egerō ('I will raise') is the standard resurrection verb, and Jesus claims the authority to do it himself. This statement will be cited at his trial (Mark 14:58) and mocked at the cross (Mark 15:29).
- 20.** The forty-six years of construction dates from Herod the Great's temple renovation, which began approximately 20-19 BC, placing this exchange around AD 27-28. The temple was not actually completed until AD 63, only seven years before its destruction. The authorities take Jesus's statement at face value — they assume he is making an absurd claim about the physical building.
- 21.** This is the narrator's interpretive aside, a characteristic feature of John's Gospel (cf. 7:39, 11:51-52, 12:33). The identification of Jesus's body as the naos ('sanctuary') makes an extraordinary theological claim: the physical temple where God's presence dwelt is being replaced by the incarnate body of Christ. After the resurrection, God's dwelling place among humanity is no longer a building but a person.
- 22.** This is the second post-Easter retrospective in the chapter (cf. v. 17). The passive egerthe ('was raised') could be divine passive (God raised him) or middle voice (he rose). The pairing of 'the Scripture' (te graphe) and 'the word that Jesus spoke' (to logo) places Jesus's own words on par with sacred Scripture — a remarkable claim about his authority.
- 23.** This is the first mention of signs (semeia, plural) performed in Jerusalem — John does not describe them individually, focusing instead on the response they provoked. The belief described here is sign-based faith, which the next verses will show to be inadequate. The imperfect epoiei ('was performing') suggests multiple signs over a period of time.
- 24.** The verb episteuen ('entrust') is the same word as 'believe' (pisteuo) in verse 23 — creating a deliberate wordplay. They 'believed' in him, but he did not 'believe in/entrust himself to' them. Their faith was based on signs alone; his knowledge of them was deeper than their knowledge of him. The imperfect tense suggests an ongoing posture of reserve.
- 25.** This verse attributes to Jesus a divine prerogative — knowing the human heart (cf. 1 Samuel 16:7, Jeremiah 17:10). The phrase ti en to anthropo ('what was in a person') is deliberately general — it applies to all humanity, not just the Jerusalem crowds. This divine knowledge of human interiority prepares for the Nicodemus encounter that follows immediately in chapter 3.
- 25.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 1 Samuel 16:7 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 25.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Jeremiah 17:10 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.

## 3

**Summary:** *John 3 opens with Nicodemus, a Pharisee and member of the Jewish ruling council, coming to Jesus at night. Their conversation moves from the necessity of being 'born from above' through the Spirit to one of the most quoted verses in Scripture (3:16), which declares that God's love for the world is the motivation for sending his Son. The chapter then transitions to John the Baptist's final testimony, in which the Baptist joyfully accepts his diminishing role as the 'friend of the bridegroom' and declares 'He must increase, but I must decrease.' The chapter concludes with a theological reflection on the relationship between the one who comes from above and the one who is from the earth.*

**What Makes This Remarkable:** *The Greek *anōthen* in verse 3 is a masterful double entendre — it means both 'again' and 'from above.' Nicodemus hears 'again' (and is confused); Jesus means 'from above' (and is revealing the divine origin of new birth). John 3:16 compresses the entire Gospel narrative — God's love, his sending of the Son, the world as the scope, belief as the means, and eternal life as the result — into a single sentence. The Baptist's self-designation as 'the friend of the bridegroom' (3:29) draws on ancient Near Eastern wedding customs where the friend managed the ceremony and then stepped aside for the groom.*

**Translation Friction:** *The boundary between Jesus's direct speech and the narrator's theological commentary is notoriously uncertain in this chapter. Most scholars place the transition somewhere between verses 12 and 21, with verses 16-21 possibly being John's own reflection rather than Jesus's words to Nicodemus. We render without quotation marks after verse 15, following the SBLGNT punctuation. Similarly, the Baptist's speech may end at verse 30, with verses 31-36 being the narrator's voice.*

**Connections:** *The 'born of water and Spirit' language connects to Ezekiel 36:25-27 (cleansing water and a new spirit). The bronze serpent reference (v. 14) connects to Numbers 21:4-9. The light-darkness judgment theme (vv. 19-21) echoes the Prologue (1:4-5). The bridegroom imagery (v. 29) connects to Old Testament depictions of God as Israel's husband (Hosea 2, Isaiah 54:5, Jeremiah 2:2). The 'wrath of God' in verse 36 is the only use of *orge* in John's Gospel.*

<sup>1</sup>Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jewish people. <sup>2</sup>He came to Jesus at night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one could perform these signs that you do unless God were with him." <sup>3</sup>Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I tell you, unless a person is born from above, they cannot see the kingdom of God." <sup>4</sup>Nicodemus said to him, "How can a person be born when they are old? Can they enter their mother's womb a second time and be born?" <sup>5</sup>Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I tell you, unless a person is born of water and the Spirit, they cannot enter the kingdom of God. <sup>6</sup>What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup>Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' <sup>8</sup>The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." <sup>9</sup>Nicodemus answered him, "How can these things be?" <sup>10</sup>Jesus answered him, "You are the teacher of Israel, and you do not understand these things? <sup>11</sup>Truly, truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but you do not accept our testimony. <sup>12</sup>If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? <sup>13</sup>No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven — the Son of Man. <sup>14</sup>As Moses raised up the serpent in the wilderness, in the same way the Son of Man be raised up:. <sup>15</sup>so that everyone who believes in him will not be destroyed but will have eternal life. <sup>16</sup>For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup>For God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but so that the world might be saved through him. <sup>18</sup>The one who believes in him is not condemned, but the one who does not believe has been condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. <sup>19</sup>And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light, because their works were evil. <sup>20</sup>For everyone who practices evil hates the light and does not come to the light, so that their works may not be exposed. <sup>21</sup>But the one who practices the truth comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their

works have been done in God. <sup>22</sup>After this, Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside, and he spent time there with them and was baptizing. <sup>23</sup>John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water there, and people were coming and being baptized. <sup>24</sup>For John had not yet been thrown into prison. <sup>25</sup>Now a dispute arose between some of John's disciples and a Jewish man about purification. <sup>26</sup>They came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, the one who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you testified — look, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him." <sup>27</sup>John answered, "A person cannot receive even one thing unless it has been given to them from heaven. <sup>28</sup>You yourselves can testify that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but I have been sent ahead of him.' <sup>29</sup>The one who has the bride is the bridegroom, but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. So this joy of mine is now complete. <sup>30</sup>He must increase, and I must decrease." <sup>31</sup>The one who comes from above is above all. The one who is from the earth belongs to the earth and speaks from an earthly perspective. The one who comes from heaven is above all. <sup>32</sup>He testifies to what he has seen and heard, yet no one accepts his testimony. <sup>33</sup>The one who has accepted his testimony has certified that God is true. <sup>34</sup>For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure. <sup>35</sup>The Father loves the Son and has placed all things in his hand. <sup>36</sup>The one who believes in the Son has eternal life, but the one who disobeys the Son will not see life — instead, the wrath of God remains on them.

## TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Nicodemus is identified by three markers: he is a Pharisee (theological party), he has a Greek name meaning 'conqueror of the people,' and he is an archon ('ruler, leader') — likely a member of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish governing council. He appears three times in John (here, 7:50-52, 19:39), each time moving closer to faith. The connection to 2:25 is immediate — Jesus knows what is in a person, and now a specific person comes to him.
2. Nicodemus comes 'at night' (nyktos) — in John's symbolic world, night represents spiritual darkness and ignorance (cf. 9:4, 11:10, 13:30). Whether Nicodemus comes by night for secrecy, out of fear, or simply because rabbis often studied at night is debated, but the symbolic resonance is unmistakable. His use of the plural 'we know' (oidamen) may indicate he speaks for a group of sympathetic Pharisees. He acknowledges Jesus as a divinely authorized teacher based on the signs — precisely the inadequate sign-faith described in 2:23-25.
3. The Greek anōthen is deliberately ambiguous — it means both 'again' (a second time) and 'from above' (from a higher place, from God). Nicodemus hears the first meaning; Jesus intends the second (as confirmed by verse 31, where anōthen clearly means 'from above'). We render 'from above' to preserve Jesus's intended meaning, noting the wordplay. This is the only passage in John's Gospel where Jesus speaks of the 'kingdom of God' (basileia tou theou), a phrase dominant in the Synoptics but rare in John.
4. Nicodemus's response reveals he has heard anōthen as 'again' — he takes the statement with wooden literalism, imagining a physical re-entry into the womb. This misunderstanding is a Johannine literary device: a character takes Jesus's words at the surface level, prompting Jesus to explain the deeper spiritual meaning (cf. 4:11, 6:42, 8:33, 11:11-12). The word geron ('old man') may hint at Nicodemus's own age.
5. The phrase 'water and Spirit' (hydatos kai pneumatos) has been interpreted in numerous ways: (1) water baptism and the Holy Spirit, (2) natural birth (amniotic fluid) and spiritual birth, (3) an echo of Ezekiel 36:25-27 where God promises to sprinkle clean water and give a new spirit. The Ezekiel connection is strongest, given that Jesus expects Nicodemus as 'the teacher of Israel' (v. 10) to understand this reference. One preposition (ek) governs both nouns, suggesting water and Spirit are aspects of a single birth, not two separate events.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Ezekiel 36:25-27 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. Jesus establishes a categorical distinction: flesh (sarx) produces flesh; Spirit (pneuma) produces spirit. Human effort cannot generate spiritual birth — it requires an entirely different source. 'Flesh' here does not mean 'sinful' (as often in Paul) but 'merely human, natural, limited.' The point is not that flesh is evil but that it cannot do what only the Spirit can accomplish.
7. The shift from singular 'you' (soi, addressing Nicodemus) to plural 'you' (hymas, 'you all must be born from above') indicates that the requirement is universal, not personal to Nicodemus. The verb dei ('must, it is necessary') expresses divine necessity — this is not optional spiritual advice but an absolute requirement. We maintain 'from above' for anōthen, consistent with verse 3.
8. The Greek pneuma means both 'wind' and 'spirit' — Jesus exploits this double meaning brilliantly. The wind/Spirit is real and observable in its effects but unpredictable and uncontrollable in its movements. The analogy teaches that spiritual birth, like wind, is sovereignly initiated by God, perceptible in its results but not subject to human management. The verb pnei ('blows') is etymologically related to pneuma, reinforcing the wordplay.
9. Nicodemus's third question ('How can these things be?') shows he remains at the level of human comprehension. His 'how' (pos) asks for mechanism — how does this work? — but spiritual birth is not a process to be understood and replicated. It is a divine act to be received. This is Nicodemus's last recorded word in this conversation; from this point, Jesus speaks alone.

- 10.** The definite article is significant — *ho didaskalos* ('the teacher'), not merely 'a teacher.' Nicodemus holds a recognized position of authority in Israel's religious instruction. Jesus's mild rebuke implies that the Old Testament itself teaches spiritual renewal (Ezekiel 36-37, Jeremiah 31:31-34) — a scholar of Nicodemus's standing should already know this. The irony is that Israel's authorized teacher cannot grasp what the unauthorized teacher from Nazareth is explaining.
- 10.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Ezekiel 36-37 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 10.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Jeremiah 31:31-34 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 11.** The shift to the plural 'we' (*oidamen, laloumen, heorakamen, martyroumen*) is debated — it may be a majestic plural, or Jesus may be including the Spirit, or the narrator's voice may be beginning to merge with Jesus's. The plural 'you' (*lambanete*) indicates that the rejection extends beyond Nicodemus to the religious leadership as a whole. The vocabulary of seeing (*heorakamen*) and testifying (*martyroumen*) connects to the Gospel's central themes.
- 12.** The distinction between 'earthly things' (*ta epigeia*) and 'heavenly things' (*ta epourania*) creates a vertical axis. The 'earthly things' are likely the analogy of wind/Spirit and the concept of new birth — observable realities used to explain spiritual truths. The 'heavenly things' are the divine realities themselves — God's love, the sending of the Son, the nature of judgment — which Jesus alone can reveal because he alone has been in heaven.
- 13.** Jesus claims unique access to heavenly realities: no human has ascended to heaven to gain this knowledge — only the Son of Man, who came down from heaven, possesses it. The perfect tense *anabeken* ('has ascended') may refer to Jesus's post-resurrection ascension, spoken from the narrator's post-Easter perspective, or may assert that no one has made the journey except the Son of Man. Some manuscripts add 'who is in heaven' (*ho on en to ourano*), but the SBLGNT omits this phrase.
- 14.** The reference is to Numbers 21:4-9, where the Israelites bitten by poisonous serpents were healed by looking at a bronze serpent lifted up on a pole. The verb *hypothenai* ('to be lifted up') carries a Johannine double meaning throughout the Gospel: it refers both to being lifted up on the cross (physical elevation) and to being exalted in glory (theological elevation). In John, the cross is simultaneously an instrument of death and the throne of glorification (cf. 8:28, 12:32-34).
- 14.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Numbers 21:4-9. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 15.** The SBLGNT does not include 'should not perish' (*me apoletai*), which appears in some manuscripts under influence from verse 16. The parallel with Numbers 21 is complete: as the Israelites looked at the serpent and lived, so those who believe in the lifted-up Son of Man receive eternal life. 'Eternal life' (*zoeon aionion*) in John is not merely endless duration but a quality of life — the life of the coming age experienced now through faith.
- 15.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Numbers 21 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 16.** The adverb *houtos* ('so, in this way, thus') modifies the verb — it describes the manner or extent of God's love: 'God loved the world in this way' or 'to this degree.' The aorist *edoken* ('gave') points to a specific, decisive act of giving. The scope is universal — *ton kosmon* ('the world'), not merely Israel. The verb *apoletai* ('perish, be destroyed') indicates total loss, not merely death. This verse compresses the entire Gospel narrative into a single sentence: the motive (God's love), the act (giving the Son), the condition (belief), and the result (eternal life versus perishing).
- 16.** Whether this verse is spoken by Jesus or is the narrator's theological commentary is debated. The SBLGNT does not use quotation marks, and the language shifts from second-person dialogue to third-person theological reflection.
- 17.** The verb *krine* ('judge, condemn') introduces the judgment theme that will dominate verses 18-21. The purpose of the incarnation is salvation (*sothe, 'be saved'*), not condemnation — though condemnation will result for those who refuse the light. The threefold repetition of *kosmos* ('world') emphasizes the universal scope: God sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but to save the world.
- 18.** The judgment described here is not a future event awaiting a final tribunal but a present reality determined by one's response to the Son. The perfect tense *kekritai* ('has been condemned') and *pepisteuken* ('has believed') indicate settled states with present consequences. The structure creates a stark binary: belief or condemnation, with no middle ground. 'In the name' (*eis to onoma*) means trusting in the person and character the name represents.
- 19.** The judgment is not an arbitrary decree but a self-executing reality — when light appears, those whose deeds are evil flee from it. The perfect tense *elythen* ('has come') indicates the light's arrival is a settled fact with ongoing consequences. The verb *egapesan* ('loved') is striking — the same word used of God's love for the world in verse 16 is now used of humanity's love for darkness. The moral failure is a disordered love: choosing darkness over light.
- 20.** The verb *elegchthe* ('be exposed, reproved, convicted') means to bring hidden things into the open. The present participle *phaula prasson* ('practicing worthless/evil things') describes a habitual pattern, not isolated acts. The logic is psychological: evil deeds create an aversion to light because light reveals what people want hidden. This may retrospectively illuminate Nicodemus's choice to come 'at night' (v. 2).
- 21.** The striking phrase 'practices the truth' (*poion ten altheian*) combines action and truth — truth in John is not merely believed but done. This Hebrew-influenced idiom (cf. 1 John 1:6) treats truth as something lived out, not merely known. The passive *phanerothe* ('may be made visible') and the phrase *en theo* ('in God') indicate that righteous works originate from and are sustained by God — they are not independent human achievements but God-empowered deeds.

22. The transition moves from Jerusalem (where the Nicodemus conversation took place) to the Judean countryside. The statement that Jesus 'was baptizing' (ebaptizen) is qualified in 4:2, which notes that Jesus himself did not baptize but his disciples did. The imperfect tense suggests an ongoing ministry period. This is the only Gospel to describe a period of overlapping baptismal ministries between Jesus and John.
23. The location of Aenon ('springs') near Salim is debated — candidates include a site in the Jordan Valley and one in Samaria. The practical note about 'plenty of water' (hydata polla, literally 'many waters') indicates that immersion, not sprinkling, was the mode of baptism. The imperfect tenses (pareginonto, ebaptizonto) describe ongoing activity — people kept coming and being baptized.
24. This parenthetical note synchronizes John's narrative with the Synoptic timeline, where Jesus's Galilean ministry begins after John's arrest (Mark 1:14). John's Gospel uniquely preserves this period of overlapping ministries before the Baptist's imprisonment.
25. The SBLGNT reads the singular Ioudaiou ('a Jewish man') rather than the plural 'Jews' found in some manuscripts. The dispute about katharismou ('purification, cleansing') connects baptism to the broader Jewish purity system. The specific content of the dispute is not given — it serves primarily as the trigger for the question brought to John in the next verse.
26. John's disciples report Jesus's growing popularity with evident concern — their teacher is losing followers. They carefully avoid using Jesus's name, referring to him only as 'the one who was with you' and 'the one you testified about.' The hyperbolic 'everyone' (pantes) expresses their alarm. The irony is that this is exactly what John predicted and intended (1:26-27).
27. John's response begins with a statement of radical divine sovereignty — every role, every gift, every ministry is heaven's assignment. The principle applies both to Jesus (whose growing ministry is heaven-given) and to John himself (whose diminishing role is equally heaven-assigned). The perfect participle dedomenon ('having been given') emphasizes the settled, divine origin of each person's calling.
28. John appeals to his own earlier testimony (1:20) — his disciples heard him say it. The phrase apetalmenos eimi ('I have been sent') uses the perfect passive, emphasizing that his role as forerunner was divinely appointed. John's identity is entirely defined by his relationship to the one who follows.
29. The 'friend of the bridegroom' (ho philos tou nymphiou) was a recognized role in Jewish weddings — the shoshbin who arranged the wedding, guarded the bridal chamber, and announced the groom's arrival. His joy was in the groom's joy, not his own. John casts himself in this role: he prepared everything for the bridegroom's arrival, and now that the groom has come, his task is fulfilled. The bridegroom imagery echoes Old Testament depictions of God as Israel's husband (Hosea 2:16, Isaiah 62:5). The cognate accusative chara chairei ('rejoices with joy') is a Semitic intensifier expressing overwhelming gladness.
29. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Hosea 2:16. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
29. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 62:5. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
30. This is perhaps the most memorable statement of the Baptist in any Gospel. The verb dei ('must, it is necessary') again expresses divine necessity — this is not John's reluctant concession but his joyful acceptance of God's design. The verbs auxanein ('to grow, increase') and elattousthai ('to diminish, decrease') describe an inverse relationship: as Jesus's ministry expands, John's contracts. The present infinitives suggest an ongoing process, not a sudden event.
31. Whether this is the Baptist's continued speech or the narrator's theological commentary is uncertain — the language closely resembles the narrator's voice throughout the Gospel. The word anothen ('from above') echoes verse 3, where it was the word Nicodemus misunderstood. The contrast between 'from above' and 'from the earth' parallels the flesh/Spirit contrast of verse 6. The repetition of 'above all' (epano panton) creates an inclusio bracketing the earthly description.
32. The perfect tense heoraken ('has seen') indicates firsthand, ongoing knowledge — the one from heaven testifies from direct experience of divine realities. The sweeping 'no one' (oudeis) is hyperbolic (as verse 33 immediately shows some do accept), expressing the general pattern of rejection that marks the Gospel's narrative. The language echoes verse 11, reinforcing whether this is narrator or Baptist speaking.
33. The verb esphragisen ('has sealed, certified, attested') is a legal metaphor — to affix one's seal to a document was to authenticate it. Accepting Jesus's testimony is equivalent to affirming God's truthfulness, because Jesus speaks God's words. Conversely, rejecting Jesus's testimony makes God a liar (cf. 1 John 5:10).
34. The phrase ou gar ek metrou ('not by measure, without limit') indicates that the Spirit is given to the Son without restriction or rationing. In rabbinic thought, the Spirit was given to prophets in limited portions for specific tasks; the Son receives the Spirit in unlimited fullness (cf. 1:32-33, where the Spirit 'remained' on Jesus). The subject of 'gives' (didosin) could be God (giving the Spirit to the Son) or the Son (giving the Spirit to believers), but the former is more natural in context.
35. The verb agapa ('loves') is the present tense of agapao, indicating the Father's continuous, active love for the Son. The perfect tense dedoken ('has given, has placed') indicates a completed transfer of authority with lasting effect. 'All things' (panta) is comprehensive — nothing is withheld. The metaphor 'in his hand' (en te cheiri) denotes authority, power, and possession — a Semitic idiom for total control.
36. The present tense echei ('has') is significant — eternal life is a present possession, not merely a future hope, for those who believe. The contrasting verb apeithon ('disobeying, refusing to be persuaded') is stronger than 'not believing' — it implies active resistance, not mere ignorance. The word orge ('wrath') appears only here in John's Gospel. The verb menei ('remains, abides') is the same word used positively elsewhere for abiding in Christ — here it describes the settled, ongoing state of divine displeasure resting upon the disobedient. This verse serves as a summary of the entire chapter's theology: belief brings life, disobedience brings wrath.

## 4

**Summary:** *John 4* narrates Jesus's encounter with a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well near Sychar. The conversation moves from physical water to 'living water,' from the woman's marital history to the nature of true worship, and culminates in Jesus's self-identification as the Messiah. The woman becomes the first evangelist in John's Gospel, bringing her town to Jesus. The chapter then transitions to a discourse on spiritual harvest with the disciples, and concludes with the healing of a royal official's son in Cana — the second sign in John's narrative.

**What Makes This Remarkable:** *This is the longest recorded conversation between Jesus and any individual in the Gospels. Jesus crosses three boundaries that a first-century Jewish teacher would normally observe: ethnic (Jew-Samaritan), gender (man-woman alone), and moral (righteous-sinful). The woman's progressive recognition of Jesus mirrors Nicodemus's failure to understand — she moves from 'a Jew' (v. 9) to 'sir' (v. 11) to 'prophet' (v. 19) to 'the Christ' (v. 29). The Messiah terminology in verse 25 is notable — the Samaritans awaited a Taheb ('restorer'), not a Davidic king, making this conversation cross-cultural at every level.*

**Translation Friction:** *The phrase 'living water' (hydor zon) carries a double meaning — it means 'running water' (as opposed to still cistern water) in ordinary usage, but Jesus uses it to mean the water that gives spiritual life. The woman's marital situation (five husbands and a current partner) has been read allegorically (representing the five foreign gods of 2 Kings 17:24-34) and literally. We render the text without imposing either reading. The worship discussion (vv. 20-24) addresses the Samaritan-Jewish dispute over the proper place of worship — Gerizim versus Jerusalem.*

**Connections:** *Jacob's well connects to the patriarch Jacob (Genesis 33:18-20). The 'living water' theme connects to Jeremiah 2:13 (God as the fountain of living water), Zechariah 14:8, and Ezekiel 47:1-12 (the river from the temple). The harvest imagery (vv. 35-38) connects to Joel 3:13 and Amos 9:13. The healing of the official's son parallels the Synoptic centurion's servant narrative (Matthew 8:5-13, Luke 7:1-10) but is likely a distinct event.*

<sup>1</sup>Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard he was making and baptizing more disciples than John — <sup>2</sup>(Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his followers,) <sup>3</sup>He departed Judaea, and departed again into Galilee. <sup>4</sup>Now he had to pass through Samaria. <sup>5</sup>So he came to a Samaritan town called Sychar, near the plot of land that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. <sup>6</sup>Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired from the journey, sat down beside the well. It was about noon. <sup>7</sup>A Samaritan woman came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." <sup>8</sup>For his disciples had gone into the town to buy food. <sup>9</sup>The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" (For Jews do not share vessels with Samaritans.) <sup>10</sup>Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." <sup>11</sup>The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket and the well is deep. Where then do you get this living water? <sup>12</sup>You are not greater than our father Jacob, are you? He gave us this well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock." <sup>13</sup>Jesus answered her, "Everyone who drinks from this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup>However, whosoever drinketh of the water that I will give him will never thirst. But the water that I will give him will be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. <sup>15</sup>The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I will not be thirsty and will not have to keep coming here to draw water." <sup>16</sup>He said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back here." <sup>17</sup>The woman answered, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right to say, 'I have no husband,' <sup>18</sup>For you have had five husbands. Then he whom you now hast is not your husband — in that saidst you truly. <sup>19</sup>The woman said to him, "Sir, I can see that you are a prophet. <sup>20</sup>Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that Jerusalem is the place where people must worship." <sup>21</sup>Jesus said to her, "Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. <sup>22</sup>You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, because salvation is from the Jews. <sup>23</sup>But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. <sup>24</sup>God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." <sup>25</sup>The woman said to him, "I know that the Messiah is coming" (the one called Christ). "When he comes, he will explain everything to us." <sup>26</sup>Jesus said to her, "I am he — the one

speaking to you." <sup>27</sup>Just then his disciples returned. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, "What are you looking for?" or "Why are you speaking with her?" <sup>28</sup>So the woman left her water jar and went back into the town and said to the people, <sup>29</sup>"Come, see a man who told me everything I have ever done! Could this be the Christ?" <sup>30</sup>They left the town and were coming to him. <sup>31</sup>Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, "Rabbi, eat something." <sup>32</sup>But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." <sup>33</sup>So the disciples said to one another, "No one brought him anything to eat, did they?" <sup>34</sup>Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to complete his work. <sup>35</sup>Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes and see the fields — they are already white for harvest. <sup>36</sup>Already the reaper is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may rejoice together. <sup>37</sup>For in this case the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.' <sup>38</sup>I sent you to reap what you did not labor for. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor." <sup>39</sup>Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony: "He told me everything I have ever done." <sup>40</sup>So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. <sup>41</sup>Numerous more believed because of his own word;. <sup>42</sup>Stated to the woman, Now we trust, not because of your declaring — since we have listened to him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world. <sup>43</sup>After the two days he departed from there to Galilee. <sup>44</sup>For Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in his own hometown. <sup>45</sup>So when he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the festival, for they too had gone to the festival. <sup>46</sup>So he came again to Cana of Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine. Now there was a royal official whose son was ill in Capernaum. <sup>47</sup>When he heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went to him and asked him to come down and heal his son, for the boy was about to die. <sup>48</sup>Jesus said to him, "Unless you see signs and wonders, you will never believe." <sup>49</sup>The royal official said to him, "Sir, come down before my child dies." <sup>50</sup>Jesus said to him, "Go — your son lives." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started on his way. <sup>51</sup>While he was still going down, his servants met him and told him that his boy was alive. <sup>52</sup>So he asked them the hour when his son began to recover, and they told him, "Yesterday at one in the afternoon the fever left him." <sup>53</sup>The father realized that this was the exact hour when Jesus had said to him, "Your son lives." And he himself believed, along with his entire household. <sup>54</sup>This was the second sign that Jesus performed after coming from Judea to Galilee.

## TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The SBLGNT reads 'Jesus' (Iesous) rather than 'the Lord' (ho kyrios) found in some manuscripts. The Pharisees' attention to Jesus's growing movement creates the narrative motivation for his withdrawal northward through Samaria. The comparison with John frames the situation as a potential political complication.
2. This parenthetical correction qualifies 3:22 and 4:1. The narrator clarifies that Jesus directed the baptizing ministry but did not personally perform the rite. The distinction may reflect a theological concern about the relative authority of baptisms, or simply a factual correction.
3. Jesus withdraws from Judea to avoid premature confrontation with the Pharisees — his 'hour' has not yet come (cf. 2:4, 7:6, 7:30). The verb *apheken* ('left, departed from') suggests a deliberate decision, not flight.
4. The verb *edei* ('it was necessary') suggests more than geographical necessity — many Jews deliberately avoided Samaria by taking a longer route through Perea east of the Jordan. The 'necessity' may be divine — Jesus must pass through Samaria because there is a woman at a well whom the Father intends him to meet. The word carries the same divine compulsion as in 3:7, 3:14, 3:30.
5. Sychar is likely modern Askar, near ancient Shechem. The reference to Jacob's gift of land to Joseph connects to Genesis 33:19 and 48:22, and Joshua 24:32, where Joseph's bones were buried. The detail grounds the narrative in patriarchal history and establishes why this well is called 'Jacob's well' in the next verse.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 33:19 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Joshua 24:32 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The word *pege* ('spring, well, fountain') suggests a natural spring-fed well, though the site today is a deep cistern. The detail that Jesus was *kekopiakos* ('weary, exhausted') from the journey is a vivid human touch — the Word who became flesh (1:14) experiences genuine physical fatigue. The 'sixth hour' is noon by either Jewish or Roman reckoning, the hottest part of the day — an unusual time for a woman to come to draw water, suggesting she may have been avoiding the other women of the town.

7. Jesus initiates the conversation — a striking social reversal. A Jewish rabbi would not normally address an unknown woman in public, much less a Samaritan woman. The request 'Give me a drink' (dos moi peïn) places Jesus in a position of need, creating an opening for dialogue. The verb antlesai ('to draw') is the same used at the Cana wedding (2:8), creating a subtle verbal link between the two water-related narratives.
8. The narrator explains why Jesus is alone — the disciples are away buying provisions. The detail that they purchase food in a Samaritan town implies a less rigid attitude toward Samaritan uncleanness than some Pharisaic standards would permit. The absence of the disciples allows the private conversation that follows.
9. The woman immediately identifies the social boundary Jesus has crossed. The parenthetical explanation ou gar sunchrōntai Ioudaioi Samaritais has been debated — synchronomai may mean 'use together with' (share utensils) rather than 'have dealings with.' The issue is ritual purity: drinking from a Samaritan's vessel would render a Jew ceremonially unclean. The hostility between Jews and Samaritans dated to the Assyrian resettlement (2 Kings 17) and the destruction of the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim in 128 BC.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 2 Kings 17. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. Jesus reverses the dynamic — the one asking for water is actually the one who has water to give. The phrase dorean tou theou ('gift of God') is deliberately ambiguous: it could refer to the living water itself, to the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 2:38), or to Jesus himself. The term hydor zon ('living water') means 'running/flowing water' in ordinary usage (as opposed to stagnant cistern water) but carries a deeper meaning that Jesus will develop. The conditional construction (if you knew... you would have asked) implies the woman does not yet know, but could.
11. The woman hears 'living water' at the physical level — running water from a deep well requires equipment. Her address kyrie ('sir, lord') marks a step up from 'Jew' (v. 9) but remains at the level of polite address. The question pothen ('from where') is one of John's theological keywords — the question of Jesus's origin runs through the Gospel (cf. 2:9, 7:27-28, 8:14, 9:29-30, 19:9).
12. The Greek particle me introduces a question expecting a negative answer: 'You're not greater than Jacob, are you?' The irony is that the reader knows Jesus is indeed greater than Jacob. The woman claims Jacob as 'our father' — the Samaritans traced their lineage to the northern tribes and regarded the patriarchs as their ancestors. The mention of Jacob drinking from the well authenticates it by ancestral use.
13. Jesus now contrasts the water from Jacob's well — which satisfies temporarily — with the living water he offers. The future tense dipsesei ('will thirst') states an inevitable limitation: physical water cannot permanently satisfy. The 'this water' (tou hydatos toutou) refers specifically to the well water, creating a bridge to the contrast in the next verse.
14. The double negative ou me dipsesei ('will never, ever be thirsty') is the strongest possible negation in Greek. The water Jesus gives does not merely satisfy — it transforms the recipient into a source: it becomes 'a spring' (pege) within them. The verb hallomenou ('springing up, leaping, bubbling') conveys dynamic, self-renewing energy. The destination is 'eternal life' (zoen aionion), the quality of divine life that is John's central theme. The image anticipates 7:37-39, where Jesus explicitly connects living water to the Holy Spirit.
15. Like Nicodemus (3:4), the woman remains at the literal level — she wants water that eliminates the daily chore of coming to the well. Yet her request 'give me this water' (dos moi touto to hydor) echoes the language of genuine petition. John's irony operates on multiple levels: the woman asks for more than she understands, and what she is about to receive will far exceed what she requested.
16. The abrupt shift in topic is a deliberate pastoral strategy — Jesus moves from theological discussion to personal reality. The request to bring her husband will expose the woman's life situation and demonstrate Jesus's supernatural knowledge, paralleling the Nathanael encounter (1:47-48). The verb phoneson ('call, summon') indicates Jesus intends the husband to be present for what follows.
17. The woman's reply is technically true but evasive — she has no husband, but the full story is more complex. Jesus affirms her statement with kalos eipas ('you have spoken well/correctly') before revealing the deeper truth. The affirmation before the exposure demonstrates pastoral sensitivity.
18. Jesus reveals knowledge he could not have obtained naturally, demonstrating the same supernatural perception shown with Nathanael (1:47-48) and anticipated in 2:25. The five previous marriages could reflect widowhood, divorce, or a combination — the text does not moralize or explain. The current relationship is distinguished from marriage ('is not your husband'). Some scholars read the five husbands allegorically as the five foreign nations settled in Samaria (2 Kings 17:24), but the narrative functions powerfully at the literal level.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 2 Kings 17:24 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. The woman's identification of Jesus advances from 'Jew' (v. 9) to 'sir' (v. 11) to 'prophet' (v. 19). Her recognition is based on Jesus's supernatural knowledge of her personal history. The Samaritans expected a prophetic figure — the Taheb ('restorer') modeled on Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15-18). Calling Jesus a prophet places him within this expectation.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 18:15-18. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. 'This mountain' is Mount Gerizim, visible from Jacob's well, where the Samaritans had built their temple (destroyed by John Hyrcanus in 128 BC but still sacred). The Samaritan-Jewish dispute over the proper location of worship was one of the deepest divisions between the two communities. The woman may be testing the prophet with the central theological question of her tradition, or she may be deflecting from the personal topic Jesus has raised.
21. Jesus transcends the either/or framework of the woman's question. The coming 'hour' (hora) connects to the theological hour motif that runs through the Gospel (2:4, 7:30, 12:23) — the death and resurrection of Jesus will render both worship locations obsolete. The address 'woman' (gynai)

is respectful, as in 2:4. The reference to 'the Father' (to patri) introduces a new dimension — worship is relational, directed to a Father, not merely performed at a location.

22. Jesus does not treat both traditions as equally valid — while transcending the location debate, he affirms the Jewish tradition's superiority in theological knowledge. The Samaritans accepted only the Torah (the five books of Moses) and rejected the Prophets and Writings, limiting their understanding of God. 'Salvation is from the Jews' (he soteria ek ton Ioudaion estin) is a remarkable statement given the Gospel's frequent criticism of 'the Jews' (religious leaders). Jesus identifies himself with Israel's heritage even as he transcends it.
23. The phrase 'is coming and is now here' (erchetai hora kai nyn estin) collapses future and present — the new age of worship is both imminent and already inaugurated in Jesus's ministry. 'In spirit and truth' (en pneumati kai aletheia) does not mean 'sincerely' or 'from the heart' in a vague sense — pneuma likely refers to the Holy Spirit, and aletheia to the truth revealed in Jesus (14:6). True worship is Spirit-empowered and Christ-centered. The astonishing statement that 'the Father is seeking' (ho pater zetei) such worshippers portrays God as the active pursuer, not merely the recipient of worship.
24. The statement pneuma ho theos ('God is spirit') is not a philosophical definition of God's essence but a statement about the nature of genuine encounter with God. Because God is spirit (not confined to physical locations), worship must be correspondingly spiritual — empowered by the Spirit, oriented toward truth. The verb dei ('must') expresses divine necessity: this is not one option among many but the only authentic mode of worship.
25. This is the second of only two uses of the Aramaic 'Messiah' in the New Testament (cf. 1:41). The Samaritan expectation was for the Taheb ('restorer'), a prophet-like-Moses who would restore true worship and reveal all things. The woman's statement 'he will explain everything to us' (anangelei hemin hapanta) reflects this expectation of a revealer figure. John translates 'Messiah' as Christos for his Greek audience.
26. The Greek ego eimi ('I am') is the first explicit 'I am' statement in the Gospel. On the surface, it means 'I am [the Messiah]' — a direct answer to the woman's expectation. But ego eimi also echoes the divine name revealed to Moses (Exodus 3:14, 'I AM WHO I AM') and will become Jesus's most characteristic self-identification in John (6:20, 8:24, 8:28, 8:58, 13:19, 18:5-6). This is the most explicit messianic self-declaration in any Gospel conversation — and it is given not to a Jewish leader but to a Samaritan woman.
26. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 3:14. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
27. The disciples' astonishment (ethaumazon) is at the gender boundary being crossed — rabbinic teaching discouraged extended conversation with women (Pirke Avot 1:5: 'Do not talk much with a woman'). The fact that she is also Samaritan compounds the surprise. Their silence — not asking 'what do you want?' or 'why are you talking to her?' — suggests a combination of respect and bewilderment.
28. The detail that she 'left her water jar' (apheken ten hydrian) is vivid and significant — the original errand is forgotten in the urgency of her discovery. She came for physical water and leaves without it, having found something greater. The abandoned jar also ensures she will return (and perhaps serves as a pledge to Jesus that she will come back). She goes to tois anthropois ('the people'), not just the men — she evangelizes the entire town.
29. Her invitation 'Come, see' (deute idete) echoes the invitation chain of chapter 1 (1:39, 1:46). The hyperbolic 'everything I have ever done' (panta hosa epoiesas) reflects the overwhelming impression of Jesus's supernatural knowledge. The question meti houtos estin ho christos ('Could this be the Christ?') uses the particle meti, which expects an uncertain or negative answer — she frames her testimony as a question, inviting investigation rather than demanding belief. This is remarkably effective evangelism.
30. The imperfect erchonto ('were coming') describes the townspeople in process — they are on their way, creating a narrative pause during which Jesus will speak to his disciples about the harvest (vv. 31-38). The woman's testimony has set an entire town in motion toward Jesus.
31. The imperfect eroton ('were urging, kept asking') suggests repeated requests. The disciples have returned with the food they purchased (v. 8) and are concerned about Jesus's physical needs. The conversation about food that follows will parallel the water conversation with the Samaritan woman — physical need becomes a springboard for spiritual teaching.
32. As with the woman and water, Jesus transforms a physical topic (food) into a spiritual teaching. The word brosin ('food, nourishment') will be defined in verse 34. The disciples' ignorance ('that you do not know about') parallels the woman's incomprehension about living water.
33. Like Nicodemus (3:4) and the Samaritan woman (4:11, 15), the disciples misunderstand by taking Jesus's words at the literal, physical level. The particle me expects a negative answer — they are fairly sure no one brought food but are puzzled. This triple pattern of misunderstanding reinforces John's theme that spiritual truth requires more than natural comprehension.
34. Jesus defines his 'food' as obedience to the Father's mission. The verb teleiosas ('to complete, to bring to perfection') anticipates Jesus's dying word tetelestai ('it is finished,' 19:30). The phrase 'the one who sent me' (tou pempantos me) is a characteristic Johannine description of the Father, emphasizing Jesus's role as the authorized emissary. Doing God's will is not merely a duty but sustenance — it nourishes Jesus in the way food sustains the body.
35. The 'four months until harvest' may be a common proverb or a literal time marker (placing this scene in December/January, four months before the April/May barley harvest). Jesus contrasts agricultural patience with spiritual urgency — the spiritual harvest is ready now. 'Lift up your eyes and see' may gesture toward the Samaritans walking toward them from the town (v. 30). The 'white fields' could refer to the white garments of approaching Samaritans or is simply harvest imagery.

- 36.** In normal agriculture, sowing and reaping are separated by months; in the spiritual harvest, they overlap. The 'fruit' (karpon) gathered is people brought to faith — the harvest goal is 'eternal life' (zoen aionion). The shared rejoicing of sower and reaper transcends the proverb of verse 37, where they are separate. This may envision Old Testament prophets (sowers) and Jesus/his disciples (reapers) celebrating together.
- 37.** Jesus quotes what appears to be a common proverb, usually carrying a negative sense (one person labors and another benefits). Jesus reframes it positively: the division of labor in God's harvest is by design, not injustice. The sower's work is essential to the reaper's harvest.
- 38.** Jesus explicitly assigns the disciples the role of reapers. The 'others' (alloi) who labored before them likely include the Old Testament prophets, John the Baptist, and possibly Jesus himself. The verb kekopiakate ('have labored') uses the same root as the word describing Jesus's weariness at the well (v. 6, kekopiakos) — there is real toil in sowing, and the reapers inherit its fruit.
- 39.** The woman's testimony (martyrouses, from martyreo) uses the same vocabulary applied to John the Baptist's witness (1:7, 15, 32, 34). A Samaritan woman becomes a credible witness whose word leads to faith — a remarkable statement in a culture where women's testimony was often discounted. Her simple report of personal experience ('He told me everything') proves more effective than theological argument.
- 40.** The Samaritans' invitation to 'stay' (meinai) and Jesus's response of 'staying' (emeinen) use the theologically loaded Johannine verb meno ('abide, remain'). A Jewish teacher staying in a Samaritan town for two days would have been scandalous to many. The hospitality extended and accepted across ethnic lines anticipates the Gospel's universal scope.
- 41.** The progression is from believing through the woman's testimony (v. 39) to believing through Jesus's own word (ton logon autou). The growth from 'many' to 'many more' shows the expanding impact of direct encounter with Jesus. John presents a model of evangelism: personal testimony brings people to Jesus, and Jesus's own word deepens and confirms their faith.
- 42.** The title 'Savior of the world' (ho soter tou kosmou) is the climactic confession of the chapter. Remarkably, it comes from Samaritans — not from Jewish disciples or leaders. 'Savior' (soter) was used for God in the Old Testament (Isaiah 43:3, 11) and for emperors in Greco-Roman culture. The Samaritans claim Jesus for the whole world (tou kosmou), not just for Israel or Samaria. The SBLGNT does not include 'the Christ' (ho Christos), which appears in some manuscripts.
- 43.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 43:3. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 43.** The narrative resumes the journey begun in verse 3. The two-day stay in Samaria delays but does not prevent the return to Galilee. The transition shifts from the Samaritan mission to the Galilean ministry.
- 44.** This proverb (cf. Mark 6:4, Matthew 13:57, Luke 4:24) creates interpretive difficulty in context. If Galilee is Jesus's 'hometown' (patris), the statement seems to contradict the reception described in the next verse. Some scholars take 'hometown' as referring to Judea (the land of his birth in John's theology) or explain that the Galileans' reception is based on signs, not genuine honor. The proverb may serve as an ironic contrast: rejected at home, received abroad (in Samaria).
- 45.** The Galileans' welcome is based on signs they witnessed in Jerusalem during Passover (cf. 2:23). This is the sign-based faith that Jesus did not trust (2:24-25) and that stands in contrast to the Samaritans' faith based on Jesus's word (4:41-42). The Galileans 'received' (edexanto) him, but the quality of their reception is ambiguous.
- 46.** The return to Cana creates a literary frame with the first sign (2:1-11). The basilikos ('royal official') was likely an officer in the service of Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee. The word could mean 'king's man' or 'nobleman.' His son is in Capernaum, roughly 16 miles from Cana — a significant distance that will become important to the story.
- 47.** The imperfect erota ('kept asking, was begging') indicates persistent, urgent pleading. The verb katabee ('come down') is geographically precise — Cana sits higher in the hills than Capernaum on the lake shore. The father assumes Jesus must be physically present to heal, a limitation Jesus will soon transcend. The son's condition is critical: emellen apothneskein ('was about to die').
- 48.** The plural 'you' (idete, pisteusete) indicates this is addressed not only to the official but to the Galileans generally — their faith is sign-dependent (cf. v. 45). The pairing of semeia kai terata ('signs and wonders') is unique in John; usually John uses semeia alone. The addition of terata ('wonders, portents') may carry a mildly negative connotation — seeking spectacle rather than understanding. The double negative ou me ('never') is emphatic.
- 49.** The official ignores Jesus's theological challenge and presses his desperate request. The urgency of a parent facing a child's death overwhelms theological debate. The word paidion ('little child') is more affectionate than huios ('son') used in verse 46, revealing the father's emotional vulnerability. The repeated katabethi ('come down') shows he still assumes Jesus must be physically present.
- 50.** Jesus heals at a distance, without going to Capernaum — his word alone is sufficient. The present tense ze ('lives') is not a promise but a declaration of present reality. The man's response marks a significant step: he 'believed the word' (episteusen to logo) — not a sign he could see, but a word he could only trust. This contrasts with the sign-dependent faith critiqued in verse 48. The verb eporeueto (imperfect, 'was going, started on his way') shows him acting on faith before receiving confirmation.
- 51.** The servants use the same verb ze ('lives') that Jesus spoke in verse 50, creating a verbal link between the word of healing and its confirmation. The word pais ('boy, child, servant') is used here for the son, echoing the affectionate paidion of verse 49. The fact that the servants came out to meet him suggests the recovery was so dramatic they did not wait for his arrival.

52. The father investigates the timing to verify the connection between Jesus's word and the healing. The 'seventh hour' is 1:00 PM by Roman reckoning or 1:00 PM by Jewish reckoning (counting from sunrise at approximately 6:00 AM). The word 'yesterday' (echthes) indicates the official traveled overnight or stayed somewhere along the way — a detail suggesting he did not rush home in anxious unbelief but traveled at a normal pace, trusting Jesus's word.
53. The temporal correspondence confirms the healing was not coincidence but the direct effect of Jesus's word. The father's faith deepens — from initial desperate request (v. 47) to trusting Jesus's word (v. 50) to full belief confirmed by evidence (v. 53). The conversion of 'his entire household' (he oikia autou hole) reflects the ancient pattern where a household head's decision affected the whole family unit. This is the first 'household faith' in the Gospel.
54. John explicitly numbers this as the 'second sign' (deuteron semeion), connecting it to the first sign at Cana (2:11). Both signs occur in Cana, creating a geographic frame. Both involve transformation: water to wine, death to life. The numbering system will cease after this, though John continues to record signs. The phrase 'coming from Judea to Galilee' frames both signs as occurring in the context of Jesus's movement from the south to the north.

