

John - Lesson 20

John Chapter 20

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Memory verses for this week: *Psa 37:37 Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.*

Introduction: In our last study, we saw Christ die a horrible death on Mount Calvary. It was hard for the disciples and Christ's family, but it was probably the hardest for God Himself when He had to turn His back on Christ when all the sin of the world was placed upon Jesus. God cannot look upon sin, and this sacrifice had to be made that you and I might have the ability to approach God by accepting Jesus as our Personal Savior. Because of His imputed righteousness, we can come before God and be justified today.

Overview of John 20: *The twentieth chapter of John contains John's account of the resurrection of Christ. As is the case throughout much of John, details are added which were not recorded in the other gospels. As John wrote several decades after the completion of the other three, he evidently was led of the Holy Ghost to provide details they had not.*

I. The Empty Tomb

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

John 20:2 Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

We see Mary coming to the tomb early on Sunday morning as the new day of the week was about to begin. We talked last week that Jesus was crucified on Wednesday, the day before the "High Sabbath Day." For three days and three nights, Jesus' body lay in the tomb. Soon after that time was up, Jesus arose victorious over the grave and death.

1 Cor 15:55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

1 Cor 15:56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

1 Cor 15:57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

It says Mary came early while it was still dark and found the stone already rolled away. You know Christ meant so much to Mary Magdalene because it was she from whom the Lord cast the seven demons. When Christ changes your heart, you are never the same. And it seems that year by year my love for the Lord grows as I begin to understand Him more and know what He did for me. While the body of Christ was gone, the linen clothes that he was buried in were still there. After she left and ran back, she came to Peter and John (the disciple whom the Lord loved) and told them that someone had taken the body. It seems like they would have remembered that Jesus was going to rise from the grave after three days and three nights.

But apparently, Christ's death had defeated much of their faith, and they were only living by sight rather than by faith at this time. Each of us need to realize that Jesus loves you and I like He did those early disciples. We didn't get to walk side by side in the early days with Christ, but I believe if it had just been one of us who needed a Savior, Christ would have come and died for just us. In Jude 21, the bible says:

Jude 1:21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Jude 1:22 And of some have compassion, making a difference:

In the early hours of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene, prior to dawn, came to the tomb where Jesus had been laid. To her dismay, she noticed in the grey light that the stone closing the door had been removed. She *ran* and came to Peter and John. (John modestly refers to himself in the third person, referring to himself as the "disciple, whom Jesus loved." John uses the 'historic present tense' with *runneth* and *cometh*. The idea is that though action as recorded is past history, it is presented as if the reader were present observing the event.

One can almost hear the astonished excitement of Mary as she came in perhaps breathless and panting to Peter and John exclaiming to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him." The *we* evidently is a reference to the other women which came with her which Luke and Matthew note, but John does not. In using the proverbial *they*, Mary Magdalene evidently envisioned that the Jewish authorities had removed the body of Jesus.

John 20:3 Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.

John 20:4 So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

Mingled with astonishment, perhaps shock and wonder, both Peter and John *ran* from where they were staying to the tomb. John beat Peter to the door.

John 20:5 And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.

John 20:6 Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie,

John 20:7 And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

John stopped at the door and stooped down, peering into the tomb. He noticed something very strange and inconsistent for a grave robbery. The linen burial clothes which had been wrapped around Jesus lay there intact. No grave robber would take the time to attempt such. Moreover, he noted “the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.” It was the practice of the Jews to cover the head of the deceased with a separated handkerchief-like piece of linen cloth. John noted how this *napkin* lay neatly folded off to the side.

The word wrapped {entulissw *enteulisso*} literally means ‘rolled up or folded in upon itself. John cautiously paused at the entrance of the tomb. Peter, arriving after John entered the tomb without hesitation, which is not uncommon for Peter during his early ministry.