## 5

**Summary:** *John 5 opens with Jesus healing a man who had been disabled for thirty-eight years at the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem on the Sabbath. When the Jewish leaders confront the healed man and then Jesus for violating Sabbath regulations, Jesus responds with a profound discourse on his relationship with the Father. He claims that 'my Father is still working, and I am working' — a statement the authorities correctly understand as a claim to equality with God. The extended discourse that follows develops themes of the Son's authority to give life and execute judgment, the reality of resurrection, and the witnesses that testify to Jesus's identity: John the Baptist, Jesus's own works, the Father himself, and the Scriptures.*

**What Makes This Remarkable:** *The Sabbath controversy triggers the most extended christological discourse in the first half of the Gospel. Jesus's claim that the Father 'shows' the Son everything he does (5:20) presents their relationship as one of intimate transparency. The authority claims escalate steadily: the Son gives life to whom he wills (v. 21), the Father has entrusted all judgment to the Son (v. 22), honoring the Son equals honoring the Father (v. 23), and the dead will hear the Son's voice and live (v. 25). The four witnesses (John, works, Father, Scripture) establish a legal case for Jesus's identity, using the courtroom language that pervades the Gospel.*

**Translation Friction:** *The SBLGNT omits verse 4 entirely (the angel stirring the water), regarding it as a later scribal addition. We follow the critical text. The thirty-eight years of the man's illness may allude to Israel's thirty-eight years of wilderness wandering (Deuteronomy 2:14), but this is uncertain. The transition from the healing narrative to the theological discourse is seamless in Greek, with no clear paragraph break. The 'works' Jesus refers to as witnesses (v. 36) likely include his signs but extend to his entire mission.*

**Connections:** *The Sabbath controversy connects to Genesis 2:2-3 (God's rest) and the ongoing Jewish debate about whether God observes the Sabbath. The resurrection theme connects to Daniel 12:2 and Ezekiel 37. The testimony of Scripture (vv. 39-47) specifically invokes Moses, connecting to Deuteronomy 18:15-18 and the entire Torah. The pool of Bethesda has been archaeologically confirmed, with its five-portico structure matching John's description.*

<sup>1</sup>After this there was a festival of the Jewish people, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup>Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool called Bethzatha in Aramaic, which has five covered colonnades. <sup>3</sup>In these lay a large number of disabled people — blind, lame, and paralyzed. <sup>4</sup>One man was there who had been disabled for thirty-eight years. <sup>5</sup>When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to get well?" <sup>6</sup>The disabled man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up. While I am trying to get there, someone else goes in ahead of me." <sup>7</sup>Jesus said to him, "Get up, pick up your mat, and walk." <sup>8</sup>Immediately the man was made well, and he picked up his mat and began to walk. Now that day was a Sabbath. <sup>9</sup>So the Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to carry your mat." <sup>10</sup>But he answered them, "The man who made me well told me, 'Pick up your mat and walk.'" <sup>11</sup>They asked him, "Who is the man who told you, 'Pick it up and walk?'" <sup>12</sup>But the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was

there. <sup>14</sup>Later Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "See, you have been made well. Do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you." <sup>15</sup>The man went away and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had made him well. <sup>16</sup>For this reason the Jewish leaders began persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. <sup>17</sup>But Jesus answered them, "My Father is still working, and I also am working." <sup>18</sup>For this reason the Jewish leaders were seeking all the more to kill him, because he was not only breaking the Sabbath but was also calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God. <sup>19</sup>So Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise. <sup>20</sup>For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything that he himself is doing. And he will show him greater works than these, so that you will be astonished. <sup>21</sup>For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he wishes. <sup>22</sup>For the Father judges no one but has given all judgment to the Son, <sup>23</sup>That all people should honour the Descendant, not even as they honour the Parent. He that honoureth not the Descendant honoureth not the Father which has dispatched him. <sup>24</sup>Truly, truly, I tell you, the one who hears my word and believes the one who sent me has eternal life and does not come under judgment but has passed from death to life. <sup>25</sup>Truly, truly, I tell you, the hour is coming and is now here when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. <sup>26</sup>For just as the Father has life in himself, so also he has granted the Son to have life in himself. <sup>27</sup>Because he is the son of man, and has given him authority to execute judgment also. <sup>28</sup>Do not be astonished at this, for the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice <sup>29</sup>Indeed, will come forth. They that have done good, to the resurrection of life. Then they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation. <sup>30</sup>I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I do not seek my own will but the will of the one who sent me. <sup>31</sup>"If I testify about myself, my testimony is not valid. <sup>32</sup>There is another who testifies about me, and I know that the testimony he gives about me is true. <sup>33</sup>You sent messengers to John, and he has testified to the truth. <sup>34</sup>Not that I accept human testimony, but I say these things so that you may be saved. <sup>35</sup>He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice in his light for a while. <sup>36</sup>But I have a testimony greater than John's, for the works that the Father has given me to accomplish — the very works I am doing — testify about me that the Father has sent me. <sup>37</sup>And the Father who sent me has himself testified about me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, <sup>38</sup>You have not his word abiding in you — for whom he has dispatched, him you believe not. <sup>39</sup>You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life, and it is they that testify about me. <sup>40</sup>You will not come to me, that you might have life. <sup>41</sup>I do not accept glory from people. <sup>42</sup>But I know you — that you do not have the love of God in yourselves. <sup>43</sup>I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive that one. <sup>44</sup>How can you believe when you accept glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? <sup>45</sup>Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father. The one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have placed your hope. <sup>46</sup>For if you believed Moses, you would believe me, because he wrote about me. <sup>47</sup>But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?"

## TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The SBLGNT reads *heorte* without the definite article ('a festival'), leaving the specific festival unidentified. Various proposals include Passover, Tabernacles, Pentecost, or Purim. The lack of specificity may be deliberate — John focuses on the event, not the calendar. The verb *anebe* ('went up') is the standard pilgrimage term for traveling to Jerusalem.
2. The SBLGNT reads 'Bethzatha' rather than 'Bethesda' (found in some manuscripts; the name means 'house of mercy') or 'Bethsaida.' The 'Sheep Gate' (*probatike*) is known from Nehemiah 3:1, 32; 12:39. Archaeological excavations near St. Anne's Church in Jerusalem have uncovered a pool with the five-colonnade structure John describes — four colonnades around the edges and one dividing the pool in two. The present tense *estin* ('there is') may suggest John writes before the pool's destruction in AD 70, or may simply be vivid narration.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Nehemiah 3:1. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The SBLGNT ends verse 3 after 'paralyzed' (*xeron*, literally 'withered, dried up'), omitting the phrase 'waiting for the moving of the water.' This phrase and all of verse 4 (about an angel stirring the water) are absent from the earliest and best manuscripts and are considered a later scribal addition explaining a local healing tradition. We follow the critical text. The three categories — blind, lame, paralyzed — represent the kinds of disabilities that Jesus will heal throughout the Gospel, echoing Isaiah 35:5-6.

3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 35:5-6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
5. The duration of thirty-eight years exceeds any healing in the Synoptic Gospels and establishes the hopelessness of the man's condition. The possible allusion to Israel's thirty-eight years of wilderness wandering between Kadesh-Barnea and the crossing of the Wadi Zered (Deuteronomy 2:14) may suggest that this man represents Israel in its helpless, prolonged suffering. Verse 4 is omitted following the SBLGNT critical text.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 2:14 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. Jesus takes the initiative — the man does not call out, does not know who Jesus is, and does not ask for healing. The verb *gnous* ('knowing') implies supernatural knowledge, as in 1:47-48, 2:24-25, 4:18. The question *theleis hygies genesthai* ('do you want to become well?') seems obvious but is probing — after thirty-eight years, the man's identity may be bound up with his illness. The question also establishes the man's will as a factor in the encounter.
7. The man's answer reveals his isolation (no one to help him) and his assumption that the pool itself is the source of healing. The reference to water being 'stirred up' (*tarachthe*) reflects the local tradition about the pool's intermittent spring, which archaeological evidence confirms — the pool was fed by a spring that flowed irregularly. The man answers Jesus's question about desire with a description of his helplessness — he wants healing but has no means to obtain it.
8. Three imperatives in rapid succession: *egire* ('get up, rise'), *aron* ('pick up, carry'), *peripatei* ('walk'). The command requires no intermediate steps — no washing in a pool, no waiting for stirred water. The word *krabatton* ('mat, pallet, cot') indicates a poor man's bedding, light enough to carry. The command to carry the mat will become the point of Sabbath controversy (v. 10), since carrying objects on the Sabbath was prohibited by rabbinic interpretation of Jeremiah 17:21-22.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jeremiah 17:21-22 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The healing is instantaneous (*eutheos*, 'immediately') and complete (*hygiees*, 'sound, whole, healthy') — thirty-eight years of disability reversed in a moment. The man obeys all three commands. The narrator's final note — 'that day was a Sabbath' — is placed last for dramatic effect, signaling the conflict about to erupt. The Sabbath detail transforms a healing miracle into a legal controversy.
10. The prohibition against carrying objects on the Sabbath derives from Jeremiah 17:21-22 as interpreted by rabbinic tradition, particularly the Mishnah's listing of thirty-nine prohibited categories of work (Shabbat 7:2). The authorities focus on the legal violation rather than the miraculous healing — a priority that Jesus will address. They confront the healed man, not Jesus, whom they have not yet identified.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Jeremiah 17:21-22 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The healed man shifts responsibility — he obeyed the one who healed him. His logic is implicit: if someone has the power to heal a thirty-eight-year disability, his authority to command actions on the Sabbath must be legitimate. The emphasis on 'the man who made me well' (*ho poiesas me hygie*) places the healing authority above the Sabbath regulation.
12. The authorities ask about the identity of the one who commanded the Sabbath violation, not the one who performed the healing. Their question focuses on the command to carry, not the miracle of restoration. The omission of the healing from their question reveals their theological priorities.
13. Unlike the Samaritan woman or Nathanael, this man does not know Jesus's identity even after being healed. The verb *exeneusen* ('turned aside, withdrew, slipped away') indicates Jesus deliberately avoided the attention. The crowd provided cover. This detail highlights the contrast with chapter 4 — the Samaritan woman sought out her community to tell them; this man cannot even identify his healer.
14. Jesus seeks the man out — the verb *heuriskei* ('finds') suggests a deliberate search. The warning 'do not sin anymore' (*meketi hamartane*) implies a connection between the man's past sin and his disability, though Jesus elsewhere denies a universal cause-and-effect between sin and suffering (9:3). The 'something worse' (*cheiron ti*) may refer to eschatological judgment rather than physical suffering. The man is now in the temple — having been healed, he can enter the sacred precincts from which his disability may have excluded him.
15. The man's action is ambiguous — is he naively reporting to those who asked (v. 12), or is he informing on Jesus? The verb *anengeilen* ('reported, announced') is neutral, but the result is that Jesus is now identified as the Sabbath violator. Unlike the Samaritan woman's testimony (4:29), which brings people to Jesus in faith, this man's report brings the authorities to Jesus in opposition.
16. The imperfect *ediokon* ('were persecuting, began to persecute') indicates the beginning of an ongoing campaign. The SBLGNT does not include 'and sought to kill him,' which appears in some manuscripts. The imperfect *epoiei* ('was doing') suggests a pattern of Sabbath activity, not just this single incident. The Sabbath issue becomes the initial flashpoint for the opposition that will eventually lead to the cross.
17. This is one of the most theologically explosive statements in the Gospel. The argument has a Jewish background: rabbis debated whether God himself observes the Sabbath. The prevailing view was that God continues to sustain creation (giving life, judging the dead) even on the Sabbath — if God stopped all work, the universe would collapse. Jesus claims to participate in this ongoing divine work. The phrase 'my Father' (*ho pater mou*) rather than 'our Father' claims a unique filial relationship. The conjunction *kago* ('and I also') places Jesus's work alongside and equivalent to the Father's.

- 18.** The narrator confirms two charges: Sabbath violation and blasphemy. The phrase *patera idion* ('his own Father') with the adjective *idion* ('own, personal, particular') distinguishes Jesus's claim from the general Jewish understanding of God as Father of the nation. The authorities correctly perceive the implication: *ison heautou poion to theo* ('making himself equal with God'). Rather than deny this charge, Jesus's following discourse will elaborate and intensify it.
- 19.** Jesus responds to the charge of 'making himself equal with God' not by denying equality but by clarifying its nature: the Son's equality is not independent autonomy but perfect dependent imitation. 'Cannot do nothing on his own' (*ou dynatai poiein aph heautou ouden*) expresses not inability but the Son's chosen submission to the Father's will. The analogy reflects the ancient apprenticeship model — a son learns his father's trade by watching and replicating. The Son's works are the Father's works made visible.
- 20.** The verb *philei* ('loves') is used here rather than *agapa* — in this context, *phileo* conveys intimate, personal affection between Father and Son. The 'greater works' (*meizona ergon*) that will astonish them are specified in what follows: giving life (v. 21) and executing judgment (v. 22). The Father's showing (*deiknusin*, present tense) is ongoing and complete — nothing is hidden from the Son.
- 21.** Giving life to the dead (*zoopoiei*, 'makes alive') was universally acknowledged as God's exclusive prerogative in Jewish theology. Jesus claims this power for himself without qualification — 'to whom he wishes' (*hous thelei*) asserts sovereign freedom, not arbitrary caprice. This is one of the most direct claims to divine authority in the Gospel.
- 22.** The second divine prerogative — judgment — is now entrusted entirely to the Son. The perfect tense *dedoken* ('has given') indicates a completed, permanent transfer of authority. The claim is breathtaking: the God of Israel does not judge directly but has delegated all judgment to the Son. This redefines the Jewish understanding of the final judgment — the Son stands at the center of eschatology.
- 23.** The purpose of delegated judgment is that the Son receives the same honor (*time*) as the Father. The word *kathos* ('just as, to the same degree as') demands equivalent honor — not similar, not lesser, but identical. The negative corollary is equally strong: dishonoring the Son is dishonoring the Father. This makes christology inseparable from theology — one's relationship to God is determined by one's response to the Son.
- 24.** This verse presents realized eschatology — the future judgment and resurrection are experienced in the present through faith. The present tense *echei* ('has') and the perfect tense *metabebeken* ('has crossed over, has passed') indicate that eternal life is a current possession and the transition from death to life has already occurred for the believer. The believer does not await a future verdict but has already been acquitted.
- 25.** As in 4:23, the phrase 'is coming and is now here' (*erchetai hora kai nyn estin*) collapses future and present. 'The dead' (*hoi nekroi*) operates on two levels: the spiritually dead who hear Jesus now and come to life (present reality), and the physically dead who will be raised at the last day (future hope, developed in vv. 28-29). The title 'Son of God' (*tou huiou tou theou*) is the most exalted title used so far in this discourse.
- 26.** This may be the most profound christological statement in the Gospel. 'Life in himself' (*zoen en heauto*) means self-existent, uncaused, underived life — the very definition of God. The Father possesses this life by nature; the Son possesses it by the Father's gift (*edoken*, 'has given, granted'). The paradox is deliberate: the Son's self-existent life is a gift — he is eternally begotten, not self-generated, yet possesses the same quality of life as the Father.
- 27.** The Greek *huios anthropou* ('Son of Man') appears without the definite article, which is unusual and may echo Daniel 7:13 in the Septuagint. The authority to judge is connected to his identity as Son of Man — the figure in Daniel who receives dominion from the Ancient of Days. The combined claims of this discourse are staggering: the Son gives life (v. 21), receives all judgment (v. 22), possesses self-existent life (v. 26), and exercises judicial authority (v. 27).
- 27.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Daniel 7:13. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 28.** Here the eschatology shifts from realized (v. 25, 'and is now here') to purely future ('the hour is coming' — without the 'and is now here' qualifier). The reference to 'all who are in the tombs' (*pantes hoi en tois mnemeios*) is unambiguously about physical resurrection, not spiritual awakening. The scope is universal — 'all' in the tombs, not merely believers.
- 29.** This is the clearest statement of a dual resurrection in John's Gospel, echoing Daniel 12:2 ('some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt'). The distinction between 'resurrection of life' (*anastasin zoes*) and 'resurrection of judgment' (*anastasin kriseos*) describes two outcomes, not two events. The basis appears to be conduct ('done good' vs. 'practiced evil'), though this must be read alongside verse 24, where faith is the criterion for escaping judgment.
- 29.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Daniel 12:2. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 30.** Jesus returns to the theme of verse 19 — his dependent relationship with the Father. His judgment is just (*dikaia*) precisely because it is not autonomous but aligned with the Father's will. The phrase 'as I hear' (*kathos akouo*) parallels 'what he sees the Father doing' (v. 19) — the Son both sees and hears from the Father, indicating complete communication. This self-limitation is paradoxically the basis of his authority.
- 31.** Jesus now shifts to a legal argument about witnesses, following the principle of Deuteronomy 19:15 that a single witness is insufficient. The concession is formal, not substantive — Jesus is not saying his self-testimony is false but that it would not be accepted as legally sufficient standing alone. The courtroom language (*martyro*, *martyria*) introduces the four-witness section that follows.
- 31.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 19:15. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

32. The 'another' (allos) most likely refers to the Father (cf. v. 37), not to John the Baptist (who is mentioned separately in v. 33). Jesus asserts that the Father's testimony is true (alethes) — reliable and authoritative. This sets up the hierarchy of witnesses that follows: John the Baptist (human witness), Jesus's works (visible evidence), the Father (divine testimony), and the Scriptures (written witness).
33. Jesus references the delegation described in 1:19-27. The perfect tense memartyreiken ('has testified') indicates that John's testimony remains on the record — it is settled and permanent. The dative te aletheia ('to the truth') indicates that John's testimony aligned with and pointed toward the truth, which in John's Gospel is ultimately Jesus himself (14:6).
34. Jesus clarifies that he does not depend on human witnesses for his authority — he cites John the Baptist for the audience's benefit, not his own. The purpose clause 'so that you may be saved' (hina hymeis sothete) reveals a pastoral motive behind the legal argument. Even in the midst of controversy, Jesus's goal is the salvation of his opponents.
35. John the Baptist is called a lychnos ('lamp') — a portable, temporary, derivative light — not the phos ('light') that the Prologue attributes to Christ (1:4-5, 8-9). The distinction is deliberate: John was a lamp that burned with borrowed fire, not the source of light itself. The phrase 'for a while' (pros horan, 'for an hour') suggests the authorities' initial enthusiasm for John's ministry was temporary and superficial.
36. The second witness is Jesus's own works (ta erga) — the signs and the entire mission the Father has assigned. The verb teleioso ('to complete, accomplish, bring to perfection') echoes 4:34 and anticipates 19:30 (tetelestai, 'it is finished'). The works are not merely evidence of power but evidence of origin — they testify 'that the Father has sent me' (hoti ho pater me apostalaken).
37. The third witness is the Father himself. The statement 'you have never heard his voice nor seen his form' is striking — did not Israel hear God's voice at Sinai? Jesus may be saying that his opponents have never truly heard or perceived God despite their religious activity. The word eidos ('form, appearance, shape') and phone ('voice') correspond to the two primary modes of divine revelation in the Old Testament — theophany and oracle. The audience has been blind and deaf to both.
38. The Johannine verb meno ('remaining, abiding') appears here negatively — God's word does not abide in them. The proof of this absence is their rejection of Jesus, whom God sent. The logic is circular by design: if they had God's word in them, they would recognize the one God sent; their failure to recognize him proves they do not have God's word.
39. The verb eraunate could be imperative ('Search!') or indicative ('You search'). We read it as indicative — Jesus is describing their practice, not commanding it. The fourth witness is Scripture itself. The irony is devastating: they study Scripture diligently believing it contains eternal life, and it does — but it points to Jesus, whom they refuse. The Scriptures are not an end in themselves but a witness that leads to the living Word.
40. The verb thelete ('you are willing, you want') frames the refusal as volitional — they do not come because they choose not to. The invitation remains open ('come to me') and the offer is unchanged ('to have life'), but the will is resistant. Jesus diagnoses the problem not as intellectual failure but as a failure of the will.
41. The word doxa ('glory, honor, praise') connects to the Prologue's theme (1:14). Jesus disclaims any need for human recognition — his glory comes from the Father alone. This sets up the contrast with his opponents in the next verse.
42. The perfect tense egnoka ('I have come to know, I know') asserts settled, deep knowledge. The 'love of God' (ten agapen tou theou) could mean their love for God or God's love in them — both senses may be intended. Their rejection of Jesus reveals an absence of love for God, despite their religious devotion. This is the root diagnosis beneath all the surface symptoms.
43. The contrast is between coming 'in my Father's name' (authorized by God) and coming 'in his own name' (self-authorized). The prediction that they will receive a self-appointed figure may refer to false messiahs generally or to specific historical figures. The irony is that the one with divine authorization is rejected while self-promoters are welcomed.
44. Jesus identifies the root obstacle to faith: a disordered desire for human approval. Those who live for peer recognition cannot receive the one who comes in God's name. The phrase tou monou theou ('the only God') echoes Deuteronomy 6:4 (the Shema) and is both a theological affirmation and an implicit charge — they claim to serve the only God but their honor system serves human opinion.
44. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 6:4. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
45. The courtroom language continues — kategoreso ('I will accuse') is a legal term for formal prosecution. Jesus will not need to accuse them because their own champion, Moses, will do so. The perfect tense elpikate ('have hoped, have placed your hope') indicates their settled trust in Moses and the Torah. The irony is that the very authority they claim will condemn them.
46. Jesus claims that Moses's writings point to him — not tangentially but centrally. The conditional construction (ei episteuete... episteuete an) is contrary to fact in the present: 'if you were believing Moses (but you are not), you would be believing me (but you are not).' The specific Mosaic texts Jesus has in mind likely include Deuteronomy 18:15-18 (the prophet like Moses) and perhaps Genesis 3:15, 12:3, and 49:10.
46. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 18:15-18. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
46. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 3:15. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

47. The discourse ends with a devastating rhetorical question. The distinction between grammatsin ('writings, letters') and remasin ('words, spoken utterances') contrasts Moses's written Torah with Jesus's oral teaching. If they cannot believe the written, established, revered text of Moses, how will they believe the spoken words of the one Moses wrote about? The question has no answer — it is an indictment that hangs in the air.

## 6

**Summary:** *John 6 is the longest chapter in the Gospel, centered on the fourth sign — the feeding of five thousand — and the extended Bread of Life discourse that follows. After feeding the crowd with five barley loaves and two fish, Jesus walks on the Sea of Galilee to his disciples. The next day, the crowd pursues him to Capernaum, and Jesus delivers the Bread of Life discourse, declaring 'I am the bread of life' — the first of the great 'I am' statements with predicate. The discourse escalates from spiritual bread to eating his flesh and drinking his blood, provoking widespread desertion. The chapter ends with Peter's confession and Jesus's identification of one of the Twelve as 'a devil.'*

**What Makes This Remarkable:** *The feeding of the five thousand is the only miracle (aside from the resurrection) recorded in all four Gospels, making it central to early Christian memory. John alone records the walking on water as occurring in direct sequence, creating a Moses typology: as Moses provided manna and crossed the sea, so Jesus provides bread and masters the water. The Bread of Life discourse is structured as a synagogue homily on Exodus 16 (the manna), following a pattern of quotation, explanation, and application. The ego eimi ('I am') statement 'I am the bread of life' (6:35, 48) inaugurates the series of seven 'I am' declarations that define the Gospel.*

**Translation Friction:** *The eucharistic language of verses 53-58 ('eat my flesh,' 'drink my blood') has been interpreted sacramentally (referring to the Lord's Supper), metaphorically (referring to faith in Jesus's death), and both simultaneously. We render the Greek without imposing either reading. The verb trogo ('to chew, to munch') in verses 54-58 is more visceral than the earlier phago ('to eat'), intensifying the scandal. The mass desertion of disciples (v. 66) and Jesus's identification of Judas as 'a devil' (v. 70) create one of the Gospel's darkest moments.*

**Connections:** *The entire chapter is structured around Exodus 16 (manna) and Psalm 78:24 ('He gave them bread from heaven to eat'). The walking on water echoes Exodus 14 (the Red Sea crossing) and Psalm 77:19 ('Your way was through the sea'). The Bread of Life discourse connects to the Last Supper tradition (1 Corinthians 11:23-26) and to Wisdom's invitation to eat (Proverbs 9:5, Sirach 24:21). Peter's confession parallels the Synoptic confession at Caesarea Philippi (Mark 8:27-30).*

<sup>1</sup>After this, Jesus went across the Sea of Galilee, that is, the Sea of Tiberias. <sup>2</sup>A large crowd kept following him because they were seeing the signs he was performing on the sick. <sup>3</sup>Jesus went up on the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. <sup>4</sup>Now the Passover, the festival of the Jewish people, was near. <sup>5</sup>When Jesus looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?" <sup>6</sup>He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. <sup>7</sup>Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get even a little." <sup>8</sup>Says to him,, one of his followers, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. <sup>9</sup>"There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are these among so many people?" <sup>10</sup>Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was plenty of grass in that place. So the men sat down, numbering about five thousand. <sup>11</sup>Then Jesus took the loaves, and after giving thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. He did the same with the fish, as much as they wanted. <sup>12</sup>When they were satisfied, he said to his disciples, "Gather up the leftover pieces, so that nothing is wasted." <sup>13</sup>So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with pieces from the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten. <sup>14</sup>When the people saw the sign that he had performed, they said, "This is truly the Prophet who is coming into the world!" <sup>15</sup>So Jesus, knowing that they were about to come and seize him to make him king by force, withdrew again to the mountain by himself alone. <sup>16</sup>When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, <sup>17</sup>Went into into a ship, and traveled over the lake toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not arrive to them. <sup>18</sup>The sea was becoming rough because a strong wind was blowing. <sup>19</sup>When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the

boat, and they were frightened. <sup>20</sup>But he said to them, "I am — do not be afraid." <sup>21</sup>They were willing to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land where they were heading. <sup>22</sup>The next day the crowd that had remained on the other side of the sea noticed that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not gotten into the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. <sup>23</sup>However, boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. <sup>24</sup>So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus. <sup>25</sup>When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?" <sup>26</sup>Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I tell you, you are looking for me not because you saw signs, but because you ate the loaves and were filled. <sup>27</sup>Do not work for food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has set his seal." <sup>28</sup>Then they said to him, "What must we do to perform the works of God?" <sup>29</sup>Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God: that you believe in the one he has sent." <sup>30</sup>So they said to him, "Then what sign do you perform, so that we may see it and believe you? What work do you do? <sup>31</sup>Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, just as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" <sup>32</sup>Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. <sup>33</sup>For the bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." <sup>34</sup>They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always." <sup>35</sup>Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. <sup>36</sup>But I told you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. <sup>37</sup>Everyone the Father gives me will come to me, and the one who comes to me I will never drive away, <sup>38</sup>For I arrived down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that dispatched me. <sup>39</sup>And this is the will of the one who sent me: that I should not lose any of all that he has given me, but raise them up on the last day. <sup>40</sup>For this is the will of my Father: that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day." <sup>41</sup>Then the Jewish leaders began to grumble about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." <sup>42</sup>They were saying, "Is this not Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" <sup>43</sup>Jesus answered them, "Stop grumbling among yourselves. <sup>44</sup>No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up on the last day. <sup>45</sup>It is written in the Prophets: 'And they will all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from him comes to me. <sup>46</sup>Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God — he has seen the Father. <sup>47</sup>Truly, truly, I tell you, the one who believes has eternal life. <sup>48</sup>I myself am the living bread. <sup>49</sup>Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. <sup>50</sup>This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that a person may eat of it and not die. <sup>51</sup>I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, they will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh." <sup>52</sup>The Jewish leaders then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" <sup>53</sup>So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. <sup>54</sup>The one who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day. <sup>55</sup>For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. <sup>56</sup>The one who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them. <sup>57</sup>Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will also live because of me. <sup>58</sup>This is the bread that came down from heaven — not like the bread the fathers ate, and died. The one who feeds on this bread will live forever." <sup>59</sup>He said these things while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum. <sup>60</sup>When many of his disciples heard this, they said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?" <sup>61</sup>But Jesus, knowing within himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, "Does this offend you? <sup>62</sup>Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? <sup>63</sup>It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is of no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. <sup>64</sup>But there are some among you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who the ones were that did not believe, and who would betray him. <sup>65</sup>And he said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted to them by the Father." <sup>66</sup>After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. <sup>67</sup>So Jesus said to the Twelve, "You do not want to leave too, do you?" <sup>68</sup>Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words of eternal life. <sup>69</sup>And we have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God." <sup>70</sup>Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil." <sup>71</sup>He was speaking of Judas son of Simon

## Iscariot, for he, one of the Twelve, was going to betray him.

### TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The double designation — 'Sea of Galilee' (the traditional Jewish name) and 'Sea of Tiberias' (the Roman name, from the city Herod Antipas built and named for Emperor Tiberius) — accommodates both Jewish and Gentile readers. A considerable time gap separates chapters 5 and 6; Jesus has moved from Jerusalem back to Galilee.
2. The imperfect tenses *ekolouthei* ('kept following') and *etheoroun* ('were seeing') indicate ongoing action — the crowd's pursuit is persistent. Their motivation is the signs (*semeia*), confirming the pattern of sign-based faith that Jesus has questioned (2:23-25, 4:48). John mentions healing signs not described in his narrative, indicating selectivity in his account.
3. The definite article to *oros* ('the mountain') may indicate a specific well-known hill on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, or may evoke Mount Sinai, where Moses received the Torah and the manna provision was first given. Jesus's posture of sitting (*ekatheto*) is the position of a teacher in Jewish tradition.
4. This is the second Passover in John's Gospel (cf. 2:13), providing the theological backdrop for the entire chapter. The feeding miracle and the Bread of Life discourse gain their deepest meaning against the Passover context — Jesus is the new Passover bread, the true manna from heaven. The note 'festival of the Jewish people' continues John's practice of explaining Jewish customs for a mixed audience.
5. Jesus initiates the encounter with a question — as with the woman at the well (4:7), he begins from a point of human need. The question is addressed specifically to Philip, possibly because Philip was from Bethsaida (1:44), near the likely location. The word *pothen* ('where, from what source') echoes the theological question of origins that runs through the Gospel (cf. 2:9, 4:11, 7:27-28).
6. The narrator's aside reveals that Jesus's question is not born of uncertainty but serves as a test (*peirazon*, 'testing, proving') of Philip's faith. The verb *edei* ('he knew') attributes supernatural foreknowledge to Jesus, consistent with 1:48, 2:24-25. The test exposes whether Philip will think in human or divine categories.
7. Philip answers in economic terms — two hundred denarii represents roughly eight months' wages for a laborer. His calculation is practical but faithless; he evaluates the problem from a purely human resource perspective. The response fails the test: Philip sees only the impossibility rather than the one who is asking the question.
8. Andrew is again identified through his relationship to Simon Peter (cf. 1:40). Andrew's contribution, while modest, at least brings available resources to Jesus's attention — a pattern consistent with his role as the disciple who brings people to Jesus (1:41-42, 12:22).
9. The word *paidarion* ('boy, young lad') is a diminutive, emphasizing the smallness of the source. Barley loaves (*artous krithinous*) were the bread of the poor — wheat was more expensive. The detail echoes the Elisha miracle in 2 Kings 4:42-44, where twenty barley loaves fed a hundred men. Andrew's question 'what are these among so many?' expresses the same logic as Philip's calculation — human resources are comically inadequate.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 2 Kings 4:42-44. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The detail 'plenty of grass' (*chortos polys*) is an eyewitness memory consistent with springtime near Passover. The number five thousand (*pentakischilioi*) counts only the men (*andres*), as Matthew 14:21 explicitly notes ('besides women and children'). The verb *anapesein* ('to recline, to sit down') is the posture for a formal meal, suggesting Jesus is hosting a banquet — the messianic banquet prefigured.
11. The verb *eucharistesas* ('having given thanks') is the root of 'Eucharist' and creates a clear connection to the Last Supper tradition and early Christian meal practice. In John's account, Jesus distributes directly to the crowd (unlike the Synoptics, where the disciples serve as intermediaries). The phrase *hoson ethelon* ('as much as they wanted') emphasizes abundance — there is no rationing.
12. The verb *eneplesthesan* ('were satisfied, were filled') indicates complete satiation, not mere taste. The command to gather leftovers (*ta perisseusanta klasmata*, 'the surplus fragments') serves both a practical and symbolic function. The verb *apoletai* ('be lost, be wasted, perish') is the same word used in 3:16 for perishing — John may intend a deeper resonance about God's intention that nothing and no one be lost.
13. The twelve baskets (*dodeka kophinous*) likely correspond to the twelve tribes of Israel — the provision is abundant enough for all God's people with surplus to spare. The *kophinos* was a large wicker basket distinctively Jewish in use. Five loaves produce twelve baskets of surplus — the mathematics of divine provision inverts human calculation.
14. The crowd identifies Jesus as 'the Prophet' (*ho prophetes*) — the Moses-like figure promised in Deuteronomy 18:15-18. The connection is logical: Moses gave manna, Jesus gives bread. But as the discourse will show, their understanding is superficial — they want a political deliverer who provides free food, not the bread of life that gives eternal sustenance.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 18:15-18. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The verb *harpazein* ('to seize, to snatch, to take by force') reveals the crowd's intention to impose a political kingship on Jesus. This confirms that their identification of Jesus as 'the Prophet' (v. 14) was politically motivated. Jesus withdraws to prevent the misappropriation of his mission — he will be king, but not on their terms. The phrase 'by himself alone' (*autos monos*) emphasizes his solitary retreat, possibly for prayer (cf. Mark 6:46).
16. The transition to the walking-on-water narrative begins. The disciples descend from the mountain to the lake shore without Jesus. The sequence — bread in the wilderness, crossing the sea — mirrors the Exodus pattern (manna in Exodus 16, Red Sea crossing in Exodus 14), though in reverse

chronological order.

16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 16. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 14. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. The note that it was 'already dark' (skotia ede egegenei) carries Johannine symbolic weight — darkness represents the absence of Jesus, who is the light (1:4-5, 8:12). The phrase 'Jesus had not yet come to them' heightens the sense of vulnerability and separation.
18. The Sea of Galilee (actually a large freshwater lake, about 13 miles long and 8 miles wide) is susceptible to sudden, violent storms when cool air from the surrounding hills descends onto the warm lake surface. The imperfect diegeireto ('was being stirred up, was becoming rough') describes an escalating danger.
19. Twenty-five to thirty stadia equals approximately three to four miles — roughly halfway across the lake at its widest point. They are in the middle of the sea, in the dark, in a storm. The phrase peripatounta epi tes thalasses ('walking on the sea') is unambiguous — epi with the genitive means 'on, upon.' The word ephobethesan ('they were frightened') captures the terror of seeing a figure walking on water in a storm at night. The Old Testament presents walking on water as a divine prerogative (Job 9:8, Psalm 77:19).
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Job 9:8. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 77:19. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. The phrase ego eimi ('I am') functions on two levels: as simple self-identification ('It is I') and as a divine self-declaration echoing the divine name (Exodus 3:14). In context — walking on water during a storm, a divine prerogative — the deeper resonance is unmistakable. The command 'do not be afraid' (me phobeisthe) echoes the Old Testament theophany pattern, where God's appearance is typically accompanied by reassurance (Genesis 15:1, Isaiah 41:10, 43:1).
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 3:14 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 15:1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 41:10 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. John adds a detail absent from the Synoptic accounts: the boat immediately (eutheos) arrived at shore. This may be another miraculous element — instantaneous transportation — or may simply mean the remainder of the crossing passed quickly once Jesus was aboard. The verb ethelon ('were willing, wanted to') suggests their fear gave way to welcome.
22. This complicated verse establishes the crowd's perplexity — they know Jesus did not board the only available boat with his disciples. How then did he get to Capernaum? John leaves the question unanswered for the crowd, letting the mystery of the sea-walking remain implicit rather than narrated publicly.
23. This parenthetical explains how the crowd was able to follow Jesus across the lake — additional boats arrived from the city of Tiberias. The phrase 'after the Lord had given thanks' (eucharistesantos tou kyriou) recalls 6:11 and is the narrator's characteristic use of the title kyrios ('Lord') for Jesus.
24. The crowd pursues Jesus across the lake, motivated by the sign they witnessed. The verb zetountes ('seeking, looking for') will be picked up by Jesus in verse 26 — they seek him, but for the wrong reasons.
25. The crowd's question 'when did you get here?' implicitly asks 'how did you get here?' — since they know he did not take the only boat. Jesus does not answer their question but redirects the conversation to their true motivations.
26. Jesus exposes their motivation: they did not come because they understood the signs (semeia, pointing to Jesus's identity) but because they got a free meal. They saw 'signs' but did not truly 'see' them — the miraculous provision did not lead them to perceive who Jesus is. The verb echortasthete ('were filled, were satisfied') is the same word used for feeding animals in some contexts, suggesting consumption without comprehension.
27. Jesus redirects their effort (ergazesthe, 'work, labor') from temporal food to eternal food. The contrast between 'food that perishes' (ten brosin ten apollymenen) and 'food that endures' (ten brosin ten menousan) echoes the water conversation with the Samaritan woman (4:13-14). The Son of Man is both the giver and the gift. The 'seal' (esphragisen) is a mark of authentication and ownership — God has certified Jesus as the authorized source of eternal nourishment.
28. The crowd's question assumes that obtaining this food requires human effort — 'works of God' (ta erga tou theou) means 'the works God requires.' They think in terms of religious performance. Jesus's answer will subvert their entire framework.
29. Jesus reduces the plural 'works' to a single 'work' (to ergon) — faith. The many required works collapse into one: believing in Jesus. The present subjunctive pisteuete ('that you believe, keep believing') suggests ongoing faith, not a one-time decision. This answer redefines the entire religious economy: the 'work' God requires is not human effort but receptive trust in God's sent one.
30. The demand for a sign is remarkable — they have just witnessed the feeding of five thousand and crossed the lake to find Jesus because of it. Yet they ask for another sign. The logic seems to be: Moses gave manna for forty years; you gave bread once. If you claim to surpass Moses, prove it with an ongoing provision. Their faith is transactional: they will believe if given sufficient evidence, on their terms.

31. The crowd cites Psalm 78:24 (or possibly Exodus 16:4, 15; Nehemiah 9:15). The quotation becomes the text for Jesus's discourse — he will offer a rabbinic-style commentary on 'bread from heaven.' The crowd uses the manna tradition to challenge Jesus: Moses gave bread from heaven for decades; what can you offer that compares?
31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 16:4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 78:24. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Nehemiah 9:15. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
32. Jesus corrects two errors in their argument: (1) Moses was not the source — God was; (2) the manna was not the true bread from heaven — it was a pointer to the reality now being revealed. The shift from past tense *dedoken* ('gave') to present tense *didosin* ('gives') is significant: the true bread is being given now, in the present moment. The adjective *alethinon* ('true, genuine, real') distinguishes the ultimate reality from the type that foreshadowed it.
33. The participle *katabainon* ('the one coming down') shifts from neuter ('that which comes down') to masculine — the bread is a person, not a substance. The scope is again universal: 'life to the world' (*zoen* to *kosmo*), not merely to Israel. The manna fed Israel in the wilderness; this bread gives life to the entire world.
34. Like the Samaritan woman's 'give me this water' (4:15), the crowd requests the gift while still understanding it physically. The adverb *pantote* ('always, at all times') reveals their desire for a permanent food supply. They will soon learn that the bread Jesus offers is himself — a claim that will divide them.
35. This is the first of the seven great 'I am' statements with a predicate in John's Gospel: *ego eimi ho artos tes zoes* ('I am the bread of life'). Jesus does not merely provide bread — he is the bread. 'Coming' and 'believing' are parallel actions describing the same movement of faith. The double negative *ou me* ('never') is the strongest possible assurance of permanent satisfaction.
36. Seeing and not believing is the persistent failure of the crowd. They have seen both the sign (feeding) and the sign-giver (Jesus himself), yet refuse the faith that seeing should produce. This verse transitions into the theological section about the Father's drawing and the Son's preservation of those who come.
37. This verse holds two realities in tension: divine initiative (the Father 'gives' people to the Son) and human responsibility (the one who 'comes'). The neuter *pan* ('everything, all') in the first clause treats those given as a collective whole; the masculine *ton erchomenon* ('the one coming') in the second clause treats each person individually. The double negative *ou me ekbalo* ('I will never cast out') is an absolute guarantee of reception.
38. The perfect tense *katabebeka* ('I have come down') indicates a completed descent with ongoing presence. Jesus's will is entirely submitted to the Father's will — a claim of perfect obedience that echoes 4:34 and 5:30. This verse provides the theological basis for the assurance of verse 37: Jesus will never reject anyone the Father sends because rejecting them would be disobeying the Father.
39. The Father's will is stated with crystalline clarity: zero loss and final resurrection. The verb *apoleso* ('lose, destroy') is the same word as 'perish' in 3:16 — what God wills is that none of his given ones perish. The phrase *te eschate hemera* ('on the last day') introduces future eschatology alongside the realized eschatology of verse 24. The resurrection promise will be repeated four times in this discourse (vv. 39, 40, 44, 54).
40. Verse 39 stated the Father's will in terms of preservation (not losing any); verse 40 states it in terms of human response (seeing and believing). Both perspectives are true simultaneously — divine keeping and human believing are not alternatives but complementary. The verb *theonon* ('seeing, beholding') implies more than glancing — it means perceiving, contemplating, recognizing Jesus for who he is.
41. The verb *egongyzon* ('were grumbling, were murmuring') deliberately echoes Israel's murmuring against Moses in the wilderness (Exodus 16:2, 7-9; Numbers 11:1). The typological parallel is precise: as Israel grumbled against Moses when given bread from heaven, so these leaders grumble against Jesus when he claims to be the bread from heaven. History repeats its pattern of unbelief.
41. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 16:2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
41. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Numbers 11:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
42. The objection is based on familiarity — they know his human family and therefore reject his heavenly origin. The question 'whose father and mother we know' assumes that known parentage excludes divine origin. The irony is thick: they think they know his father (Joseph), but they do not know his true Father (God). This is the same stumbling block Nathanael initially faced ('Can anything good come from Nazareth?' 1:46).
43. The command *me goggyzete* ('stop grumbling') directly echoes Moses's rebuke of Israel in Exodus 16:8-9. Jesus assumes Moses's role in the wilderness narrative, further establishing the typological parallel.
43. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 16:8-9 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

44. The verb *helkyse* ('draws, attracts, drags') is a strong word — it is used for drawing a net (21:6), drawing a sword (18:10), and drawing Paul through the streets (Acts 16:19). This is not gentle persuasion but decisive, powerful attraction. The claim is that coming to Jesus requires divine initiative — apart from the Father's drawing, no one can come. The third repetition of 'I will raise them up on the last day' reinforces the resurrection promise.
45. The quotation is from Isaiah 54:13, part of the new covenant vision. Being 'taught by God' (*didaktoi theou*) means direct divine instruction — those who are open to God's teaching recognize Jesus. The logic is: if you have truly heard and learned from the Father, you will come to the Son, because the Father's teaching leads to the Son.
46. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 54:13 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
47. Jesus qualifies verse 45: being 'taught by God' does not mean anyone has seen God directly. Only the one who is 'from God' (*para tou theou*) — Jesus himself — has seen the Father (cf. 1:18). All human knowledge of God is mediated through the Son.
48. The statement is stark in its simplicity: belief equals eternal life, present tense. The SBLGNT does not include 'in me' (*eis eme*) though some manuscripts add it; the object of belief is clear from context. This is a restatement of 3:16 and 5:24 in its most compressed form.
49. The 'I am' statement from verse 35 is repeated, now functioning as the transition to the more scandalous claims that follow. The repetition creates emphasis and marks the beginning of the discourse's intensification.
50. The manna's limitation is stated bluntly: those who ate it died. Physical bread, even miraculously given, cannot prevent death. This establishes the need for a different kind of bread — one that conquers death itself.
51. The bread from heaven surpasses the manna in its essential quality: it prevents death. The phrase *me apothane* ('not die') refers to spiritual/eternal death, not physical death — Jesus's followers still die physically, but death no longer has the final word.
52. The discourse reaches its most provocative claim: the bread is his flesh (*he sarx mou*). The word *sarx* ('flesh') echoes 1:14 ('the Word became flesh') and now receives a sacrificial dimension — this flesh is given 'for the life of the world' (*hyper tes tou kosmou zoes*). The preposition *hyper* ('for, on behalf of') indicates substitutionary sacrifice. The shift from metaphor to shocking literalism sets up the controversy of the next verses.
53. The verb *emachonto* ('were fighting, were disputing') indicates heated argument, not merely questioning. Their question 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' takes Jesus's words at face value and finds them absurd and offensive. Eating human flesh would violate every dietary and moral law they knew. Jesus does not soften the claim in response — he intensifies it.
54. Rather than moderating the offensive claim, Jesus escalates it by adding 'drink his blood' — an absolute prohibition in Jewish law (Genesis 9:4, Leviticus 17:10-14). The double requirement (eating flesh and drinking blood) and the negative conditional (unless... you have no life) make this the most scandalous statement in Jesus's public ministry. Whether understood sacramentally (Eucharist), metaphorically (total appropriation of Jesus's sacrificial death by faith), or both, the language is deliberately confrontational.
55. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 9:4 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
56. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Leviticus 17:10-14 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
57. The verb shifts from *phago* ('to eat,' used earlier) to *trogo* ('to chew, to munch, to gnaw') — a more visceral, physical word that intensifies the scandal. This is the fourth occurrence of 'I will raise them up on the last day' (cf. vv. 39, 40, 44), making the resurrection promise the drumbeat of the entire discourse.
58. The adjective *alethes* ('true, genuine') in the SBLGNT (some manuscripts read *alethōs*, 'truly') means that Jesus's flesh and blood are the authentic reality of which all other food and drink are shadows. This is not metaphor diminishing into symbol but reality claiming its full weight.
59. The mutual indwelling language — 'remains in me and I in them' (*en emoi menei kago en auto*) — introduces the abiding theme that will be fully developed in the Farewell Discourse (chapters 14-17, especially 15:1-11). Eating and drinking create a relationship of mutual inhabitation between the believer and Christ.
60. The chain of life is explicit: the Father (source of life) gives life to the Son, and the Son gives life to the believer. The phrase 'the living Father' (*ho zon pater*) is unique in the New Testament and identifies the Father as the ultimate source of all life. The preposition *dia* ('because of, through') indicates that Jesus's life is derived from the Father, and the believer's life is derived from Jesus.
61. The discourse concludes by returning to its starting point — the contrast with the manna — creating an *inclusio*. The manna sustained life temporarily; this bread gives life forever. The verb *trogo* ('feeds on') maintains the visceral language to the end. The final promise — *zesei eis ton aiona* ('will live forever') — is the discourse's ultimate claim.
62. The narrator identifies the setting: a synagogue in Capernaum. This context confirms that the Bread of Life discourse is a formal teaching, delivered in a liturgical setting where Scripture would have been read and expounded. The synagogue setting makes the desertion that follows even more dramatic — these are not casual listeners but members of the worshiping community.
63. The word *skleros* ('hard, harsh, offensive') does not mean difficult to understand but difficult to accept. They understand the claim well enough — and find it intolerable. The 'disciples' (*mathetai*) here are the broader group of followers, not just the Twelve. The question 'who can hear it?' (*tis dynatai autou akouein*) means 'who can bear to listen to this?'

61. The verb *skandalizei* ('offend, cause to stumble, shock') is strong — the teaching is a stumbling block, an obstacle to continued following. Jesus knows their reaction before they express it (cf. 2:25) and addresses it directly without softening the teaching.
62. The sentence is deliberately incomplete — Jesus leaves the conclusion unstated. Will the ascension confirm or resolve their offense? The phrase 'where he was before' (*hopou en to proteron*) asserts pre-existence: the Son of Man was in heaven before his descent. The ascension will prove that his heavenly origin claims are true.
63. This verse is the interpretive key to the entire discourse. 'The flesh is of no help' (*he sarx ouk ophelei ouden*) does not retract the flesh-eating language but clarifies the mode of reception: the discourse cannot be understood at the level of flesh (human reasoning, physical consumption) but only through the Spirit. Jesus's words are 'spirit and life' — they carry the Spirit's life-giving power and must be received in the Spirit.
64. The narrator's aside reveals that Jesus's knowledge extends to the identity of the unbelievers within his own circle and to the identity of his future betrayer. The phrase *ex arches* ('from the beginning') indicates this was not a gradual discovery but foreknowledge. The first mention of betrayal (*paradoson*, 'the one who would hand over') in John's Gospel — an ominous foreshadowing.
65. Jesus restates the divine initiative of verse 44 — coming to him is not a human achievement but a divine gift. The perfect passive participle *dedomenon* ('having been given, granted') emphasizes that the ability to come is God's prior work. The 'therefore' (*dia touto*) connects unbelief to the absence of this divine enablement.
66. The phrase *apelthon eis ta opisō* ('went back, turned away') is the language of apostasy — they reverse course and abandon discipleship. The imperfect *periepatoun* ('were walking') with the negative *ouketi* ('no longer') indicates a permanent departure, not a temporary wavering. This is the greatest crisis of faith in Jesus's ministry as John narrates it.
67. This is the only place in John's Gospel where 'the Twelve' (*tois dodeka*) are mentioned as a distinct group. The question *me kai hymeis thelete* ('you don't want to go too, do you?') uses the particle *me*, which expects a negative answer, but the possibility is real. Jesus does not compel anyone to stay — he offers the freedom to leave.
68. Peter's response is not a triumphant confession but an honest acknowledgment of having no alternative. The question 'to whom would we go?' admits the difficulty of the teaching while recognizing that there is no other source of 'words of eternal life' (*remata zoes aioniou*). Peter does not say 'we understand' but 'we have nowhere else to go.' This is faith in the face of incomprehension.
69. The SBLGNT reads 'the Holy One of God' (*ho hagios tou theou*) rather than 'the Christ, the Son of the living God' found in some manuscripts (influenced by Matthew 16:16). The title 'Holy One of God' appears in Mark 1:24 on the lips of a demon. The perfect tenses *pepistukamen* ('we have believed') and *egnokamen* ('we have known') indicate settled, ongoing conviction. The order is significant: belief leads to knowledge, not the reverse.
70. The word *diabolos* ('devil, accuser, slanderer') is shocking when applied to a disciple. Jesus affirms that he chose all twelve deliberately (*exelexamen*, 'I selected'), including the one who will betray him. The divine foreknowledge of verse 64 is now applied directly. The presence of a betrayer within the chosen circle is a mystery Jesus acknowledges but does not explain.
71. The narrator identifies the betrayer by full name: Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. The designation 'Iscariot' (*Iskariōtou*) may derive from the Hebrew *ish-Qeriyot* ('man of Kerioth'), indicating Judas's origin in a Judean town — making him possibly the only non-Galilean among the Twelve. The phrase 'one of the Twelve' (*heis on ek ton dodeka*) emphasizes the insider nature of the betrayal. The imperfect *emellen* ('was going to') indicates this was settled in advance.

## 7

**Summary:** *John 7 takes place during the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot) in Jerusalem. Jesus initially stays in Galilee while his brothers urge him to go public in Judea, then travels to Jerusalem secretly and teaches in the temple midway through the festival. The chapter is structured around escalating division: the crowds are split over whether Jesus is a good man or a deceiver, whether he could be the Christ, and whether the authorities want to arrest or believe him. On the last day of the feast, Jesus makes his climactic declaration: 'If anyone is thirsty, let them come to me and drink' — a claim the narrator connects to the Holy Spirit. The chapter ends with the Pharisees and chief priests failing to arrest him, and Nicodemus making a cautious defense.*

**What Makes This Remarkable:** *The Feast of Tabernacles provides the symbolic backdrop for Jesus's teaching. The festival celebrated the wilderness wandering with water-pouring ceremonies (commemorating the water from the rock) and light ceremonies (commemorating the pillar of fire). Jesus's 'living water' declaration (7:37-39) directly engages the water-pouring ritual, and his 'light of the world' declaration in 8:12 engages the light ceremony. The division among the people (schisma, 7:43) becomes a structural element — Jesus is the great divider, forcing a decision. The officers sent to arrest him return empty-handed, declaring 'No one ever spoke like this man' (7:46).*

*Translation Friction: The punctuation of 7:37-38 is heavily debated. The traditional reading makes the believer the source of living water ('Out of their heart will flow rivers'). An alternative reading makes Jesus the source ('Out of his heart will flow rivers'). We follow the traditional punctuation while noting the alternative. The reference to 'Scripture' in 7:38 does not correspond to any single Old Testament passage — it may be a composite allusion to Isaiah 55:1, Ezekiel 47:1-12, and Zechariah 14:8. Jesus's brothers' unbelief (7:5) and the confused expectations of the crowd create a portrait of widespread misunderstanding.*

*Connections: The Feast of Tabernacles connects to Leviticus 23:33-43, Nehemiah 8:14-18, and Zechariah 14:16-19. The water-pouring ceremony connects to Isaiah 12:3 ('With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation'). The crowd's debate about whether the Christ comes from Bethlehem (7:42) ironically confirms Jesus's qualification — they do not know he was born there. Nicodemus's reappearance (7:50-52) continues his arc from chapter 3.*

<sup>1</sup>After this, Jesus traveled around in Galilee. He did not want to travel in Judea because the Jewish leaders were seeking to kill him. <sup>2</sup>Now the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles was near. <sup>3</sup>So his brothers said to him, "Leave here and go to Judea, so that your disciples there can also see the works you are doing. <sup>4</sup>For no one does anything in secret if they want to be known publicly. If you are doing these things, show yourself to the world." <sup>5</sup>For not even his brothers believed in him. <sup>6</sup>So Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready. <sup>7</sup>The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil. <sup>8</sup>You go up to the festival. I am not going up to this festival because my time has not yet been fulfilled." <sup>9</sup>After saying this, he stayed behind in Galilee. <sup>10</sup>But after his brothers had gone up to the festival, then he also went up — not publicly but in secret. <sup>11</sup>The Jewish leaders were looking for him at the festival, saying, "Where is that man?" <sup>12</sup>There was much whispering about him among the crowds. Some were saying, "He is a good man," while others were saying, "No, he is leading the people astray." <sup>13</sup>Yet no one spoke openly about him for fear of the Jewish leaders. <sup>14</sup>When the festival was already half over, Jesus went up to the temple and began teaching. <sup>15</sup>The Jewish leaders were astonished, saying, "How does this man know Scripture without having been formally educated?" <sup>16</sup>Jesus answered them, "My teaching is not my own but comes from the one who sent me. <sup>17</sup>If anyone chooses to do God's will, they will know whether this teaching is from God or whether I speak on my own authority. <sup>18</sup>The one who speaks on their own authority seeks their own glory, but the one who seeks the glory of the one who sent him — this person is true, and there is no falsehood in them. <sup>19</sup>Did not Moses give you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why are you seeking to kill me?" <sup>20</sup>The crowd answered, "You have a demon! Who is seeking to kill you?" <sup>21</sup>Jesus answered them, "I did one work, and all of you are astonished. <sup>22</sup>Moses gave you circumcision — not that it originated with Moses but with the patriarchs — and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. <sup>23</sup>If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses is not broken, are you angry with me because I made an entire man well on the Sabbath? <sup>24</sup>Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment." <sup>25</sup>Some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, "Is this not the man they are trying to kill? <sup>26</sup>And look — he is speaking publicly and they say nothing to him! Could it be that the rulers really know that this is the Christ? <sup>27</sup>But we know where this man is from. When the Christ comes, no one will know where he is from." <sup>28</sup>Then Jesus cried out in the temple as he was teaching, "You know me, and you know where I am from! But I have not come on my own. The one who sent me is true, and you do not know him. <sup>29</sup>I know him, because I am from him and he sent me." <sup>30</sup>So they tried to arrest him, but no one laid a hand on him because his hour had not yet come. <sup>31</sup>But many in the crowd believed in him. They were saying, "When the Christ comes, will he perform more signs than this man has done?" <sup>32</sup>The Pharisees heard the crowd whispering these things about him, and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent temple officers to arrest him. <sup>33</sup>So Jesus said, "I will be with you only a little while longer, and then I am going to the one who sent me. <sup>34</sup>You will look for me and will not find me, and where I am you cannot come." <sup>35</sup>The Jewish leaders said among themselves, "Where does this man intend to go that we will not find him? He does not intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks, does he? <sup>36</sup>What does he mean by saying, 'You will look for me and will not find me, and where I am you cannot come'?" <sup>37</sup>On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and cried out, "If anyone is thirsty, let them come to me and drink. <sup>38</sup>Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of their heart will flow rivers of living water.'" <sup>39</sup>Now he said this about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were going to receive, for the Spirit had not yet been given because Jesus had not yet been glorified. <sup>40</sup>When some in the crowd heard

these words, they said, "This man is truly the Prophet." <sup>41</sup>Others were saying, "This is the Christ." But some were saying, "Surely the Christ does not come from Galilee, does he? <sup>42</sup>Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David and from Bethlehem, the village where David lived?" <sup>43</sup>So there was a division among the crowd because of him. <sup>44</sup>Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him. <sup>45</sup>The temple officers then returned to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, "Why did you not bring him in?" <sup>46</sup>The officers answered, "No one has ever spoken like this man." <sup>47</sup>The Pharisees answered them, "Have you been deceived too? <sup>48</sup>Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees put their trust in him? <sup>49</sup>But this crowd that does not know the law — they are cursed!" <sup>50</sup>Nicodemus — the one who had come to Jesus earlier, and who was one of them — said to them, <sup>51</sup>"Does our law condemn a man without first hearing from him and finding out what he is doing?" <sup>52</sup>They answered him, "You are not from Galilee too, are you? Search and see — no prophet arises from Galilee!" <sup>53</sup>Then each of them went to his own home.

## TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The verb *periepatei* ('was walking around, was traveling') indicates a period of itinerant ministry in Galilee. The reason for avoiding Judea is explicit: the authorities were seeking to kill him (cf. 5:18). The narrative tension between Galilee (relative safety) and Jerusalem (mortal danger) structures the chapter.
2. The *skenopegia* ('Feast of Tabernacles, Feast of Booths') was one of the three pilgrimage festivals (with Passover and Pentecost) requiring attendance in Jerusalem. Celebrated in September/October (Tishri 15-22), it commemorated Israel's wilderness wandering and gave thanks for the autumn harvest. It was the most joyful of the festivals, involving temporary shelters (*sukkot*), torch-lit processions, and water-drawing ceremonies.
3. Jesus's brothers (*adelphoi*, cf. 2:12) urge him to go public on the largest possible stage. Their advice is worldly wisdom: if you want followers, perform in the capital during the biggest festival. The reference to 'your disciples' in Judea distinguishes the broader circle of followers from the Galilean group.
4. The brothers' logic is strategic: public figures need public platforms. The contrast between *en krypto* ('in secret') and *en parresia* ('openly, publicly, with boldness') frames the issue as marketing. The conditional 'if you are doing these things' (*ei tauta poieis*) may carry a note of doubt — they are not entirely sure about his works. The command 'show yourself to the world' (*phaneroson se auton to kosmo*) echoes the narrator's role-description of signs as 'revelations' (2:11).
5. The narrator's blunt assessment — 'not even his brothers believed' (*oude gar hoi adelphoi autou episteuon*) — is one of the most poignant notes in the Gospel. The imperfect tense *episteuon* indicates their unbelief at this point in time; Acts 1:14 shows them among the believers after the resurrection. The word 'even' (*oude*) emphasizes the scandal: those closest to him by blood do not believe.
6. The word *kairos* ('time, opportune moment') is distinct from *chronos* ('chronological time'). Jesus operates on a divine timetable; his brothers can go to Jerusalem whenever they choose because nothing of cosmic significance depends on their timing. The phrase *oupo parestin* ('has not yet arrived') connects to the 'hour' motif (2:4, 7:30, 8:20) — Jesus's movements are determined by the Father's schedule, not human advice.
7. The world (*kosmos*) has no reason to hate Jesus's brothers — they share its values and pose no threat to its order. Jesus provokes hatred because he exposes evil (cf. 3:19-20). The verb *martyro* ('I testify') places Jesus in the role of witness against the world — his very presence is an indictment of human darkness.
8. The SBLGNT reads *ouk* ('not') rather than *oupo* ('not yet'), which some manuscripts have. With *ouk*, Jesus says flatly 'I am not going' — then goes secretly (v. 10). This is not deception but a refusal to go on their terms and their timetable. The perfect tense *peplerotai* ('has been fulfilled') indicates that the *kairos* is not yet complete — God's timing has not yet arrived for a public appearance.
9. Jesus remains (*emeinen*) in Galilee — temporarily. His brothers go ahead publicly; he will follow privately. The verb *meno* ('to stay, to remain') carries its usual Johannine weight of deliberate, purposeful presence.
10. Jesus goes to Jerusalem, but on his own terms — *en krypto* ('in secret'), the opposite of the *en parresia* ('publicly') his brothers demanded (v. 4). He will make a public appearance, but at the time and in the manner the Father determines, not as a publicity stunt orchestrated by unbelieving family members.
11. The imperfect *ezetoun* ('were looking for') indicates an ongoing search. The demonstrative *ekeinos* ('that one, that man') can be either neutral or disdainful — they refer to Jesus without naming him. The authorities expect him at the festival and are prepared to act.
12. The word *goggysmos* ('murmuring, whispering') indicates guarded, secretive conversation — people are afraid to speak openly (v. 13). The division is between those who see Jesus as 'good' (*agathos*) and those who see him as a deceiver who 'leads astray' (*plana*, the root of 'planet' — one who wanders and causes others to wander). This division (*schisma*) will deepen throughout the chapter.
13. The word *parresia* ('openly, boldly, with freedom of speech') contrasts with the secretive whispering of verse 12. Fear of the authorities (*ton phobon ton Ioudaion*) suppresses public discourse about Jesus. This fear of the authorities recurs in 9:22, 12:42, 19:38, 20:19, revealing the coercive power of the religious establishment.

14. Jesus makes his public appearance on his own schedule — midway through the seven-day festival (approximately day three or four). He teaches in the temple (hieron, the temple complex), the most public forum in Jerusalem. The imperfect edidasken ('was teaching, began teaching') indicates sustained instruction, not a single statement.
15. The phrase grammata oiden ('knows letters/learning') refers not to basic literacy but to the formal study of Scripture under a recognized rabbi. Jesus had no rabbinic credentials — he had not studied under any recognized teacher. The verb memathekas ('having learned, having studied') is from the same root as mathetes ('disciple'). Their astonishment acknowledges his competence while questioning his credentials.
16. Jesus explains his lack of formal credentials by identifying the source of his teaching: the Father who sent him. His teaching is not self-generated (ouk estin eme) but received from God. This continues the pattern of the Son doing nothing on his own but only what the Father gives (5:19, 30).
17. Jesus offers an epistemological principle: obedience is the pathway to knowledge. Those who are willing to do God's will (to thelema autou poiein) will be able to discern whether Jesus's teaching comes from God. The willingness to obey precedes the ability to evaluate — moral alignment opens the way to theological understanding.
18. Jesus provides a test for authenticating a teacher: examine whose glory they seek. Self-promoters seek their own glory (ten doxan ten idian); an authentic teacher seeks the glory of the one who commissioned them. The word adikia ('unrighteousness, falsehood, injustice') here carries the sense of dishonesty or deception — the teacher who seeks God's glory is trustworthy.
19. Jesus turns the tables: they claim to follow Moses's law, yet they are plotting murder — which the law forbids (Exodus 20:13). The argument is devastating: the very law they accuse Jesus of violating (Sabbath regulations) condemns their own intent to kill. The phrase oudeis ex hymon poiei ton nomon ('none of you keeps the law') is either hyperbolic or a specific charge about the murder plot.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 20:13. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. The crowd (ochlos), as opposed to the authorities (Ioudaioi), appears unaware of the murder plot. Their accusation 'you have a demon' (daimonion echeis) attributes Jesus's claims to insanity or demonic influence — a charge that will recur (8:48, 52, 10:20). The crowd's ignorance of the leadership's intentions reveals a disconnect between the people and their rulers.
21. The 'one work' (hen ergon) refers to the Sabbath healing at the pool of Bethesda (5:1-9), which triggered the persecution. Jesus returns to the unfinished argument from chapter 5. The verb thaumazete ('you are astonished/troubled') indicates the Sabbath healing still provokes them.
22. Jesus constructs a rabbinic argument from lesser to greater (qal vahomer). Circumcision predates Moses (Genesis 17) but was incorporated into Mosaic law (Leviticus 12:3). When the eighth day after birth falls on a Sabbath, circumcision proceeds — the obligation to circumcise overrides the Sabbath prohibition of work. This was settled Jewish law (cf. Mishnah Shabbat 18:3, 19:2).
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 17. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Leviticus 12:3. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
23. The argument from lesser to greater: if circumcision (which benefits one part of the body) can override the Sabbath, how much more should healing the whole person (holon anthropon hygie, 'an entire person well') override it? The word cholate ('are angry, are furious') is unusually strong — suggesting that Jesus perceives their opposition as irrational rage rather than principled disagreement.
24. Jesus concludes with a general principle: judgment (krisis) should be based on reality (dikaia, 'righteous, just, correct'), not surface appearances (kat opsin, 'according to the face/sight'). Applied to the Sabbath controversy: judging Jesus as a Sabbath-breaker is a superficial verdict that fails to see the deeper reality of what God is doing through him.
25. The 'people of Jerusalem' (Hierosolymitōn) are distinct from the festival crowds (who are pilgrims from elsewhere). The residents know about the authorities' intentions, confirming Jesus's claim in verse 19. Their question implies surprise that Jesus is teaching publicly unmolested.
26. The crowd speculates that the authorities' inaction might mean they have secretly concluded Jesus is the Christ. The adverb parresia ('publicly, boldly') is the very quality his brothers demanded (v. 4) — now Jesus displays it, but on the Father's timetable. The particle mepote ('could it be that?') introduces a tentative, almost hopeful possibility.
27. The crowd dismisses their own suggestion based on a popular belief about the Christ's hidden origin — some Jewish traditions held that the Messiah would appear suddenly and mysteriously (cf. 1 Enoch 48:6, 4 Ezra 13:51-52). Since they know where Jesus is from (Galilee/Nazareth), he cannot be the Christ. The irony is multilayered: they think they know his origin, but they do not know his true origin (from the Father, from heaven, as the Prologue declares).
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ezra 13:51-52. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
28. The verb ekraxen ('cried out, shouted') indicates a public proclamation — Jesus raises his voice to address the crowd's discussion about his origins. His response is both concessive and corrective: yes, you know my human identity, but you do not know the one who sent me. The claim 'I have not come on my own' (ap emautou ouk elelyta) asserts divine commissioning. The accusation 'you do not know him' (hon hymeis ouk oidate) is devastating to a people who pride themselves on knowing God.

- 29.** Jesus claims two things: personal knowledge of God (ego oida auton, 'I know him') and origin from God (par autou eimi, 'I am from him'). The preposition para ('from the side of, from the presence of') indicates intimate proximity — Jesus comes from God's very presence. The aorist apesteilen ('sent') marks a specific, decisive commissioning.
- 30.** The attempt to arrest (piasai, 'to seize, to arrest') fails — not because of human protection but because of divine timing. The narrator's explanation 'his hour had not yet come' (oupo eleythei he hora autou) indicates that the 'hour' of Jesus's death is determined by the Father, not by his enemies. No human action can advance or prevent the divinely appointed hour.
- 31.** The question expects a negative answer: the Christ will not do more signs than Jesus has done. The logic is simple: if the Messiah will be identified by his works, and no one could surpass Jesus's works, then Jesus must be the Messiah. This is sign-based faith, which John presents as genuine but incomplete.
- 32.** The growing popular support alarms the authorities. The coalition of 'chief priests and Pharisees' (hoi archiereis kai hoi Pharisaioi) represents both the Sadducean temple establishment and the Pharisaic party — political rivals united against Jesus. The hyperetas ('officers, servants, attendants') are the temple police, authorized to make arrests within the temple precincts.
- 33.** Jesus speaks past the immediate crisis to his impending departure — the 'going to the one who sent me' refers to his return to the Father through death, resurrection, and ascension. The phrase chronon mikron ('a little while') introduces the temporal urgency that marks the second half of the Gospel. His presence is temporary; the opportunity to respond is limited.
- 34.** This enigmatic statement will be repeated in 8:21 and 13:33. The meaning is that after his departure, those who rejected him will seek him in vain. 'Where I am' (hopou eimi ego) refers to the Father's presence — a destination accessible only through faith in the Son. The inability to come (ou dynasthe elthein) reflects spiritual incapacity, not physical distance.
- 35.** The 'Dispersion' (diaspora) refers to Jews living outside the land of Israel among Greek-speaking populations. Their speculation is ironic — while meant dismissively, it prophetically anticipates the mission to the Gentile world that will follow Jesus's departure. The word Hellenas ('Greeks') here means Gentiles generally, not merely Greek nationals.
- 36.** The leaders repeat Jesus's words but cannot penetrate their meaning. Their incomprehension is a recurring Johannine pattern — Jesus speaks on a heavenly register and his listeners hear on an earthly one. The irony persists throughout: they cannot understand because they do not know the one who sent him (v. 28).
- 37.** The 'last and greatest day' (te eschate hemera te megale) is either the seventh day (the climax of the water-pouring ceremonies) or the eighth day (a closing assembly, Leviticus 23:36). During the festival, priests processed from the Pool of Siloam to the temple altar, pouring water as a prayer for rain and a commemoration of the water from the rock (Exodus 17:1-7). At this precise liturgical moment, Jesus stands (heistekei, the posture of proclamation) and cries out (ekraxen), offering himself as the fulfillment of everything the water ceremony signified.
- 37.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Leviticus 23:36. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 37.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 17:1-7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 38.** The punctuation of verses 37-38 is heavily debated. The traditional reading (which we follow) makes the believer the source of living water: 'Whoever believes in me... out of their heart will flow rivers.' An alternative reading makes Jesus the source: 'Let the one who believes in me drink. As the Scripture said, out of his (Jesus's) heart will flow rivers.' Both readings are theologically sound. The word koilia ('belly, inner being, heart') refers to the innermost part of a person. No single Old Testament verse matches this quotation exactly — it may be a composite of Isaiah 55:1, 58:11, Ezekiel 47:1-12, and Zechariah 14:8.
- 38.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 55:1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 38.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Ezekiel 47:1-12 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 38.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Zechariah 14:8 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 39.** The narrator provides the authoritative interpretation: 'living water' = the Holy Spirit. The startling phrase oupo gar en pneuma ('for the Spirit was not yet') does not mean the Spirit did not exist but that the Spirit had not yet been given in the post-resurrection, post-glorification manner. The Spirit's full giving awaits Jesus's glorification (his death, resurrection, and ascension). This is fulfilled in 20:22, where the risen Jesus breathes the Spirit on his disciples.
- 40.** The crowd identifies Jesus as 'the Prophet' (ho prophetes) — the Moses-like figure promised in Deuteronomy 18:15-18, the same identification made after the feeding miracle (6:14). The adverb alethos ('truly, really') indicates conviction. But as in 6:14, this identification, while correct as far as it goes, falls short of the full truth.
- 40.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 18:15-18 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.

41. The schisma (division) deepens: some affirm Jesus as the Christ, others object on geographical grounds. The particle *me* introduces a question expecting a negative answer — 'the Christ doesn't come from Galilee, does he?' The objection assumes Jesus's Galilean origin, not knowing about his birth in Bethlehem.
42. The crowd cites Micah 5:2 (the Messiah from Bethlehem) and 2 Samuel 7:12-16 (the Messiah from David's line). The irony is devastating: the very Scripture they cite to disqualify Jesus actually confirms his identity. Matthew and Luke both record Jesus's birth in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:1, Luke 2:4-7). John does not correct the crowd's error — he lets the dramatic irony stand for the reader to appreciate.
42. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Micah 5:2. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
42. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 2 Samuel 7:12-16. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
43. The word *schisma* ('division, split, tear') is emphatic — Jesus divides the crowd into irreconcilable camps. This is the first of three uses of *schisma* in John (cf. 9:16, 10:19), each time caused by Jesus's words or actions. The preposition *di auton* ('because of him') makes Jesus the cause of the division.
44. For the second time (cf. v. 30), an attempt to seize Jesus fails. The repeated failure underscores the principle that Jesus's 'hour' is divinely protected. No human agency can touch him before the appointed time.
45. The officers sent in verse 32 return empty-handed. The authorities demand an explanation for the failed arrest. The scene shifts from the public forum to the private council, revealing the frustration of the leadership.
46. The temple police — trained professionals, not easily impressed — testify that Jesus's speech is without parallel. The adverb *oudepote* ('never, at no time') and *houtos* ('in this way, like this') combine to declare Jesus's teaching absolutely unique. Their testimony is unintentionally profound: the Word made flesh (1:14) speaks as no mere human can.
47. The Pharisees respond with contempt — *me kai hymeis peplanesthe* ('surely you too have not been led astray?') uses the same verb (*planao*, 'to lead astray, deceive') from verse 12, where some accused Jesus of 'leading the people astray.' The irony is that the officers were affected not by deception but by the truth of Jesus's teaching.
48. The question expects a negative answer and uses social status as the criterion for truth: if no authorities believe, the teaching must be false. This is an argument from institutional authority, not from evidence. The irony is that Nicodemus — a ruler and a Pharisee — is about to speak up (v. 50).
49. The Pharisees dismiss the common people (*ho ochlos houtos*) as ignorant of the law and therefore cursed (*eparatoi*, 'accursed'). The term reflects the rabbinic category of *am ha-arets* ('people of the land') — the uneducated masses whom some Pharisees regarded as ritually and morally deficient. The arrogance of the statement is staggering and is immediately challenged by one of their own.
50. Nicodemus reappears for the second of his three appearances in John (3:1-21, 7:50-52, 19:39). The narrator identifies him as 'the one who had come to Jesus earlier' (*ho elthon pros auton proteron*), linking back to the nighttime visit in chapter 3. The phrase 'one of them' (*heis on ex auton*) emphasizes that dissent comes from within the Pharisaic party itself — contradicting their claim in verse 48.
51. Nicodemus's intervention is careful and procedural rather than confessional — he does not defend Jesus directly but appeals to legal process. The principle is from Deuteronomy 1:16-17 and 17:2-6: proper judgment requires hearing the accused. By invoking 'our law' (*ho nomos hemon*), Nicodemus turns the Pharisees' own weapon against them — they who accused the crowd of not knowing the law are themselves violating its procedures.
51. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 1:16-17. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
52. The Pharisees respond with personal attack rather than legal argument — they sarcastically ask if Nicodemus is a Galilean sympathizer. Their claim that 'no prophet arises from Galilee' (*ek tes Galilias prophetes ouk egeiretai*) is historically inaccurate — Jonah was from Gath-hepher in Galilee (2 Kings 14:25), and possibly other prophets as well. Some manuscripts read 'the prophet does not arise' (*ho prophetes*, with the article), specifically denying the Prophet-like-Moses from Galilee. The scene ends with the council in deadlock.
52. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 2 Kings 14:25. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
53. This verse is included in the SBLGNT as the conclusion to chapter 7, though it is often grouped with the Pericope Adulterae (7:53-8:11) in many manuscripts. The verse itself simply narrates the council dispersing — without resolution, without arresting Jesus, and without answering Nicodemus's legal challenge. The chapter ends with the authorities frustrated, the crowd divided, and Jesus unharmed.

## 8

**Summary:** *John 8 opens with the Pericope Adulterae (7:53-8:11), in which a woman caught in adultery is brought before Jesus as a legal trap — he disarms the accusers with 'Let the one without sin throw the first stone.' The remainder of the chapter records an extended confrontation between Jesus and the Jewish leaders in the temple courts, centered on Jesus's identity and authority. Jesus declares himself the light of the world (8:12), claims that the Father testifies on his behalf, warns that those who reject him will die in their sins, and reveals his divine origin. The chapter climaxes with the explosive declaration 'Before Abraham was, I AM' (8:58), prompting an attempt to stone him.*

**What Makes This Remarkable:** *The Pericope Adulterae (7:53-8:11) is one of the most textually disputed passages in the New Testament — absent from the earliest and most reliable Greek manuscripts (P66, P75, Sinaiticus, Vaticanus), it appears in various locations across later manuscripts. The SBLGNT does not include it in the main text. We include it here with full textual notation, as it has been part of the received tradition for centuries. The ego eimi ('I AM') declaration in 8:58 is the chapter's theological summit — Jesus uses the absolute form of the divine self-identification from Exodus 3:14, and his audience understands the claim immediately, responding with attempted execution for blasphemy.*

**Translation Friction:** *The textual status of 7:53-8:11 requires transparent handling. The ego eimi statements throughout this chapter carry varying force — some are ordinary predicate uses ('I am the light'), while 8:58 is the absolute, divine-name usage. We render all as 'I am' but note the distinction. The dialogue in 8:31-59 involves escalating hostility that modern readers may find harsh; we render the Greek as given without softening.*

**Connections:** *The 'I AM' declaration connects to Exodus 3:14 (the divine name revealed to Moses), Isaiah 41:4 and 43:10-13 (the LORD's self-identification), and John's own Prologue (1:1-18). The light-of-the-world claim connects to Isaiah 9:2, 42:6, and 49:6. The discussion of Abraham connects to Genesis 12-22 and the covenant promises. The theme of judgment and testimony connects to Deuteronomy 17:6 and 19:15 (the two-witness requirement).*

<sup>53</sup>Then each of them went to his own house, <sup>1</sup>Jesus traveled to the mount of Olives. <sup>2</sup>At dawn he went again to the temple, and all the people came to him. He sat down and began teaching them. <sup>3</sup>The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery. They made her stand in the middle of the group <sup>4</sup>They say to him, Teacher, this lady was removed in adultery, in the very act. <sup>5</sup>In the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" <sup>6</sup>They said this to test him, so that they would have grounds to accuse him. But Jesus bent down and began writing on the ground with his finger. <sup>7</sup>When they kept pressing him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." <sup>8</sup>Then he bent down again and continued writing on the ground. <sup>9</sup>When they heard this, they went away one by one, beginning with the elders, until Jesus was left alone with the woman still standing there. <sup>10</sup>Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" <sup>11</sup>She said, "No one, Lord." Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on do not sin anymore." <sup>12</sup>Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." <sup>13</sup>So the Pharisees said to him, "You are testifying about yourself — your testimony is not valid." <sup>14</sup>Jesus answered them, "Even if I testify about myself, my testimony is valid, because I know where I came from and where I am going. But you do not know where I came from or where I am going. <sup>15</sup>You judge by human standards. I judge no one. <sup>16</sup>Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, because I am not alone — I and the Father who sent me judge together. <sup>17</sup>In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is valid. <sup>18</sup>I am the one who testifies about myself, and the Father who sent me testifies about me." <sup>19</sup>Then they said to him, "Where is your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father as well." <sup>20</sup>He spoke these words while teaching in the treasury area of the temple. Yet no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come. <sup>21</sup>Then he said to them again, "I am going away, and you will look for me, but you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come." <sup>22</sup>So the Jewish leaders said, "Is he going to kill himself? Is that why he

says, 'Where I am going, you cannot come?'" <sup>23</sup>He said to them, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. <sup>24</sup>That is why I told you that you will die in your sins. For if you do not believe that I am he, you will die in your sins." <sup>25</sup>They said to him, "Who are you?" Jesus said to them, "What I have been telling you from the beginning. <sup>26</sup>I have much to say about you and much to judge. But the one who sent me is true, and what I have heard from him — these things I speak to the world." <sup>27</sup>They did not understand that he was speaking to them about the Father. <sup>28</sup>So Jesus said to them, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but I speak just as the Father taught me. <sup>29</sup>The one who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, because I always do what pleases him." <sup>30</sup>As he was saying these things, many believed in him. <sup>31</sup>So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you remain in my word, you are truly my disciples, <sup>32</sup>You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free. <sup>33</sup>They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been enslaved to anyone. How can you say, 'You will be set free?'" <sup>34</sup>Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. <sup>35</sup>A slave does not remain in the household forever, but a son remains forever. <sup>36</sup>So if the Son sets you free, you will be truly free. <sup>37</sup>I know that you are Abraham's descendants. Yet you are seeking to kill me because my word finds no room in you. <sup>38</sup>I speak of what I have seen in the presence of the Father, and you do what you have heard from your father." <sup>39</sup>They answered him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did. <sup>40</sup>But now you are seeking to kill me — a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. <sup>41</sup>You are doing the works of your father." They said to him, "We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father — God." <sup>42</sup>Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I did not come on my own, but he sent me. <sup>43</sup>Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. <sup>44</sup>You are of your father the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and has not stood in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. <sup>45</sup>Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. <sup>46</sup>Which of you can convict me of sin? If I speak the truth, why do you not believe me? <sup>47</sup>The one who is from God hears the words of God. The reason you do not hear is that you are not from God." <sup>48</sup>The Jewish leaders answered him, "Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?" <sup>49</sup>Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon. On the contrary, I honor my Father, and you dishonor me. <sup>50</sup>I do not seek my own glory. There is one who seeks it, and he is the judge. <sup>51</sup>Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death." <sup>52</sup>The Jewish leaders said to him, "Now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets died, yet you say, 'If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.'" <sup>53</sup>Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too. Who do you make yourself out to be?" <sup>54</sup>Jesus answered, "If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me — the one you claim is your God. <sup>55</sup>You have not known him, but I know him. If I said I did not know him, I would be a liar like you. But I do know him, and I keep his word. <sup>56</sup>Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad." <sup>57</sup>So the Jewish leaders said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and you have seen Abraham?" <sup>58</sup>Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I AM." <sup>59</sup>So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

## TRANSLATOR NOTES

- 53.** This verse concludes the scene of 7:45-52 in the traditional placement. The Greek is straightforward narrative transition. The Pericope Adulterae begins here in manuscripts that include it.
1. The Mount of Olives is mentioned frequently in the Synoptic Gospels but only here in John (another indicator of the passage's non-Johannine origin). The contrast between 'each to his own house' and Jesus going to the mount suggests he had no home in Jerusalem.
  2. The Greek orthrou ('at dawn') indicates very early morning. The posture of sitting (kathisas) was the standard teaching position for a Jewish rabbi — the teacher sat while the audience stood or sat around him.
  3. The Greek kateilēmmenēn ('having been caught, seized') is a perfect passive participle indicating she was caught in the very act. The public shaming of placing her 'in the middle' (en mesō) is deliberate humiliation designed to pressure Jesus into a ruling.
  4. The Greek ep' autophōrō ('in the very act, red-handed') is emphatic — they stress that there is no ambiguity about her guilt. The address 'Teacher' (Didaskale) frames the encounter as a legal question put to a rabbi. Notably absent is the man involved, though the law required both parties to be

present (Leviticus 20:10).

4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 20:10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The reference is to Leviticus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:22-24, which prescribe death for adultery (though the specific method of stoning is debated — Deuteronomy 22:24 specifies stoning for a betrothed virgin). The trap is designed to force Jesus into a dilemma: upholding the law would conflict with Roman authority (Jews could not execute), while showing mercy would appear to dismiss Moses.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Leviticus 20:10 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 22:22-24 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The verb *peirazontes* ('testing') reveals their motive — this is entrapment, not a sincere legal question. The Greek *kategraphein* ('to write down') is used only here in the New Testament. What Jesus wrote has been the subject of endless speculation — the text does not say, and we do not speculate. The KJV's addition 'as though he heard them not' is not in the Greek manuscripts.
7. The Greek *anamartētos* ('without sin') appears only here in the New Testament. Jesus does not deny the law's validity or the woman's guilt — he redirects the moral scrutiny to the accusers themselves. Under Deuteronomy 17:7, the witnesses were required to cast the first stones, so Jesus's statement may also challenge whether legitimate witnesses are present.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 17:7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The imperfect *egraphen* ('was writing, continued to write') suggests ongoing action — Jesus did not write briefly and stop but continued writing while the accusers processed his words. The repetition of the writing gesture frames the central pronouncement.
9. The detail 'beginning with the elders' (*arxamenoi apo tōn presbyterōn*) is psychologically acute — the oldest, presumably with the most accumulated guilt or the most wisdom, leave first. The KJV's 'convicted by their own conscience' is an addition not found in the best manuscripts of this passage; the Greek simply says they left after hearing.
10. The address *gynai* ('woman') is respectful in Greek, not dismissive — the same form Jesus uses to address his mother at Cana (2:4) and from the cross (19:26). The verb *katekrinen* ('condemned') is a legal term — Jesus asks whether any formal judgment has been rendered.
11. Jesus's response is neither legal acquittal nor moral indifference — he declines to condemn (*katakrinō*) while commanding a changed life. The phrase *apo tou nyn* ('from now on') marks a turning point. The imperative *mēketi hamartane* ('sin no more') is a present imperative with the negative, meaning 'stop the ongoing practice of sinning.' Grace and moral demand stand together without tension.
12. This is the second of John's seven 'I am' statements with a predicate (following 6:35). The double negative *ou mē* ('never, by no means') is the strongest negation in Greek. If this discourse occurs during the Feast of Tabernacles (cf. 7:2), the four giant candelabra lit in the Court of Women provide a vivid backdrop — Jesus claims to be what the festival rituals symbolized.
13. The Pharisees invoke the legal principle of Deuteronomy 19:15: no one can serve as their own witness. The Greek *alēthēs* here means 'valid, legally admissible' rather than 'factually true' — they are challenging the admissibility of self-testimony, not calling Jesus a liar. This directly engages the two-witness law that governs Jewish legal proceedings.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 19:15: — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. Jesus's defense rests on his unique origin and destiny — his knowledge of his divine origin (*pothen elthon*, 'where I came from') and divine destination (*pou hypagō*, 'where I am going') validates his self-testimony in a way that applies to no ordinary witness. This appears to contradict 5:31 ('If I testify about myself, my testimony is not valid') but the contexts differ: there Jesus was speaking hypothetically about isolated self-testimony, while here he argues that his testimony is never truly isolated because the Father always testifies with him.
15. The phrase *kata tēn sarka* ('according to the flesh') means by external, superficial, merely human criteria. Jesus's statement 'I judge no one' seems to conflict with other Johannine statements about judgment (5:22, 9:39); the resolution is that Jesus does not judge in the flawed, appearance-based way his opponents do.
16. The word *alēthinē* ('true, genuine, real') differs from *alēthēs* in verse 13 — it implies not merely factual accuracy but genuine, ultimate reality. Jesus grounds the validity of his judgment in his unity with the Father, introducing the two-witness theme that he develops in the next verse.
17. Jesus cites Deuteronomy 17:6 or 19:15 (the two-witness requirement). The phrase 'your law' (*tō hymetero nomō*) does not mean Jesus disowns the Torah — the pronoun 'your' appeals to an authority his opponents accept. The argument is: you require two witnesses; I have two — myself and my Father.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 17:6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

18. The ego eimi ('I am') here functions as a simple copula ('I am the one who...') rather than the absolute divine claim, but John may intend a double resonance — Jesus identifies himself as a witness while using the phrase that will carry divine force in verse 58.
19. The question 'Where is your Father?' may be a genuine misunderstanding (thinking of a human father) or a veiled insult about Jesus's parentage. Jesus's response links knowledge of himself inseparably to knowledge of the Father — a recurring Johannine theme (cf. 14:7). The conditional *ei ēdeite* ('if you knew') uses the imperfect, indicating they do not currently know.
20. The *gazophylakion* ('treasury') was located in the Court of Women, a public area of the temple — Jesus was teaching openly, not in hiding. The phrase 'his hour' (*hē hōra autou*) is a key Johannine motif referring to the appointed time of Jesus's death and glorification (cf. 2:4, 7:30, 12:23, 13:1, 17:1). John presents Jesus's safety as divinely governed, not circumstantial.
21. The singular 'sin' (*hamartia*, not the plural *hamartiais* as in verse 24) may refer to the specific sin of rejecting Jesus rather than sins in general. The statement 'where I am going, you cannot come' echoes 7:34 and provokes the same confusion — his opponents think in geographical terms while Jesus speaks of his return to the Father.
22. The Greek *mēti* introduces a question expecting a negative answer, but with ironic uncertainty. The suggestion of suicide is deeply offensive in a Jewish context, where it was viewed as a sin that would consign someone to the lowest part of Sheol — they are inadvertently suggesting Jesus would go where they truly cannot follow. We render *hoi Ioudaioi* as 'Jewish leaders' since the context indicates the religious authorities in debate with Jesus, not the Jewish people broadly.
23. The spatial dualism — below/above, this world/not of this world — is characteristic of John's theology. The Greek *ek tōn katō* ('from the things below') and *ek tōn anō* ('from the things above') establish an ontological distinction, not merely a moral one. Jesus claims a fundamentally different origin from his opponents.
24. The phrase *ego eimi* ('I am') here stands without a predicate — 'I am he' is supplied by English translators for grammatical sense, but the Greek is absolute: 'unless you believe that I AM.' This is the first instance in the chapter of the potentially divine-name usage of *ego eimi*. The plural 'sins' (*hamartiais*) replaces the singular of verse 21, broadening the reference.
25. Jesus's response (*tēn archēn ho ti kai lalō hymin*) is one of the most debated phrases in the Gospel. It could mean: (1) 'What I have been telling you from the start,' (2) 'Why do I speak to you at all?' (taking *tēn archēn* as 'at all'), or (3) 'I am the beginning — what I tell you.' We follow the first reading as most contextually natural, but the ambiguity may be intentional.
26. Jesus restrains himself from full judgment ('I have much to say and judge') and instead speaks only what he has received from the Father. The adjective *alēthēs* ('true, truthful') applied to the Father affirms the reliability of everything Jesus has been commissioned to say.
27. John's editorial comment highlights the persistent misunderstanding that characterizes the opponents throughout this chapter — they hear Jesus's words but cannot grasp that 'the one who sent me' refers to God as his Father.
28. The verb *hypsōsete* ('lift up') carries a deliberate double meaning in John: physical lifting up on the cross and exaltation to glory (cf. 3:14, 12:32-34). The 'you' (*hymeis*) makes the opponents themselves the agents of the lifting up — they will crucify him, and that very act will reveal his identity. The *ego eimi* ('I am he') is again absolute, with the full meaning to become clear only at the cross.
29. The claim 'I always do what pleases him' (*ta aresta autō poiō pantote*) is an extraordinary assertion of perfect moral alignment with God. This is not a boast but a statement of the Son's complete dependence on and obedience to the Father — the basis for their unity.
30. The verb *episteusan* ('believed') uses the aorist tense, which may indicate an initial response rather than deep, lasting faith — as the following verses will test. John often distinguishes between shallow and genuine belief (cf. 2:23-25, 6:60-66).
31. Jesus addresses those who 'believed' (*pepisteukotas*, perfect participle — 'who had come to believe') but immediately sets a condition: genuine discipleship requires remaining (*meinēte*, aorist subjunctive of *menō*) in his word. The verb *menō* ('remain, abide') is central to Johannine theology (cf. ch. 15). The shift from initial belief to tested commitment drives the rest of this conversation.
32. One of the most quoted verses in the Gospel. The Greek *alētheia* ('truth') in John is not abstract philosophical truth but the revealed reality of God embodied in Jesus (cf. 14:6). The verb *eleutherōsei* ('will set free, will liberate') points forward to the freedom from sin discussed in verses 34-36. The future tense *gnōsethe* ('you will know') makes knowledge the result of abiding, not its prerequisite.
33. The claim 'we have never been enslaved to anyone' (*oudeni dedouleukamen pōpote*) is historically astonishing — they had been slaves in Egypt, exiles in Babylon, and were currently under Roman occupation. The statement likely reflects a theological self-understanding: as Abraham's seed, they considered themselves spiritually free regardless of political circumstances. The perfect tense *dedouleukamen* ('have been enslaved') emphasizes their ongoing status claim.
34. The double *amēn* ('truly, truly') is unique to John's Gospel and marks solemn, authoritative declarations. The present participle *ho poiōn* ('the one who practices, who keeps on doing') indicates habitual action, not a single lapse. The Greek *doulos* ('slave') is stronger than the KJV's 'servant' — Jesus speaks of genuine bondage, directly countering their claim of freedom.
35. Jesus draws a contrast between the legal status of a slave and a son within a household. The slave has no permanent rights; the son has an enduring place. The Greek *oikia* ('house, household') and the verb *menei* ('remains, abides') carry double meaning — the earthly household analogy points to the Father's house and the permanent standing of those who belong to the Son. The phrase *eis ton aiōna* ('into the age, forever') echoes the Hebrew *olam*.