Did Peter and John go to see the Lord resurrected? Probably not. You normally don’t go to a grave yard to seek the living. The truth of what had happened had not yet sunk in. We see that Peter and John came and found the tomb just as Mary had said. It may have been that the other disciples had turned their backs on Peter because of his denial of Christ. If so, John had taken him in. One other reason to consider this was due to the instructions to go and tell the disciples and Peter that the Lord had risen.

Mark 16:1 And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.

Mark 16:2 And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

Mark 16:3 And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

Mark 16:4 And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.

Mark 16:5 And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.

Mark 16:6 And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.

Mark 16:7 But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

Do you remember when Jesus raised Lazarus? When he came forth from the grave he was all wrapped in grave clothes and the Lord told them to loose Lazarus. Lazarus came out in his old body wrapped in grave clothes. The body of Lazarus would have to die again. When Jesus Christ came out of the grave, he came forth in a glorified body which shall never see death. This is the

Resurrection! When they entered the tomb, they saw the linen clothes lying in one place with the napkin that was about his head in another spot.

We have heard in recent years reports that people have found this “Shroud of Christ” since the linen lights up. Whether that napkin is real or not, the truth is that Jesus rose from that grave. We should just believe God and the Bible, and not look to worldly things to prove Christ was who He claimed. But if you go out and study just the worldly records, you would still have to conclude that Jesus was the true and only Begotten son of God.

1 Cor 15:12 Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?

1 Cor 15:13 But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen:

1 Cor 15:14 And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.

1 Cor 15:15 Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.

1 Cor 15:16 For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:

1 Cor 15:17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.

1 Cor 15:18 Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

1 Cor 15:19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

1 Cor 15:20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

1 Cor 15:21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

1 Cor 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

1 Cor 15:23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

John 20:8 Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.

John 20:9 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

John 20:10 Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

John enters the tomb of his Lord. John had more insight into the disappearance of the Lord's body. “And he saw, and believed.” He quickly figured out what had happened. Jesus' body had not been removed. He had risen from the dead. John does not mention Peter's reaction, though following events confirm his faith as well. John records that his conviction in the resurrected Christ initially was

by sight. He had seen for himself. He goes on to note that none of the disciples initially understood “the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.”

At this early time, the disciples were not aware of the significance of, for instance, Psalm 16:10 and its prophetic relationship to the resurrection.

Psa 16:10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

The reference to them going away unto their own home refers to where they were staying in Jerusalem. It may be the disciples were staying at the home of John who evidently had a house at Jerusalem. Or, they may have been staying at the upper room where they had so many vital meetings before and after.

J. Vernon McGee said in his commentary that:

“Jesus Christ came up out of that tomb like a seed comes out of the soil. Remember He had said that a grain of corn falls to the ground and remains alone unless it dies. Then new corn will grow out of it. But the old shell of the seed is still in the ground. That is what was left in the tomb—just the old shell that He had been in. He was no longer in that shell... He was alive.”

When John saw the empty tomb, he believed. I can't understand how that they did not know that he would rise again, since Jesus had taught them many times about his death and resurrection. The disciples had hard times with many of Jesus' teachings, and Christ had told them that when the Holy Spirit came upon them, He would bring many of the teachings back to their minds and they would understand.

Rom 4:24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;

Rom 4:25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

II. The Appearing of Christ to Mary Magdalene

John 20:11 But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre,

John 20:12 And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

John 20:13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

Mary (Magdalene) remained outside the “sepulchre weeping.” As she wept, she “stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre” and saw two angels in white sitting where Jesus had been. Why John did

not see them is not noted. It is conceivable, they appeared after Peter and John departed. They asked her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" Mary evidently still had not arrived at the conclusion which John already had. She still was laboring under the assumption that someone (the proverbial *they*) had taken her Lord away and she didn't know where.