36. The adverb *ontōs* ('truly, really, in reality') contrasts with their illusory sense of freedom in verse 33. The Son's freedom is the only genuine freedom — ontological liberation from sin's mastery, not merely political or social freedom. This verse completes the thought begun in verse 32: the truth (embodied in the Son) produces real freedom.
37. Jesus concedes their physical descent from Abraham (*sperma Abraam*) while denying its spiritual significance. The verb *chōrei* ('has room, makes progress, finds place') suggests that Jesus's word cannot penetrate or advance within them — there is no space for it. This is not a failure of the word but of the hearers.
38. The contrast between 'my Father' (*tō patri*, with the article — the Father) and 'your father' (*tou patros*, without possessive in some manuscripts) introduces the devastating paternity argument that dominates the rest of the chapter. Jesus speaks from direct vision (*heōraka*, perfect of *horaō*, 'I have seen') of the Father; they act on what they received from their father — whose identity Jesus will soon reveal.
39. Jesus shifts from *sperma* ('seed, descendant' — physical lineage, v. 37) to *tekna* ('children' — relational belonging). Physical descent is not denied, but spiritual sonship requires doing Abraham's works. The imperfect *epoiete* ('you would be doing') is a contrary-to-fact condition — they are not doing Abraham's works, therefore they are not truly his children in the way that matters.
40. Jesus identifies himself as *anthrōpon* ('a man') — the one who has spoken truth from God — and notes that Abraham, who welcomed divine messengers (Genesis 18), would never have sought to kill someone bringing God's word. The contrast is damning: those who claim Abraham as father act in ways Abraham never would.
40. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 18 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
41. The Greek *porneias* ('sexual immorality, fornication') may carry a double edge: (1) they are asserting spiritual legitimacy — unlike the Samaritans, they are not 'illegitimate' children of God through syncretism; (2) some interpreters see a veiled attack on Jesus's own birth — rumors about his parentage (cf. Mark 6:3 where Jesus is called 'son of Mary' rather than 'son of Joseph'). They escalate from Abraham to God himself as their father.
42. The conditional *ei... ēn* ('if he were') with the imperfect is a second-class (contrary to fact) condition — Jesus directly states that God is not their father. The verbs *exēlthon* ('came out from') and *hēkō* ('I am here, I have arrived') describe both origin and present reality. The verb *apestellen* ('sent') is the root of 'apostle' — Jesus is God's authorized emissary.
43. Jesus distinguishes between *lalia* ('speech, manner of speaking') and *logos* ('word, message') — they fail to grasp even the surface level of his speech because they cannot receive the deeper reality of his message. The verb *dynamai* ('to be able') suggests an incapacity, not merely an unwillingness — their spiritual condition renders them unable to hear.
44. This is the sharpest language in the chapter. The Greek *diabolos* ('devil, slanderer, accuser') literally means 'the one who throws across' — the one who creates division. The title *anthrōpoktonos* ('murderer, man-killer') is a compound word used only here and in 1 John 3:15 in the NT, linking the devil to the first murder (Cain, Genesis 4) or to the introduction of death through deception (Genesis 3). The phrase 'father of lies' (*ho patēr autou*, lit. 'his father') is ambiguous — it could mean the devil is 'the father of the lie' or 'the father of the liar.' We follow the traditional reading.
44. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 4. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
44. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 3. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
45. The irony is sharp: the very fact that Jesus speaks truth is the reason they reject him — those aligned with the father of lies find truth intolerable. The Greek construction (*hoti tēn alētheian legō*) makes truth-telling itself the cause of disbelief.
46. The verb *elenchei* ('convict, expose, prove guilty') is a legal term — Jesus issues an open challenge to prove any sin against him. The question is rhetorical: no one can. The logic is: if you cannot convict me of sin, then I am a truthful witness; and if I speak truth, your refusal to believe is inexcusable.
47. Jesus completes the argument: hearing God's words is the natural capacity of those who belong to God. Their inability to hear is diagnostic — it reveals their origin. The Greek *ek tou theou* ('from God') uses the same preposition (*ek*, 'from, out of') that described their origin from the devil in verse 44.
48. The double insult — 'Samaritan' (heretic, impure lineage) and 'demon-possessed' (insane, deluded) — represents their most hostile response yet. Calling someone a Samaritan accused them of being a religious half-breed who worshiped God wrongly. The charge of demon-possession was a standard way of dismissing someone whose claims seemed outrageous (cf. 7:20, 10:20).
49. Jesus addresses only the demon charge, not the 'Samaritan' label — whether by silence he refuses to dignify the ethnic slur or whether the distinction between true and false worship (cf. 4:21-24) makes the label irrelevant. The contrast between *timō* ('I honor') and *atimazete* ('you dishonor') is a deliberate wordplay using the same root (*timē*, 'honor') with and without the alpha-privative.
50. Jesus disclaims self-promotion (*ou zētō tēn doxan mou*) while affirming that the Father actively seeks Jesus's glory and renders judgment on those who dishonor him. The participle *krinōn* ('the one who judges') warns that rejecting Jesus carries consequences determined by God himself.
51. The double *amēn* again marks a solemn pronouncement. The verb *tērēsē* ('keeps, guards, obeys') implies more than intellectual assent — it requires active obedience and faithful preservation of Jesus's word. The double negative *ou mē* with *theōrēsē* ('see, experience') is the strongest possible denial: such a person will absolutely never experience death. Jesus means spiritual/eternal death, but his opponents will take it literally in the next verse.

52. Their response reveals the misunderstanding: they hear Jesus's spiritual claim in purely physical terms. They shift from *theōreō* ('see') to *geuomai* ('taste'), perhaps intensifying the imagery — not even a taste of death. The argument from Abraham and the prophets is logical within their framework: if the greatest figures in Israel's history died, who is this man to promise immortality?
53. The particle *mē* expects a negative answer ('You're not greater than Abraham, are you?'), but John's irony is that the correct answer is yes. The question 'Who do you make yourself out to be?' (*tina seauton poieis*) is the central question of the chapter — and Jesus is about to answer it definitively.
54. Jesus returns to the theme of verse 50: he does not seek his own glory. The verb *doxazō* ('glorify') and noun *doxa* ('glory') correspond to the Hebrew *kavod*. The pointed phrase 'whom you say is your God' (*hon hymeis legete hoti theos hēmōn estin*) challenges their claim to know God while rejecting the one God sent.
55. Jesus uses two different Greek words for 'know': *egnōkate* (*ginosko*, 'come to know through experience') for their lack of knowledge, and *oida* ('know intuitively, know with certainty') for his own knowledge. The distinction suggests Jesus's knowledge of the Father is innate and direct, not acquired. Calling them 'liars' (*pseustēs*) connects back to verse 44 — they resemble the father of lies.
56. The verb *ēgalliasato* ('rejoiced, exulted') is strong — Abraham's joy was exuberant. 'My day' (*tēn hēmeran tēn emēn*) most likely refers to the day of the Messiah's coming. Jewish tradition held that Abraham was given a vision of future ages (cf. 2 Esdras 3:14, Apocalypse of Abraham 31). The statement that Abraham 'saw it and was glad' implies Abraham had prophetic knowledge of Christ's coming — a claim that prepares for the explosive verse 58.
57. The number fifty (*pentēkonta*) is a round number, not a precise indication of Jesus's age. Some manuscripts read 'forty' instead. Their objection focuses on chronological impossibility — Abraham lived roughly two thousand years before Jesus. They miss the deeper claim entirely: Jesus is not saying he saw Abraham but that Abraham saw him.
58. The contrast between *genesthai* (aorist infinitive of *ginomai*, 'to come into being') for Abraham and *eimi* (present indicative of *eimi*, 'I am') for Jesus is theologically precise: Abraham came into existence at a point in time; Jesus simply IS, without beginning. The double *amēn* underscores the gravity. This is the climactic *ego eimi* of chapter 8, completing the sequence begun in verses 24 and 28.
59. Stoning was the prescribed punishment for blasphemy (Leviticus 24:16), confirming that they understood Jesus's *ego eimi* as a divine claim. The Greek *ekrybē* ('hid himself') is passive — whether Jesus physically hid or was divinely concealed is left ambiguous. The KJV adds 'going through the midst of them, and so passed by,' which is not in the earliest manuscripts. The SBLGNT ends the verse at 'went out of the temple.'
59. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 24:16. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.

## 9

**Summary:** *John 9 tells the story of a man born blind whom Jesus heals by making mud with saliva and sending him to wash in the Pool of Siloam. The healing triggers an escalating investigation by the Pharisees, who interrogate the man, his parents, and the man again. The narrative functions as both a literal sign and a profound metaphor: the man born blind progressively gains spiritual sight (calling Jesus a man, a prophet, someone from God, and finally Lord), while the Pharisees who claim to see become progressively more blind. The chapter closes with Jesus's declaration that he came into the world for judgment — so that the blind might see and those who see might become blind.*

**What Makes This Remarkable:** *This is one of the most carefully structured narratives in the Fourth Gospel, built on dramatic irony. Seven scenes alternate between the healed man's growing insight and the Pharisees' deepening blindness. The man's progression of faith — from identifying Jesus as 'the man called Jesus' (v. 11) to 'a prophet' (v. 17) to 'from God' (v. 33) to worshiping him as 'Lord' (v. 38) — is one of the clearest discipleship trajectories in the Gospels. The Pharisees, meanwhile, move from division (v. 16) to suspicion (v. 18) to hostility (v. 28) to excommunication (v. 34). The healing on the Sabbath connects to the broader conflict about Jesus's authority over Sabbath law (cf. 5:1-18).*

**Translation Friction:** *The Pool of Siloam was archaeologically confirmed in 2004, giving historical grounding to the narrative. The Greek *Siloam* (*Silōam*) translates the Hebrew *Shiloach*, and John provides the etymology 'Sent' (*apostalmenos*), connecting the pool's name to Jesus as the one 'sent' by the Father. The parents' fear of excommunication (v. 22) reflects a later historical situation (the *Birkat ha-Minim*) that many scholars date after Jesus's lifetime, though others argue synagogue exclusion was possible in Jesus's era.*

*Connections: The healing connects to 8:12 ('I am the light of the world') — now demonstrated in giving sight to the blind. The Sabbath controversy connects to 5:1-18. The expulsion from the synagogue foreshadows 16:2. The theme of spiritual blindness connects to Isaiah 6:9-10 (quoted in John 12:40) and Isaiah 42:7 (the Servant opens blind eyes). The judgment theme connects to 3:17-21 and 5:22-30.*

<sup>1</sup>As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup>His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned — this man or his parents — that he was born blind?" <sup>3</sup>Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but so that the works of God might be displayed in him. <sup>4</sup>We must do the works of the one who sent me while it is day. Night is coming, when no one can work. <sup>5</sup>I am the light in the world, and as long as I am in the world. <sup>6</sup>After saying this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he spread the mud on the man's eyes <sup>7</sup>Stated to him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, dispatched.) He traveled his way therefore, and washed, and arrived seeing. <sup>8</sup>His neighbors and those who had previously seen him as a beggar said, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" <sup>9</sup>Some said, "It is him." Others said, "No, but he looks like him." He kept saying, "I am the one." <sup>10</sup>So they asked him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" <sup>11</sup>He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud and spread it on my eyes and told me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed, and I received my sight." <sup>12</sup>They asked him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know." <sup>13</sup>They brought the man who had formerly been blind to the Pharisees. <sup>14</sup>Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. <sup>15</sup>So the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He told them, "He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and now I see." <sup>16</sup>Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, because he does not keep the Sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And there was a division among them. <sup>17</sup>So they asked the blind man again, "What do you say about him, since he opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet." <sup>18</sup>The Jewish leaders did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight. <sup>19</sup>They asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How is it that he now sees?" <sup>20</sup>His parents answered, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. <sup>21</sup>But how he now sees, we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him — he is of age. He can speak for himself." <sup>22</sup>His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, for the Jewish leaders had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus as the Christ would be expelled from the synagogue. <sup>23</sup>That is why his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." <sup>24</sup>So for a second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, "Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner." <sup>25</sup>He answered, "Whether he is a sinner, I do not know. One thing I do know: I was blind, and now I see." <sup>26</sup>They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" <sup>27</sup>He answered them, "I already told you, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" <sup>28</sup>They reviled him and said, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses! <sup>29</sup>We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." <sup>30</sup>The man answered them, "This is remarkable! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. <sup>31</sup>We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is devout and does his will, God listens to that person. <sup>32</sup>Never since the world began has anyone been heard of who opened the eyes of a person born blind. <sup>33</sup>He could do nothing, and if this man were not of God. <sup>34</sup>They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and you are trying to teach us?" And they threw him out. <sup>35</sup>Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and finding him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" <sup>36</sup>He answered, "And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" <sup>37</sup>Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking with you." <sup>38</sup>I believe, he said, Lord. And he worshipped him. <sup>39</sup>Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind." <sup>40</sup>Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, "Are we blind too?" <sup>41</sup>Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains."

#### TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The narrative connects directly to 8:59 — Jesus has just left the temple. The phrase *ek genetēs* ('from birth') is crucial: this is not acquired blindness but a congenital condition, ruling out any connection to the man's own sin and setting up the theological question of verse 2.

2. The disciples assume a direct causal link between sin and suffering, reflecting a common Jewish theology of retribution (cf. Exodus 20:5, Ezekiel 18:20). The question about whether the man himself sinned before birth may reflect belief in prenatal sin (attested in some rabbinic texts) or simply reveals the logical absurdity their framework produces when confronted with congenital conditions.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 20:5. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ezekiel 18:20. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. Jesus rejects the entire sin-causation framework for this case. The hina ('so that') clause does not mean God caused the blindness in order to heal it later (a common misreading); it redirects the question from cause to purpose — whatever the origin of the blindness, its purpose now is to reveal God's works. The verb phanerōthē ('be made visible, displayed') connects to the light/sight theme of the chapter.
4. The SBLGNT reads hēmas ('we') rather than eme ('I'), including the disciples in the mission. 'Day' and 'night' function metaphorically: day is the time of Jesus's active ministry; night is his departure through death. The urgency (dei, 'it is necessary') reflects divine mandate, not mere preference.
5. This repeats the claim of 8:12 but adds the temporal qualifier hotan ('as long as, whenever'). The light-of-the-world declaration immediately precedes giving sight to a blind man — the metaphor is about to become literal. The implicit corollary is that after Jesus's departure, the disciples must carry the light (cf. Matthew 5:14).
6. The act of making mud (pēlon, 'clay, mud') echoes Genesis 2:7 where God forms man from the ground — Jesus performs a creative act. Saliva was believed to have healing properties in the ancient world (cf. Mark 7:33, 8:23). The verb epechrisein ('smeared, anointed') may carry overtones of the christos/anointing theme. Making mud on the Sabbath would constitute 'kneading,' one of the thirty-nine categories of prohibited Sabbath work in the Mishnah.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 2:7. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. John provides the etymology of Siloam (Silōam from Hebrew Shiloach, related to shalach, 'to send') as apestalmenos ('sent'), connecting the pool's name to Jesus as the one 'sent' by the Father — a recurring Johannine theme (cf. 3:17, 5:36, 6:29, 7:29). The man's obedience is immediate and unquestioning, reminiscent of Naaman washing in the Jordan (2 Kings 5:10-14). The simple statement 'came back seeing' (ēlthen blepōn) is understated for the magnitude of the miracle — a lifetime of blindness ends in a single washing.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 2 Kings 5:10-14. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The SBLGNT reads prosaitēs ('beggar') rather than typhlos ('blind'), though some manuscripts have 'blind.' The question introduces the first of several investigations — even the man's identity is disputed, setting up a narrative in which seeing and knowing are constantly in question.
9. The man's ego eimi ('I am') is an ordinary identification ('I am the one'), not a divine claim — but John may intend an ironic echo of Jesus's ego eimi statements in chapter 8. The imperfect elegen ('kept saying') suggests he had to assert his identity repeatedly against doubt.
10. The passive ēneōchthēsan ('were opened') is a divine passive — the question inadvertently acknowledges that the healing came from a power beyond the man himself. This is the first of three times the man will be asked to explain how he was healed (cf. vv. 15, 26).
11. The man's first identification of Jesus is minimal: ho anthrōpos ho legomenos Iēsous ('the man called Jesus'). He knows a name and an action but nothing more. This is the starting point of his progressive understanding. The verb aneblepsa ('I received sight, I looked up') can mean both 'to see again' and 'to see for the first time' — here it must mean the latter, since he was born blind.
12. The man does not know where Jesus is — he was sent to the pool and returned to find Jesus gone. This physical separation mirrors his theological distance: he knows Jesus by name and action but does not yet know him as prophet, as from God, or as Lord.
13. The phrase ton pote typhlon ('the one formerly blind') is John's editorial confirmation that the healing was real and complete. The Pharisees function as the investigative authority — the neighbors bring the case to them for evaluation.
14. John withholds this critical detail until verse 14, after the healing and the neighbors' investigation — a masterful narrative technique that raises the stakes retroactively. The Sabbath issue transforms the healing from a wonder to a legal problem. Making mud (kneading) and possibly healing (which some rabbis classified as work) both potentially violated Sabbath regulations.
15. The man's account becomes more compressed with each retelling — the three-step process (mud, wash, see) is stated with increasing economy. The present tense blepō ('I see') is emphatic: the evidence stands before them. This is the second interrogation (cf. v. 10).
16. The schisma ('division, split') among the Pharisees reveals two competing theological principles: (1) a true prophet would keep the Sabbath, therefore Jesus cannot be from God; (2) a sinner cannot perform genuine miracles, therefore Jesus must be from God. John uses the word sēmeia ('signs') — his preferred term for Jesus's miracles, emphasizing their revelatory function. This internal Pharisaic debate mirrors the broader division Jesus causes throughout the Gospel (cf. 7:43, 10:19).
17. The man's understanding has advanced: from 'the man called Jesus' (v. 11) to prophētēs ('a prophet'). A prophet is one who speaks and acts with divine authority — the man draws the logical conclusion from the evidence of his own healing. This is the second stage in his progressive recognition

of Jesus.

18. Unable to refute the healing theologically, the opponents shift to challenging the facts — perhaps the man was never really blind. The term *houdaioi* ('the Jews') here refers to the investigating authorities, not the Jewish people generally. The calling of the parents introduces a new phase of the investigation.
19. The three questions embedded in this verse — (1) Is this your son? (2) Was he born blind? (3) How does he now see? — are designed to find a crack in the testimony. The phrase 'who you say was born blind' (*hon hymeis legete hoti typhlos egennēthē*) subtly casts doubt on the parents' claim, as if the blindness itself might be fabricated.
20. The parents confirm two of the three points with certainty (*oidamen*, 'we know'): identity and congenital blindness. They will deflect the third question — how he now sees — out of fear, as the next verses explain.
21. The parents' threefold 'we do not know' (*ouk oidamen*) is evasive rather than honest — they redirect all inquiry to their son. The phrase *hēlikian echei* ('he is of age, he has maturity') indicates he is old enough to give legal testimony on his own behalf, likely meaning he is over thirteen (the age of legal responsibility in Jewish law).
22. John provides the narrator's explanation for the parents' evasion: fear of excommunication. The term *aposynagōgos* ('expelled from the synagogue, put out of the synagogue') appears only in John (here, 12:42, 16:2) and describes formal exclusion from the Jewish worshiping community — a devastating social and religious penalty. The verb *synetethento* ('had agreed, had decided together') indicates a formal policy decision by the authorities.
23. John repeats the parents' deflection to underscore its motivation: fear, not ignorance, drives their evasion. The contrast with their son's increasing boldness is deliberate — the parents protect themselves while their son faces the authorities alone.
24. The phrase *dos doxan tō theō* ('give glory to God') is a solemn adjuration equivalent to 'tell the truth before God' (cf. Joshua 7:19, where Joshua uses the same phrase to compel Achan's confession). The Pharisees have already reached their verdict — 'we know' (*hēmeis oidamen*) — and are pressuring the man to confirm it. The irony is thick: they claim knowledge while demonstrating blindness.
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Joshua 7:19. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. One of the most memorable lines in the Gospel. The man refuses to be drawn into theological debate and stands on the irrefutable evidence of his own experience. The contrast between their claimed knowledge ('we know he is a sinner') and his actual knowledge ('one thing I know') is the chapter's central irony — the formerly blind man sees more clearly than the experts.
26. This is the third time the man is asked to recount the healing (cf. vv. 10, 15). The repetition serves the Pharisees' investigative purpose — they hope to find an inconsistency — and also serves John's literary purpose of highlighting the futility of their resistance to evident truth.
27. The man's boldness escalates — the *mē* particle expects a negative answer ('you don't want to become his disciples too, do you?'), but the question is deliberately provocative. The word 'also' (*kai*) implies the man already considers himself a disciple, though he has not yet met the risen Jesus. The verb *ēkousate* ('you did not hear/listen') carries the Johannine double meaning: they physically heard but did not truly receive.
28. The verb *eloidorēsan* ('reviled, insulted, heaped abuse on') marks the shift from investigation to hostility. They draw a sharp line: his loyalty to Jesus versus their loyalty to Moses. The pronoun emphasis (*sy/hēmeis*, 'you/we') makes the division absolute. Ironically, Jesus has already claimed that Moses wrote about him (5:46).
29. Their confession 'we do not know where he comes from' (*ouk oidamen pothen estin*) is deeply ironic in John's framework — Jesus's origin (*pothen*, 'from where') is one of the Gospel's central questions (cf. 7:27-28, 8:14, 19:9). They think their ignorance of his origin discredits Jesus; in reality, it reveals their own spiritual blindness.
30. The man's argument is devastatingly simple: the evidence of the miracle should resolve any uncertainty about Jesus's origin. The adjective *thaumaston* ('remarkable, amazing, astonishing') is used with sharp irony — what is truly astonishing is not the healing but the leaders' refusal to draw the obvious conclusion from it.
31. The man uses their own theological framework against them: the principle that God hears the righteous but not sinners is widely attested in Scripture (cf. Psalm 66:18, Proverbs 15:29, Isaiah 1:15). The adjective *theosebēs* ('God-fearing, devout') appears only here in the NT. His logic is irresistible within their system: God answered Jesus's act, therefore Jesus must be devout and obedient to God's will.
31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 66:18. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Proverbs 15:29. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 1:15. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
32. The phrase *ek tou aiōnos* ('from the age, since the world began') emphasizes the unprecedented nature of the miracle. While there are Old Testament healings and even resurrections, there is no recorded case of congenital blindness being healed — this is a creative act, not merely a restorative one. The man's theological reasoning is more sophisticated than his opponents'.

33. The man's conclusion — *para theou* ('from God') — represents his third stage of recognition (after 'the man called Jesus' in v. 11 and 'a prophet' in v. 17). The conditional is contrary to fact: since Jesus has done something (opened blind eyes), the only possible conclusion is that he is from God. The former beggar out-argues the trained theologians.
34. Their response reveals the very theology Jesus rejected in verse 3 — they revert to the assumption that his congenital blindness proves his sinfulness. The phrase *en hamartiais... holos* ('entirely in sins') is contemptuous: you are nothing but sin from birth. The irony is complete: the religious experts resort to the argument Jesus already dismantled. The verb *exebalon* ('threw out, cast out') likely refers to formal expulsion from the synagogue (cf. v. 22), not merely physical ejection from the room.
35. The SBLGNT reads *ton huion tou anthrōpou* ('the Son of Man') rather than *ton huion tou theou* ('the Son of God') found in some later manuscripts. We follow the critical text. Jesus seeks out the expelled man — the shepherd finds the one cast out by the religious establishment. The question is not whether the man believes in Jesus generally but whether he believes in the Son of Man — a title with eschatological and divine connotations from Daniel 7:13-14.
35. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Daniel 7:13-14 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
36. The address *kyrie* could mean either 'sir' (a polite form of address) or 'Lord' (a confessional title). At this point in the conversation, the man does not yet know who the Son of Man is, so 'sir' is the more natural rendering here. The willingness in his question — 'that I may believe' (*hina pisteusō*) — shows readiness, not resistance.
37. The verb *heōrakas* ('you have seen') carries profound irony: the man who was born blind has now not only received physical sight but is using that sight to see the Son of Man himself. The self-revelation follows the pattern of John 4:26 (the Samaritan woman) — Jesus discloses his identity to an outsider who has shown faith.
38. Now *kyrie* is clearly 'Lord' — a confessional title, not mere politeness. The verb *prosekynēsen* ('worshiped, bowed down before') is the same word used for worship of God throughout the Septuagint and New Testament. This is the man's final stage of recognition: from 'the man called Jesus' (v. 11) to 'a prophet' (v. 17) to 'from God' (v. 33) to worshiping him as Lord. The progression is complete — the man born blind now sees more clearly than anyone in the chapter.
39. This statement appears to contradict 3:17 ('God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world') but the tension is deliberate: Jesus's primary purpose is salvation, but his coming inevitably produces judgment because it forces a response. The *krima* ('judgment, verdict') is not condemnation imposed from outside but the self-sorting that occurs when light enters darkness (cf. 3:19-21). The chapter has enacted this principle: the blind man now sees; the seeing Pharisees are now blind.
40. The *mē* particle expects a negative answer ('we aren't blind too, are we?'), revealing their confidence in their own spiritual sight. The irony is that their very confidence is the proof of their blindness — they cannot even conceive that Jesus's words might apply to them.
41. Jesus's final statement inverts their assumption completely: genuine blindness (acknowledged ignorance) would remove culpability; claimed sight (self-assured knowledge) locks them into sin. The verb *meni* ('remains, abides') is the same word used positively of abiding in Jesus (15:4) — here it describes sin's permanent residence in those who refuse to acknowledge their blindness. The chapter ends with the devastating conclusion: those who claim to see are the truly blind, and their condition is incurable precisely because they refuse the diagnosis.

# 10

*Summary:* John 10 contains Jesus's extended shepherd discourse, in which he identifies himself as both the gate of the sheepfold and the good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep. The chapter opens with a parable about shepherds and thieves (vv. 1-6), followed by two 'I am' declarations: 'I am the gate' (vv. 7-10) and 'I am the good shepherd' (vv. 11-18). Jesus distinguishes himself from hired hands who flee when wolves attack. He speaks of 'other sheep' not of this fold whom he must also bring. The discourse provokes yet another division (vv. 19-21). At the Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah), the Jewish leaders confront Jesus directly about whether he is the Christ, leading to Jesus's declaration 'I and the Father are one' (v. 30) and a second attempt to stone him (v. 31). The chapter closes with Jesus withdrawing beyond the Jordan.

*What Makes This Remarkable:* The shepherd imagery draws on deep Old Testament roots: God as shepherd (Psalm 23, Isaiah 40:11), David as shepherd-king (2 Samuel 5:2), and Ezekiel's devastating critique of Israel's failed shepherds (Ezekiel 34), where God promises to shepherd his people himself and raise up 'my servant David.' Jesus's claim to be the good shepherd is simultaneously a claim to fulfill Ezekiel 34 and to embody God's own shepherding. The 'I and the Father are one' declaration (v. 30) is the theological climax — neuter *hen* ('one thing') rather than masculine *heis* ('one person'), indicating unity of purpose and being without collapsing the distinction between Father and Son.

*Translation Friction: The relationship between 10:1-21 and the preceding chapter is debated — some scholars see it as a continuation of the post-chapter-9 dialogue, others as an independent discourse. The Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah) setting in verse 22 marks a chronological shift (roughly December, two months after Tabernacles). The 'other sheep' (v. 16) is traditionally interpreted as referring to Gentile believers, though the text does not specify. Jesus's scriptural argument from Psalm 82:6 (vv. 34-36) is complex and has been interpreted in various ways.*

*Connections: The shepherd discourse connects to Psalm 23, Ezekiel 34, Zechariah 11:4-17, and Isaiah 40:11. The gate imagery connects to Psalm 118:20. The 'I and the Father are one' declaration connects to the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4) and to Jesus's prayer in John 17:11, 22. The laying down of life anticipates the cross narrative (chs. 18-19). The Hanukkah setting (rededication of the temple) provides ironic context for Jesus's claim that the Father 'consecrated' him (v. 36).*

<sup>1</sup>"Truly, truly, I say to you, the one who does not enter the sheepfold through the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a robber. <sup>2</sup>The one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup>The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup>When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. <sup>5</sup>They will never follow a stranger but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers." <sup>6</sup>Jesus told them this figure of speech, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. <sup>7</sup>So Jesus said again, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the gate for the sheep. <sup>8</sup>All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. <sup>9</sup>I am the gate. If anyone enters through me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. <sup>10</sup>The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came so that they may have life, and have it abundantly. <sup>11</sup>I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup>The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and abandons the sheep and runs away — and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. <sup>13</sup>The hireling fleeth, on account of the fact that he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. <sup>14</sup>I am the good shepherd. I know my own, and my own know me, <sup>15</sup>Indeed, as the Father knows me, even so know I the Father — and I lay down my life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup>I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will hear my voice. There will be one flock, one shepherd. <sup>17</sup>For this reason the Father loves me — because I lay down my life so that I may take it up again. <sup>18</sup>No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father." <sup>19</sup>There was again a division among the Jewish people because of these words. <sup>20</sup>Many of them said, "He has a demon and is out of his mind. Why listen to him?" <sup>21</sup>Others said, "These are not the words of someone possessed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?" <sup>22</sup>Then came the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem. It was winter, <sup>23</sup>Jesus walked in the sanctuary in Solomon's porch. <sup>24</sup>So the Jewish leaders surrounded him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." <sup>25</sup>Jesus answered them, "I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name testify about me, <sup>26</sup>But you trust not, because you are not of my sheep, as I stated to you. <sup>27</sup>My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, then they Come, follow me: <sup>28</sup>I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. <sup>29</sup>My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. <sup>30</sup>I and the Father are one." <sup>31</sup>The Jewish leaders picked up stones again to stone him. <sup>32</sup>Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these works are you going to stone me?" <sup>33</sup>The Jewish leaders answered him, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you, but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, make yourself God." <sup>34</sup>You are gods?, Jesus responded them, Is it not written in your law, I said. <sup>35</sup>If he known as them gods, to whom the word of God arrived, and the scripture cannot be broken: <sup>36</sup>Say you of him, whom the Father has sanctified, and dispatched into the world, you blasphemest. Because I stated, I am the Son of God? <sup>37</sup>If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me. <sup>38</sup>But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father." <sup>39</sup>So they tried again to arrest him, but he escaped from their grasp. <sup>40</sup>He went away again across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing at first, and he stayed there. <sup>41</sup>Many came to him and said, "John performed no sign, but everything John said about this man was true." <sup>42</sup>Numerous believed on him there.

## TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The double amēn marks solemn declaration. The aulē tōn probatōn ('sheepfold, courtyard of the sheep') refers to an enclosed area, often a stone-walled courtyard with a single entrance, used to protect sheep at night. John distinguishes between kleptēs ('thief,' one who steals by stealth) and lēstēs ('robber, bandit,' one who uses violence). The parable follows directly from the expulsion of the blind man in chapter 9 — the Pharisees are the false shepherds.
2. The Greek thyra ('door, gate') is the legitimate entry point. The poimēn ('shepherd') enters openly, with nothing to hide. The contrast is between legitimacy (through the gate) and illegitimacy (any other way).
3. The identity of the thurōros ('gatekeeper, doorkeeper') is not explained and should not be allegorized — the focus is on the shepherd's relationship with his sheep. The phrase phōnei kat' onoma ('calls by name') reflects actual Palestinian shepherding practice, where shepherds knew and named individual sheep. The sheep recognize and respond to the shepherd's specific voice — an image of intimate, personal relationship.
4. The verb ekbalē ('brought out, put forth') is the same word used in 9:34 for the Pharisees casting out the healed man — a deliberate contrast. The Pharisees 'cast out'; the shepherd 'leads out.' Middle Eastern shepherds lead from the front rather than driving from behind — the sheep follow voluntarily because they recognize the shepherd. The verb oidasin ('they know') indicates deep, experiential knowledge.
5. The double negative ou mē ('never, by no means') with the future akolouthēsousin ('will follow') is emphatic. The allotriō ('stranger, outsider') is not the same as the thief/robber — it is anyone whose voice the sheep do not recognize. The sheep's discernment is instinctive, based on relationship rather than analysis.
6. John calls this a paroimia ('figure of speech, proverb, riddle') rather than parabolē ('parable'). The paroimia in John is an enigmatic saying that requires interpretation (cf. 16:25, 29). The audience's failure to understand sets up Jesus's explanatory statements in the following verses.
7. This is the third of John's 'I am' statements with a predicate. Jesus identifies himself not as the shepherd (that comes in v. 11) but as the thyra ('gate, door') — the point of access and protection. In some shepherding practices, the shepherd himself would lie across the opening of the fold at night, literally becoming the gate. We render thyra as 'gate' rather than 'door' to maintain the pastoral setting.
8. The sweeping statement 'all who came before me' (pantes hosoi ēlthon pro emou) cannot refer to Moses and the prophets (whom Jesus affirms elsewhere) but to false leaders who claimed authority over God's flock without legitimate commission — the failed shepherds of Ezekiel 34. Some manuscripts omit 'before me' (pro emou), which would change the sense to 'all who came [apart from me].'
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Ezekiel 34 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The three-fold promise — salvation (sōthēsetai), freedom of movement (eiseleusetai kai exeleusetai, 'will go in and out'), and sustenance (nomēn heurēsei, 'will find pasture') — describes the complete provision of the shepherd through the gate. 'Going in and out' is a Hebrew idiom for living freely and securely (cf. Numbers 27:17, Deuteronomy 28:6, Psalm 121:8).
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Numbers 27:17. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 28:6. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 121:8. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The three verbs describing the thief — klepsē ('steal'), thysē ('slaughter, sacrifice'), apolesē ('destroy') — escalate in violence. The verb thysē is the same word used for ritual sacrifice, adding bitter irony: the thief 'sacrifices' the sheep for his own benefit. Against this, Jesus's purpose is stated in two stages: life (zōēn) and abundance (perisson, 'surplus, overflow, more than enough'). The Greek perisson means not barely adequate life but overflowing life.
11. The fourth 'I am' statement with predicate. The adjective kalos ('good, noble, beautiful, excellent') means more than morally good — it connotes the ideal, the model, the shepherd as he was meant to be. The phrase tēn psychēn autou tithēsīn ('lays down his life') uses the deliberate act of placing (tithēmi) — this is not accidental death but voluntary sacrifice. The preposition hyper ('for, on behalf of') indicates substitutionary action.
12. The misthotos ('hired hand, wage worker') is not a villain like the thief — he is simply not the owner. His relationship to the sheep is economic, not relational. When danger comes (the lykos, 'wolf'), the cost-benefit analysis favors flight. The verbs harpazei ('snatches, seizes by force') and skorpizei ('scatters') describe the devastation that follows failed leadership.
13. The phrase ou melei autō ('it does not matter to him, he does not care') reveals the hired hand's fundamental deficiency: lack of genuine care (cf. Mark 4:38, where the same phrase appears). The issue is not competence but commitment — the hired hand may be skilled but lacks the ownership-stake that produces sacrificial devotion.
14. The verb ginōskō ('know') here describes deep, mutual, relational knowledge — not mere awareness but intimate acquaintance. The reciprocity (I know them / they know me) echoes the covenant relationship pattern: God knows his people, and they know him (cf. Jeremiah 31:34). The next verse will ground this mutual knowledge in the relationship between Father and Son.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Jeremiah 31:34. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.

15. The comparison *kathōs* ('just as') is extraordinary: the mutual knowledge between shepherd and sheep is patterned on the mutual knowledge between Father and Son. This elevates the shepherd-sheep relationship to a divine model. The second clause returns to the theme of voluntary death (*tēn psychēn mou tithēmi*, 'I lay down my life'), now grounded in the Father-Son relationship that motivates it.
16. The 'other sheep' (*alla probata*) not of 'this fold' (*tēs aulēs tautēs*) is traditionally understood as Gentile believers who will be gathered into one community with Jewish believers. The *dei* ('must, it is necessary') indicates divine compulsion — this is part of God's plan, not optional. Note the critical distinction: 'one flock' (*mia poimnē*) not 'one fold' (*mia aulē*) — the KJV's 'one fold' is a mistranslation. The unity is in the flock (the people under one shepherd), not in a single enclosure (one institution).
17. The Father's love (*agapa*) for the Son is connected to the Son's willingness to die and rise. The verb *tithēmi* ('lay down, place') followed by *labō* ('take up, receive back') describes a voluntary, temporary surrender — death followed by resurrection. The 'again' (*palin*) points to resurrection as the completion of the act, not its reversal.
18. The Greek *exousia* ('authority, right, power') appears twice, asserting Jesus's sovereign control over both his death and his resurrection. The verb *airei* ('takes away') is negated absolutely (*oudeis*, 'no one') — Jesus's death is not imposed but chosen. Yet this sovereign freedom operates within the Father's command (*entolē*) — Jesus freely does what the Father has ordained. The tension between freedom and obedience is resolved in perfect alignment of wills.
19. The schisma ('division, split') recurs from 9:16 and 7:43 — Jesus's words consistently divide his audience. The adverb *palin* ('again') indicates this is a pattern, not an anomaly.
20. The charge of demon possession (*daimonion echei*) repeats from 7:20 and 8:48. The verb *mainetai* ('is mad, is insane') adds a new charge — raving madness. The combination suggests they hear his claims as the ravings of a possessed person. Their dismissive question ('why listen?') attempts to shut down the conversation.
21. The counter-argument has two parts: (1) Jesus's words are too coherent and meaningful to be demonic ravings, and (2) the healing of the blind man in chapter 9 provides concrete evidence that his power comes from God, not demons. The *mē* particle expects a negative answer: 'a demon can't open blind eyes, can it?' The reference back to the blind man's healing links chapters 9 and 10.
22. The *egkainia* ('Dedication, Renewal') is Hanukkah, commemorating the rededication of the temple by Judas Maccabeus in 164 BC after its desecration by Antiochus IV Epiphanes (1 Maccabees 4:36-59). The festival falls in Kislev (November-December). The note 'it was winter' (*heimōn ēn*) may be simply calendrical or may carry symbolic weight — the season of cold and darkness as the theological conflict intensifies.
23. Solomon's Colonnade (*stoa tou Solomōnos*) was a covered portico on the eastern side of the temple mount, believed to date to Solomon's original temple. It was a common gathering place for teaching and debate (cf. Acts 3:11, 5:12). The location is public and prominent.
24. The verb *ekyklōsan* ('surrounded, encircled') suggests both physical and psychological pressure — they close in on him. The idiom *tēn psychēn hēmōn aireis* (lit. 'you take away our soul/life') means 'you hold us in suspense' or 'you keep us agitated.' The demand for *parrhēsia* ('plainness, openness, boldness') reflects their frustration with Jesus's indirect self-revelation. During Hanukkah, the question of messianic identity would carry particular weight — the festival commemorates a military deliverer.
25. Jesus's response reframes the problem: the issue is not insufficient evidence but insufficient faith. He has told them (*eipon hymin*) — through his 'I am' statements and his signs — and they have not believed. The works (*erga*, including healings, signs, and teaching) done 'in my Father's name' (*en tō onomati tou patros*) carry the Father's own authority and serve as testimony.
26. The logic is direct: unbelief is the evidence that they do not belong to Jesus's flock, not the cause of being excluded from it. The phrase *ek tōn probatōn tōn emōn* ('from my sheep') connects their unbelief to the shepherd discourse — they cannot hear his voice because they are not his sheep (cf. 8:47).
27. Three marks of the true sheep: they hear (*akouousin*, present tense — ongoing hearing), they are known by the shepherd (*ginōskō*, personal relational knowledge), and they follow (*akolouthousin*, habitual following). The order matters: hearing precedes knowing precedes following.
28. Three assurances correspond to the three marks of verse 27: eternal life is given (*didōmi*, present tense — ongoing gift), they will never perish (*ou mē apolōntai*, the strongest possible negation), and no one can forcibly remove them (*ouch harpasei*, 'will not snatch' — the same verb used of the wolf in v. 12). The security of the sheep rests in the shepherd's power, not in the sheep's strength.
29. The textual tradition here is complex — some manuscripts read 'what my Father has given me is greater than all' (emphasizing the gift), others 'my Father who has given them to me is greater than all' (emphasizing the Father). The theological point is the same: the sheep are doubly secure, held in both the Son's hand (v. 28) and the Father's hand. No external force can overcome either.
30. This is the theological summit of the chapter. The statement is concise to the point of explosive — five Greek words that generated centuries of theological debate. The audience's response (picking up stones, v. 31) confirms they hear this as a divine claim. The statement follows logically from vv. 28-29: if the sheep are equally secure in the Son's hand and the Father's hand, the two hands must be one.
31. The adverb *palin* ('again') connects to the stoning attempt in 8:59. The verb *ebastasan* ('picked up, carried') suggests they found stones in the temple precincts — possibly from ongoing construction work on the temple complex. Their intent to stone him for blasphemy (cf. v. 33) confirms they understood verse 30 as a divine claim, not merely a statement of prophetic alignment.

32. The adjective *kala* ('good, noble, beautiful') for the works echoes *kalos* in 'good shepherd' (v. 11) — the works are beautiful, noble, worthy of praise. The question forces them to identify which specific act merits death — the absurdity of stoning someone for doing good is laid bare.
33. The charge is explicit: *blasphēmia* ('blasphemy') — and the specific form of blasphemy is that a human being (*anthrōpos ōn*, 'being a man') claims to be *theon* ('God'). The phrase *poieis seauton theon* ('make yourself God') is how they interpret 'I and the Father are one.' They understand the claim correctly; what they dispute is Jesus's right to make it.
34. Jesus quotes Psalm 82:6, where God addresses the divine council or Israel's judges as 'gods' (*theoi*). The phrase 'your Law' (*tō nomō hymōn*) uses 'Law' broadly to include the Psalms (the entire Hebrew Scripture). Jesus's argument is a *qal wahomer* ('lesser to greater'): if Scripture itself applies the word 'gods' to human beings, how can it be blasphemy for the one the Father consecrated and sent to call himself God's Son?
34. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalms 82:6. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
35. The parenthetical 'Scripture cannot be broken' (*ou dynatai lythēnai hē graphē*) is a significant assertion of the authority and inviolability of the written text. The verb *lythēnai* ('broken, loosened, dissolved') means Scripture cannot be invalidated or set aside. 'To whom the word of God came' identifies the 'gods' of Psalm 82 as recipients of divine revelation — mere humans who were nonetheless called 'gods' by God's own word.
35. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 82 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
36. The verb *hēgiasen* ('consecrated, set apart, sanctified') is particularly resonant during the Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah), which celebrates the rededication/consecration of the temple. Jesus implies he is the true consecrated one — the living temple (cf. 2:19-21). Note that Jesus says 'Son of God' (*huios tou theou*) here, not 'God' — he reframes their charge. The argument is: if Scripture calls humans 'gods,' how much more appropriate for the one the Father himself consecrated to say 'I am the Son of God'?
37. Jesus offers a falsifiable test: his works are the evidence. If they do not bear the character of the Father's works, disbelief is warranted. This is not an appeal to blind faith but to observable evidence — the signs and works he has performed throughout the Gospel.
38. The phrase 'the Father is in me and I am in the Father' (*en emoi ho patēr kagō en tō patri*) expresses mutual indwelling — a concept developed further in 14:10-11 and 17:21. The two verbs *gnōte kai ginōskēte* ('know and keep knowing') move from initial recognition (aorist) to ongoing understanding (present). Jesus offers the works as an entry point for those who cannot yet accept his word directly.
39. The verb *piasai* ('arrest, seize') indicates an official arrest attempt, not merely stoning. The phrase *exēlthen ek tēs cheiros autōn* ('went out from their hand') echoes the shepherd discourse: no one can snatch from the Father's hand (v. 29), and no one can seize the shepherd either. Jesus's escape is narrated without explanation — divine protection is implied.
40. Jesus returns to the location of his ministry's beginning (cf. 1:28) — a geographic and thematic return to origins. The verb *emeinen* ('stayed, remained') uses the key Johannine verb *menō*. The withdrawal beyond the Jordan is strategic, removing himself from Jerusalem's immediate danger while remaining accessible.
41. The contrast between John (no signs) and Jesus (many signs) highlights that John's authority was prophetic testimony, not miraculous power. Yet John's testimony is vindicated — 'everything John said about this man was true' (*alēthē ēn*). This verse connects the end of chapter 10 back to the beginning of the Gospel (1:19-34) and John the Baptist's witness.
42. The chapter ends on a note of faith — 'many believed' (*polloi episteusan*). In contrast to the rejection in Jerusalem, the people beyond the Jordan receive Jesus. The adverb *ekei* ('there') is emphatic: away from Jerusalem, away from the religious establishment, faith flourishes. This provides a hopeful conclusion before the Lazarus narrative in chapter 11.

# 11

**Summary:** *John 11 narrates the raising of Lazarus from the dead — the climactic seventh sign in John's Gospel. When Jesus receives word that his friend Lazarus is ill, he deliberately delays two days before traveling to Bethany, where he finds Lazarus already four days dead. Martha meets Jesus with a statement of faith and grievance: 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' Jesus declares 'I am the resurrection and the life' and asks if she believes. At the tomb, Jesus weeps, then commands the stone removed and calls Lazarus out of the grave. The raising triggers two opposite responses: many believe, but the Sanhedrin convenes to plot Jesus's death. Caiaphas unwittingly prophesies that Jesus will die for the nation. The chapter closes with Jesus withdrawing to Ephraim as the authorities issue orders for his arrest.*

**What Makes This Remarkable:** *This is the longest sustained narrative in John's Gospel and the most theologically dense sign. The raising of Lazarus functions simultaneously as a historical event, a demonstration of Jesus's power over death, a prophetic sign of the general resurrection, and a catalyst for the crucifixion — the one who raises from death is sentenced to death precisely because he raises from death. The 'I am the resurrection and the life' declaration (v. 25) is the fifth 'I am' with predicate and*

*arguably the most sweeping. Jesus's weeping at the tomb (v. 35, the shortest verse in the Bible) reveals the fully human emotional life of the one who has just claimed divine authority over death. Caiaphas's unwitting prophecy (vv. 49-52) is one of John's most brilliant ironies.*

*Translation Friction: The four-day delay is crucial — Jewish tradition held that the soul lingered near the body for three days, meaning by the fourth day decomposition confirmed death was irreversible. Jesus's emotional response involves two Greek words: dakryō ('shed tears,' v. 35) and embrimaomai ('deeply moved/indignant,' vv. 33, 38). The latter may indicate anger — at death itself, at the grief it causes, or at unbelief — rather than mere sadness. Lazarus's raising is not mentioned in the Synoptic Gospels, a significant omission that has generated extensive scholarly discussion.*

*Connections: The raising connects to Jesus's earlier claims about giving life (5:21, 25-29), the bread of life discourse (6:39-40, 54), and the good shepherd who lays down his life (10:11-18). Martha's confession (v. 27) parallels Peter's confession in the Synoptics (Matthew 16:16). The unwinding of grave cloths (v. 44) anticipates the resurrection narrative (20:6-7). Caiaphas's prophecy connects to Isaiah 53 (the servant dying for the people) and to John's understanding of the cross as gathering (cf. 12:32).*

<sup>1</sup>Now a man named Lazarus was ill. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. <sup>2</sup>Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; it was her brother Lazarus who was ill. <sup>3</sup>So the sisters sent word to him, saying, "Lord, the one you love is ill." <sup>4</sup>When Jesus heard this, he said, "This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." <sup>5</sup>And Lazarus, now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister. <sup>6</sup>So when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed where he was for two more days. <sup>7</sup>Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." <sup>8</sup>The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jewish leaders were just now trying to stone you, and you are going there again?" <sup>9</sup>Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in a day? If anyone walks during the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. <sup>10</sup>But if anyone walks at night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him." <sup>11</sup>After saying this, he told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going to wake him up." <sup>12</sup>The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover." <sup>13</sup>Jesus had spoken about his death, but they thought he was talking about ordinary sleep. <sup>14</sup>So then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus has died. <sup>15</sup>And for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." <sup>16</sup>So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, so that we may die with him." <sup>17</sup>When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. <sup>18</sup>Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away, <sup>19</sup>Numerous of the Jews arrived to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. <sup>20</sup>When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him, but Mary stayed seated in the house. <sup>21</sup>Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. <sup>22</sup>But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." <sup>23</sup>Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." <sup>24</sup>Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." <sup>25</sup>Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me, even if he dies, will live, <sup>26</sup>Whosoever liveth and believes in me will never die. Believest you this? <sup>27</sup>So he said to her, "Yes, Lord. I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one coming into the world." <sup>28</sup>After saying this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying quietly, "The Teacher is here and is asking for you." <sup>29</sup>When she heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. <sup>30</sup>Jesus had not yet come into the village but was still at the place where Martha had met him. <sup>31</sup>When the Jewish people who were with her in the house consoling her saw Mary get up quickly and go out, they followed her, assuming she was going to the tomb to weep there. <sup>32</sup>When Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." <sup>33</sup>When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jewish people who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and troubled. <sup>34</sup>He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." <sup>35</sup>Indeed, Jesus wept. <sup>36</sup>So the Jewish people said, "See how he loved him!" <sup>37</sup>But some of them said, "Could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind man, have kept Lazarus from dying?" <sup>38</sup>Then Jesus, deeply moved again within himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. <sup>39</sup>Jesus said, "Remove the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by now there will be a stench, for he has been dead four days." <sup>40</sup>Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" <sup>41</sup>So they removed the stone. Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. <sup>42</sup>I knew

that you always hear me, but I said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." <sup>43</sup> After saying this, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" <sup>44</sup> The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go." <sup>45</sup> Many of the Jewish people who had come to Mary and had seen what he did believed in him. <sup>46</sup> But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. <sup>47</sup> So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council meeting and said, "What are we going to do? For this man is performing many signs. <sup>48</sup> If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." <sup>49</sup> But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all. <sup>50</sup> You do not consider that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish." <sup>51</sup> He did not say this on his own, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, <sup>52</sup> Not for that nation sole, but that as well he should gather as one in one the God's children that were scattered abroad. <sup>53</sup> So from that day on they plotted to put him to death. <sup>54</sup> Therefore Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jewish leaders but went from there to the region near the wilderness, to a town called Ephraim, and he stayed there with his disciples. <sup>55</sup> Now the Passover of the Jewish people was near, and many went up to Jerusalem from the countryside before the Passover to purify themselves. <sup>56</sup> They were looking for Jesus and asking one another as they stood in the temple, "What do you think? Surely he will not come to the feast?" <sup>57</sup> Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that anyone who knew where he was should report it, so that they could arrest him.

## TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Lazarus (Greek Lazaros from Hebrew Eleazar, 'God has helped') is introduced by his illness, his hometown, and his sisters. Bethany was a village about two miles east of Jerusalem on the slopes of the Mount of Olives (cf. v. 18). John identifies the village by its residents rather than its geography, suggesting the sisters were well known to his audience.
2. John identifies Mary by an event he has not yet narrated (the anointing occurs in 12:1-8), suggesting his readers already knew the story. The detail 'wiped his feet with her hair' distinguishes this Mary from other anointing accounts in the Synoptics. The parenthetical identification reinforces the family connection: Lazarus is defined in relation to his sisters.
3. The message is restrained — no explicit request, only a statement of fact that assumes Jesus will act. The verb *phileis* ('you love,' from *phileō*) indicates personal affection and friendship. The sisters trust that the information alone will be sufficient to move Jesus to come.
4. Jesus's statement is true at a deeper level than it appears: Lazarus will die, but his death is not the final destination — it serves the glory (*doxa*) of God. The purpose clause *hina doxasthē* ('so that he may be glorified') connects the sign to its ultimate meaning. The phrase 'the Son of God' (*ho huios tou theou*) appears rarely in John as a self-designation and carries full Christological weight here.
5. The verb *ēgapa* (from *agapaō*) is used here rather than *phileō* (v. 3). John uses both verbs for Jesus's love without a clear semantic distinction in this passage. The sentence is placed before the delay, emphasizing that Jesus's decision to wait is not a failure of love but operates within it.
6. The conjunction *oun* ('so, therefore') is startling — 'therefore he stayed.' The delay is deliberate, not accidental. Combined with one day's travel each way, the two-day delay ensures Lazarus will have been dead four days when Jesus arrives. The delay serves the sign: a four-day-dead man is beyond any natural recovery, making the miracle unmistakable.
7. The verb *agōmen* ('let us go') is a hortatory subjunctive, inviting the disciples to join him. The adverb *palin* ('again') recalls the danger — they had just fled Judea after the stoning attempt (10:31, 39). The return to Judea is a return to danger.
8. The adverb *nyn* ('just now, recently') emphasizes the immediacy of the danger — the stoning attempt was not ancient history but recent experience. The disciples' question reveals understandable fear mixed with incredulity.
9. The question is rhetorical: daylight hours are appointed and sufficient. The metaphor means Jesus has an appointed time for his work, and while that time lasts, he cannot be stopped. 'The light of this world' (*to phōs tou kosmou toutou*) here refers to the sun, but John's readers would hear the echo of 8:12 and 9:5 where Jesus is the light of the world.
10. The shift from 'sees the light of this world' (external light, v. 9) to 'the light is not in him' (internal light, v. 10) is significant. The one who walks in darkness stumbles not merely because it is dark outside but because there is no light within. This connects to the Johannine theme of internal illumination through faith.
11. Jesus uses the metaphor of sleep (*kekoimētai*, perfect of *koimaō*, 'has fallen asleep') for death — a common biblical euphemism (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14, Daniel 12:2) that takes on literal force when spoken by the one who can reverse death. The perfect tense indicates a completed state: Lazarus is currently in the state of having fallen asleep. The verb *exypnisō* ('wake up') shows Jesus views death as a temporary condition he can reverse.

11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Daniel 12:2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The disciples understand Jesus literally: if Lazarus is sleeping, sleep is healing, and he will get better (*sōthēsetai*, 'he will be saved/healed'). The misunderstanding is typically Johannine — the audience takes Jesus's words at face value while the deeper meaning escapes them.
13. John provides the narrator's clarification, as he often does after misunderstandings (cf. 2:21, 6:71, 7:39, 12:33). The phrase *koimēseōs tou hypnou* ('the rest of sleep') is emphatic — literal, physical sleep, not the metaphorical sleep of death.
14. The adverb *parrēsia* ('plainly, openly') contrasts with the figurative language of verse 11. The blunt statement *Lazaros apethanen* ('Lazarus died') uses the aorist — a completed event. Jesus knows Lazarus is dead without having been told, demonstrating the supernatural knowledge that characterizes John's portrayal of Jesus.
15. Jesus's gladness (*chairō*) is not callousness about Lazarus's death but satisfaction that the disciples will witness a sign that deepens their faith. His absence was deliberate (cf. v. 6): had he been present, he would have healed Lazarus, and the disciples would have seen another healing. Instead, they will see a resurrection — a sign of a completely different order.
16. Thomas (Aramaic for 'twin,' translated by the Greek *Didymos*) appears here with characteristic blunt pessimism (cf. 14:5, 20:25). His statement is darkly loyal: he expects the trip to Judea to result in death but is willing to share it. The 'him' (*autou*) is ambiguous — it could mean 'die with Jesus' or 'die with Lazarus.' Most naturally it refers to Jesus, since the danger is in Judea.
17. The four days (*tessarās hēmeras*) is theologically significant: Jewish tradition held that the soul departed the body definitively after three days, when decomposition set in (cf. v. 39). By the fourth day, death was considered irreversible. Jesus arrives when human hope has been exhausted.
18. The Greek *stadiōn dekapente* ('fifteen stadia') equals approximately 1.7 miles (2.8 km). We render with the approximate modern equivalent for clarity. The proximity to Jerusalem explains both the presence of many mourners from the city (v. 19) and the rapid report of the miracle to the authorities (v. 46).
19. The verb *paramythēsōntai* ('console, comfort, encourage') describes the formal Jewish mourning practice of visiting the bereaved. Here *hoi Ioudaioi* refers to Jewish people from Jerusalem generally (neighbors and acquaintances), not the hostile authorities. The pluperfect *elēlytheisan* ('had come') indicates they were already present when Jesus arrived.
20. The sisters' responses are consistent with their characterizations in Luke 10:38-42: Martha is active and initiative-taking; Mary remains seated. The verb *ekathezeto* ('was sitting, remained seated') may indicate mourning posture — mourners traditionally sat on low seats or the ground during the shiva period.
21. The conditional *ei ēs hōde* ('if you had been here') is a contrary-to-fact condition expressing both grief and implicit trust — she believes Jesus could have prevented the death. Mary will say the identical words in verse 32, suggesting the sisters had spoken these words to each other during the waiting period. The address *Kyrie* ('Lord') carries genuine reverence.
22. The phrase *alla kai nyn* ('but even now') pushes beyond grief to tentative hope. Martha does not explicitly ask for resurrection, but her words leave the door open. The verb *aitēsē* ('ask, request') and the confident *oida* ('I know') express a faith that does not fully grasp what is about to happen but trusts in Jesus's relationship with God.
23. The verb *anastēsetai* ('will rise') is deliberately ambiguous — it could refer to the general resurrection at the last day (as Martha takes it in v. 24) or to an imminent, present-tense rising. Jesus's statements in John frequently operate on multiple levels simultaneously.
24. Martha's response is orthodox Pharisaic theology — belief in bodily resurrection at the eschaton (cf. Daniel 12:2, 2 Maccabees 7:9). Her *oida* ('I know') is theologically correct but inadequate to the moment: she knows about future resurrection but does not yet grasp that the resurrection stands before her in person. Jesus will redirect her from eschatological hope to present encounter.
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Daniel 12:2. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. The fifth 'I am' statement with predicate. By identifying himself as both *hē anastasis* ('the resurrection') and *hē zōē* ('the life'), Jesus claims to be the source and embodiment of both. The sequence 'even if he dies, will live' addresses physical death: faith in Jesus does not prevent physical death but renders it temporary.
26. The second clause addresses the living: those who believe in Jesus will never experience the ultimate death (*ou mē apothanē eis ton aiōna*, 'will absolutely never die into the age'). Verse 25 addresses those who have already died; verse 26 addresses those now living. Together they cover all cases. The direct question 'Do you believe this?' (*pisteueis touto*) shifts from theological declaration to personal challenge — Martha must respond.
27. Martha's confession is one of the most complete in the Gospels, paralleling Peter's confession in Matthew 16:16. Three titles: *ho Christos* ('the Christ/Messiah'), *ho huios tou theou* ('the Son of God'), and *ho eis ton kosmon erchomenos* ('the one coming into the world'). The perfect tense *pepisteuka* ('I have believed and continue to believe') indicates settled, enduring faith. This is the confession the Fourth Gospel aims to produce in its readers (cf. 20:31).
28. Martha calls Jesus *ho didaskalos* ('the Teacher') — a title of respect and intimacy. The adverb *lathra* ('secretly, quietly') suggests discretion: Martha does not want the mourners to follow and create a commotion before Mary and Jesus can meet privately. The verb *phonei* ('calls, summons') indicates a specific request from Jesus to see Mary.

29. The adverb tachy ('quickly') shows Mary's eager response — she does not hesitate. The passive ēgerthē ('was raised, got up') uses the same verb root (egeirō) that describes resurrection, a coincidence John may intend: Mary rises from mourning at the Teacher's call.
30. This geographical note explains why Mary must go out to Jesus rather than Jesus coming to her. He remained outside the village, perhaps deliberately — the encounter will eventually move to the tomb, which was also outside the village.
31. The mourners' assumption (doxantes, 'supposing, assuming') is wrong but natural — a bereaved sister rushing out would typically be going to the tomb to grieve. Their following creates an audience for the miracle, fulfilling the narrative requirement that many witnesses be present (cf. vv. 45-46).
32. Mary's words are identical to Martha's in verse 21, but her posture differs — she falls at Jesus's feet (epesen autou pros tous podas), a gesture of both reverence and grief. Unlike Martha, Mary does not add any expression of continued hope (cf. Martha's v. 22). Her grief is raw and unqualified. This is the same posture she will take in 12:3 when she anoints Jesus's feet.
33. The verb enebrimēsato (from embrimaomai) is difficult to translate: it denotes a deep, forceful emotion — sometimes anger, indignation, or a snorting like a horse. The most likely sense here is a combination of grief at the devastation death causes and anger at death itself as an enemy. The reflexive etaraxen heauton ('troubled himself') indicates this was not involuntary emotion but something Jesus allowed himself to feel fully. The same verb (tarassō) appears at 12:27 and 13:21.
34. Jesus's question 'Where have you laid him?' does not indicate ignorance (he already knew of Lazarus's death in v. 14) but draws the mourners into active participation in what is about to happen. The invitation 'come and see' (erchou kai ide) echoes the invitation in 1:39 and 1:46 — words that in John lead to revelation.
35. The shortest verse in the Bible, but among the most theologically significant. The verb edakrysen (from dakryō, 'to shed tears') is distinct from the loud wailing (klaiō) used of Mary and the mourners. Jesus's tears are quiet and controlled but genuine. The one who has just claimed to be the resurrection and the life weeps at the tomb of his friend — the fully divine one is fully human. The rendering matches the KJV because the Greek is so simple and direct that there is no meaningfully different modern rendering.
36. The mourners' observation is genuine and correct — ephilei ('he loved,' imperfect of phileō) indicates ongoing personal affection. The imperfect tense captures habitual, characteristic love. Even Jesus's opponents recognize the depth of his friendship with Lazarus.
37. The reference to opening blind eyes connects directly to chapter 9. The question is logical: if Jesus can heal congenital blindness, why not prevent death? The implied criticism is that Jesus's power (or willingness) has limits. The answer will come in the next few verses — Jesus's power exceeds their imagination.
38. The second occurrence of embrimaomai (cf. v. 33) underscores the intensity of Jesus's emotional engagement. The tomb is described as a spēlaion ('cave') with a stone placed against (epekeito, 'was lying upon/against') the entrance — a typical first-century Jewish rock-cut tomb sealed with a rolling stone or blocking stone.
39. Martha's objection is practical and visceral: ozei ('it stinks, there is an odor') refers to the decomposition of a four-day-old corpse. The term tetartaiois ('fourth-day,' an adjective meaning 'of the fourth day') confirms what the narrative has established — Lazarus is unambiguously dead and decomposing. Martha's faith (v. 27) does not yet encompass the immediate possibility of resurrection.
40. Jesus refers back to verse 4 (the illness is for God's glory) and verse 25 (the resurrection claim), though neither statement was made directly to Martha in those exact words — the reference may encompass the message sent through the sisters (v. 4) and the conversation of vv. 25-26. The conditional ean pisteusēs ('if you believe') makes sight dependent on faith, not faith on sight.
41. The prayer begins with eucharistō ('I thank, I give thanks') — not petition but thanksgiving, as if the outcome is already settled. The aorist ēkousas ('you heard') treats the hearing as a completed event. Jesus's prayer is not a request but an acknowledgment that the Father has already answered.
42. Jesus explains that the audible prayer is pedagogical — the crowd needs to hear it so they understand the miracle's source. The phrase pantote mou akoueis ('you always hear me') asserts a permanent, unbroken communion between Father and Son. The purpose clause hina pisteusōsin ('so that they may believe') reveals that the entire event — including the delay, the grief, and the miracle — serves the mission of bringing people to faith.
43. The verb ekraugasen ('cried out, shouted') with phōnē megalē ('a great/loud voice') describes a commanding shout — not a whisper or a prayer but a sovereign summons to the dead. The command deuro exō ('come out here') is simple, direct, and imperative. Augustine famously noted that Jesus specified 'Lazarus' by name because, had he simply said 'come out,' all the dead would have risen.
44. John describes Lazarus as ho tethnēkōs ('the one having died, the dead man') — even in the act of emerging, the narrative emphasizes he was genuinely dead. The keiriai ('linen strips, burial wrappings') bound hands and feet according to Jewish burial custom. The soudarion ('face cloth, sweat cloth') is the same word used in 20:7 for the cloth found in Jesus's empty tomb — but at Jesus's resurrection, the cloths are left behind neatly, not unwound by human hands. The command 'unbind him and let him go' (lysatē auton kai aphete auton hypagein) involves the community in the miracle's completion.
45. The expected response: eyewitnesses of the raising believe (episteusan, aorist — they came to faith). The sign fulfills its purpose (cf. v. 42). These are the same mourners from verse 19 who had come to console the sisters.
46. The tines ('some') who report to the Pharisees may be hostile informants or may simply be reporting a remarkable event — John does not specify their motive. Either way, the report triggers the fateful council meeting in the next verse. The proximity of Bethany to Jerusalem (v. 18) makes the

rapid communication plausible.

47. The synedrion ('council, Sanhedrin') indicates a formal session of the ruling body. The question *ti poioumen* ('what are we doing?' or 'what should we do?') reveals panic and paralysis. They do not dispute the signs (*sēmeia*) — the reality of the miracles is conceded. Their concern is entirely political and practical, not theological.
48. The fear is political: a popular messianic movement will provoke Roman intervention. The 'place' (*topon*) likely refers to the temple, and the 'nation' (*ethnos*) to Jewish national autonomy. John's readers, writing after 70 AD, would recognize the bitter irony: the Romans did come and destroy both the temple and the nation — the very outcome the council hoped to prevent by killing Jesus.
49. The phrase *archiereus ōn tou eniautou ekeinou* ('being high priest that year') does not mean the office rotated annually — Caiaphas served as high priest from about 18-36 AD. John specifies the year to connect the high priesthood to the specific year of Jesus's death. Caiaphas's opening dismissal (*hymeis ouk oidate ouden*, 'you know nothing') is contemptuous and politically shrewd.
50. Caiaphas's political calculus — sacrifice one to save many — is straightforward realpolitik. The verb *sympherei* ('it is advantageous, it is better') is coldly pragmatic. But John will immediately reinterpret these words as unwitting prophecy (vv. 51-52). The phrase *heis anthrōpos apothanē hyper tou laou* ('one man die for the people') uses the same preposition (*hyper*, 'for, on behalf of') that Jesus used of the good shepherd laying down his life (10:11, 15).
51. John's editorial comment transforms Caiaphas's political statement into prophetic oracle. The phrase *aph' heautou ouk eipen* ('he did not say this on his own') indicates that a power beyond Caiaphas was speaking through him — the high priestly office carried prophetic capacity that operated independently of the priest's own intentions. The verb *eprophēteusen* ('he prophesied') is the narrator's authoritative interpretation.
52. John expands the prophecy beyond Caiaphas's intent: Jesus dies not only for the Jewish nation but to gather (*synagagē*, from *synagō* — the verb root of 'synagogue') all God's scattered children into one community. The phrase *ta tekna tou theou ta dieskorpismena* ('the scattered children of God') echoes the 'other sheep' of 10:16 and connects to the prophetic vision of Israel's regathering (Isaiah 11:12, 43:5-6, Ezekiel 37:21) now extended to include Gentiles.
52. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 11:12. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
52. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ezekiel 37:21. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
53. The verb *ebouleusanto* ('they deliberated, resolved, plotted') marks the formal decision to kill Jesus. The raising of Lazarus — Jesus's greatest sign of life — becomes the direct cause of the decision to end his life. This is John's supreme irony: the one who gives life is condemned to death for giving life.
54. Ephraim is likely the modern village of et-Taiyibeh, about fifteen miles northeast of Jerusalem on the edge of the Judean wilderness. The withdrawal is temporary — Jesus will return for Passover (v. 55). The verb *emeinen* ('stayed, remained') uses *menō*, and he remains with his disciples (*meta tōn mathētōn*), withdrawing from public ministry to the community of faith.
55. This is the third and final Passover in John's Gospel (cf. 2:13, 6:4). The purification (*hagnisōsin heautous*) refers to ritual cleansing required before participating in the Passover — those who had contracted uncleanness through contact with a corpse or other sources needed to purify themselves in advance (cf. Numbers 9:6-12). The irony: they purify themselves for Passover while the true Passover Lamb is about to be slaughtered.
55. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Numbers 9:6-12 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
56. The crowd's speculation builds suspense: will Jesus come to this Passover, knowing the authorities want him dead? The *ou mē* ('surely not') with the subjunctive *ēlthē* expects a negative answer — they doubt he will risk it. But the readers know Jesus has already indicated he will lay down his life voluntarily (10:17-18).
57. The pluperfect *dedōkeisan* ('had given') indicates the orders preceded the crowd's speculation — the authorities had already set the trap. The verb *mēnysē* ('report, inform, disclose') makes the public complicit in the arrest — everyone becomes a potential informant. The chapter ends with the net closing around Jesus, setting the stage for the events of chapters 12-19.

## 12

**Summary:** *John 12 transitions from public ministry to the passion narrative. It opens with Mary's anointing of Jesus at Bethany — an extravagant act of devotion that Jesus interprets as preparation for his burial. The triumphal entry into Jerusalem follows, with crowds waving palm branches and shouting 'Hosanna.' Greeks seeking Jesus trigger his declaration that 'the hour has come' for the Son of Man to be glorified, which he describes through the metaphor of a grain of wheat dying to bear fruit. A voice from heaven confirms him. Jesus reflects on the meaning of his death — 'when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself' — then withdraws as the crowd fails to understand. The chapter closes with John's theological summary: despite the signs, most did not believe, fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy. Jesus makes a final public appeal about light, judgment, and the Father's command.*

**What Makes This Remarkable:** *This chapter marks the hinge of John's Gospel — the end of the 'Book of Signs' (chs. 1-12) and the threshold of the 'Book of Glory' (chs. 13-21). The anointing at Bethany, the triumphal entry, and the coming of the Greeks form a triptych that interprets Jesus's death as simultaneously an act of love, a royal claim, and a universal mission. The grain-of-wheat metaphor (v. 24) is one of Jesus's most profound self-descriptions: life through death, glory through humiliation. The voice from heaven (v. 28) is the Johannine equivalent of the Synoptic transfiguration. Isaiah 6:10 and 53:1 are quoted together (vv. 38-40), weaving together the themes of prophetic rejection and suffering servanthood.*

**Translation Friction:** *The chronology of the anointing differs between John (six days before Passover) and the Synoptics. Judas is identified as the objector in John, while in Matthew it is the disciples generally. The identification of the voice from heaven as 'thunder' or 'an angel' by the crowd (v. 29) parallels the Synoptic transfiguration accounts but occurs in a different setting. The 'Greeks' (Hellēnes, v. 20) are likely Gentile God-fearers who attended Jewish festivals, not Greek-speaking Jews.*

**Connections:** *The anointing connects to Mark 14:3-9 and anticipates the burial in 19:38-42. The triumphal entry fulfills Zechariah 9:9 and connects to Psalm 118:25-26. The grain-of-wheat metaphor connects to 1 Corinthians 15:36-37. 'Lifted up' (v. 32) resumes the language of 3:14 and 8:28. The Isaiah quotations connect to the broader theme of prophetic rejection. The 'prince of this world' (v. 31) connects to 14:30 and 16:11.*

<sup>1</sup>Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was — the one whom Jesus had raised from the dead. <sup>2</sup> So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining at table with him. <sup>3</sup>Mary then took a pound of expensive perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus's feet, and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. <sup>4</sup>But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples — the one who was about to betray him — said, <sup>5</sup>"Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" <sup>6</sup>He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief. As keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it. <sup>7</sup>Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She intended to keep it for the day of my burial. <sup>8</sup>You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me." <sup>9</sup>When the large crowd of the Jewish people learned that Jesus was there, they came not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. <sup>10</sup>So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, <sup>11</sup>because that by reason of him numerous of the Jews traveled away, and believed on Jesus. <sup>12</sup>The next day the large crowd that had come for the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup>They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord — the King of Israel!" <sup>14</sup>Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, as it is written: <sup>15</sup>"Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion. See, your king is coming, seated on a donkey's colt." <sup>16</sup>His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and that they had done these things to him. <sup>17</sup>The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to testify about it. <sup>18</sup>This is also why the crowd went to meet him — because they heard that he had performed this sign. <sup>19</sup>So the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you are gaining nothing. Look — the whole world has gone after him!" <sup>20</sup>Now there were some Greeks among those who had come up to worship at the feast. <sup>21</sup>So they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir,

we want to see Jesus." <sup>22</sup>Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. <sup>23</sup>Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. <sup>24</sup>Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain. But if it dies, it produces much fruit. <sup>25</sup>The one who loves his life loses it, and the one who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. <sup>26</sup>If anyone serves me, he must follow me, and where I am, there my servant will be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him." <sup>27</sup>"Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say — 'Father, save me from this hour'? But it is for this purpose that I have come to this hour. <sup>28</sup>Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." <sup>29</sup>The crowd standing there heard it and said it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." <sup>30</sup>Jesus answered, "This voice came not for my sake but for yours. <sup>31</sup>Now is the judgment of this world. Now the ruler of this world will be cast out. <sup>32</sup>And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." <sup>33</sup>He said this to indicate the kind of death he was going to die. <sup>34</sup>So the crowd answered him, "We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?" <sup>35</sup>So Jesus said to them, "The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness does not overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. <sup>36</sup>While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become children of light." After saying this, Jesus departed and hid himself from them. <sup>37</sup>Although he had performed so many signs in their presence, they did not believe in him, <sup>38</sup>Indeed, that the declaring of Esaias the prophet of old could be fulfilled, which he spoke, Lord, who has believed our report? and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? <sup>39</sup>For this reason they could not believe, because Isaiah also said: <sup>40</sup>"He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, so that they would not see with their eyes or understand with their hearts, and turn — and I would heal them." <sup>41</sup>Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke about him. <sup>42</sup>Nevertheless, many even among the leaders believed in him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be expelled from the synagogue. <sup>43</sup>For they loved the glory that comes from people more than the glory that comes from God. <sup>44</sup>Then Jesus cried out and said, "The one who believes in me does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. <sup>45</sup>And the one who sees me sees the one who sent me. <sup>46</sup>I have come into the world as light, so that everyone who believes in me may not remain in darkness. <sup>47</sup>If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him, for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. <sup>48</sup>The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge: the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. <sup>49</sup>For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment — what to say and what to speak. <sup>50</sup>And I know that his commandment is eternal life. So whatever I say, I say just as the Father has told me."

## TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The time marker 'six days before the Passover' (pro hex hēmerōn tou pascha) places the anointing on the Saturday evening before the final week. The identification of Bethany through Lazarus — 'whom Jesus had raised from the dead' — keeps the raising miracle in view and reminds the reader that Lazarus is living proof of Jesus's power over death.
2. Martha's serving (diēkonei, from diakoneō, the root of 'deacon') is consistent with her characterization in Luke 10:40. Lazarus reclining at table (anakeimenōn, the standard posture for formal dining) is a quiet, powerful detail: the man who was dead four days ago now dines as a living guest.
3. The litra ('pound,' approximately 327 grams or 12 ounces) of nard — an aromatic oil imported from the Himalayas — was extraordinarily expensive (v. 5 values it at 300 denarii, nearly a year's wages). The adjective pistikēs ('pure, genuine, unadulterated') emphasizes quality. Mary anoints Jesus's feet (not his head, as in Mark 14:3), an act of extreme humility, and wipes them with her hair — a shocking intimate gesture in a culture where women kept their hair covered in public. The detail that the fragrance filled the house (hē oikia eplērōthē) is sensory and symbolic: the extravagance of devotion permeates everything.
4. John identifies the objector specifically as Judas (the Synoptics generalize), and immediately adds the editorial tag ho mellōn auton paradidonai ('the one about to betray him'). This characterization colors everything Judas says with duplicity. The verb paradidonai ('hand over, betray') is the standard term for Judas's act throughout the Gospels.
5. Three hundred denarii represented approximately a year's wages for a common laborer (cf. Matthew 20:2, where one denarius is a day's wage). Judas frames his objection as concern for the poor, giving it moral weight. The question implies Mary's act is wasteful.
6. John's narrator strips away Judas's pretense with blunt editorial commentary. The word kleptēs ('thief') is the same word used for the one who does not enter the sheepfold through the gate (10:1). The glōssokomon ('money bag, money box,' originally a case for flute reeds) was the common purse of the group. The verb ebastazen can mean 'carried' (neutral) or 'carried away, pilfered' (negative) — John intends the latter.

7. The Greek is syntactically difficult: hina... tērēsē auto ('so that she might keep it') has been interpreted as (1) 'let her keep the remaining perfume for my burial,' (2) 'she bought it in order to keep it for my burial day,' or (3) 'leave her alone — she has kept it for the purpose of my burial.' We follow the second sense: the anointing itself is the burial preparation, whether Mary fully understands this or not. Jesus interprets her act as prophetically anticipating his death.
8. Jesus alludes to Deuteronomy 15:11 ('the poor will never cease from the land'). The statement does not dismiss care for the poor (Deuteronomy 15:11 commands generosity) but asserts the unique, unrepeatable nature of this moment. Jesus's physical presence is temporary; the opportunity to honor him in this way will soon pass.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 15:11 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. Lazarus has become a living attraction — people come to see the man who was dead and is now alive. He is walking evidence of Jesus's power. The dual motivation (dia ton Iēsoun... kai ton Lazaron) shows the raising has become inseparable from Jesus's public reputation.
10. The plot extends to Lazarus — they want to destroy the evidence. The logic is brutally pragmatic: a living Lazarus is an ongoing testimony to Jesus's power. The verb ebouleusanto ('resolved, plotted') is the same word used for the decision to kill Jesus (11:53). The priests' willingness to murder an innocent man to suppress a miracle reveals how far institutional self-preservation has corrupted their mission.
11. The verb hypēgon ('were going away, were departing') suggests people were leaving the authority of the religious leaders and transferring their allegiance to Jesus. The imperfect tense indicates an ongoing trend, not a single event. Lazarus's existence was causing a steady hemorrhage of loyalty.
12. The 'next day' (tē epaurion) places the triumphal entry on the day after the anointing — traditionally identified as Sunday (Palm Sunday). The crowd consists of Passover pilgrims (ho elthōn eis tēn heortēn), not merely Jerusalem residents. The news of Jesus's approach creates spontaneous excitement.
13. The baia tōn phoinikōn ('branches of palm trees') are mentioned only in John among the Gospel accounts. Palm branches were symbols of Jewish nationalism and military victory (cf. 1 Maccabees 13:51, 2 Maccabees 10:7). The crowd quotes Psalm 118:25-26, a Hallel psalm sung at Passover, adding 'the King of Israel' (ho basileus tou Israēl) — a political-messianic title not in the original psalm. 'Hosanna' (Hebrew hoshi'a na, 'save now, please save') had evolved from a prayer into an acclamation of praise.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalms 118:26 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. John's account is compressed compared to the Synoptics (no disciples sent to fetch the animal). The onarion ('young donkey, donkey colt') fulfills the prophecy quoted in the next verse. The verb heurōn ('having found') suggests Jesus actively sought the donkey — the act is deliberate, not accidental.
15. The quotation combines Zephaniah 3:16 ('Do not fear, O Zion') with Zechariah 9:9 ('your king comes to you... riding on a donkey'). John abbreviates the Zechariah text, omitting 'humble and mounted on a donkey' — the full context in Zechariah presents a king who comes in humility and peace, not on a war horse. The choice of a donkey is a deliberate counter-symbol to Roman military procession.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Zechariah 9:9 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Zephaniah 3:16 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. A characteristic Johannine retrospective note (cf. 2:22, 7:39): understanding comes after the resurrection ('when Jesus was glorified,' hote edoxasthē). The verb emnēsthēsan ('they remembered') describes a Spirit-aided recollection that connects Scripture to the events they witnessed. John is honest about the disciples' initial incomprehension.
17. The imperfect emartyrei ('kept testifying, continued to bear witness') shows the Lazarus witnesses were actively spreading the story. The eyewitnesses function as evangelists — their testimony drives the growing crowds of verse 18.
18. John explicitly connects the triumphal entry to the Lazarus miracle: the crowds come because of the raising. The word sēmeion ('sign') rather than 'miracle' maintains John's theological vocabulary — the raising is not merely a wonder but a pointer to Jesus's identity.
19. The Pharisees' frustrated exaggeration — ho kosmos opisō autou apēlthen ('the world has gone after him') — is deeply ironic in John's theology, where kosmos ('world') is precisely what Jesus came to save (3:16). They speak more truth than they know. Their admission of failure ('you are gaining nothing,' ouk ōpheleite ouden) is also ironic: the verb ōpheleō is the same root Caiaphas used in 11:50 ('it is better,' sympherei) — their efforts are futile.
20. The Hellēnes ('Greeks') are Gentile God-fearers — non-Jews who were attracted to Jewish monotheism and came to worship at the temple festivals. They would have been limited to the Court of the Gentiles. Their arrival immediately following the Pharisees' statement 'the world has gone after him' is John's ironic confirmation: the world — including Gentiles — is indeed coming to Jesus.
21. The Greeks approach Philip, possibly because his Greek name made him seem approachable to non-Jews. Bethsaida, in the tetrarchy of Philip, had a significant Gentile population. The request thelomen ton Iēsoun idein ('we want to see Jesus') is simple and direct. The verb idein ('to see') in John often carries the deeper meaning of perceiving, understanding, and believing.

22. Philip and Andrew, the only two disciples with Greek names, serve as intermediaries between the Gentile seekers and Jesus. The chain of communication (Greeks Philip Andrew Jesus) may reflect early church practice of Gentile inclusion through apostolic mediation. John does not record whether the Greeks actually met Jesus — the request triggers Jesus's discourse on his death rather than a meeting.
23. Throughout the Gospel, 'the hour' (hē hōra) has been approaching but not yet arrived (2:4, 7:30, 8:20). Now, triggered by the Greeks' approach, Jesus declares elēlythen hē hōra ('the hour has come,' perfect tense — it has arrived and is now present). The coming of the Gentiles signals that the time for Jesus's death-as-glorification has arrived. In John, glorification and crucifixion are the same event seen from different perspectives.
24. The agricultural metaphor is precise: a seed that is preserved intact remains alone (autos monos menei); a seed that is buried and 'dies' (its outer shell breaking open) produces abundance (polyn karpon, 'much fruit'). Jesus applies this to himself: his death is not loss but the condition for universal fruitfulness. The 'much fruit' is the gathered community of believers — including the very Greeks who have just sought him.
25. The paradox parallels the Synoptic sayings (Matthew 10:39, Mark 8:35, Luke 9:24). The Greek psychē ('life, soul, self') refers to one's entire existence, not merely biological life. The verb misōn ('hating') is Semitic hyperbole for 'placing in second priority' — not literal hatred but radical subordination of self-preservation to the call of following Jesus.
26. The verb diakoneō ('serve') connects service to following — discipleship is both imitation and participation. The promise 'where I am, there my servant will be' (hopou eimi egō ekei kai ho diakonos ho emos estai) unites the servant's destiny with Jesus's destiny. Since Jesus is about to enter glory through death, this is both promise and warning: following Jesus means sharing his path.
27. This is John's equivalent of the Gethsemane agony (absent from John's passion narrative). The verb tetaraktai ('is troubled, is agitated') is the same word used at Lazarus's tomb (11:33). Jesus's inner conflict is real — he contemplates asking for rescue — but immediately reaffirms his purpose. The rhetorical question format (ti eipō, 'what should I say?') shows Jesus thinking through the temptation and rejecting it in real time.
28. Instead of asking for deliverance, Jesus asks for the Father's name to be glorified — a prayer that accepts the cross as the means of glorification. The heavenly voice (phōnē ek tou ouranou) is the third instance of the bat qol ('daughter of a voice,' divine speech) in the Gospels (cf. baptism, transfiguration). The response spans past ('I have glorified,' edoxasa) and future ('I will glorify again,' palin doxasō) — the Father's glory has been manifested throughout Jesus's ministry and will be manifested supremely through the cross and resurrection.
29. The crowd hears the sound but cannot discern the content — some hear thunder (natural phenomenon), others hear angelic speech (supernatural but impersonal). Neither group perceives that the Father himself has spoken. This graduated perception mirrors the chapter's theme of seeing without understanding.
30. Jesus does not need the audible confirmation — his communion with the Father is unbroken (cf. 11:42). The voice is pedagogical, intended to give the crowd evidence of divine involvement. The distinction between Jesus's needs and the crowd's needs underscores his unique relationship with the Father.
31. The double nyn ('now') marks the decisive moment. The krisis ('judgment') is not a future courtroom scene but a present event — the cross is the judgment of the world. The archōn tou kosmou toutou ('the ruler of this world') refers to Satan (cf. 14:30, 16:11). The paradox: at the very moment the world appears to condemn Jesus, it is the world — and its ruler — that stands judged.
32. The verb hypsōthō ('am lifted up') carries the characteristic Johannine double meaning: physical elevation on the cross and spiritual exaltation to glory (cf. 3:14, 8:28). The verb helkysō ('will draw, will drag') suggests powerful, irresistible attraction — not coercion but a gravitational pull emanating from the cross. The word pantas ('all') is universal: Jew and Gentile, echoing the Greeks who have just sought him and the 'other sheep' of 10:16.
33. The verb sēmainōn ('signifying, indicating') shares the root of sēmeion ('sign') — even Jesus's words about his death are signs pointing to deeper meaning. The phrase poiō thanatō ('what kind of death') specifies crucifixion — the death that involves being physically lifted up.
34. The crowd's objection reveals their messianic expectations: the Christ (ho Christos) should reign forever (menei eis ton aiōna, cf. Psalm 89:36, Isaiah 9:7, Daniel 7:14). If the Son of Man must be 'lifted up' (die), he cannot be the eternal Messiah. Their question 'Who is this Son of Man?' is genuinely confused — they cannot reconcile messianic permanence with the necessity of death.
34. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 89:36. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
34. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 9:7. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
34. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Daniel 7:14. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
35. Jesus does not directly answer their question but issues an urgent warning. The 'light' (to phōs) is himself (cf. 8:12, 9:5), and it is about to be withdrawn through his death. The verb katalabē ('overtake, seize, overcome') is the same word used in 1:5 ('the darkness has not overcome it'). The urgency (eti mikron chronon, 'yet a little time') presses for immediate response before the opportunity passes.
36. The call to 'believe in the light' (pisteuete eis to phōs) and become 'children of light' (huioi phōtos) connects to the Prologue (1:12, 'to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God'). The phrase 'children of light' also appears in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in Paul (1 Thessalonians 5:5). Jesus's departure and hiding (ekrybē, 'hid himself,' cf. 8:59) marks the end of his public ministry in John — he will next appear with his disciples in the upper room (ch. 13).

37. John begins his theological summary of the public ministry. The concessive clause (tosauta... sēmeia pepoiēkotos, 'though he had done so many signs') emphasizes the abundance of evidence and the inexcusability of unbelief. The perfect participle pepoiēkotos indicates signs performed with lasting results — they stand as permanent testimony.
38. John quotes Isaiah 53:1, the opening of the fourth Servant Song. The connection between Jesus and the Suffering Servant is made explicit: the Servant's rejection was prophesied. The 'arm of the Lord' (ho brachiōn kyriou) is a metaphor for God's saving power — the question implies that God's power was present in Jesus's signs but went unrecognized.
38. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 53:1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
39. The phrase ouk ēdynanto pisteuein ('they could not believe') is stark — John presents inability, not merely unwillingness. The second Isaiah quotation (v. 40) provides the explanation: God has judicially hardened those who persistently rejected the signs.
39. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 6:10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
40. John quotes Isaiah 6:10, modifying it to make God the subject of the blinding and hardening. The verbs tetyphlōken ('has blinded') and epōrōsen ('has hardened, petrified') are in the perfect tense, indicating completed action with ongoing results. The theological tension between human responsibility (they refused to believe, v. 37) and divine sovereignty (they could not believe, v. 39) is left unresolved — John presents both as true without harmonizing them.
40. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 6:10 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
41. The stunning claim: Isaiah's vision in the temple (Isaiah 6:1-4, where he saw 'the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted') was a vision of Jesus's glory. The pronoun autou ('his') refers to Jesus — John identifies the pre-incarnate Christ as the one Isaiah saw enthroned. This is one of the highest Christological statements in the Gospel.
41. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 6:1-4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
42. This verse qualifies the preceding judgment: not all rejected Jesus — even among the archontōn ('rulers, leaders') many believed. But their faith was secret, suppressed by fear of aposynagōgoi ('expelled from the synagogue,' cf. 9:22). John presents closet discipleship as a real but compromised form of faith — belief without public confession.
43. The Greek doxa ('glory, honor, praise') is used for both human and divine approval, forcing the reader to choose between them. The verb ēgapēsan ('they loved') applies the agapaō word (usually reserved for the highest form of love) to misdirected devotion — they loved human approval with the intensity that should be reserved for God's approval. This diagnosis echoes 5:44.
44. The verb ekrazen ('cried out, shouted') marks an urgent, public declaration — Jesus's final appeal to the crowd. The statement that belief in Jesus is belief in the Father who sent him restates the fundamental Johannine principle of the unity between sender and sent (cf. 5:23-24, 13:20). We add 'only' for English clarity — the Greek negation ou... alla means 'not merely X but Y,' not 'not X at all.'
45. The verb theōreō ('see, perceive, behold') denotes more than physical sight — it is perceptive, contemplative seeing. To see Jesus with understanding is to see the Father (cf. 14:9). This statement grounds all knowledge of God in the encounter with Jesus.
46. The light imagery returns for Jesus's final public statement, connecting back to 1:4-5, 3:19, 8:12, and 9:5. The purpose clause hina... mē meinē ('so that he might not remain') uses menō — the darkness is not the natural human condition from which Jesus rescues (remaining is negative here); light is the transformative alternative.
47. Jesus reaffirms 3:17: his mission is salvific, not condemnatory. The verb phylaxē ('keep, guard, observe') describes active obedience to Jesus's words, not mere hearing. Those who hear but do not keep are not judged by Jesus directly — but verse 48 explains what does judge them.
48. The verb athetōn ('rejecting, setting aside, nullifying') is a strong term for willful dismissal. The judge is not a person but a word — ho logos hon elalēsa ('the word that I spoke'). Jesus's words carry inherent judicial authority that will manifest 'on the last day' (en tē eschatē hēmera). Present rejection stores up future judgment.
49. Jesus grounds the judicial authority of his words in the Father's commissioning: every word carries divine mandate. The Father has given a specific entolē ('commandment, instruction') governing both content (ti eipō, 'what to say') and delivery (ti lalēsō, 'what to speak'). Jesus's words are the Father's words — to reject them is to reject the Father.
50. The final verse of Jesus's public ministry ends with the identification of the Father's command as zōē aiōnios ('eternal life') — the Father's will is not arbitrary law but life-giving reality. Jesus's closing declaration of obedience (kathōs eirēken moi ho patēr, houtōs lalō, 'just as the Father has told me, so I speak') summarizes his entire public ministry: faithful transmission of the Father's word. The public voice falls silent; the private teaching of chapters 13-17 follows.