Mary truly loved Jesus. As we mentioned earlier, Mary Magdalene was the one that Jesus had cast seven demons. Many times Christ had blessed this woman, and she comes looking for the body. The two angels are on the place where the body had lain, one at the foot and one at the head. It says they were Angels clothed in white, and ask here, "Why weepest thou?" They knew that there was nothing to fear, but great joy to be known for Jesus had risen.

John Calvin pointed out that the angels in white were a sign of heavenly glory, as we find that Christ was clothed in "white" when He was transfigured on the mountain and showed his glorious majesty to the three apostles. (Matt: 17:2) Luke tells us that the angel who appeared to Cornelius was "In shining clothes." (Acts 10:30) I do not deny that linen clothes were common in the East, but in the angels' dress God was pointing out something remarkable and uncommon, marking them out, as it were, to distinguish them from ordinary people. Besides, Matthew 28:3 compares the appearance of the angel who talked to the women to "lightning. "

Mat 28:3 His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:

John 20:14 And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

John 20:15 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

When she had spoken, she evidently sensed someone behind her. She turned around and saw Jesus, but did not recognize Him. Whether it was because of the grey light of dawn, or whether His features had been somewhat altered in His glorification, we are not told. Perhaps the tears and despair were partly the reason coupled with the fact that she wasn't looking for Jesus to be alive and walking about. He asked her the same question the angels had asked her, "Why weepest thou?" She thought He was the gardener. Maybe He had removed the body. So she pled with Him, "Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away."

John 20:16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

When Mary turned back, she actually sees Christ, but mistakes him for the gardener. Why did Mary not know this was Jesus? I think it was unbelief. Mary believed Jesus was dead, not alive. It takes a lot of faith to believe a person can rise from the dead. Jesus asks her the same question that the angels had asked "Why weepest thou?" Mary asks where that the gardener might have taken the body. Jesus calls her by her name, and for the first time, Mary realizes that this is Jesus, and most

importantly, He is not dead. Jesus knows his every sheep, and we know our Master's voice when he calls.

John 10:2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

John 10:3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

John 10:4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

John 10:5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

Jesus, in a tone of love and compassion for her grief, called her name as only He could. Immediately, she recognized who it was. Turning about, she cried out *Rabboni*. Her tone must have been one of utter joy mingled with reverence and astonishment. The word *Rabboni* is Aramaic and is the equivalent of the more common Master (didaskalov *didaskalos* in Greek). Jews such as Mary commonly spoke Aramaic as their everyday tongue. John, writing in Greek, noted her actual word.

As just mentioned, "Rabboni" means Master. As I was putting this together, I wonder how many people the Holy Spirit bids to come and be saved, and that person either does not realize who it is that is calling, or just flatly rejects the call. I praise God that He does seek after us. Our hearts and imaginations are so far from God. But yet he loves us, and seeks us out. As the song says, Jesus is tenderly calling and speaking to us if we will but hear.

Luke 24:1 Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.

Luke 24:2 And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.

Luke 24:3 And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

Luke 24:4 And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments:

Luke 24:5 And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

Luke 24:6 He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee,

Luke 24:7 Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

Luke 24:8 And they remembered his words,

Luke 24:9 And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.

Luke 24:10 It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles.

Luke 24:11 And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.

Luke 24:12 Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.

III. Mary Recognizes Jesus

John 20:16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

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

Mary recognized Jesus, and calls him Rabboni. Jesus knows His sheep, and as we read in last week's lesson, the sheep know their master's voice. He tells her to not touch Him, since he had not yet ascended unto the Father. We know that after Jesus ascended, He took the perfect offering of His blood to God, and made the sacrifice that would atone for the sins of all mankind. Unfortunately, only those who come to Jesus by faith receive this gift.

That is why we need to be about the Father's work, and spreading the Gospel to everyone we come into contact with. We see in verse 17 that Jesus makes it very clear that it was not only His Father and His God, but also it was Mary's father and God. Because of Jesus, we are joint heirs with Christ.