## 13

**Summary:** *John 13 marks the transition from Jesus's public ministry to the private instruction of his disciples during the final Passover. Jesus washes his disciples' feet — an act of radical self-humiliation that embodies the love he is about to command. He predicts his betrayal, identifies Judas by dipping bread and giving it to him, and Judas departs into the night. After Judas leaves, Jesus announces his glorification, gives the 'new commandment' to love one another, and predicts Peter's threefold denial.*

**What Makes This Remarkable:** *John's account of the Last Supper contains no institution of the Eucharist — instead, the foot-washing functions as the defining act. This substitution is deliberate: John's eucharistic theology is already expressed in the Bread of Life discourse (chapter 6). The foot-washing is unique to John and is presented as both a concrete act of service and a symbolic anticipation of the cross. The phrase 'having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end' (eis telos, v. 1) can mean both 'to the utmost' and 'to the end/completion' — the cross is the full expression of this love. Judas's departure 'into the night' (v. 30) is one of the most haunting lines in Scripture, where physical darkness embodies spiritual reality.*

**Translation Friction:** *The relationship between the foot-washing and baptism has been debated since the patristic era. The exchange with Peter (vv. 6-10) has been read sacramentally, ethically, or christologically. We translate the Greek without imposing any single interpretive framework. The identity of the Beloved Disciple (v. 23) remains John's great mystery — we follow the text without speculating. The morsel given to Judas (v. 26) has eucharistic overtones that intensify the horror of his departure.*

**Connections:** *The foot-washing connects to the servant songs of Isaiah (especially 52:13-53:12) and to Jesus's own teaching about the greatest being the servant of all (Mark 10:43-45). The new commandment (v. 34) echoes Leviticus 19:18 ('love your neighbor') but transcends it — the standard is now 'as I have loved you.' Judas's departure connects to 6:70-71 and anticipates 18:1-5. Peter's predicted denial foreshadows 18:15-27. The 'hour' (v. 1) fulfills the anticipation built throughout the Gospel (2:4, 7:30, 8:20, 12:23, 27).*

<sup>1</sup>Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus, knowing that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. <sup>2</sup>During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray him, <sup>3</sup>Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, <sup>4</sup>Indeed, he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments. And picked up a towel, and girded himself. <sup>5</sup>Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. <sup>6</sup>He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" <sup>7</sup>Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand." <sup>8</sup>Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." <sup>9</sup>But also my hands and my head, Simon Peter says to him, Lord, not my feet only. <sup>10</sup>Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean — but not all of you." <sup>11</sup>For he knew who was to betray him; that is why he said, "Not all of you are clean." <sup>12</sup>When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and reclined at table again, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? <sup>13</sup>You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. <sup>14</sup>Have washed your feet, if I then, your Lord and Master. You also ought to wash one another's feet. <sup>15</sup>For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. <sup>16</sup>Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. <sup>17</sup>If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. <sup>18</sup>I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture will be fulfilled: 'The one who eats bread with me has lifted his heel against me.' <sup>19</sup>I am telling you this now, before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe that I am. <sup>20</sup>Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me." <sup>21</sup>After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and he testified, "Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me." <sup>22</sup>The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he was speaking. <sup>23</sup>One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table close to Jesus. <sup>24</sup>So Simon Peter

motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. <sup>25</sup>So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, "Lord, who is it?" <sup>26</sup>Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it." So when he had dipped the morsel, he took it and gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. <sup>27</sup>Then after he received the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "What you are going to do, do quickly." <sup>28</sup>Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. <sup>29</sup>Some thought that, because Judas had the money box, Jesus was telling him, "Buy what we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor. <sup>30</sup>So, after receiving the morsel, he went out immediately. And it was night. <sup>31</sup>And god is glorified in him, therefore, while he was gone out, Jesus declared, Now is the Son of Man glorified. <sup>32</sup>If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and will glorify him at once. <sup>33</sup>Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, 'Where I am going, you cannot come,' so now I say it to you. <sup>34</sup>A new commandment I give to you: that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. <sup>35</sup>By this all people will know that you are my disciples: if you have love for one another." <sup>36</sup>Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered, "Where I am going, you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward." <sup>37</sup>Peter said to him, "Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." <sup>38</sup>Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow until you have denied me three times."

## TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. This verse is the theological overture to the entire Farewell Discourse (chapters 13-17). The phrase *eis telos* ('to the end') carries a double meaning: 'to the uttermost' (the fullest extent of love) and 'to the completion' (love expressed in the cross). The word *hora* ('hour') is the culmination of every previous reference to 'his hour' throughout the Gospel. The phrase 'his own' (*tous idious*) echoes the Prologue (1:11) but here refers specifically to the disciples, not Israel as a whole.
2. The genitive absolute *deipnou ginomenou* means 'while supper was taking place,' not 'after supper was ended' as the KJV renders. The devil (*ho diabolos*) is the external agent, Judas's heart is the internal battleground. The perfect participle *beblakotos* ('having already put') indicates that the decision has been made before the foot-washing — Judas's betrayal is already in motion even as Jesus washes his feet.
3. The triple knowledge — all authority, divine origin, divine destination — makes the foot-washing astonishing. It is precisely the one who possesses absolute authority who takes the position of the lowest slave. The phrase 'from God ... back to God' (*apo theou ... pros ton theon*) frames the incarnation as a round trip: origin, mission, return.
4. The historic present tense (*egeiretai*, 'rises'; *tithesin*, 'lays aside') gives the narrative vivid immediacy. The verb *tithesin* ('lays aside') is the same word used for laying down one's life in 10:11, 15, 17-18 — a verbal foreshadowing of the cross. The actions described are precisely those of a household slave: removing outer clothing, wrapping a towel, and preparing to wash feet.
5. Foot-washing was a menial task assigned to the lowest-ranking servant in a household, or performed by a wife for her husband or a student for his teacher — never by a master for his servants. In Jewish custom, even a Hebrew slave could not be compelled to wash feet (*Mekilta on Exodus 21:2*). Jesus's act overturns every social expectation.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 21:2 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. Peter's question carries shock and protest. The Greek word order emphasizes the incongruity: *sy mou* — 'You ... my?' The emphatic pronouns set the Lord against the servant, making Peter's objection not mere politeness but theological protest — this inversion of status is intolerable to him.
7. Jesus distinguishes between present incomprehension (*ouk oidas arti*) and future understanding (*gnosei de meta tauta*). The 'afterward' may refer to the cross, the resurrection, or the coming of the Spirit — all of which will illuminate the meaning of this act. The foot-washing is a parable-in-action that requires interpretation.
8. Peter's *ou me* ('never, by no means') is the strongest possible refusal. Jesus's response raises the stakes to the ultimate level: *meros* ('share, portion, inheritance') is the same word used for Israel's inheritance in the Promised Land (cf. Deuteronomy 12:12). Without receiving Jesus's cleansing service, Peter has no part in Jesus's kingdom. The washing symbolizes the cleansing that comes through Jesus's sacrificial death.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 12:12 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. Peter's response swings from refusal to excess — characteristically impulsive. If washing means sharing in Jesus, he wants the maximum. The mention of hands, feet, and head may echo priestly washing rituals (*Exodus 30:19-21*), though the connection is not explicit.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 30:19-21. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. Jesus distinguishes between the full bath (*ho leloumenos*, from *louō*, 'to bathe the whole body') and the foot-washing (*nipsasthai*, from *niptō*, 'to wash a part'). The one who has been bathed needs only the foot-washing — a metaphor whose precise referent is debated: the bath may represent initial conversion/baptism, and the foot-washing ongoing cleansing from sin. The ominous qualification 'but not all' (*all' ouchi pantes*) points to

Judas.

11. The narrator clarifies the cryptic remark. Jesus's knowledge of the betrayer is emphasized throughout this chapter (vv. 2, 11, 18, 21, 26-27). The uncleanness is moral, not physical — Judas has been washed but remains unclean because his heart belongs to the devil (v. 2).
12. The verb *elaben* ('took up, received') reverses the *tithesin* ('laid aside') of verse 4 — Jesus resumes his garments, having completed the act of service. The question *ginōskete* ('do you understand?') shifts from the act to its meaning. The foot-washing is not merely exemplary behavior; it carries theological significance that requires explanation.
13. Jesus affirms the titles 'Teacher' (*ho didaskalos*, corresponding to 'Rabbi') and 'Lord' (*ho kyrios*). The affirmation is crucial: the foot-washing does not erase the hierarchy but redefines how authority is exercised. The one who is genuinely Teacher and Lord chooses to serve — this is not a renunciation of authority but its highest expression.
14. The verb *opheilete* ('you ought, you owe it') expresses moral obligation, not merely suggestion. The reciprocal 'one another' (*allelōn*) makes the command communal — every disciple serves every other, with no one exempt. Note the reversal of title order: 'Lord and Teacher' (not 'Teacher and Lord' as in v. 13), placing the higher title first to maximize the force of the argument.
15. The word *hypodeigma* ('example, pattern, model') indicates that the foot-washing is paradigmatic — it establishes a pattern of self-giving service that defines the community's life. The 'just as' (*kathōs*) sets a standard: not merely serving in general, but serving in the specific manner of Jesus — sacrificially, without concern for status.
16. The double *amen* introduces a solemn principle. The word *apostolos* ('one who is sent, messenger') here carries its original meaning rather than the later technical sense of 'Apostle.' The logic is *a fortiori*: if the Master serves, the servants have no ground for refusing to serve.
17. The beatitude (*makarioi*, 'blessed, fortunate') hinges on the conditional *ean poiēte* ('if you do'). Knowledge without practice yields no blessing. This echoes the Sermon on the Mount's emphasis on doing, not merely hearing (Matthew 7:24-27). John rarely uses *makarios*, making this instance particularly striking.
18. Jesus quotes Psalm 41:9, which describes the betrayal of a close friend — one who shares table fellowship. The verb *trogōn* ('the one eating, feeding on') is the same visceral word used in the Bread of Life discourse (6:54-58). The image of lifting the heel (*epēren ... tēn pternan*) may suggest a horse kicking its master, or simply turning one's back in contempt. The Scripture is not merely predicted but 'fulfilled' (*plērōthē*) — Judas's betrayal is woven into the divine plan.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalms 41:9 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. The ego *eimi* ('I am') at the end of this verse is the absolute form — without a predicate. Jesus's foreknowledge of the betrayal is itself a sign of divine identity. When the betrayal occurs as predicted, the disciples will recognize that Jesus is the 'I AM' of Exodus 3:14 — the one who knows the end from the beginning.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 3:14. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. This saying establishes a chain of representation: the sent one represents Jesus, and Jesus represents the Father. The principle of agency (*shaliach*) in Jewish law held that a person's agent was legally equivalent to the person himself. This prepares for the sending of the disciples after the resurrection (20:21).
21. The verb *etarachthē* ('was troubled, disturbed, agitated') is the same word used at Lazarus's tomb (11:33) and in the 'soul troubled' passage (12:27). Jesus is not detached from the anguish of betrayal — he feels it deeply. The verb *emarturēsen* ('testified, bore witness') elevates the prediction to a formal declaration.
22. The imperfect *eblepon* ('were looking') captures the prolonged, bewildered exchange of glances. The participle *aporoumenoi* ('being at a loss, uncertain') indicates genuine confusion — none of the disciples suspects Judas, which speaks either to Judas's skill at concealment or to the disciples' trust.
23. This is the first explicit appearance of the Beloved Disciple (*hon egapa ho Iesus*, 'whom Jesus loved'). The phrase *en tō kolpō* ('at the chest/bosom') describes the position of honor at a Roman-style dining arrangement, where guests reclined on their left sides — the one reclining in front of Jesus would have his head near Jesus's chest. The phrase echoes 1:18, where the Son is 'in the bosom' (*eis ton kolpon*) of the Father.
24. Peter's resort to gestures (*neuei*, 'nods, signals') shows the intimacy of the reclining arrangement — direct conversation required physical proximity that Peter apparently lacked. He relies on the Beloved Disciple's privileged position to gain information.
25. The Beloved Disciple leans back (*anapesōn*) toward Jesus's chest to ask privately. The question is whispered — this is not a public exchange. The physical intimacy between the Beloved Disciple and Jesus mirrors the theological intimacy between the Son and the Father (1:18).
26. The *psōmion* ('morsel, small piece of bread') dipped and given was a gesture of honor at a meal — the host would offer choice morsels to favored guests. Jesus's act is thus a final gesture of intimacy and generosity toward his betrayer, making the betrayal all the more grievous. The identification is made privately to the Beloved Disciple, not publicly to the group.
27. The shift from 'the devil' (*diabolos*, v. 2) to 'Satan' (*Satanas*) marks an escalation — Satan himself takes possession. The timing 'after the morsel' is chilling: the gesture of fellowship becomes the occasion of total satanic invasion. Jesus's command 'do quickly' (*poiēson tachion*) is not permission

but sovereign dismissal — he controls even the timing of his own betrayal.

28. Despite the identification to the Beloved Disciple, the rest of the group remains ignorant. The secrecy is maintained — Jesus does not expose Judas publicly, preserving the betrayer's dignity even at this late moment.
29. The mention of the glossokomon ('money box') recalls 12:6, where John noted that Judas was a thief who helped himself from it. The fact that Judas was entrusted with the group's finances despite his character speaks to the mundane realities of the community. The two guesses — festival supplies or almsgiving — show that the disciples' explanation is utterly domestic; they have no idea that cosmic treachery is underway.
30. The three-word phrase *en de nyx* ('and it was night') is one of the most theologically charged sentences in the Gospel. On the literal level, it is a time marker. On the symbolic level, Judas steps out of the light of Jesus's presence into the darkness that represents the domain of evil (cf. 1:5, 3:19, 8:12, 9:4, 11:10, 12:35-36, 46). Night has come.
31. Judas's departure triggers the glorification language. The aorist *edoxasthē* ('was glorified') is proleptic — the cross is already accomplished in Jesus's mind. In John, 'glorification' (*doxa*) encompasses the cross, resurrection, and ascension as a single event. The mutual glorification ('the Son of Man glorified' and 'God glorified in him') expresses the inseparability of Father and Son.
32. The cascade of 'glorify' language (five uses of the *doxaz-* root in vv. 31-32) creates an intense concentration. The 'at once' (*euthys*) emphasizes the immediacy — there is no gap between the Son's obedient death and the Father's vindication.
33. The address *teknia* ('little children') is unique to Jesus in John and is found nowhere else in the Gospels (though John uses it in 1 John 2:1, 12, 28). It conveys tender affection and paternal care. Jesus applies to the disciples the same warning he gave to the Jewish leaders (7:33-34, 8:21), but with a crucial difference: for the disciples, the separation is temporary.
34. The 'new commandment' (*entolēn kainēn*) is not new in commanding love — Leviticus 19:18 already did that. It is new in its standard: 'just as I have loved you' (*kathōs ēgapēsa hymas*). The measure of love is no longer 'as yourself' but 'as Christ' — a standard that includes sacrificial death. The command defines the community's identity: they are not marked by knowledge, power, or ritual, but by mutual love.
34. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 19:18. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
35. Love is the public badge of discipleship — not miracles, not doctrine, not moral rigor, but mutual love. The verb *gnōsontai* ('will know') makes love an epistemological category: the world gains knowledge of Christ through the community's love. This is the most visible and most demanding criterion of authentic Christianity.
36. Peter's question picks up on verse 33. Jesus's answer contains both a refusal and a promise: 'not now' (*nyn*) but 'afterward' (*hysteron*). The verb *akolouthēseis* ('you will follow') contains a double meaning — Peter will follow Jesus both in discipleship and in death (cf. 21:18-19, where Peter's crucifixion is predicted).
37. Peter's declaration uses the exact language of the Good Shepherd: 'lay down my life' (*tēn psychēn mou ... thēsō*, cf. 10:11, 15, 17-18). He claims to do for Jesus what Jesus does for the sheep. The irony is painful — within hours, Peter will not lay down his life but will deny three times that he even knows Jesus.
38. Jesus echoes Peter's words back as a question, exposing the gap between Peter's intention and his capacity. The prediction is precise: three denials before the rooster crows. The fulfillment in 18:15-27 is exact. The double amen underscores the certainty of this painful prophecy. Yet the chapter does not end in despair — the following discourse (chapters 14-17) will provide the resources for Peter's eventual restoration.

# 14

*Summary: John 14 is part of Jesus's Farewell Discourse, delivered to his disciples on the night before his crucifixion. Jesus consoles the troubled disciples by promising that his Father's house has many rooms and that he goes to prepare a place for them. He declares himself 'the way, the truth, and the life' — the exclusive path to the Father. He promises that those who believe will do even greater works, that prayers in his name will be answered, and that the Father will send another Advocate (Parakletos), the Spirit of Truth, to be with them forever. The chapter closes with Jesus bequeathing his peace — distinct from the world's peace — and urging the disciples not to be troubled or afraid.*

*What Makes This Remarkable: This chapter contains some of the most theologically concentrated statements in the New Testament. The 'I am the way' declaration (14:6) is the sixth of John's seven great 'I am' sayings. The introduction of the Parakletos ('Advocate, Helper, Comforter') is unique to John's Gospel and becomes the foundation for later trinitarian theology. Jesus's language moves fluidly between departure and presence — he is leaving, yet he will come to them; they will not see him, yet they will see him. This paradox is resolved through the Spirit, who makes Jesus's continued presence real after his physical departure. The phrase 'my Father's house' (14:2) has been debated for centuries: does it refer to heaven as a destination, or to the temple as a community of God's*

*dwelling?*

**Translation Friction:** *The Greek monai ('rooms, dwelling places') in verse 2 has traditionally been rendered 'mansions' (KJV), following the Latin Vulgate's mansiones. The Greek word simply means 'dwelling places' or 'rooms' and carries no connotation of luxury. The term Parakletos (14:16, 26) resists single-word translation: 'Comforter' (KJV), 'Advocate,' 'Helper,' and 'Counselor' each capture only part of its legal and relational semantic range. We render it 'Advocate' with notation. The relationship between 14:28 ('the Father is greater than I') and Johannine high Christology has generated extensive theological debate; we render the Greek as stated without harmonizing.*

**Connections:** *The Farewell Discourse (John 13-17) parallels Moses's farewell in Deuteronomy and David's in 1 Chronicles 28-29. The Parakletos promise anticipates the Pentecost narrative in Acts 2. 'I am the way' connects to Old Testament path/way imagery (Psalm 1, Isaiah 40:3). The 'many rooms' language echoes temple theology and Ezekiel's vision of the restored temple. Jesus's peace declaration (14:27) contrasts with the world's shalom and connects to Isaiah's 'Prince of Peace' (Isaiah 9:6).*

1Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. 2In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? 3And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am, you also may be. 4And you know the way to where I am going. 5Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" 6Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7If you have known me, you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him." 8Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." 9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" 10Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. 11Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves. 12Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do, and will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. 13Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it. 15If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever — 17Even the Spirit of truth. Whom the world cannot accept, because it sees him not, neither knows him — but you know him. Since he dwelleth with you, and will be in you. 18I will not leave you as orphans. I am coming to you. 19In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. 20 On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. 21Whoever has my commandments and keeps them is the one who loves me. And whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him." 22Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, what has happened that you are going to reveal yourself to us and not to the world?" 23Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. 24Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me. 25These things I have spoken to you while remaining with you. 26But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. 27Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not be afraid. 28You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I am coming to you.' If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. 29And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe. 30I will no longer speak much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me, 31However, that the world may know that I love the Father. And as the Father offered me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

#### TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The verb tarassestho ('be troubled, be agitated') is the same word used of Jesus himself in 11:33 and 13:21. The imperative can be read as either indicative-then-imperative ('you believe in God; believe also in me') or as two imperatives ('believe in God, and believe in me'). The Greek is ambiguous; we follow the more traditional reading that takes the first clause as indicative.

2. The Greek *monai* ('dwelling places, rooms') has been famously rendered 'mansions' in the KJV, following the Latin Vulgate's *mansiones*. The Greek word carries no connotation of grandeur; it simply means 'abiding places' or 'rooms,' from the verb *meno* ('to remain, abide'), a key Johannine term. The punctuation of this verse is debated: some take 'I go to prepare a place for you' as a statement, others as part of the preceding question. We follow the reading that takes the final clause as part of the rhetorical question.
3. The verb *paralempomai* ('take to myself, receive') implies personal accompaniment, not merely granting access. The promise 'where I am, you also may be' is the heart of Johannine eschatology — the goal of salvation is being with Jesus. Whether this refers to his return at death, at the resurrection, or at the *parousia* has been debated since the earliest centuries.
4. Some manuscripts read 'you know where I am going, and you know the way,' which the KJV follows. The SBLGNT follows the shorter reading, which is more likely original and sets up Thomas's question in verse 5 more naturally.
5. Thomas's honest confusion mirrors the recurring Johannine pattern of misunderstanding that leads to deeper revelation. His question provokes one of the Gospel's most important declarations. Thomas appears elsewhere in John as a figure of honest doubt (11:16, 20:24-29).
6. This is the sixth of John's seven great *ego eimi* ('I am') declarations. The three nouns — *hodos* ('way'), *aletheia* ('truth'), *zoe* ('life') — may be read as three coordinate claims or as a single claim with two appositional qualifiers: 'I am the way, that is, the truth and the life.' The definite articles before each noun are emphatic: not a way but the way. The exclusivity clause ('no one comes to the Father except through me') is absolute in the Greek and we render it without softening.
7. The textual tradition is divided between a contrary-to-fact condition ('if you had known me, you would have known') and a fulfilled condition ('if you have known me, you will know'). The SBLGNT follows the latter reading, which is more encouraging than rebuking. The claim that they have 'seen' the Father through knowing Jesus anticipates Philip's question in verse 8.
8. Philip's request echoes Moses's plea in Exodus 33:18 ('Show me your glory'). The verb *deiknumi* ('show, reveal') implies a visible manifestation. Philip has not yet grasped that seeing Jesus is seeing the Father — the central christological claim of the Fourth Gospel.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 33:18 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The statement 'whoever has seen me has seen the Father' (*ho heorakos eme heoraken ton patera*) is one of the highest christological claims in the New Testament. The perfect tense *heoraken* implies a completed seeing with continuing results. Jesus is not merely a representative of God but the visible manifestation of the invisible Father (cf. Colossians 1:15).
10. The mutual indwelling formula — 'I in the Father and the Father in me' — is a distinctive Johannine expression of the unity between Father and Son. The verb *meno* ('dwell, abide, remain') is one of John's most important theological terms. Jesus grounds his claim not in abstract theology but in observable evidence: his words and works are the Father's own activity.
11. Jesus offers two grounds for faith: his word and his works. The appeal to works as evidence recalls 10:38 and anticipates the theme of signs throughout John. The concessive 'or else' (*ei de me*) acknowledges that direct trust in his word is the higher form of faith, while trust based on evidence is still valid.
12. The double *amen* ('truly, truly') is a distinctive Johannine formula that introduces solemn declarations. The promise of 'greater works' (*meizona touton*) is striking — greater than Jesus's own miracles. The 'because' clause (*hoti*) ties the greater works to Jesus's departure: his going to the Father enables the sending of the Spirit, which empowers the disciples' mission.
13. Asking 'in my name' (*en to onomati mou*) is not a formula appended to prayers but denotes asking in accord with Jesus's character, mission, and authority. The purpose clause — 'so that the Father may be glorified in the Son' — defines the scope and aim of such prayer.
14. This verse repeats and reinforces the promise of verse 13. Some manuscripts omit 'me' (*me*), making the request directed to the Father rather than to Jesus. The SBLGNT includes it, placing Jesus as both the mediator and the one who acts.
15. The future indicative *tereseite* ('you will keep') is preferable to reading this as an imperative ('keep'). Jesus states a fact about love's nature rather than issuing a command: genuine love for him will naturally express itself in obedience. This connection between love and obedience is a central theme of the Farewell Discourse.
16. The word *Parakletos* appears only in John's writings in the New Testament (here, 14:26, 15:26, 16:7, and 1 John 2:1). The KJV's 'Comforter' follows the Latin *consolator* but captures only one dimension. The Greek term has legal overtones ('advocate, one called alongside to help') and relational dimensions ('counselor, helper'). We render it 'Advocate' while acknowledging the broader range. The word *allon* ('another') implies one of the same kind — the Spirit is another Advocate like Jesus himself.
17. The 'Spirit of truth' (*to pneuma tes aletheias*) identifies the Advocate with truth itself — a key Johannine theme (cf. 'I am the truth,' 14:6). The contrast between the world's inability and the disciples' capacity to receive the Spirit is absolute. The shift from 'remains with you' (present tense, *meni*) to 'will be in you' (future, *estai*) marks a transition from the Spirit's presence alongside them during Jesus's ministry to the Spirit's indwelling after Pentecost.
18. The Greek *orphanous* ('orphans') is more specific than the KJV's 'comfortless.' The metaphor casts the disciples as children who would be fatherless without Jesus's continued presence. The present tense *erchomai* ('I am coming') conveys certainty and immediacy rather than a distant future event.

19. The contrast between the world and the disciples regarding 'seeing' Jesus extends beyond physical sight to spiritual perception. The declaration 'because I live, you also will live' compresses the entire Christian hope into a single sentence — the disciples' life depends on and flows from Jesus's resurrection life.
20. The mutual indwelling now extends beyond the Father-Son relationship (v. 10) to include the disciples: Father in Son, Son in believers, believers in Son. This threefold chain of indwelling is the Johannine vision of salvation — not merely forgiveness but participatory union. 'That day' likely refers to the post-resurrection encounters and the coming of the Spirit.
21. The chain of love is striking: the believer's love for Jesus expressed through obedience leads to the Father's love for the believer and Jesus's self-revelation. The verb *emphaniso* ('reveal, manifest, make visible') suggests a personal, experiential disclosure — not merely intellectual knowledge but encounter.
22. The parenthetical 'not Iscariot' distinguishes this Judas from the betrayer, who has already departed (13:30). This is likely the same as 'Judas son of James' in Luke 6:16. His question reflects the common expectation that the Messiah would manifest himself publicly to the entire world, not privately to a small group.
23. The word *monen* ('home, dwelling place') is the singular of the *monai* ('rooms') in verse 2. There, Jesus goes to prepare rooms in the Father's house for the disciples; here, the Father and Son come to make a dwelling within the believer. The movement is reciprocal: believers dwell in God's house, and God dwells in believers. The first-person plural 'we will come' (*eleusometha*) unites Father and Son in a single action toward the believer.
24. The negative counterpart to verse 23: failure to keep Jesus's words reveals the absence of love. The second clause reinforces the unity of Father and Son — rejecting Jesus's words is rejecting the Father's words. The shift from 'words' (*logous*, plural) to 'word' (*logos*, singular) may suggest that Jesus's individual sayings constitute a unified message.
25. The perfect tense *lelaleka* ('I have spoken') emphasizes the lasting significance of what has been said. The phrase 'while remaining with you' (*par hymin menon*) uses the key Johannine verb *meno* and marks the transition from Jesus's physical presence to the Spirit's coming ministry.
26. Here the Parakletos is explicitly identified as the Holy Spirit (to *pneuma* to *hagion*). The Spirit's twofold ministry is teaching and reminding — not introducing new content unrelated to Jesus but illuminating and recalling what Jesus has already taught. The Father sends the Spirit 'in Jesus's name' (*en to onomati mou*), meaning in Jesus's authority and as his representative.
27. The Greek *eirene* corresponds to the Hebrew *shalom*, which encompasses wholeness, well-being, and right relationship — far more than the absence of conflict. Jesus distinguishes his peace from the world's peace: the world offers temporary, conditional peace; Jesus offers a peace grounded in his relationship with the Father. The repetition of 'do not let your hearts be troubled' forms an *inclusio* with verse 1, framing the entire chapter. The verb *deiliao* ('be afraid, be cowardly') appears only here in the New Testament.
28. The statement 'the Father is greater than I' (*ho pater meizon mou estin*) has been one of the most debated verses in christological history. In context, Jesus speaks of his incarnate, pre-glorification state — his return to the Father is a return to glory, which should cause the disciples to rejoice. The statement does not necessarily address the ontological relationship between Father and Son but rather the functional relationship during the incarnation.
29. Jesus's foreknowledge serves a pastoral purpose: when the events of the crucifixion unfold, the disciples will remember his predictions and find their faith strengthened rather than destroyed. This pattern of prediction-fulfillment runs throughout John (cf. 13:19, 16:4).
30. The 'ruler of this world' (*ho tou kosmou archon*) refers to Satan (cf. 12:31, 16:11). The declaration 'he has nothing in me' (*en emoi ouk echei ouden*) means Satan has no claim, no foothold, no authority over Jesus. Jesus goes to the cross not as Satan's victim but voluntarily, as the next verse makes clear.
31. Jesus frames his approaching death as an act of obedient love toward the Father — the supreme demonstration that the world can see. The command 'Rise, let us go from here' (*egeiresthe, agomen enteuthen*) suggests a physical departure, yet the discourse continues through chapters 15-17. Some scholars propose that chapters 15-17 were originally spoken en route to Gethsemane; others see a literary rather than geographical transition.

# 15

**Summary:** *John 15 continues Jesus's farewell discourse with the extended metaphor of the vine and the branches, calling his disciples to remain connected to him as the condition for bearing fruit. The chapter moves from the intimacy of abiding love to the gravity of the world's hatred, culminating in the promise of the Spirit of truth who will testify about Jesus.*

**What Makes This Remarkable:** *The vine metaphor draws on deep Old Testament imagery where Israel is God's vineyard (Isaiah 5:1-7, Psalm 80:8-16, Jeremiah 2:21). Jesus's claim 'I am the true vine' redirects this identity to himself — he is now the locus of covenant fruitfulness. The 'no greater love' declaration in verse 13 becomes one of the most recognized statements in all of Scripture. The Greek *meno* ('abide, remain') appears eleven times in verses 4-10, creating a literary drumbeat of relational*

*permanence.*

**Translation Friction:** *The relationship between 'abiding' (meno) and fruitfulness raises theological questions about whether the branches that are 'taken away' (v. 2) represent genuine believers who fall away or those who were never truly connected. We render the Greek without resolving this debate. The phrase 'I chose you' (v. 16) uses exelexamen, the same verb used for divine election in the Septuagint, but the context is specifically the Twelve's apostolic commission.*

**Connections:** *The vine imagery connects to Isaiah 5 (the vineyard song), Psalm 80 (Israel as vine), and Ezekiel 15 (the useless vine). The love command (vv. 12-17) intensifies the 'new commandment' of 13:34. The world's hatred (vv. 18-25) prepares for the persecution themes of chapter 16. The Paraclete promise (vv. 26-27) continues the Spirit passages of 14:16-17 and 14:26.*

<sup>1</sup>"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. <sup>2</sup>Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, he removes, and every branch that bears fruit, he prunes so that it may bear more fruit. <sup>3</sup>You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup>Remain in me, and I will remain in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it remains in the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. <sup>5</sup>I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever remains in me, and I in him, bears much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup>If anyone does not remain in me, he is thrown out like a branch and withers. Such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. <sup>7</sup>If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup>My Father is glorified by this: that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. <sup>9</sup>As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Remain in my love. <sup>10</sup>If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love. <sup>11</sup>I have told you these things so that my joy may be in you, and your joy may be made complete. <sup>12</sup>As I have loved you, this was my commandment, That you love one another. <sup>13</sup>No one has greater love than this: to lay down his life for his friends. <sup>14</sup>You are my friends if you do what I command you. <sup>15</sup>I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know what his master is doing. Instead, I have called you friends, because everything I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. <sup>16</sup>You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you would go and bear fruit — fruit that will last — so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he will give you. <sup>17</sup>These things I command you, so that you may love one another. <sup>18</sup>You know that it hated me before it hated you, and if the world hate you. <sup>19</sup>If you belonged to the world, the world would love its own. But because you do not belong to the world — because I chose you out of the world — for this reason the world hates you. <sup>20</sup>Remember the word I spoke to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you as well. If they kept my word, they will keep yours also. <sup>21</sup>But they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they do not know the one who sent me. <sup>22</sup>If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have no excuse for their sin. <sup>23</sup>The one who hates me hates my Father also. <sup>24</sup>If I had not done among them the works that no one else has done, they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have seen and yet hated both me and my Father. <sup>25</sup>But this is to fulfill the word written in their Law: 'They hated me without cause.' <sup>26</sup>When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father — the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father — he will testify about me. <sup>27</sup>And you also will testify, because you have been with me from the beginning."

#### TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. This is the last of John's seven 'I am' (ego eimi) declarations with a predicate. The adjective alethinee ('true, genuine') distinguishes Jesus from Israel as the failed vine of Old Testament imagery (Isaiah 5:1-7, Jeremiah 2:21). The Greek georgos ('farmer, vinedresser') is more specific than the KJV's 'husbandman' — it denotes one who tends and cultivates the land, here specifically a vineyard keeper.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 5:1-7. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Jeremiah 2:21. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. There is a wordplay in the Greek between airei ('takes away, lifts up') and kathairei ('prunes, cleanses'). Some scholars argue airei should be translated 'lifts up' (as a vinedresser lifts trailing branches off the ground), but the context of removal versus pruning favors 'removes.' The verb kathairei is the root of katharos ('clean'), connecting to Jesus's statement in verse 3.

3. The adjective *katharoi* ('clean') connects to *kathairei* ('prunes/cleanses') in verse 2 — the disciples have already undergone a cleansing through Jesus's word. This also echoes 13:10 where Jesus told the disciples 'you are clean' after washing their feet. The *logos* ('word') here encompasses the entirety of Jesus's teaching, not a single statement.
4. The verb *meno* ('remain, abide, stay') appears here for the first of eleven uses in verses 4-10, forming the thematic center of the passage. The imperative *meinate* ('remain!') is an aorist command implying decisive, sustained commitment. The mutual indwelling ('in me... I in you') echoes the Father-Son mutual indwelling of 14:10-11 and extends it to the disciples.
5. The absolute claim *choris emou ou dynasthe poiein ouden* ('apart from me you can do nothing') is among the most radical statements of dependence in the New Testament. The word *choris* ('apart from, separated from') reinforces the vine metaphor — a severed branch is not merely weakened but wholly incapable of producing fruit.
6. The aorist tenses *eblethee* ('was thrown out') and *exeranthee* ('withered') are striking — they describe the result as already accomplished, giving the warning a sense of finality. The impersonal 'they gather' (*synagousin*) avoids naming who performs this judgment. The imagery of fire for useless branches reflects standard Palestinian viticultural practice and echoes John the Baptist's warning in Matthew 3:10.
7. The promise of answered prayer is conditioned on a double remaining: the disciple in Christ and Christ's words (*reemata*, 'spoken words, sayings') in the disciple. This is not a blank check but a promise that those whose desires are shaped by Jesus's teaching will find their prayers aligned with God's will and therefore answered.
8. The aorist *edoxasthee* ('was glorified') could be rendered as a timeless truth ('is glorified') in English since the aorist here expresses a general principle. The conjunction *kai* before *genesthe* could mean 'and' (additional result) or 'and so' (consequential). We render it as consequential — bearing fruit is the proof of discipleship, not a separate item alongside it.
9. The comparison *kathos* ('just as, in the same way as') establishes that Jesus's love for his disciples is patterned on the Father's love for the Son — the same quality, not merely a lesser imitation. The imperative *meinate* ('remain!') shifts from the vine metaphor to love itself as the sphere in which disciples are to dwell.
10. Obedience to commandments (*entolas*) is presented not as the means of earning love but as the means of remaining within the sphere of love already given. The perfect tense *teteereka* ('I have kept and continue to keep') emphasizes Jesus's completed and ongoing obedience to the Father. This parallels the covenantal pattern of the Old Testament where obedience is the response to grace, not its cause.
11. The Greek *pleerothee* ('may be fulfilled, made complete') suggests joy brought to its full capacity, not merely increased. Jesus speaks of 'my joy' (*hee chara hee emee*) — the joy that belongs to him and originates from his relationship with the Father — being transferred to the disciples. This is not human happiness but divine joy shared.
12. The singular *entolee* ('commandment') reduces all of Jesus's commands to a single imperative. The standard of love is not abstract but personal — *kathos eegapeesa hymas* ('as I have loved you'). This intensifies the 'new commandment' of 13:34 by anchoring it in the self-sacrificial love Jesus is about to demonstrate on the cross.
13. The Greek *psycheen* ('soul, life') here means one's entire existence, not merely biological life. The verb *thee* ('to lay down, to place') is the same word used in 10:11, 15, 17-18 for the Good Shepherd laying down his life for the sheep. Jesus defines the supreme expression of love and is about to enact it. The word *philon* ('friends') anticipates verse 15 where Jesus redefines the disciples' status from servants to friends.
14. The conditional *ean poieete* ('if you do') uses the present subjunctive, indicating ongoing action — 'if you continue doing.' Friendship with Jesus is not unconditional in the sense of requiring no response; it is maintained through obedience. The concept of being 'friends of God' has deep Old Testament roots — Abraham was called 'friend of God' (2 Chronicles 20:7, Isaiah 41:8).
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 2 Chronicles 20:7. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 41:8. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The Greek *doulos* ('slave, servant') denotes one who serves without understanding the master's purposes. The shift from *douloi* to *philo* ('friends') is a dramatic elevation — friends are confidants who share in the master's knowledge. The perfect tense *egnorisa* ('I have made known') indicates a completed act of revelation. Jesus's entire ministry has been an act of sharing the Father's counsel with his disciples.
16. The verb *exelexameen* ('I chose') is the same word used in the Septuagint for God's election of Israel (Deuteronomy 7:6-7). The verb *etheka* ('I appointed, placed, set') is stronger than the KJV's 'ordained' — it carries the sense of deliberate commissioning. The purpose clause contains three elements: going (mission), bearing fruit (productivity), and fruit that remains (permanence). The prayer promise is tied to this fruitfulness.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 7:6-7. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. This verse serves as a closing bracket to the love section (vv. 9-17), echoing the command of verse 12. The *hina* clause ('so that') could indicate purpose ('in order that you may love') or content ('namely, that you love'). The effect is the same: mutual love among disciples is both the goal and the substance of Jesus's commands.
18. The conditional *ei* with the indicative *misei* ('hates') presents the world's hatred as a real condition, not a hypothetical. The Greek *ginooskete* could be indicative ('you know') or imperative ('know!'). The imperative reading fits the context better — Jesus is commanding awareness, not merely acknowledging what they already understand. The perfect *memiseeken* ('has hated') indicates an ongoing state of enmity.

19. The phrase *ek tou kosmou* ('out of/from the world') appears five times in this single verse, creating an emphatic contrast between belonging and separation. The verb *exelexameen* ('I chose') again echoes divine election language. The word *idion* ('its own') indicates that the world recognizes and embraces what belongs to it — the disciples' rejection proves they no longer belong to the world system.
20. Jesus refers back to 13:16 where he made this statement in the context of foot-washing. The parallel structure ('if they persecuted me... if they kept my word') presents both outcomes as real possibilities within different groups of people. The verb *ediooksan* ('persecuted') and *eteereesan* ('kept/obeyed') represent the two responses the world gives to divine truth.
21. The phrase *dia to onoma mou* ('on account of my name') indicates that persecution comes not because of who the disciples are but because of whom they represent. The verb *oidasin* ('they know') uses the perfect form of *oida*, meaning intuitive or relational knowledge — the persecutors lack not merely information about God but genuine knowledge of him.
22. The Greek *hamartian ouk eichosan* ('they would not have sin') does not mean they were sinless before Jesus came, but that they would not bear the specific guilt of rejecting God's self-revelation. The word *prophasin* ('excuse, pretext') — rendered 'cloke' in the KJV — means a justification or defense. Jesus's coming has removed all plausible deniability.
23. This brief statement encapsulates Johannine Christology: Jesus and the Father are so united that one's response to Jesus is necessarily one's response to God. Hatred of Jesus cannot be separated from hatred of God himself.
24. Verse 22 addressed the witness of Jesus's words; this verse addresses the witness of his works (*erga*). The perfect tenses *heorakasin* ('they have seen') and *memiseekasin* ('they have hated') describe settled states — they have witnessed the evidence and have chosen enmity. The claim that these are works 'no one else has done' heightens the culpability of rejection.
25. The quotation is from Psalm 35:19 or 69:4 (both contain the phrase). Jesus refers to the Psalms as 'their Law' (to *nomos auton*), using 'Law' in its broad sense to encompass all of Scripture. The word *dorean* ('without cause, freely, for no reason') emphasizes the gratuitous nature of the hatred — there is no rational basis for it.
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 35:19 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
26. The Greek *parakletos* ('advocate, helper, counselor') is rendered 'Advocate' to capture its forensic meaning — one who comes alongside to defend and represent. The KJV's 'Comforter' reflects an older English sense of 'one who strengthens' but has lost that meaning in modern usage. The phrase 'who proceeds from the Father' (*ho para tou patros ekporeuetai*) became theologically significant in the later filioque controversy between Eastern and Western Christianity. The masculine pronoun *ekeinos* ('he') is used for the Spirit, despite *pneuma* being neuter in Greek — this personalizes the Spirit.
27. The verb *martyreite* could be indicative ('you testify') or imperative ('testify!'). Either reading works — the disciples both will and should bear witness. The phrase *ap archees* ('from the beginning') refers to the beginning of Jesus's public ministry, establishing the disciples as eyewitnesses. Their testimony alongside the Spirit's testimony creates a dual witness as required by Jewish law (Deuteronomy 19:15).
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 19:15. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

# 16

**Summary:** *John 16 continues and concludes the farewell discourse. Jesus warns the disciples of coming persecution, then explains that his departure is necessary for the Advocate (the Spirit of truth) to come. He describes the Spirit's work of convicting the world and guiding the disciples into all truth. Jesus then uses the metaphor of a woman in labor to describe the transition from sorrow to joy, promises direct access to the Father in prayer, and closes with the declaration 'I have overcome the world.'*

**What Makes This Remarkable:** *The Paraclete teaching reaches its fullest development in this chapter: the Spirit will convict the world (v. 8), guide into all truth (v. 13), and glorify Jesus (v. 14). The labor metaphor (vv. 21-22) draws on prophetic imagery of Zion's birth pangs (Isaiah 26:17-18, 66:7-8). The climactic declaration 'I have overcome the world' (v. 33) uses the perfect tense *nenikeeka*, indicating a victory already accomplished even before the cross — an extraordinary claim at the moment of Jesus's greatest apparent vulnerability.*

**Translation Friction:** *The precise meaning of the Spirit 'convicting' (*elenchei*) the world regarding sin, righteousness, and judgment (vv. 8-11) has been debated extensively. The Greek *elenchein* can mean 'convict, expose, prove, or prove wrong.' We render the verb and let the explanatory clauses speak for themselves. The phrase 'a little while' (*mikron*) in verses 16-19 is deliberately ambiguous — it could refer to the crucifixion/resurrection gap, the ascension, or the *parousia*.*

*Connections: The persecution warnings connect to 15:18-25 and look forward to the early church's experience in Acts. The Paraclete promises continue from 14:16-17, 14:26, and 15:26-27. The 'little while' language echoes Isaiah 26:20. The labor metaphor draws on the prophetic tradition of eschatological birth pangs. The 'I have overcome' declaration connects to Revelation's conquering language (Revelation 2-3, 5:5).*

<sup>1</sup>"I have told you these things so that you will not fall away. <sup>2</sup>They will expel you from the synagogues. In fact, an hour is coming when everyone who kills you will think he is offering service to God. <sup>3</sup>They will do these things because they have not known the Father or me. <sup>4</sup>But I have told you these things so that when their hour comes you will remember that I told you about them. I did not tell you these things from the beginning because I was with you. <sup>5</sup>But now I am going to the one who sent me, and none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' <sup>6</sup>But because I have told you these things, sorrow has filled your hearts. <sup>7</sup>But I am telling you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away. For if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. <sup>8</sup>When he comes, he will convict the world regarding sin, righteousness, and judgment: <sup>9</sup>Of sin, because they trust in not on me; <sup>10</sup>about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will no longer see me; <sup>11</sup>Of the time of reckoning, because the prince of this world is judged. <sup>12</sup>I still have many things to tell you, but you cannot bear them now. <sup>13</sup>But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you into all the truth. For he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. <sup>14</sup>He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. <sup>15</sup>Everything the Father has is mine. That is why I said that he takes what is mine and will declare it to you. <sup>16</sup>A little while, and you will no longer see me. Then again a little while, and you will see me." <sup>17</sup>Some of his disciples said to one another, "What is this that he is telling us: 'A little while, and you will not see me, and then again a little while, and you will see me'? And, 'Because I am going to the Father'?" <sup>18</sup>They kept saying, "What is this 'little while' he is talking about? We do not understand what he is saying." <sup>19</sup>Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, "Are you discussing with one another what I meant by saying, 'A little while, and you will not see me, and then again a little while, and you will see me'? <sup>20</sup>Truly, truly, I tell you, you will weep and mourn, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. <sup>21</sup>When a woman is giving birth, she has pain because her hour has come. But when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, because of the joy that a person has been born into the world. <sup>22</sup>So you also have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. <sup>23</sup>In that day you will ask me nothing. Truly, truly, I tell you, whatever you ask the Father in my name, he will give you. <sup>24</sup>Until now you have asked for nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, so that your joy may be made complete. <sup>25</sup>I have said these things to you in figures of speech. An hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech, but will tell you plainly about the Father. <sup>26</sup>In that day you will ask in my name, and I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf, <sup>27</sup>And have believed that I came out from God, because the Father himself loveth you, because you have loved me. <sup>28</sup>I came from the Father and have come into the world. Now I am leaving the world and going to the Father." <sup>29</sup>His disciples said, "Now you are speaking plainly and not using figures of speech! <sup>30</sup>Now we know that you know all things and do not need anyone to question you. By this we believe that you came from God." <sup>31</sup>Jesus responded them, Do you now believe? <sup>32</sup>Look, an hour is coming — and has come — when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and you will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. <sup>33</sup>I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation. But take courage — I have overcome the world."

#### TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The verb skandalisthete ('be caused to stumble, fall away') is stronger than the KJV's 'offended.' It means to be tripped up in faith, to abandon one's commitment. The word skandalon originally referred to the trigger of a trap. Jesus's warnings about persecution are meant to inoculate the disciples against the shock that could destroy their faith.
2. The term aposynagogous ('expelled from the synagogue') appears only in John (9:22, 12:42, 16:2) and refers to formal exclusion from the Jewish community — a devastating social and religious penalty. The phrase latreian prospHEREIN ('offering service/worship') is cultic language — those who kill the disciples will regard it as an act of religious worship. This reflects the historical reality of zealous persecution.

3. The aorist *egnosan* ('they knew') points to a fundamental failure of recognition rather than a temporary misunderstanding. The persecutors' ignorance of both the Father and Jesus is presented as the root cause of religious violence — they are acting in the name of a God they do not actually know.
4. The phrase *hee hora auton* ('their hour') parallels the language of Jesus's own 'hour' throughout John (2:4, 7:30, 12:23, 13:1). As Jesus has his hour appointed by the Father, so the persecutors have their hour permitted by God. The explanation for not telling them earlier — 'because I was with you' — implies that Jesus's physical presence provided the protection that the Spirit's presence will provide after his departure.
5. This statement seems to contradict 13:36 (Peter asked 'Where are you going?') and 14:5 (Thomas's question). The point is that now, overwhelmed by grief (v. 6), the disciples have stopped asking the right question. They are consumed by sorrow over the departure rather than curiosity about the destination — which would have led to hope.
6. The perfect tense *pepleeroken* ('has filled') describes sorrow as having completely occupied their hearts — leaving no room for the hope Jesus is trying to communicate. The Greek *lypee* ('grief, sorrow, pain') refers to deep emotional distress, not mere sadness.
7. The verb *sympherei* ('it is advantageous, it is better for') is a strong claim — Jesus asserts that his physical absence is better for the disciples than his physical presence. This is because the Spirit's presence will be universal and internal rather than localized and external. The paradox is startling: the incarnate presence of God will be replaced by something even more beneficial.
8. The verb *elenxei* ('will convict, prove wrong, expose') is forensic language — the Spirit acts as a prosecutor demonstrating guilt. The three charges — sin, righteousness, and judgment — are explained in the following verses. The KJV's 'reprove' is weaker than the Greek, which implies successful conviction, not merely accusation.
9. Sin is defined here not as moral failure in general but specifically as unbelief — the refusal to trust in Jesus. This is consistent with John's theology throughout the Gospel, where believing or not believing in Jesus is the fundamental human decision (3:18, 3:36, 5:24).
10. The logic is compressed: Jesus's departure to the Father vindicates his righteousness (*dikaiosyne*s). The world judged Jesus as a sinner and criminal, but his return to the Father proves the world's verdict wrong. The Spirit will expose this — the one the world condemned was in fact the Righteous One.
11. The perfect tense *kekritai* ('has been judged') indicates that the ruler of this world (*ho archon tou kosmou toutou*) has already been condemned — the verdict is settled even before the cross. This echoes 12:31 ('now the ruler of this world will be cast out'). The Spirit convicts the world that its ruler has lost, and therefore the world's system of values stands condemned.
12. The verb *bastazein* ('to bear, carry, endure') suggests that the additional truths would be too heavy for the disciples in their current state of grief and incomprehension. Jesus exercises pastoral restraint — revelation is given in accordance with the disciples' capacity to receive it.
13. The verb *hodegesei* ('will guide') pictures the Spirit as a guide leading travelers along a path. The phrase *en tee aletheia pasee* ('into all the truth') uses the article — 'the truth' — indicating the full truth about Jesus and his significance, not abstract omniscience. The Spirit's dependence on what he 'hears' parallels Jesus's own dependence on the Father (5:30, 8:28). The phrase *ta erchomena* ('the things coming') refers to future events and their meaning.
14. The Spirit's primary work is Christocentric — he glorifies Jesus, not himself. The verb *leempsetsai* ('will take, receive') indicates that the Spirit's teaching content comes from Jesus. This establishes a chain of revelation: Father to Son to Spirit to disciples.
15. The claim *panta hosa echei ho pater ema estin* ('everything the Father has is mine') is one of the most sweeping claims of unity with the Father in the Gospel. Because the Father and Son share everything, the Spirit's drawing from Jesus is simultaneously drawing from the Father. The revelation chain is unbroken.
16. The SBLGNT does not include the final clause 'because I go to the Father' (*hoti hypago pros ton patera*), which is present in some manuscripts and in the KJV. We follow the critical text. The word *mikron* ('a little while') is deliberately enigmatic, creating the confusion the disciples express in the next verses. The two different verbs for 'see' — *theoreite* (present, continuous observation) and *opsesthe* (future, experiential seeing) — may indicate different qualities of perception.
17. The disciples quote Jesus back to one another, trying to understand his meaning. Their confusion is characteristic of the Johannine misunderstanding motif, where characters take Jesus's words at face value and miss the deeper meaning (cf. 3:4, 4:15, 6:52). The phrase 'because I am going to the Father' appears in the disciples' quotation even though the SBLGNT omits it from verse 16 — suggesting they are combining statements from different points in the discourse.
18. The imperfect *elegon* ('they kept saying') indicates repeated, ongoing discussion — the disciples are turning the phrase over among themselves without resolution. Their honest confession *ouk oidamen* ('we do not know/understand') echoes a persistent theme in John where the disciples struggle to comprehend Jesus's teaching until after the resurrection (cf. 2:22, 12:16).
19. The verb *egnoo* ('knew') indicates Jesus's supernatural awareness of their thoughts, a recurring feature in John (1:48, 2:24-25, 6:64). The verb *eethelohn* ('they wanted') suggests they desired to ask but were too confused or intimidated to voice the question directly.
20. The double *ameen* ('truly, truly') signals a solemn and authoritative declaration. The three pairs — weeping/mourning, world rejoicing/disciples sorrowing, sorrow/joy — create a carefully structured prophecy of the crucifixion-to-resurrection reversal. The phrase *eis charan geneesetai* ('will become into joy') means not that sorrow will be replaced by joy but that the very sorrow itself will be transformed into joy — the same event (the cross) that causes grief will become the source of joy.

- 21.** The phrase 'her hour has come' (eelthen hee hora autees) deliberately echoes the language of Jesus's own 'hour' (12:23, 13:1, 17:1), connecting the woman's suffering to Jesus's passion. The Greek anthropos ('a person, a human being') rather than a more specific term gives the birth a universal quality. The prophetic tradition uses labor imagery for the suffering that precedes divine deliverance (Isaiah 26:17-18, 66:7-8, Micah 4:9-10).
- 21.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 26:17-18. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 21.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Micah 4:9-10. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 22.** The application of the labor metaphor is direct: the disciples' current sorrow corresponds to labor pains, and Jesus's return (the resurrection) corresponds to the birth that transforms pain into joy. The promise 'no one will take your joy from you' (teen charan hymoon oudeis airei aph hymoon) uses the present tense airei, suggesting that this joy, once given, is permanently beyond anyone's power to remove.
- 23.** The Greek uses two different verbs for 'ask': erooteesete ('ask a question, inquire') and aiteesete ('ask for, request, petition'). In that day — the post-resurrection era — the disciples will no longer need to question Jesus for understanding (the Spirit will guide them), and their prayers to the Father in Jesus's name will be answered. 'In my name' (en to onomati mou) means by his authority and in alignment with his character, not as a magic formula.
- 24.** The adverb heos arti ('until now') marks a turning point — a new era of prayer in Jesus's name is about to begin. The connection between prayer, answered requests, and complete joy (pepleeromenee, 'having been made full') echoes 15:11. The imperative aiteite ('ask!') is a present tense command implying ongoing, habitual practice.
- 25.** The Greek paroimiais ('proverbs, figures of speech, riddles') is broader than 'proverbs' — it includes any indirect or veiled speech. The contrast with parreesia ('plainly, openly, with boldness') promises a shift from enigmatic teaching to direct revelation. This shift is associated with the coming of the Spirit (v. 13) who will make plain what Jesus taught in veiled terms.
- 26.** This verse has been misread as Jesus saying he will not intercede (contradicting Romans 8:34 and 1 John 2:1). The point is rather that direct intercession will not be the primary dynamic — the disciples will have their own direct access to the Father. Jesus is not denying his intercessory role but emphasizing the Father's direct love for the disciples.
- 27.** The verb philei ('loves') here is the word for personal, affectionate love rather than agapao. The Father's love for the disciples is warm and intimate. The perfect tenses pephileekate ('you have loved') and pepisteukate ('you have believed') indicate ongoing states that began in the past. The phrase para tou theou ('from God, from the presence of God') asserts Jesus's divine origin.
- 28.** This verse summarizes the entire Johannine Christology in four movements: origin (from the Father), incarnation (into the world), departure (leaving the world), and return (to the Father). The chiasmic structure (Father world world Father) frames Jesus's earthly ministry as a round trip from and back to the Father's presence.
- 29.** The disciples' enthusiasm is somewhat premature — they think they have achieved the understanding Jesus promised for 'that day' (v. 25), but Jesus will immediately challenge this confidence (v. 31). The irony is characteristic of John: the disciples claim clarity at the very moment they are about to demonstrate their confusion by abandoning Jesus.
- 30.** The disciples' confession oidamen ('we know') and pisteuomen ('we believe') represents genuine but still immature faith. Jesus's knowledge of their unspoken questions (v. 19) has convinced them of his omniscience and divine origin. Yet the faith expressed here will be severely tested within hours.
- 31.** The question arti pisteuete could be read as a statement ('Now you believe') or a question ('Do you now believe?'). The interrogative reading fits better with the following prediction of their scattering. The adverb arti ('now, at this moment') carries a note of irony — their belief is real but about to be tested by catastrophic events.
- 32.** The verb skorpisthete ('be scattered') echoes Zechariah 13:7 ('Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered'), which Jesus quotes in the Synoptic accounts (Matthew 26:31, Mark 14:27). The phrase eis ta idia ('to his own things/home') is the same expression used in the Prologue (1:11, 'his own'). The juxtaposition of abandonment by the disciples and the Father's continued presence demonstrates that Jesus faces the cross in conscious reliance on the Father.
- 32.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Zechariah 13:7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 33.** The contrast is spatial: 'in me' (en emoi) peace; 'in the world' (en to kosmo) tribulation. The imperative tharseite ('take courage, be of good cheer') is a command, not a suggestion. The perfect tense nenikeeka ('I have overcome') is extraordinary — Jesus speaks of his victory as already accomplished before the cross. This is not future hope but present reality declared in advance. The verb nikao ('to conquer, overcome') becomes a key term in Revelation for the victory of Christ and his followers.

## 17

**Summary:** *John 17 records Jesus's extended prayer to the Father, traditionally called the 'High Priestly Prayer.' It is the longest recorded prayer of Jesus in the Gospels. The prayer moves in three concentric circles: Jesus prays for himself and the completion of his mission (vv. 1-5), for his immediate disciples (vv. 6-19), and for all future believers (vv. 20-26). The dominant themes are glory, unity, protection, sanctification, and the revelation of the Father's name.*

**What Makes This Remarkable:** *This prayer is unique in the Gospel tradition — nowhere else do we hear Jesus pray at such length and with such theological depth. The opening petition 'Glorify your Son' (v. 1) reverses normal prayer convention where the petitioner glorifies God; here the Son asks the Father to glorify him, revealing the mutual glorification within the Godhead. The prayer's Christology is extraordinarily high: Jesus speaks of glory shared with the Father 'before the world existed' (v. 5), implying pre-existence. The unity prayer (vv. 21-23) grounds human unity in the divine unity of Father and Son — 'that they may be one, just as we are one.'*

**Translation Friction:** *The phrase 'eternal life is that they know you' (v. 3) redefines eternal life as relational knowledge rather than temporal duration. We render this without theological commentary. The 'son of destruction' (v. 12) is widely understood as referring to Judas, but the phrase itself (ho huios tees apoleias) is a Semitic idiom meaning 'one destined for destruction.' The prayer's placement before the arrest creates a literary tension — Jesus prays with serene authority while betrayal approaches.*

**Connections:** *The prayer connects to the Prologue (1:1-18) through its themes of glory, pre-existence, and the Father-Son relationship. The sanctification language (vv. 17-19) echoes the consecration of priests in Exodus 28-29. The unity theme anticipates the early church's struggle and hope (Acts 4:32, Ephesians 4:1-6). The 'I am not of the world' language (vv. 14-16) develops the farewell discourse's world/disciple contrast (15:18-19, 16:33).*

<sup>1</sup>After Jesus had spoken these things, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, so that the Son may glorify you, <sup>2</sup>As you have given him authority over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as numerous as you have given him. <sup>3</sup>And this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. <sup>4</sup>I have glorified you on the earth by completing the work you gave me to do. <sup>5</sup>And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory I had with you before the world existed. <sup>6</sup>I have made your name known to the people you gave me out of the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. <sup>7</sup>Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you, <sup>8</sup>For I have given to them the words which you gavest me. Then they have received them, and have known surely that I arrived out from you, then they have believed that you didst send me. <sup>9</sup>I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, because they are yours. <sup>10</sup>All that is mine is yours, and all that is yours is mine, and I have been glorified in them. <sup>11</sup>I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, so that they may be one, just as we are one. <sup>12</sup>While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, so that the Scripture might be fulfilled. <sup>13</sup>But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. <sup>14</sup>I have given them your word. Even as i am not in the world, and the world has hated them, because they are not in the world. <sup>15</sup>I am not asking that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup>Even as i am not in the world, and they are not in the world. <sup>17</sup>Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. <sup>18</sup>Just as you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. <sup>19</sup>And for their sake I consecrate myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth. <sup>20</sup>I am not asking on behalf of these alone, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, <sup>21</sup>That they all may be one. As you, Father, art in me, and I in you, that they also may be one in us — that the world may trust that you have dispatched me. <sup>22</sup>The glory that you have given me I have given to them, so that they may be one just as we are one — <sup>23</sup>I in them and you in me, that they may be brought to complete unity, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them just as you

loved me. <sup>24</sup>Father, I desire that those you have given me may also be with me where I am, so that they may see my glory that you have given me, because you loved me before the foundation of the world. <sup>25</sup>Righteous Father, the world has not known you, but I have known you, and these have known that you sent me. <sup>26</sup>I have made your name known to them and will continue to make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

## TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The gesture of lifting eyes to heaven (*eparas tous ophthalmous eis ton ouranon*) is a traditional Jewish prayer posture (cf. Psalm 123:1). The perfect tense *eleelyhen* ('has come') marks the arrival of the 'hour' that has been anticipated throughout the Gospel (2:4, 7:30, 8:20, 12:23, 13:1). The mutual glorification — Son glorifies Father, Father glorifies Son — reveals a reciprocal dynamic within the Godhead.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 123:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The phrase *exousian pases sarkos* ('authority over all flesh') is a Semitic expression meaning authority over all humanity. The neuter singular *pan ho* ('everything that') is collective, referring to believers as a unified whole, while the plural *autois* ('to them') sees them as individuals. The Father gives people to the Son; the Son gives them eternal life — a chain of divine giving.
3. This verse redefines eternal life (*aiōnios zōē*) not as endless duration but as relational knowledge of God and Jesus Christ. The verb *ginōskōsin* (present subjunctive of *ginōskō*) indicates ongoing, deepening knowledge — not a one-time acquisition but a continual knowing. The phrase *ton monon aleethinon theon* ('the only true God') echoes the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4) and the first commandment. The juxtaposition of knowing the Father and knowing Jesus Christ places Jesus alongside God as the co-object of saving knowledge.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 6:4 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The aorist *edoxasa* ('I glorified') and the participle *teleiōsas* ('having completed') speak of Jesus's earthly mission as already finished — a proleptic perspective that views the cross as accomplished even before it occurs. The word *teleiōsas* shares its root with *tetelestai* ('It is finished,' 19:30), creating a verbal link between this prayer and the cross.
5. This is one of the strongest pre-existence claims in the New Testament. Jesus asks to be restored to the glory (*tee doxee*) he shared with the Father *pro tou ton kosmon einai* ('before the world existed'). The phrase *para seautō* ('in your own presence, at your own side') echoes the Prologue's *pros ton theon* ('with God,' 1:1). The prayer assumes that the incarnation involved a voluntary setting aside of divine glory, which is now to be resumed.
6. The verb *ephanērōsa* ('I revealed, manifested, made known') indicates that Jesus's entire ministry was an act of revealing the Father's name — his character, identity, and purposes. 'Name' (*onoma*) in Semitic thought encompasses the person's entire nature. The possessive chain — 'they were yours, you gave them to me' — emphasizes that the disciples belong first to the Father and are entrusted to the Son.
7. The perfect *egnōkan* ('they have come to know') indicates a settled conviction. The disciples have reached the understanding that Jesus's teaching, authority, and mission all originate with the Father — not from himself independently. This echoes the disciples' confession in 16:30.
8. The chain of transmission is explicit: Father gives words to Son, Son gives words to disciples, disciples receive them. The three verbs — *elabon* ('received'), *egnōsan* ('understood'), *episteusan* ('believed') — describe the progression of faith: reception, comprehension, and trust. The adverb *alēthōs* ('truly, genuinely') affirms the reality of their knowledge despite its limitations.
9. The limitation 'not for the world' (*ou peri tou kosmou*) does not mean Jesus has no concern for the world (cf. 3:16) but that this particular prayer focuses on the disciples who form the nucleus of the future community. The reason given — 'because they are yours' (*hoti soi eisin*) — grounds the petition in the Father's ownership of the disciples.
10. The mutual possession — 'mine is yours and yours is mine' — is a striking declaration of complete unity between Father and Son. The perfect passive *dedoxasmai* ('I have been glorified') in the disciples suggests that the disciples' faith and witness already constitute a glorification of Jesus, even before the cross.
11. The address *pater hagio* ('Holy Father') is unique in the New Testament — this combination appears nowhere else. The petition *teerēson autous en tō onomati sou* ('keep them in your name') asks the Father to protect the disciples within the sphere of his revealed character. The unity requested — 'that they may be one, just as we are' — sets the standard for human community at the level of the divine unity between Father and Son.
12. Two verbs describe Jesus's protective work: *eteeroun* ('I kept, watched over') and *ephylaxa* ('I guarded, protected'). The phrase *ho huios tees apōleias* ('the son of destruction') is a Semitic idiom meaning 'one destined for or characterized by destruction.' The same phrase appears in 2 Thessalonians 2:3. The reference to Scripture being fulfilled likely points to Psalm 41:9 (quoted in 13:18) or Psalm 109:8.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 41:9. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 109:8. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

13. Jesus prays aloud ('in the world') so the disciples can hear. The phrase *teen charan teen emeen pepleerōmeneen* ('my joy made complete') echoes 15:11 and 16:24. The joy Jesus offers is his own joy — the joy of his relationship with the Father — shared with the disciples and brought to fullness.
14. The logic is: receiving God's word alienates the disciples from the world-system, making them targets of hatred. The parallel 'just as I am not of the world' (*kathōs egō ouk eimi ek tou kosmou*) places the disciples' experience in direct parallel with Jesus's own rejection. The world's hatred is evidence of their belonging to God, not a sign of failure.
15. The phrase *ek tou poneerou* could mean 'from evil' (abstract) or 'from the evil one' (personal). Given John's references to the 'ruler of this world' (12:31, 14:30, 16:11), the personal reading is more likely. Jesus does not pray for escape from the world but for protection while remaining in it — the mission requires presence, not withdrawal.
16. This verse nearly repeats verse 14b, creating a frame around the petition in verse 15. The repetition emphasizes the foundational claim: the disciples' identity is defined by their origin ('not of the world') rather than their location (they remain in the world). This grounds both the world's hostility and the need for divine protection.
17. The verb *hagiason* ('sanctify, set apart, consecrate') is cultic language — the same verb used in the Septuagint for consecrating priests and offerings (Exodus 28:41, Leviticus 8:10-12). The disciples are being set apart for a sacred mission. The instrument of sanctification is truth (*en tee aletheia*), which is then identified with God's word (*ho logos ho sos*). Truth in John is not abstract proposition but the reality of God revealed through Jesus.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 28:41. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Leviticus 8:10-12. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. The verb *aposteila* ('I sent') is the root of *apostolos* ('apostle, sent one'). Jesus's mission becomes the model and mandate for the disciples' mission. The parallel is comprehensive: as the Father sent the Son into a hostile world, so the Son sends his followers into that same world. The mission is outward, not inward.
19. Jesus 'consecrates himself' (*hagiazō emauton*) — language that evokes a sacrifice being set apart for offering. The phrase *hyper autōn* ('for their sake, on their behalf') gives his self-consecration a substitutionary quality. Jesus sets himself apart for the cross so that the disciples might be set apart for mission. The shift from 'sanctify' (for the disciples in v. 17) to 'consecrate' (for Jesus here) reflects the sacrificial nuance of Jesus's self-dedication.
20. The prayer expands from the present disciples to all future believers — everyone who will come to faith through the apostolic witness. The present participle *pisteuontōn* ('those believing') envisions an ongoing community that extends through time. This verse makes every subsequent Christian a subject of Jesus's prayer.
21. The unity prayer has three layers: unity among believers ('that they may all be one'), participation in the divine life ('that they also may be in us'), and missional witness ('that the world may believe'). The standard for human unity is nothing less than the mutual indwelling of Father and Son. This is not organizational uniformity but relational oneness patterned on the Godhead.
22. The claim that Jesus has given his glory (*teen doxan*) to the disciples is remarkable. This glory is not the pre-incarnate glory of verse 5 but the glory revealed through the incarnation and the cross — the glory of self-giving love. Shared glory becomes the basis for unity: those who share in the same glory naturally share in one another.
23. The perfect participle *teteleiōmenoi* ('having been brought to completion, perfected') describes unity as a realized state, not merely an aspiration. The chain of indwelling — Jesus in the disciples, the Father in Jesus — creates a unity that has missional impact: the world will 'know' (*ginōskee*) God's sending of Jesus and God's love for the disciples. The astounding claim is that God loves the disciples *kathos eme eegapeesas* ('just as you loved me') — with the same quality of love he has for the Son.
24. The verb *thelō* ('I desire, I will') is unusually direct for prayer — Jesus does not merely ask but expresses his will to the Father, reflecting the intimacy and unity of their relationship. The phrase *pro katabolees kosmou* ('before the foundation of the world') reaches further back than verse 5 ('before the world existed'), grounding the Father's love for the Son in eternity. The ultimate destiny of believers is to see (*theōrosin*) Jesus's full, unveiled glory — a beatific vision.
25. The address *pater dikaie* ('Righteous Father') shifts from 'Holy Father' (v. 11) — holiness related to the petition for protection, righteousness to the appeal for justice and vindication. Three levels of knowing are contrasted: the world does not know the Father at all, Jesus knows the Father directly, and the disciples know that the Father sent Jesus. The disciples' knowledge is mediated through Jesus.
26. The prayer ends with a final statement of purpose that encompasses the entire Gospel: the revelation of the Father's name (his character) results in the Father's own love dwelling in the disciples, with Jesus himself in them. The future *gnōrisō* ('I will make known') indicates that Jesus's revelatory work continues beyond the cross through the Spirit. The prayer's final word is 'in them' (*en autois*), placing the focus not on Jesus's return to glory but on his ongoing presence within the believing community.

## 18

**Summary:** *John 18 narrates the arrest of Jesus in the garden, the Jewish interrogation before Annas and Caiaphas, Peter's three denials, and the Roman trial before Pilate. John's account differs from the Synoptics in key details: Jesus initiates the encounter with the arresting party, there is no Gethsemane agony, and the Jewish proceedings focus on Annas rather than a formal Sanhedrin trial. Pilate's interrogation centers on the question of kingship and culminates in the crowd's choice of Barabbas.*

**What Makes This Remarkable:** *John's arrest scene is theologically charged: when Jesus says ego eimi ('I am he,' v. 5), the soldiers fall to the ground — a detail unique to John that echoes the divine name theophany. Peter's sword-strike is attributed to him by name (only John identifies him). The interweaving of Peter's denials with Jesus's interrogation creates a literary contrast between Jesus's bold confession and Peter's craven denial. Pilate's question 'What is truth?' (v. 38) is one of the most famous philosophical moments in literature, left unanswered while Truth incarnate stands before him.*

**Translation Friction:** *John's chronology of the Jewish proceedings differs from the Synoptics — Jesus is taken first to Annas (the former high priest and father-in-law of Caiaphas), then to Caiaphas, with no detailed account of a Sanhedrin trial. We render John's account as given without harmonizing. The phrase 'not into the Praetorium, so that they would not be defiled' (v. 28) reflects the irony John intends — the Jewish leaders avoid ritual defilement while engineering the death of the innocent.*

**Connections:** *The garden arrest connects to the Gethsemane accounts in the Synoptics (Matthew 26:36-56, Mark 14:32-52, Luke 22:39-53). The ego eimi declaration echoes Exodus 3:14 and John's earlier 'I am' statements (8:24, 8:28, 8:58). Peter's denials fulfill Jesus's prediction in 13:38. Pilate's encounter with Jesus develops the kingship theme running through John (1:49, 6:15, 12:13-15). The Barabbas choice echoes the scapegoat ritual of Leviticus 16.*

<sup>1</sup>After Jesus had said these things, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron Valley to a place where there was a garden, and he and his disciples entered it. <sup>2</sup>Now Judas, who was betraying him, also knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. <sup>3</sup>So Judas, having procured a detachment of soldiers and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons. <sup>4</sup>Then Jesus, knowing everything that was going to happen to him, came forward and said to them, "Who are you looking for?" <sup>5</sup>They answered him, "Jesus the Nazarene." Jesus said to them, "I am he." Judas, who was betraying him, was also standing with them. <sup>6</sup>When he said to them, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground. <sup>7</sup>So he asked them again, "Who are you looking for?" They said, "Jesus the Nazarene." <sup>8</sup>Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So if you are looking for me, let these men go." <sup>9</sup>This was to fulfill the word he had spoken: "I have not lost a single one of those you gave me." <sup>10</sup>Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. <sup>11</sup>Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back in its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup the Father has given me?" <sup>12</sup>So the detachment of soldiers, their commander, and the officers of the Jewish leaders arrested Jesus and bound him. <sup>13</sup>They led him first to Annas, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. <sup>14</sup>It was Caiaphas who had advised the Jewish leaders that it was better for one man to die for the people. <sup>15</sup>Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. That disciple was known to the high priest and went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, <sup>16</sup>However, Peter was standing at the door without. Then traveled out that other disciple, which was recognized to the elevated priest, and spoke to her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. <sup>17</sup>The servant girl at the door said to Peter, "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not." <sup>18</sup>Now the servants and officers had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing around it warming themselves. Peter was also standing with them, warming himself. <sup>19</sup>The high priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. <sup>20</sup>Jesus answered him, "I have spoken openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jewish people gather, and I have said nothing in secret. <sup>21</sup>Why do you question me? Ask those who heard what I said to them. They know what I said." <sup>22</sup>When he had said this, one of the officers standing nearby struck Jesus, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?" <sup>23</sup>Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify about what was wrong. But if

I spoke rightly, why do you strike me?" <sup>24</sup>Then Annas sent him, still bound, to Caiaphas the high priest. <sup>25</sup>Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, "You are not also one of his disciples, are you?" He denied it and said, "I am not." <sup>26</sup>One of the high priest's servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, said, "Didn't I see you in the garden with him?" <sup>27</sup>Peter denied it again, and immediately a rooster crowed. <sup>28</sup>Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the governor's headquarters. It was early morning. They did not enter the headquarters themselves, so that they would not be defiled but could eat the Passover. <sup>29</sup>So Pilate went outside to them and said, "What charge do you bring against this man?" <sup>30</sup>They answered him, "If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you." <sup>31</sup>Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him according to your own law." The Jewish leaders said to him, "It is not permitted for us to execute anyone." <sup>32</sup>This was to fulfill what Jesus had said when he indicated the kind of death he was going to die. <sup>33</sup>So Pilate entered the headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" <sup>34</sup>Jesus answered, "Are you asking this on your own, or did others tell you about me?" <sup>35</sup>Pilate answered, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests handed you over to me. What have you done?" <sup>36</sup>Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jewish leaders. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here." <sup>37</sup>So Pilate said to him, "Then you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world: to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." <sup>38</sup>Pilate said to him, "What is truth?" After he said this, he went back out to the Jewish leaders and told them, "I find no basis for a charge against him. <sup>39</sup>But you have a custom that I release one prisoner for you at the Passover. So do you want me to release the King of the Jews for you?" <sup>40</sup>They shouted back, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a revolutionary.

## TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *cheimmarrou tou Kedrōn* ('the winter-torrent of Kidron') refers to the Kidron Valley east of Jerusalem, between the city and the Mount of Olives. John does not name Gethsemane (a Synoptic detail) but simply refers to a 'garden' (*kēpos*). The Kidron crossing echoes David's flight from Absalom (2 Samuel 15:23), creating a typological parallel between the rejected kings.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 2 Samuel 15:23. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The present participle *paradidous* ('the one handing over, betraying') describes Judas's action as ongoing — he is in the process of betrayal. The detail that Jesus 'often met there' (*pollakis synēchthē*) explains how Judas knew where to find him and emphasizes that Jesus made no attempt to avoid arrest by changing his routine.
3. The Greek *speiran* ('cohort, detachment') technically denotes a Roman military unit of 200-600 soldiers, though it may be used loosely here for a smaller detachment. The involvement of Roman soldiers alongside Jewish temple officers (*hypēretas*) indicates cooperation between Roman and Jewish authorities. The detail of lanterns and torches at Passover (during a full moon) carries Johannine irony — they bring artificial light to arrest the Light of the World.
4. John emphasizes Jesus's omniscience (*eidōs panta ta erchomena*) — he is not caught off guard but moves toward his captors deliberately. The verb *exēlthen* ('went out, came forward') shows Jesus taking the initiative rather than being discovered or seized. The question *tina zēteite* ('Who are you looking for?') is not a request for information but a sovereign challenge.
5. The response *egō eimi* ('I am he' or simply 'I am') functions on two levels: as a simple identification ('I'm the one you're looking for') and as an echo of the divine self-revelation in Exodus 3:14 and Isaiah 43:10. John's Gospel has used *egō eimi* repeatedly with divine overtones (8:24, 8:28, 8:58). The effect in verse 6 confirms the deeper reading. The detail of Judas standing with the arresting party (*met' autōn*) emphasizes his position — he has crossed from Jesus's side to the opposition.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 3:14 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 43:10 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The physical recoil (*apēlthon eis ta opisō*, 'went backward') and falling (*epesan chamai*, 'fell to the ground') are unique to John and carry theophanic overtones. In the Old Testament, people fall before divine presence (Ezekiel 1:28, Daniel 10:9). This detail transforms the arrest scene: Jesus is not a victim being seized but a sovereign figure before whom armed men collapse. He permits his own arrest.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Ezekiel 1:28. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Daniel 10:9. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. Jesus repeats the question (palin epērōtēsen) after the soldiers recover, demonstrating complete control of the situation. The repetition also serves to set up the protective command in verse 8.
8. Jesus negotiates the disciples' freedom even at the moment of his own arrest. The imperative aphete toutous hypagein ('let these go') is a command, not a request. Jesus acts as the Good Shepherd protecting his flock (10:11-15) — he offers himself in exchange for the safety of his followers.
9. John applies fulfillment language (hina pleerōthee, 'so that it might be fulfilled') not to an Old Testament text but to Jesus's own words from 6:39 and 17:12. Jesus's own statements carry the authority of Scripture. The physical protection of the disciples here points to the spiritual protection Jesus promised in the prayer of chapter 17.
10. Only John identifies Peter as the one who struck (the Synoptics leave the swordsman anonymous) and names the servant Malchus. The specificity suggests eyewitness knowledge. The Greek ōtarion ('ear,' diminutive form) denotes the outer ear or earlobe. Peter's violent response contrasts sharply with Jesus's sovereign self-surrender.
11. The 'cup' (poteerion) is a well-established Old Testament metaphor for divinely appointed suffering or judgment (Psalm 75:8, Isaiah 51:17, Jeremiah 25:15). John's account omits the Gethsemane agony over the cup (Matthew 26:39, Mark 14:36, Luke 22:42) and presents Jesus as wholly resolved — the rhetorical question expects the answer 'yes.' The perfect tense dedōken ('has given') indicates the Father's settled determination.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 75:8. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 51:17. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Jeremiah 25:15. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The Greek chiliarchos ('commander of a thousand') is a Roman military title, confirming the involvement of Roman forces. The verb edēsan ('they bound') emphasizes the indignity — the one who spoke as sovereign moments ago now submits to being bound. John lists three groups cooperating: Roman soldiers (speira), their commander (chiliarchos), and Jewish temple police (hypēretai).
13. Annas had served as high priest from AD 6-15 and retained enormous influence. The Synoptics do not record this preliminary hearing before Annas. John's phrase 'high priest that year' (archiereus tou eniautou ekeinou) does not imply an annual rotation (which did not exist) but identifies which year is in view — the year of Jesus's death.
14. John reminds the reader of Caiaphas's unwitting prophecy from 11:49-52. The word sympherei ('it is advantageous, it is better') is the same word Jesus used in 16:7 about his departure being 'to your advantage.' The irony is layered: Caiaphas spoke cynical political calculus, but John understood it as genuine prophecy about substitutionary death.
15. The identity of the 'other disciple' (allos matheetes) is debated — traditionally identified with the Beloved Disciple (the author). The word gnōstos ('known') implies a personal connection with the high priest's household, not merely acquaintance. The Greek aulēn ('courtyard') rather than 'palace' — the proceedings take place in the open courtyard of the high priest's residential compound.
16. The female doorkeeper (thyrooro, feminine) plays a small but significant role — she will initiate Peter's first denial in the next verse. The other disciple's ability to enter freely and arrange Peter's admission underscores his connection to the high priest's household.
17. The question expects a negative answer (mee kai sy, 'surely you're not also...'), giving Peter an easy path to denial. Peter's response ouk eimi ('I am not') stands in devastating contrast to Jesus's egō eimi ('I am') in verses 5-6 and 8. Where Jesus boldly identified himself, Peter denies his own identity as a disciple.
18. The detail of the charcoal fire (anthrakian) is significant because the same rare word appears in 21:9 when Jesus makes a charcoal fire on the beach — creating a literary connection between Peter's denial and his restoration. The image of Peter warming himself among Jesus's enemies visually places him on the wrong side.
19. The 'high priest' here is Annas (v. 13), who retains the title by courtesy despite having been deposed. The two topics — disciples and teaching (didachēs) — suggest an inquiry into whether Jesus leads a seditious movement. John provides no false witnesses or blasphemy charge as in the Synoptic accounts.
20. The adverb parrēsia ('openly, with boldness') contrasts with en kryptō ('in secret'). Jesus asserts that his teaching has been entirely public — there is no hidden revolutionary agenda. The appeal to public teaching implicitly challenges the legitimacy of a secret nighttime proceeding. The phrase is reminiscent of Isaiah 45:19: 'I have not spoken in secret.'
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 45:19: — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. Jesus's response implicitly invokes a legal principle — under Jewish law, a defendant should not be compelled to testify against himself. Witnesses should be called. The perfect participle akēkootas ('those who have heard') refers to the many public witnesses of his teaching. Jesus's bold response

before the high priest contrasts with Peter's denials in the courtyard.

22. The Greek *edōken rhapsima* ('gave a blow') could mean a slap with the open hand or a strike with a rod. The officer's rebuke assumes that any challenge to the high priest's authority is disrespectful. This is the first physical violence against Jesus in the passion narrative (in John's account), and it comes from a Jewish officer, not a Roman soldier.
23. Jesus's response is a model of dignified resistance — he does not retaliate but demands legal accountability. The contrast between *kakōs* ('wrongly, badly') and *kalōs* ('rightly, well') frames the issue as a matter of justice, not authority. If Jesus said something false, let it be proved; if true, the violence is unjust.
24. The perfect participle *dedemenon* ('having been bound') emphasizes that Jesus remained bound throughout. John provides no details of the proceedings before Caiaphas, moving directly to the continuation of Peter's denials. The Synoptic accounts place the main trial before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin; John's focus remains on the theological significance of the events rather than legal procedure.
25. The scene returns to Peter, still at the charcoal fire (v. 18), creating a literary interweaving with Jesus's interrogation. The second denial uses the same formula as the first — *ouk eimi* ('I am not') — reinforcing the contrast with Jesus's *egō eimi*. The verb *ērēsato* ('he denied') is emphatic.
26. This third challenge is the most dangerous — the questioner is a relative (*syngenēs*) of Malchus (v. 10) and claims to be an eyewitness (*ouk egō se eidon*, 'didn't I see you?'). Peter is now in real physical danger, not merely social embarrassment. The detail of the family connection is unique to John and suggests firsthand knowledge of the events.
27. The fulfillment of Jesus's prediction (13:38) is stated without commentary — John lets the bare fact speak. The word *eutheos* ('immediately') compresses the moment: denial and rooster-crow are nearly simultaneous. Unlike Luke (22:61-62), John does not record Peter's emotional response — the scene simply ends, leaving the reader to feel the weight of the silence.
28. The Greek *praitōrion* ('praetorium') is the Roman governor's official residence, likely the former palace of Herod the Great or the Antonia Fortress. The irony is unmistakable: the Jewish leaders avoid entering a Gentile building to preserve ceremonial purity for Passover while simultaneously delivering an innocent man to death. John's Passover chronology differs from the Synoptics — here the Passover meal has not yet been eaten, placing the crucifixion on the day the Passover lambs are slaughtered.
29. Pilate accommodates the Jewish leaders' purity concerns by going outside — a detail that structures the entire trial scene as a series of movements between inside (with Jesus) and outside (with the crowd). The word *katēgorian* ('accusation, charge') is a legal term requiring a formal indictment.
30. The response avoids a specific charge, instead asserting a general claim of criminality (*kakon poiōn*, 'one doing evil'). The evasion suggests either that their real charge (blasphemy) would not interest a Roman court, or that they expected Pilate to simply ratify their judgment without independent investigation. The verb *paredōkamen* ('we handed over') is the same root (*paradidōmi*) used for Judas's betrayal.
31. Pilate's response is dismissive — he attempts to return the case to Jewish jurisdiction. The Jewish leaders' reply reveals their true intention: they want execution, not merely punishment. The phrase *ouk exestin* ('it is not permitted') refers to the Roman restriction on Jewish capital punishment (the *ius gladii* reserved to the governor). This legal constraint ensures that Jesus will die by Roman crucifixion rather than Jewish stoning.
32. John explains the theological significance: Roman execution means crucifixion, which fulfills Jesus's own predictions about being 'lifted up' (3:14, 8:28, 12:32-33). The verb *sēmainōn* ('signifying, indicating') is the same word used in 12:33 where Jesus spoke of being 'lifted up from the earth.' Death by lifting up — on a cross — rather than by casting down (stoning) was divinely ordained.
33. Pilate moves inside to question Jesus privately — this inside/outside movement structures the entire trial (vv. 28-29 outside, 33-38a inside, 38b-40 outside). The question *sy ei ho basileus tōn Ioudaiōn* ('Are you the king of the Jews?') indicates that the Jewish leaders have now framed the charge in political terms — kingship claims would constitute sedition against Rome.
34. Jesus's counter-question probes the source and intent of Pilate's inquiry. If Pilate asks on his own, the question has a Roman political meaning (Are you a revolutionary?). If others prompted it, the question carries Jewish messianic meaning (Are you the promised king?). The distinction matters because Jesus's answer depends on which sense of 'king' is intended.
35. Pilate's question *mēti egō Ioudaios eimi* ('I'm not a Jew, am I?') expects a negative answer and expresses disdain — he has no interest in Jewish messianic categories. The emphasis on 'your own nation' (to *ethnos* to son) and 'the chief priests' underscores that the initiative for Jesus's arrest came from his own people. Pilate's final question — 'What have you done?' — returns to the Roman concern: what crime warrants this proceeding?
36. The phrase *ouk estin ek tou kosmou toutou* ('is not from this world') uses *ek* ('from, out of') to indicate origin, not location. Jesus does not say his kingdom has no relevance to this world, but that it does not derive its authority, methods, or power from worldly sources. The proof is the absence of armed resistance — a kingdom of this world would fight. The threefold repetition of 'my kingdom' (*hee basileia hee emee*) emphasizes personal ownership.
37. Jesus's response *sy legeis hoti basileus eimi* ('you say that I am a king') is ambiguous — it neither confirms nor denies the title but redirects it. Jesus then redefines his kingship in terms of truth-bearing rather than political power. The phrase *eis touto gegennēmai* ('for this I was born') combined with *eis touto elēlytha eis ton kosmon* ('for this I came into the world') distinguishes birth from incarnation, implying pre-existence. The claim 'everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice' echoes the shepherd discourse (10:3-4, 27).
38. Pilate's question *ti estin alētheia* ('What is truth?') has been interpreted as cynical dismissal, philosophical inquiry, or weary pragmatism. John leaves it unanswered — Pilate does not wait for a reply but immediately exits. The irony is profound: Pilate asks 'What is truth?' while standing

before the one who said 'I am the truth' (14:6). His judicial verdict — oudemian heuriskō en autō aitian ('I find no charge in him') — is the first of three declarations of innocence (cf. 19:4, 6).

39. The Passover amnesty custom (synētheia, 'custom, usual practice') is not attested outside the Gospels but is plausible within Roman provincial practice. Pilate's use of the title 'the King of the Jews' (ton basilea tōn Ioudaiōn) may be mocking or strategic — using the title to minimize the charge. The Passover context deepens the theological resonance: the festival celebrating Israel's liberation from slavery becomes the setting for a choice between releasing a criminal and condemning the innocent.
40. The verb ekraugasan ('they shouted, cried out') indicates a loud, collective outcry. The name Barabbas (Bar-Abbas) means 'son of the father' in Aramaic — an ironic detail since the crowd chooses the 'son of the father' over the Son of the Father. The Greek lēstēs can mean 'robber, bandit, or insurrectionist.' Given the political context and the parallel accounts (Mark 15:7 mentions insurrection and murder), 'revolutionary' better captures the political dimension. The crowd prefers a violent revolutionary to the king whose kingdom is 'not of this world.'

# 19

**Summary:** *John 19 narrates the climax of the passion: Pilate's final attempts to release Jesus, the scourging and mocking, the crowd's demand for crucifixion, the crucifixion itself at Golgotha, Jesus's final words and death, and the burial by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. John's account emphasizes Jesus's sovereignty throughout — he carries his own cross, speaks from the cross with deliberate purpose, and chooses the moment of his death with the declaration 'It is finished.'*

**What Makes This Remarkable:** *John's crucifixion account is rich with theological symbolism. The inscription in three languages (v. 20) proclaims Jesus's kingship to the world. The seamless tunic (vv. 23-24) may symbolize the high priestly garment. Jesus's care for his mother (vv. 26-27) demonstrates love even in death. The flow of blood and water (v. 34) carries sacramental overtones. The fulfillment of Scripture is noted repeatedly (vv. 24, 28, 36-37). The word tetelestai ('It is finished,' v. 30) is the Greek perfect of teleō — not a cry of defeat but a shout of completion. The same root appeared in the prayer of 17:4 ('I have completed the work').*

**Translation Friction:** *John's account differs from the Synoptics in several details: Jesus carries his own cross (no Simon of Cyrene), only three sayings from the cross are recorded (compared to seven across all Gospels), and the darkness and temple veil are not mentioned. We render John's text as given. The identity of the Beloved Disciple (v. 26) remains debated — traditionally identified as John son of Zebedee. The emphasis on eyewitness testimony (v. 35) asserts historical reliability at the most theologically charged moment.*

**Connections:** *The scourging and crown of thorns connect to Isaiah 53 (the suffering servant). The seamless tunic echoes Psalm 22:18 and possibly the high priestly garment of Exodus 28. 'It is finished' completes the work described in 4:34 and 17:4. The unbroken bones fulfill Exodus 12:46 (Passover lamb) and Psalm 34:20. The piercing fulfills Zechariah 12:10. The burial with myrrh and aloes connects to Nicodemus's first appearance in chapter 3. The garden burial echoes the garden of Eden and anticipates the garden resurrection of chapter 20.*

<sup>1</sup>Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. <sup>2</sup>The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and placed it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. <sup>3</sup>They kept coming up to him and saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and striking him in the face. <sup>4</sup>Pilate went outside again and said to them, "Look, I am bringing him out to you so that you may know I find no basis for a charge against him." <sup>5</sup>So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" <sup>6</sup>When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no basis for a charge against him." <sup>7</sup>The Jewish leaders answered him, "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he made himself the Son of God." <sup>8</sup>When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid. <sup>9</sup>He entered the headquarters again and said to Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. <sup>10</sup>So Pilate said to him, "You refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?" <sup>11</sup>Jesus answered him, "You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given to you from above. For this reason, the one who handed me over to you has the greater sin." <sup>12</sup>From then on Pilate sought to release him, but the Jewish leaders shouted, "If you release this man, you are no friend of Caesar. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar." <sup>13</sup>When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called the

Stone Pavement — in Aramaic, Gabbatha. <sup>14</sup>Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover, about the sixth hour. He said to the Jewish leaders, "Here is your king!" <sup>15</sup>They shouted, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your king?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." <sup>16</sup>So he handed him over to them to be crucified. They took Jesus, <sup>17</sup>He bearing his cross traveled forth into a location called the location of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha. <sup>18</sup>There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on each side, with Jesus in the middle. <sup>19</sup>Pilate also wrote an inscription and placed it on the cross. It read: "Jesus the Nazarene, the King of the Jews." <sup>20</sup>Many of the Jewish people read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, Latin, and Greek. <sup>21</sup>So the chief priests of the Jewish people said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but rather, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'" <sup>22</sup>Indeed, Pilate answered, What I have written stands as written. <sup>23</sup>When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic. Now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. <sup>24</sup>So they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to decide whose it will be." This was to fulfill the Scripture that says: "They divided my garments among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots." So that is what the soldiers did. <sup>25</sup>Standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. <sup>26</sup>When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." <sup>27</sup>Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home. <sup>28</sup>After this, Jesus, knowing that everything was now completed, said (to fulfill the Scripture), "I am thirsty." <sup>29</sup>A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge soaked in the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. <sup>30</sup>When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and bowing his head, he gave up his spirit. <sup>31</sup>Since it was the day of Preparation, and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross during the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jewish leaders asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. <sup>32</sup>So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man and then of the other who had been crucified with him. <sup>33</sup>But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. <sup>34</sup>Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. <sup>35</sup>The one who saw it has testified, and his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe. <sup>36</sup>For these things took place to fulfill the Scripture: "Not one of his bones will be broken." <sup>37</sup>And another Scripture says: "They will look on the one whom they pierced." <sup>38</sup>After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus — but secretly, for fear of the Jewish leaders — asked Pilate for permission to take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave permission, so he came and took his body. <sup>39</sup>Nicodemus also came — the one who had first come to Jesus at night — bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. <sup>40</sup>So they took the body of Jesus and wrapped it in linen cloths with the spices, according to the Jewish burial custom. <sup>41</sup>Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. <sup>42</sup>So because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

## TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The verb *emastigōsen* ('scourged, flogged') refers to the Roman *flagellum* — a brutal punishment using a multi-tailed whip embedded with bone or metal. Roman scourging often preceded crucifixion but could also serve as a lesser punishment. Pilate may have intended the flogging as a substitute for execution, hoping it would satisfy the crowd (cf. Luke 23:16, 22).
2. The crown of thorns (*stephanon ex akanthōn*) parodies a royal crown or possibly the laurel wreath of a Roman victor. The purple robe (*himation porphyroun*) mocks royal status — purple was the color of royalty and extreme wealth. The irony in John's narrative is that the mockery accidentally declares the truth: Jesus is a king, and the thorns echo the curse of Genesis 3:18.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 3:18. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The imperfect tenses *ērchonto* ('they kept coming') and *elegon* ('they kept saying') indicate repeated, ongoing mockery. The greeting *chaire* ('hail, rejoice') parodies the formal salutation to the emperor: 'Ave Caesar.' The verb *edidosan* ('they kept giving') with *rapismata* ('slaps, blows') describes repeated strikes. The soldiers' mockery is a cruel game, but for John's readers it is unwitting testimony.