Rom 8:16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

Rom 8:17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

Few things are more important to the child of God than to know that Jesus was resurrected from the grave. We as Christians, are the only religion that claims to have a resurrected founder. Mohammed was a great man, but he died. Many of the eastern religions had great men that founded their religions, but each one is dead and still in the tomb. Praise God that you and I serve the true and living God, and Jesus is just as alive as any of us, and is now seated on the right hand of God today, making intercession for you and I. Paul expressed what vanity we would be facing if Christ be not risen to the church in Corinth.

1 Cor 15:17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.

1 Cor 15:18 Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

1 Cor 15:19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

1 Cor 15:20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

1 Cor 15:21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

1 Cor 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

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

Some people believe that when Jesus told Mary to go and tell His brethren that he had risen, He spoke of His personal family. But earlier in our study, we saw that Jesus' own half brothers did not believe He was the Son of God. I think that Mary went to the exact ones Jesus directed her to go to, and that was the disciples. She tells them about what she had witnessed and what Jesus had said unto her.

Jesus admonished her, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father."

The idea was not so much that Jesus forbade any physical contact prior to His *initial* ascension. Rather, the idea was for her not to hinder Him in the accomplishing of the will of the Father. He therefore, instructed her to go to His brethren (evidently His disciples) and inform them that presently He was ascending "unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." In other words, Jesus told her to tell them that He was about to ascend back to God the Father. This ascension is not the one noted in Acts 1:9-11. Rather, it apparently is that alluded to in Ephesians 4:8-10.

Eph 4:8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

Eph 4:9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?)

Eph 4:10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

It was at this time that Jesus likely first descended into Paradise and led Old Testament saints there directly to heaven. Likely, also it was at this time, He conveyed His own precious blood to the mercy-seat in heaven.

Heb 10:9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

Heb 10:10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Heb 10:11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

Heb 10:12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

Heb 10:13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

IV. Christ Appears Unto the Disciples

John 20:19 Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

John 20:20 And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

That same Sunday evening, the disciples had assembled (perhaps in the upper room) to mull over all that had taken place in the last several days. Word of the empty tomb had already spread and, fearing retribution of the Jewish leadership, they made their meeting as secretive as possible, shutting the doors of their meeting place. Jesus startled them by appearing in their midst. Though not so stated, they no doubt were taken aback and even frightened. Jesus therefore said, "Peace be unto you." To further verify Himself to them, He proceeded to show them His nail-scarred hands and His riven side. The disciples indeed were glad. They had heard that Jesus had risen. Now they had seen Him with their own eyes.

Most of the disciples were there allowing them to all experience the blessing at the same time. It is interesting how that even though Jesus had a glorified body, he still had those nail prints in His hands and the wounds in His side. Most likely, these are there as symbols of what He suffered when he died for us there on the Cross of Calvary. When we receive our glorified bodies, I think they will be perfect and without blemish. It took those wounds for Jesus to purchase our salvation.

John Calvin in his commentary on the Gospel of John said this:

"The evangelist now tells us that Christ's resurrection was proved to the disciples by their seeing Him. God provided that they were assembled in one place, so that the event might be more certain and trustworthy. It is notable how gently Christ acted towards them, not keeping them in suspense any longer than that evening. Moreover, he enlightened them by bringing the pledge of new life while darkness was spreading over the world. It was a sign of faith, or at least of a godly attitude, that they had all assembled. It is true that keeping themselves behind locked doors was some proof of their weakness; but although the strongest and boldest minds are sometimes overcome by fear, it is easy to see that the apostles were then frightened in a way that showed their faith.

This example is worth noticing, for although they are less courageous that they should have been, they still do not give way to their weakness. True, they seek concealment to escape danger, but they gather courage enough to remain together; otherwise they would have been scattered, and none of them would have dared look at anyone else. Similarly, we too should struggle against the weakness of our flesh and not give way to fear, which tempts us to apostatize. Christ also blesses their zeal when he appears to them while they are together, though Thomas is rightly deprived of the grace given to all his brothers because, like a wandering soldier, he had deserted from the banner of union. Here is a lesson for those who are excessively timid: they must learn to discipline themselves and take it on themselves to correct their sinful fear.”