4. This is Pilate's second declaration of Jesus's innocence (cf. 18:38). The verb *agō* ('I bring, I lead out') presents Jesus as being exhibited to the crowd. Pilate's strategy appears to be: display the beaten, humiliated prisoner and demonstrate that he poses no political threat, hoping the crowd will be satisfied short of execution.
5. The Latin *Ecce Homo* ('Behold the man') is one of the most famous phrases in Western culture. The Greek *idou ho anthrōpos* may carry several layers: Pilate's dismissive 'Look at this pathetic figure' (hoping to evoke pity), an ironic echo of 'Son of Man' (*ho huios tou anthrōpou*), or an unwitting declaration of Jesus's true humanity. For John's readers, the beaten figure in mock-royal garments is simultaneously the most pitiful and the most regal sight in history.
6. The double imperative *staurōson staurōson* ('Crucify! Crucify!') is a frenzied demand. John identifies the chief priests and officers as leading the cry, not the general populace. Pilate's third declaration of innocence (*ego gar ouch heuriskō en autō aitian*) makes his eventual capitulation all the more damning — he condemns a man he knows to be innocent. His suggestion to 'take him yourselves and crucify him' is likely sarcastic, since the Jewish leaders lack authority to crucify.
7. The charge shifts from political (king) to religious (Son of God). The law they reference is likely Leviticus 24:16 regarding blasphemy. The phrase *huion theou heauton epoiēsen* ('he made himself Son of God') reveals the core theological offense — not merely claiming to be Messiah but claiming a unique divine relationship. For Pilate, a Roman, the phrase 'Son of God' (*huios theou*) would evoke the divine claims associated with the emperor.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Leviticus 24:16. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The comparative *mallon ephobēthē* ('he was more afraid') implies Pilate was already uneasy — the claim of divine sonship intensifies his discomfort. Roman superstition took divine claims seriously; Pilate may fear divine retribution for mistreating a being with supernatural connections. The fear also has political dimensions — executing someone with a divine following could provoke unrest.
9. Pilate's question *pothen ei sy* ('Where are you from?') operates on two levels: Pilate asks about Jesus's origin in light of the 'Son of God' claim, but the question of Jesus's origin is one of the great themes of John's Gospel (7:27-28, 8:14, 9:29-30). Jesus's silence echoes Isaiah 53:7 ('like a sheep before its shearers is silent'). Having already declared his origin to Pilate (18:36-37), Jesus offers no further testimony to one who dismissed truth itself (18:38).
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 53:7. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. Pilate asserts his *exousian* ('authority, power') — the Roman governor's judicial authority over life and death. The double claim of authority (to release and to crucify) is meant to compel a response. The irony is that Pilate's authority is about to be overridden by the crowd's pressure, exposing its fragility.
11. Jesus breaks his silence to correct Pilate's claim to autonomous authority. All authority is *anōthen* ('from above') — derived from God. The phrase *paradou me soi* ('the one who handed me over to you') most likely refers to Caiaphas (who formally delivered Jesus to Pilate) rather than Judas (who betrayed Jesus to the Jewish leaders). The comparative 'greater sin' (*meizona hamartian*) implies Pilate also bears sin, but the one with fuller knowledge of God's purposes bears more guilt.
12. The phrase *philos tou Kaisaros* ('friend of Caesar') may be a formal title (*amicus Caesaris*) denoting loyalty to the emperor, or simply a threat that Pilate would be reported as disloyal. Under the emperor Tiberius, accusations of disloyalty were extremely dangerous — many officials were executed on such charges. This political threat is the lever that finally breaks Pilate's resistance. The irony is that the Jewish leaders, who chafe under Roman rule, now invoke Caesar's authority to destroy their own Messiah.
13. The verb *ekathisen* ('sat down') could be transitive ('he seated Jesus on the judgment seat') — a reading some scholars favor as another layer of Johannine irony: the judge is being judged, and the condemned man occupies the seat of judgment. The more natural reading is intransitive ('Pilate sat down'). The *Lithostroton* ('Stone Pavement') was likely a paved area in the governor's complex. John provides both the Greek and Aramaic names, characteristic of his concern for multilingual readers.
14. The chronological note is theologically loaded: *paraskeue tou pascha* ('Preparation of the Passover') is the day the Passover lambs were slaughtered in the temple. At the very hour the lambs are being prepared for sacrifice, the Lamb of God (1:29) is being condemned. The 'sixth hour' (about noon) conflicts with Mark 15:25 ('the third hour'); John may be using Roman time-reckoning (6 AM) or emphasizing the symbolic correspondence with the lamb-slaughtering hour. Pilate's *idou ho basileus hymōn* ('Here is your king!') parallels his earlier *idou ho anthrōpos* ('Here is the man!', v. 5).
15. The double imperative *aron aron* ('Take away! Take away!') expresses urgent demand for removal. The chief priests' declaration *ouk echomen basilea ei mē Kaisara* ('We have no king but Caesar') is a devastating theological surrender — Israel's foundational confession was that God alone is king (Judges 8:23, 1 Samuel 8:7, Isaiah 33:22). The religious leaders renounce their own theological heritage to secure Jesus's death.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Judges 8:23 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 1 Samuel 8:7 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 33:22 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The verb *paredōken* ('he handed over') is the same word used for Judas's betrayal (*paradidōmi*). Pilate becomes another link in the chain of 'handing over.' The subject shifts abruptly — 'they took Jesus' begins the crucifixion narrative. John compresses the transition from verdict to execution.

17. John emphasizes that Jesus carried his own cross (bastazōn heautō ton stauron) — unlike the Synoptics where Simon of Cyrene is pressed into service (Mark 15:21). John may omit Simon to emphasize Jesus's sovereign self-determination. The stauros ('cross') here refers to the crossbeam (patibulum), which the condemned carried to the execution site where the upright post was fixed. Golgotha is Aramaic Gulgalta ('skull'), possibly named for the skull-shaped topography of the site.
18. John records the crucifixion itself with stark brevity — estaurōsan ('they crucified') — without describing the physical process. The placement of Jesus meson ('in the middle') between two others may symbolize his role as mediator or may ironically fulfill Isaiah 53:12 ('he was numbered with the transgressors'). John does not identify the two others as criminals (a Synoptic detail).
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 53:12 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. The Greek titlon is a loanword from the Latin titulus, the official placard stating the condemned person's crime. The inscription — Iesous ho Nazōraios ho basileus tōn Ioudaiōn — becomes the inadvertent proclamation that John's entire Gospel has been building toward. Pilate, who asked 'What is truth?' now unwittingly publishes the truth for all to read.
20. The three languages represent the three major linguistic communities in the region: Hebraisti (Aramaic, the local language), Rhōmaisti (Latin, the language of power), and Hellēnisti (Greek, the language of culture and commerce). The trilingual inscription proclaims Jesus's kingship to the entire known world. John uses Hebraisti to mean 'in the local Semitic language,' which at this period was Aramaic rather than classical Hebrew.
21. The chief priests want the inscription changed from a factual declaration to a reported claim — the difference between 'The King of the Jews' (a statement of identity) and 'He said he was King of the Jews' (a recorded accusation). The objection reveals their awareness that Pilate's wording, as written, amounts to an official Roman acknowledgment of Jesus's kingship.
22. The perfect tense gegrapha ('I have written and it stands written') carries the force of finality — the decision is irreversible. This is Pilate's one act of resolve in the entire proceeding. Whether from stubbornness, spite, or unconscious obedience to a higher purpose, Pilate ensures that the proclamation of Jesus's kingship stands permanently over the cross.
23. The detail of four soldiers (tessara merē, 'four parts') establishes the standard Roman crucifixion squad (a quaternion). The chitōn ('tunic, inner garment') is distinguished from the outer himation ('garments'). The seamless tunic (araphos, 'without seam') woven ek tōn anōthen ('from the top') has been interpreted as symbolizing the high priestly garment (Josephus, Antiquities 3.161 describes the high priest's robe as woven without seam) or as representing the unity of Jesus's work that cannot be divided.
24. The Scripture quoted is Psalm 22:18, one of the most detailed prophetic correspondences in the passion narrative. John sees the two halves of the psalm verse fulfilled in two distinct actions: the dividing of the outer garments and the casting of lots for the inner tunic. Psalm 22 opens with 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' — words Jesus speaks from the cross in Matthew and Mark but not in John.
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalms 22:18. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. The Greek could list three or four women depending on whether 'his mother's sister' and 'Mary the wife of Clopas' are the same person or two different individuals. If four women, they form two pairs; if three, one pair is identified. We render the list as given without resolving the ambiguity. The courage of these women contrasts with the absence of the male disciples (except the Beloved Disciple, v. 26).
26. The address gynai ('woman') is not disrespectful in Greek (cf. 2:4) but is notably formal rather than intimate. The 'disciple whom he loved' (ton mathētēn hon ēgapa) is the Beloved Disciple, traditionally identified as John son of Zebedee. From the cross, Jesus establishes a new family relationship — his mother is entrusted to the Beloved Disciple's care. The scene has both pastoral and symbolic dimensions: the formation of a new community at the foot of the cross.
27. The phrase eis ta idia ('into his own home/things') is the same expression used in 1:11 and 16:32, creating a literary connection. The Beloved Disciple's immediate obedience (elaben, 'he took') mirrors Joseph's obedience in Matthew 1:24. The phrase 'from that hour' (ap ekeinēs tēs hōras) marks a decisive moment — even from the cross, Jesus's words create new realities.
28. The perfect tense tetelestai ('has been completed') indicates that Jesus's mission is accomplished. The verb teleiōthē ('might be fulfilled/completed') connects Scripture fulfillment to the completion of Jesus's work — the two are inseparable. The Scripture referenced is likely Psalm 69:21 ('for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink') or Psalm 22:15 ('my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth'). The declaration dipsō ('I thirst') is both a genuine expression of physical suffering and a deliberate action to fulfill Scripture.
28. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 69:21 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
28. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 22:15 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
29. The oxos ('sour wine, vinegar') was the posca — cheap vinegar-wine commonly drunk by Roman soldiers. The hyssop (hyssōpō) is a significant detail: hyssop was used to apply the Passover lamb's blood to the doorposts in Exodus 12:22. John connects Jesus's death to the Passover sacrifice through this botanical detail. Some manuscripts read hyssō ('javelin') instead of hyssōpō, but the Passover connection favors the majority reading.
29. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 12:22. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.

- 30.** The word *tetelestai* ('It is finished, It has been completed') is the perfect tense of *teleō* — denoting a completed action with lasting results. This is not a cry of defeat ('It's over') but a shout of accomplishment ('It is accomplished'). The same root appears in 4:34 ('to complete his work'), 17:4 ('I have completed the work'), and 19:28 ('everything was completed'). The phrase *paredōken to pneuma* ('he handed over his spirit') portrays Jesus's death as a voluntary act — he 'gave' his spirit rather than having it taken. The verb *paradidōmi* ('to hand over') is the same word used for Judas's betrayal, creating a theological contrast: Judas handed Jesus over to death; Jesus hands his spirit over to the Father.
- 31.** Deuteronomy 21:22-23 required that a hanged body not remain overnight. The request to break legs (*crurifragium*) was a method of hastening death — unable to push up on their legs to breathe, the crucified would suffocate quickly. The note that this Sabbath was *megalē* ('great, high') indicates it coincided with a festival — in John's chronology, the first day of Passover, making it doubly sacred.
- 31.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 21:22-23. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 32.** The soldiers proceed systematically from one end to the other. Jesus, crucified in the middle (v. 18), would be last. The verb *kateaxan* ('they broke') refers to the *crurifragium* — smashing the shin bones with a heavy mallet.
- 33.** The perfect participle *tethnēkota* ('having died, being dead') emphasizes that Jesus's death was already complete and verified by professional soldiers. The fact that his legs were not broken becomes theologically significant in verses 36-37 as the fulfillment of Scripture.
- 34.** The spear thrust (*lonchē*, 'lance, spear') was likely a verification of death. The flow of *haima kai hydōr* ('blood and water') has been interpreted medically (pericardial fluid and blood, indicating death by cardiac rupture), sacramentally (symbolizing the Eucharist and baptism), and typologically (echoing the water from the rock in Exodus 17:6). John's emphasis on this detail (reinforced by the eyewitness attestation in v. 35) suggests he sees deep significance beyond mere physical description.
- 34.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 17:6. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 35.** This is a rare intrusion of the narrator's voice asserting eyewitness authority. The perfect tenses *heōrakōs* ('having seen') and *memartyrēken* ('has testified') indicate that the witness continues to bear testimony. The double affirmation — 'his testimony is true' (*alēthinē*) and 'he tells the truth' (*alēthē*) — uses two different Greek words for truth, reinforcing the reliability of the account. The purpose clause 'so that you may believe' (*hina kai hymeis pisteusēte*) connects the eyewitness report directly to the Gospel's evangelistic purpose (cf. 20:31).
- 36.** The Scripture cited is Exodus 12:46 (or Numbers 9:12), which prohibits breaking the bones of the Passover lamb, or Psalm 34:20 ('He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken'). The Passover lamb connection is primary in John's theology — Jesus is the Lamb of God (1:29, 36) whose bones remain unbroken according to the Passover regulations. The sacrificial typology is complete.
- 36.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 12:46. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 36.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Numbers 9:12. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 36.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 34:20. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 37.** The quotation is from Zechariah 12:10, which in its original context describes a future mourning in Jerusalem: 'They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only son.' The Hebrew has 'on me' (*alai*) while John's Greek has 'on the one whom' (*eis hon*), following a textual tradition that avoids the startling first-person reference to God being pierced. Revelation 1:7 also cites this passage in connection with Jesus's return.
- 37.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Zechariah 12:10. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 38.** Joseph's status as a 'secret disciple' (*mathētēs kekrymmenos*) connects him to the 'many rulers' who believed but would not confess openly (12:42). The fear that silenced him during Jesus's life gives way to courage after his death — Joseph publicly identifies himself with the crucified Jesus by requesting his body, an act that would end any remaining concealment. Roman law allowed the bodies of the executed to be claimed by friends or family.
- 39.** John reminds the reader of Nicodemus's nighttime visit in chapter 3 (*ho elthōn pros auton nyktos to prōton*). His progression in the Gospel is notable: he came secretly at night (3:1-2), spoke cautiously in Jesus's defense (7:50-52), and now openly participates in the burial. The quantity — *hōs litras hekaton* ('about a hundred litrai') — is enormous, approximately 75 modern pounds (33 kg). This is a royal burial provision, befitting a king. The spices (*myrrh* and *aloes*) were used to mask the odor of decomposition and honor the dead.
- 40.** The Greek *othoniois* ('linen cloths, strips of linen') are burial wrappings. The phrase *kathos ethos estin tois Ioudaiois entaphiazein* ('as is the custom of the Jews to bury') distinguishes Jewish burial practice from Egyptian embalming or Roman cremation. The spices are packed within and around the wrappings. These grave cloths will be significant in the resurrection account (20:5-7).
- 41.** John frames the death and burial in a garden (*kēpos*), creating a literary inclusion with the arrest in a garden (18:1) and anticipating the resurrection in the same garden (20:15). The 'new tomb' (*mnēmeion kainon*) where 'no one had ever been placed' (*oudepō oudeis ēn tetheimenos*) ensures that any resurrection from this tomb can only be Jesus's. The garden setting also evokes Eden — humanity fell in a garden, and new creation begins in a

garden.

42. The burial is hasty — driven by the approaching Sabbath (*paraskeuen tōn Ioudaiōn*). The proximity of the tomb (*engys ēn to mnēmeion*) was providential rather than planned. The verb *ethēkan* ('they placed, they laid') is simple and final. The chapter ends not with triumph or commentary but with a body laid in a tomb — the silence between death and resurrection.

## 20

**Summary:** *John 20* narrates the resurrection and its aftermath: Mary Magdalene discovers the empty tomb, Peter and the Beloved Disciple investigate, Mary encounters the risen Jesus in the garden, Jesus appears to the gathered disciples and commissions them with the Holy Spirit, and Thomas moves from doubt to the climactic confession 'My Lord and my God.' The chapter concludes with the Gospel's purpose statement: 'these are written so that you may believe.'

**What Makes This Remarkable:** *This chapter contains some of the most intimate and theologically significant scenes in the Gospels. Mary Magdalene's encounter with the risen Jesus (vv. 11-18) is deeply personal — she recognizes him only when he speaks her name, echoing the shepherd who 'calls his own sheep by name' (10:3). Thomas's confession 'My Lord and my God' (v. 28) is the highest Christological declaration in the Gospel, forming an *inclusio* with the Prologue's 'the Word was God' (1:1). The purpose statement (vv. 30-31) reveals that the entire Gospel has been evangelistic testimony designed to produce faith.*

**Translation Friction:** *Mary's instruction 'Do not cling to me' (v. 17) with the explanation 'I have not yet ascended' is theologically puzzling — the relationship between touching Jesus and his ascension is not self-evident. We render the Greek without resolving the debate. The phrase 'he breathed on them' (v. 22) uses the same verb (*emphysaō*) as Genesis 2:7 in the Septuagint, suggesting a deliberate new-creation parallel. Whether this constitutes the Johannine Pentecost or an anticipation of Acts 2 is debated.*

**Connections:** *The empty tomb narrative connects to all four Gospel accounts while retaining John's distinctive perspective. Mary's garden encounter echoes Song of Songs 3:1-4 (seeking the beloved). The breathing of the Spirit echoes Genesis 2:7 (creation of humanity) and Ezekiel 37:9 (revival of dry bones). Thomas's confession answers the question of Jesus's identity posed throughout the Gospel. The purpose statement connects to 1 John 5:13 and frames the entire Gospel as testimony.*

1On the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. 2So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." 3So Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. 4They were both running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5Stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. 6Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, 7The napkin, that was concerning his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a location by itself. 8Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed. 9For they did not yet understand the Scripture that he must rise from the dead. 10Then the disciples went back to their homes. 11But Mary stood outside the tomb weeping. As she wept, she stooped to look into the tomb, 12Sees two angels in brilliant sitting, the one at the skull, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. 13They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." 14After she said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not recognize that it was Jesus. 15Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?" She, thinking he was the gardener, said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him." 16 Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" — which means "Teacher." 17Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" 18Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord!" — and she told them what he had said to her. 19On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being

locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." <sup>20</sup>After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. <sup>21</sup>Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you." <sup>22</sup>And after he said this, he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup>If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." <sup>24</sup>Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup>So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the mark of the nails and put my hand into his side, I will never believe." <sup>26</sup>Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." <sup>27</sup>Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." <sup>28</sup>Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" <sup>29</sup>Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." <sup>30</sup>Now Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. <sup>31</sup>But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

#### TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The phrase *tee mia tōn sabbatōn* ('the first of the week') is a Semitic way of saying 'Sunday.' The detail *skotias eti ousēs* ('while it was still dark') is characteristically Johannine — darkness in this Gospel symbolizes spiritual blindness and separation from Jesus (cf. 1:5, 3:19, 13:30). Mary comes in literal darkness and will move toward the light of recognition. John mentions only Mary Magdalene, unlike the Synoptics which include other women.
2. Mary's first interpretation is grave robbery (*ēran ton kyrion*, 'they have taken the Lord'). The plural 'we do not know' (*ouk oidamen*) may suggest other women were present (as in the Synoptic accounts) even though John mentions only Mary. The 'other disciple whom Jesus loved' (*tonallon mathētēn hon ephilei ho Iēsous*) is the Beloved Disciple, here described with *phileō* ('loved with personal affection') rather than the *agapaō* used in 13:23 and 19:26.
3. The imperfect *ērchonto* ('they were going, they were on their way') captures the ongoing action — the narrative builds suspense as the two disciples make their way to the tomb.
4. The detail of the foot race (*proedragen tachion*, 'ran ahead faster') has the feel of eyewitness memory — specific, personal, and unnecessary for the theological point. The Beloved Disciple's greater speed and earlier arrival set up the distinction between seeing (v. 5) and believing (v. 8).
5. The verb *parakypsas* ('stooping, bending over to look') indicates the low entrance of a first-century rock-cut tomb. The Beloved Disciple sees (*blepei*) the linen cloths (*othonia*) but hesitates to enter — whether from reverence, fear, or deference to Peter is not stated.
6. Peter arrives and enters without hesitation — consistent with his impulsive character throughout the Gospels. The verb *theōrei* ('he observed, he looked carefully at') is a more intensive form of seeing than the Beloved Disciple's *blepei* in verse 5, suggesting Peter examined the scene closely.
7. The *soudarion* ('face cloth, handkerchief') is a separate piece from the body wrappings. The detail that it was *entetyligmenon* ('rolled up, folded') and placed *choris* ('separately, apart') suggests orderliness rather than the haste of grave robbery — a thief would not neatly fold the burial cloths. The arrangement of the grave cloths is evidence that something other than theft has occurred.
8. Three different Greek verbs for 'seeing' appear in verses 5-8: *blepei* (v. 5, 'he sees'), *theōrei* (v. 6, 'he observes'), and *eiden* (v. 8, 'he saw' — from *horaō*, implying perception with understanding). The Beloved Disciple's seeing leads immediately to believing — he is the first to believe in the resurrection based on the evidence of the empty tomb and the arrangement of the burial cloths, without yet seeing the risen Jesus.
9. The narrator explains that the disciples' understanding was still incomplete — they had not yet grasped the scriptural necessity (*dei*, 'it is necessary') of the resurrection. The specific Scripture (*graphēn*, singular) is not identified; possibilities include Psalm 16:10 ('you will not abandon my soul to Sheol'), Hosea 6:2 ('on the third day he will raise us up'), or Isaiah 53:10-12. The Beloved Disciple believed based on what he saw, but fuller scriptural understanding would come later.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 16:10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Hosea 6:2. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 53:10-12. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The phrase *pros autous* ('to themselves, to their own') indicates they returned to where they were staying. The departure sets the stage for Mary's solitary encounter with the risen Jesus — the disciples leave, but Mary stays.
11. The imperfect *eistēkei* ('she was standing') and the present participle *klaiousa* ('weeping') paint a vivid picture of sustained grief. Mary's sorrow dominates the scene — she is weeping for a dead man, unaware that death has been conquered. The verb *parekypsen* ('she stooped to look') echoes the Beloved Disciple's action in verse 5.

12. The two angels (angelous) in white recall the cherubim on the mercy seat (kapporet) of the Ark of the Covenant, positioned at each end (Exodus 25:18-20). If this parallel is intended, the place where Jesus's body lay corresponds to the mercy seat — the place of atonement. The white garments (en leukois) are characteristic of heavenly beings in the New Testament.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 25:18-20. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. Mary's response repeats her earlier report (v. 2) but now uses the singular 'I do not know' (ouk oida) and the personal 'my Lord' (ton kyrion mou) — the grief has become deeply personal. She is so consumed by sorrow that the presence of angels does not startle her or redirect her attention.
14. Mary's failure to recognize Jesus (ouk ēdei hoti Iēsous estin) echoes other post-resurrection non-recognition scenes (Luke 24:16, 24:37). This may indicate a transformation in Jesus's risen body, or it may reflect Mary's grief-blurred perception, or both. The dramatic irony is intense — the reader knows who stands before her.
15. Jesus's question tina zēteis ('Who are you looking for?') echoes his first question in the Gospel to Andrew and John (1:38, 'What are you seeking?') and his question to the arresting party (18:4, 'Who are you looking for?'). Mary's assumption that Jesus is the kēpouros ('gardener') is natural given the garden setting — but for John's readers, there is a deeper truth: the risen Jesus is the true gardener of the new Eden, the one who tends the garden of new creation.
16. The recognition comes through a single word — her name. This fulfills 10:3 ('he calls his own sheep by name') and 10:27 ('my sheep hear my voice'). The shift from non-recognition to recognition pivots on the personal address. Mary's response 'Rabboni' (rabbouni) is an intensified form of 'Rabbi' — 'my great teacher' or 'my dear teacher.' John translates it as didaskalos ('teacher') for his Greek readers. The scene is one of the most intimate in all four Gospels.
17. The present imperative mee mou haptou is better rendered 'stop clinging to me' or 'do not keep holding on to me' rather than 'do not touch me' — Mary has apparently grasped him and Jesus tells her to release him. The reason given — 'I have not yet ascended' (oupō anabebēka) — implies that the old mode of physical relationship must give way to a new mode of spiritual relationship mediated by the Spirit. The phrase 'my brothers' (tous adelphous mou) is the first time Jesus uses this family language for his disciples. The careful distinction 'my Father and your Father, my God and your God' maintains Jesus's unique relationship to the Father while including the disciples in a genuine filial relationship.
18. Mary becomes the first witness to the resurrection and the first evangelist — she is sent (poreuou, 'go!') by Jesus to proclaim the news. The verb angellousa ('announcing, reporting') is related to angelos ('messenger') — Mary fulfills an angelic function. Her declaration heōraka ton kyrion ('I have seen the Lord') uses the perfect tense, indicating a sight with lasting impact.
19. The locked doors (tōn thyron kekleismenōn) emphasize both the disciples' fear and the supernatural character of Jesus's appearance — he enters without the doors being opened. The greeting eirēnē hymin ('Peace to you') is the standard Semitic greeting (shalom aleichem) but carries enormous weight in this context. Jesus had promised 'my peace I give to you' (14:27) and 'in me you may have peace' (16:33). Now the risen Jesus delivers on that promise.
20. Jesus shows his wounds as identification — the risen body bears the marks of the cross. The resurrection does not erase the crucifixion but transforms it. The disciples' joy (echarēsan, 'they rejoiced') fulfills Jesus's promise in 16:20-22 that their sorrow would be turned to joy. The verb echarēsan echoes 16:22: 'your hearts will rejoice.'
21. The second eirēnē hymin transitions from greeting to commissioning. The perfect apestalken ('has sent,' denoting the ongoing mission) is paired with the present pempō ('I am sending,' denoting the immediate commission). This echoes 17:18: 'As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.' The disciples' mission is patterned on Jesus's own mission from the Father.
22. The verb enephsēsēn ('he breathed on/into') appears in the Septuagint only in Genesis 2:7 (God 'breathed into' Adam the breath of life) and Ezekiel 37:9 (the Spirit 'breathes' life into the dry bones). The allusion is deliberate — Jesus's act is a new creation, a new breathing of life into his people. Whether this constitutes the full giving of the Spirit (as in Johannine theology) or an anticipation of Pentecost (as in Lukan theology) is debated. In John's narrative, this is the moment the Spirit is given.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 2:7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ezekiel 37:9. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
23. The authority to forgive or retain sins (aphēte, 'release, forgive' and kratēte, 'hold, retain') is given to the community of disciples, not to an individual. The perfect tenses apheōntai ('they stand forgiven') and kekratēntai ('they stand retained') indicate permanent results. This commission extends the forgiveness ministry that Jesus exercised during his earthly life. The precise exercise of this authority — whether sacramental, declarative, or disciplinary — has been debated throughout church history.
24. The name Thomas (Thōmas) is itself Aramaic for 'twin' (te'oma), and Didymos is the Greek equivalent. John consistently identifies Thomas with this double name (11:16, 14:5, 21:2). His absence from the first appearance sets up one of the Gospel's most dramatic scenes.
25. Thomas's demand escalates from seeing (idō) to touching (balō ton daktylo mou, 'put my finger') to thrusting his hand into the spear wound (balō mou tēn cheira eis tēn pleuran). The double negative ou mē pisteusō ('I will absolutely not believe') is the strongest form of denial in Greek. Note that Thomas demands the same evidence Jesus had already provided the other disciples (v. 20) — his request is not unreasonable, merely emphatic.

The mention of nails (hēlōn) confirms crucifixion by nailing (rather than tying).

26. The phrase meth' hēmeras oktō ('after eight days') by inclusive counting means the following Sunday — establishing the pattern of first-day-of-the-week gatherings that would become Christian worship practice. The repeated detail of locked doors and Jesus's supernatural entry underscores the nature of the resurrection body: physical enough to be seen and touched, yet not bound by physical barriers.
27. Jesus addresses Thomas's exact demands (vv. 25) — demonstrating both his knowledge of Thomas's words (he was not present when Thomas spoke them) and his willingness to meet Thomas where he is. The imperative mē ginou apistos alla pistos ('stop becoming unbelieving but be believing') uses the present imperative ginou, suggesting a process: Thomas is not yet fixed in unbelief but is moving toward it, and Jesus intervenes. The text does not say whether Thomas actually touched Jesus's wounds — the narrative moves directly to his confession.
28. Thomas's confession ho kyrios mou kai ho theos mou ('My Lord and my God') is the climactic Christological declaration of the Gospel. The use of the nominative with the article (ho kyrios, ho theos) as vocative gives the confession maximum force. This directly identifies Jesus as theos ('God'), completing the theological arc that began in 1:1 ('the Word was God'). Thomas moves from the most extreme doubt to the most exalted confession in the Gospel — a transformation John presents as the paradigm of faith.
29. The first clause can be read as a statement ('Because you have seen me, you have believed') or a question ('Have you believed because you have seen me?'). Both readings work theologically. The beatitude for those who believe without seeing (makarioi hoi mē idontes kai pisteusantes) reaches beyond Thomas to all future believers — including every reader of the Gospel. This is the bridge between the apostolic eyewitnesses and the ongoing community of faith.
30. The word sēmeia ('signs') is John's characteristic term for Jesus's miracles — they are not mere displays of power but signs pointing to deeper realities about Jesus's identity. The acknowledgment that 'many other signs' exist admits the Gospel's selectivity — what is included has been deliberately chosen for the purpose stated in verse 31.
31. This is the Gospel's purpose statement, revealing that everything written has been evangelistic testimony. The verb pisteusēte could be aorist subjunctive ('come to believe' — evangelistic, aimed at unbelievers) or present subjunctive ('continue believing' — pastoral, aimed at the community). The manuscript evidence is divided; both purposes are served by the Gospel. The double object of faith — that Jesus is the Christ (Messiah) and the Son of God — summarizes the Gospel's dual Christological claim: Jesus fulfills Jewish messianic expectation and shares in the divine identity. The result of believing is zōē ('life') — the life that has been the Gospel's theme from the Prologue (1:4: 'In him was life').

## 21

**Summary:** *John 21 is the epilogue of the Gospel, set by the Sea of Tiberias (Galilee). Seven disciples go fishing and catch nothing until the risen Jesus appears on the shore and directs them to an enormous catch. After a breakfast of bread and fish, Jesus three times asks Peter 'Do you love me?' — restoring him from his threefold denial. Jesus predicts Peter's martyrdom, addresses the fate of the Beloved Disciple, and the chapter closes with a final testimony to the authenticity of the Gospel.*

**What Makes This Remarkable:** *The chapter is widely regarded as an epilogue added after the original conclusion (20:30-31), though it is present in all manuscripts. The miraculous catch of 153 fish has generated centuries of interpretation — the number may be symbolic (Jerome claimed it was the number of known species of fish, representing the universal mission). The threefold 'Do you love me?' dialogue restores Peter from his threefold denial (18:17, 25, 27), creating a literary and pastoral symmetry. The charcoal fire (anthrakian, v. 9) uses the same rare word as the fire where Peter denied Jesus (18:18), connecting the two scenes. Jesus's final commission — 'Feed my sheep' — establishes pastoral care as the expression of love for Christ.*

**Translation Friction:** *The interchange between agapaō and phileō in the Peter dialogue (vv. 15-17) has been interpreted as theologically significant (agapaō as divine love, phileō as human affection) or as Johannine stylistic variation without distinction. We render both as 'love' since English lacks the Greek differentiation, and note the variation in translator notes. The identity of the Beloved Disciple (v. 20) remains the Gospel's enduring mystery. The final verse (v. 25) is hyperbolic, a literary convention for closing a work of vast scope.*

**Connections:** *The fishing scene echoes Luke 5:1-11 (the first miraculous catch). The charcoal fire connects to 18:18 (Peter's denials). The threefold restoration mirrors the threefold denial. 'Feed my sheep' connects to the shepherd discourse (10:1-18). Peter's predicted death by stretching out his hands (v. 18) has traditionally been understood as crucifixion. The Beloved Disciple's testimony (vv. 24-25) connects to the eyewitness claim of 19:35.*

<sup>1</sup>After these things, Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias. He revealed himself in this way: <sup>2</sup>Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples were together. <sup>3</sup>Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will come with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. <sup>4</sup>Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>5</sup>Jesus said to them, "Children, you do not have any fish, do you?" They answered him, "No." <sup>6</sup>He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and they were not able to haul it in because of the great number of fish. <sup>7</sup>So the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment — for he had stripped for work — and threw himself into the sea. <sup>8</sup>The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land — only about a hundred yards. <sup>9</sup>When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire there with fish laid on it, and bread. <sup>10</sup>Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught." <sup>11</sup>So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish — a hundred and fifty-three. And although there were so many, the net was not torn. <sup>12</sup>Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" — because they knew it was the Lord. <sup>13</sup>Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and the fish likewise. <sup>14</sup>This was now the third time Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead. <sup>15</sup>When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." <sup>16</sup>He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." <sup>17</sup>He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. <sup>18</sup>Truly, truly, I tell you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted. But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go." <sup>19</sup>He said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. After saying this, he said to him, "Follow me." <sup>20</sup>Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them — the one who had reclined next to Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?" <sup>21</sup>When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about this man?" <sup>22</sup>Jesus said to him, "If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!" <sup>23</sup>So the word spread among the brothers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say to him that he would not die. Rather, he said, "If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you?" <sup>24</sup>This is the disciple who is testifying about these things and who wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true. <sup>25</sup>Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.

## TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The verb *ephanerōsen* ('he revealed, manifested') emphasizes Jesus's initiative — he chooses when and how to appear. The Sea of Tiberias is an alternate name for the Sea of Galilee, named after the city built by Herod Antipas in honor of Emperor Tiberius. The repetition of *ephanerōsen* creates a formal introduction, as if presenting an official account.
2. Seven disciples are listed — seven being the number of completeness. This is the only mention of the sons of Zebedee (James and John) in the Fourth Gospel, supporting the traditional identification of the Beloved Disciple with John son of Zebedee. Nathanael, introduced in 1:45-51, reappears only here in John. The two unnamed disciples remain unidentified.
3. Peter's return to fishing has been interpreted as apostasy (returning to his old life), pragmatism (they needed to eat), or simply filling time while waiting for further instruction. The narrative does not condemn the decision. The fruitless night of fishing (*epiasan ouden*, 'they caught nothing') sets up the contrast with the abundance that Jesus provides — apart from him they can do nothing (15:5).
4. The transition from night to dawn (*prōias ēdē genomenēs*, 'morning already having come') carries symbolic weight: the fruitless darkness gives way to the presence of the Light (cf. 1:5, 8:12). The disciples' failure to recognize Jesus (*ouk ēdeisan hoti Iēsous estin*) echoes Mary Magdalene's experience (20:14) and the Emmaus road encounter (Luke 24:16).
5. The address *paidia* ('children, lads') is informal and affectionate. The word *prospaghion* ('something to eat with bread, fish') specifically refers to the relish or fish eaten alongside bread. The question *mē ti prospaghion echete* expects a negative answer — Jesus already knows the result of their night's labor. The stark monosyllable *ou* ('no') captures the disciples' frustrated exhaustion.

6. The direction 'right side' (ta dexia merē) may be coincidental or may carry symbolic significance (the right side being associated with favor and blessing in biblical and ancient Near Eastern thought). The contrast between total failure without Jesus's direction and overwhelming abundance with it illustrates the principle of 15:5 ('apart from me you can do nothing'). The verb *halkysai* ('to drag, haul') will reappear in verse 11.
7. The Beloved Disciple recognizes Jesus first (spiritual perception), but Peter acts first (impulsive action) — a pattern consistent with their characterizations throughout the Gospel (cf. 20:4-8). The word *gymnos* ('naked') here means stripped to a loincloth for work, not fully unclothed. Peter puts on his *ependytēn* ('outer garment') before jumping in — seemingly illogical for swimming, but motivated by the desire not to greet his Lord in a state of undress.
8. The Greek *pēchōn diakosiōn* ('two hundred cubits') is approximately 300 feet or 90 meters. We render this as 'about a hundred yards' for modern comprehension. The diminutive *ploiariō* ('small boat') distinguishes their vessel from a larger ship. While Peter swims, the others bring the catch to shore.
9. The word *anthrakian* ('charcoal fire') appears only here and in 18:18 (the fire where Peter denied Jesus) in the entire New Testament. The verbal link is deliberate — Jesus will restore Peter at the same type of fire where Peter fell. The prepared meal (*opsarion*, 'fish,' and *arton*, 'bread') recalls the feeding of the five thousand (6:9, 11) where the same two words appear. Jesus provides for his people.
10. Jesus already has fish on the fire (v. 9) but invites the disciples to contribute from their catch. This combines divine provision with human participation — a pattern consistent with the feeding miracles. The adverb *nyn* ('now, just now') emphasizes the freshness of the catch.
11. The exact count of 153 fish (*hekatōn pentēkonta triōn*) has generated extensive speculation: Jerome claimed it was the number of known fish species (universal mission); Augustine noted it is the triangular number of 17 ( $1+2+3...+17=153$ ); others connect it to Ezekiel 47:10 (the prophetic vision of abundant fishing in the Dead Sea). The precision of the count suggests eyewitness memory. The unbroken net (*ouk eschisthē to diktyon*) may symbolize the unity of the church despite the great number gathered into it.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Ezekiel 47:10. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The invitation *deute aristēsate* ('come, have breakfast') is warm and domestic. The verb *aristēsate* specifically refers to the morning meal. The tension between knowing (*eidotes hoti ho kyrios estin*, 'knowing that it was the Lord') and wanting to ask (*exetasai*, 'to examine, to question') captures the awe and strangeness of encountering the risen Jesus — they recognize him but his transformed presence inhibits normal interaction.
13. The verbs *lambanei... didōsin* ('he takes... he gives') echo the actions at the feeding of the five thousand (6:11: 'Jesus took the loaves... and distributed them') and the Last Supper (13:26). The risen Jesus continues to be the one who feeds his people. The act is eucharistic in resonance without being explicitly identified as a sacramental meal.
14. The narrator counts Jesus's appearances to the disciples as a group: first on Easter evening (20:19-23), second a week later with Thomas (20:26-29), and now third by the sea. Mary Magdalene's encounter (20:14-18) is not counted because it was to an individual, not to the gathered disciples. The passive *egertheis* ('having been raised') attributes the resurrection to divine action.
15. Jesus addresses Peter by his birth name *Simōn Iōannou* ('Simon son of John') rather than his apostolic name Peter — recalling the moment of their first meeting (1:42). The phrase *pleon toutōn* ('more than these') could mean 'more than these other disciples love me,' 'more than you love these men,' or 'more than you love these things (the boats and fish).' The first reading fits Peter's earlier boast of superior loyalty (13:37). Jesus uses *agapas* ('do you love with *agapē*?') while Peter responds with *philō* ('I love with *philia*'). Whether this distinction is theologically significant or merely stylistic variation is debated. The command *boske ta arnia mou* ('feed my lambs') commissions Peter as an under-shepherd.
16. The second question drops 'more than these' — the comparison is removed and the question is simple and direct. Jesus again uses *agapas*; Peter again responds with *philō*. The command shifts from *boske* ('feed') to *poimaine* ('tend, shepherd') and from *arnia* ('lambs') to *probata* ('sheep'). The shepherd imagery connects directly to chapter 10 where Jesus is the Good Shepherd; Peter is now commissioned to continue that shepherding work.
17. In the third question, Jesus switches to Peter's own verb — *phileis me?* ('do you have affection for me?'). This is what grieves Peter (*elypēthē*, 'he was hurt, pained') — Jesus seems to question even Peter's *philia*-level love. Peter's response appeals to Jesus's omniscience: *panta sy oidas* ('you know everything'). The switch from *oidas* ('you know intuitively') to *ginōskeis* ('you know from experience') is emphatic — Peter trusts that Jesus's comprehensive knowledge includes knowledge of Peter's heart. The threefold question-and-commission corresponds to the threefold denial, effecting a complete restoration.
18. The double *amēn* introduces a solemn prediction. The phrase *ekteneis tas cheiras sou* ('you will stretch out your hands') has traditionally been understood as a reference to crucifixion — the stretching out of arms on a cross. The progression from self-determination ('you dressed yourself, walked where you wanted') to submission ('another will dress you, carry you where you do not want') describes the movement from freedom to martyrdom. Church tradition records that Peter was crucified in Rome under Nero, reportedly upside down at his own request.
19. The verb *sēmainōn* ('signifying, indicating') is the same word used in 12:33 and 18:32 for Jesus indicating the manner of his own death. Peter's death, like Jesus's, will 'glorify God' (*doxasei ton theon*) — martyrdom is presented not as tragedy but as the ultimate expression of discipleship. The command *akolouthei moi* ('follow me') recalls the original call to discipleship (1:43) and takes on new meaning in light of the predicted death — 'follow me' now means 'follow me to the cross.'

- 20.** The Beloved Disciple is identified by his posture at the Last Supper (13:23-25) — reclining at Jesus's chest and asking about the betrayer. This lengthy identification emphasizes the intimacy of his relationship with Jesus and connects the epilogue to the upper room narrative. Peter's natural curiosity about the Beloved Disciple's fate follows immediately from the prediction about his own.
- 21.** Peter's question *houtos de ti* ('But this one — what?') is characteristically blunt and impulsive. Having learned his own fate, Peter wants to know the Beloved Disciple's. The question reveals a natural human tendency to compare one's calling and suffering with others'.
- 22.** Jesus's response is both an answer and a rebuke: each disciple's calling is between him and Jesus, and comparison is inappropriate. The conditional *ean auton thelō menein* ('if I want him to remain') is deliberately hypothetical — Jesus does not predict the Beloved Disciple's survival until the *parousia* but uses the hypothetical to redirect Peter's focus. The emphatic *sy moi akolouthei* ('you — follow me!') places the pronoun first for emphasis: 'As for you, your job is to follow me.'
- 23.** The narrator corrects a misunderstanding that had circulated in the early Christian community (*eis tous adelphous*, 'among the brothers'). The rumor that the Beloved Disciple would not die had apparently persisted, perhaps because he lived to an advanced age. This correction suggests the chapter was written or finalized after the Beloved Disciple's death (or near the end of his life) when the community needed clarification.
- 24.** The present participle *martyrōn* ('the one testifying') indicates ongoing witness, while the aorist *grapsas* ('the one who wrote') points to a completed literary act. The first-person plural *oidamen* ('we know') shifts from the individual voice of the Beloved Disciple to a community that vouches for his testimony. This suggests a circle of disciples who knew the Beloved Disciple and endorsed his Gospel. The claim *alēthēs autou hē martyria estin* ('his testimony is true') echoes 19:35.
- 25.** The closing verse is a literary convention of hyperbolic modesty (cf. Ecclesiastes 12:12, 'Of making many books there is no end'). The first person *oimai* ('I suppose, I think') is the only clear first-person singular in the Gospel, giving the ending a personal and reflective tone. The hyperbole — the world could not contain the books — expresses the inexhaustible significance of Jesus's life and work. Some manuscripts add 'Amen,' but the SBLGNT does not include it.
- 25.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Ecclesiastes 12:12 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.