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

Jesus repeated his invocation of peace to them. Then, in what evidently is John’s record (and the first issuing) of the Great Commission, Jesus said “As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.” Two different words are used regarding being sent.

The first sent is translated from (apostellw) *apostello* which is the verbal form of *apostolos*. It denotes being officially sent. Jesus’ reference to sending them is translated from (pempw) *pempo* which is the more general idea. (It is not imperative, but indicative mode.) Jesus would later be much more specific and emphatic in reiterating the Great Commission, just prior to his final ascension, found in Matthew 28, Mark 16, and Acts 1.

John 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Peace comes when Jesus enters the room, and peace comes to every sinner who invites Jesus into their hearts. On every occasion, from the first meeting with the angels until now, Jesus wanted the women and the disciples to not fear. He is ever with us when we know Jesus as our own Personal Savior. What a blessing to know that whatever we face, even in death, Jesus is with us every step of the way. Many of you knew my late cousin, Aric Johnson, who was the Pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Iowa Park, Texas. With no doubt at all in my mind, Aric was my favorite cousin of the dozen or so I have.

And he in the past introduced me as his favorite cousin many times. Our common love for God and God’s Word is a bond that made us almost inseparable. He and my younger brother, Ray, and Aric’s older brother, Jack, grew up together as children, and we had much fun running together on my grandfather’s farm west of Seymour. Before Aric died several years ago, we talked of how we both trusted in the sovereignty of God. It sure is easier to believe that when things are going well, we are healthy, and we have plenty of money in the bank. But many times we face heartache and trials, sometimes financial strains, and sometimes ultimately death. One thing Aric and I both knew then and I still know now is that Jesus is going to be there by our side no matter what may come. King David probably put the best words together found in the bible concerning how God is with His child through everything, even through death.

Psa 23:1 A Psalm of David. The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

Psa 23:2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

Psa 23:3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Psa 23:4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Psa 23:5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Psa 23:6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

John 20:22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:

John 20:23 Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

The breathing of the Holy Spirit (emfusaw *emphusao*) upon the disciples may be the imparting of the Holy Ghost described by Jesus in John 16:7.

Joh 16:7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

This may have been their indwelling by the Spirit which heretofore had not been bestowed upon any man. The total fulfillment of the promise of the Spirit was accomplished at Pentecost, not long thereafter. Then, the baptism of the believer into the body of Christ along with other New Testament ministries of the Spirit were enlarged. The key to understanding this verse lies in the subjunctive mode in which the verb *remit* is conjugated. The understanding is in recalling that only God can forgive sins.

What Jesus granted to His disciples (and us by extension) was the prospect of presenting the *terms of forgiveness* to others. As we withhold that truth from others, they may remain in their sin. The so-called keys to the kingdom lie in the basis of forgiveness which is faith in Christ. As we preach Christ and the simple gospel of salvation, the prospect for forgiveness is presented to people. If we withhold that truth from them, they very likely may remain in their sin.

Jesus had told the disciples that after He left them, the Holy Ghost would come upon them, and He would bring all things to their remembrance. Today, when you and I accept Christ as Savior, the Holy Spirit comes immediately and takes up abode in our bodies. We effectively become the temple of the Holy Ghost.

1 Cor 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

1 Cor 6:20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

John 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Jesus had conquered death and the grave, and redemption had been purchased. Now Christ sends the disciples forth into the world that they might preach the Gospel to every man, woman, boy and girl. The directive was to the church, and we know that the Great Commission is to be carried out every day of our earthly existence.

We know that from the time of Jesus' birth until His death, and even in these early days of the church, they were going through a transitional period between law and grace. The grace of God was always in existence (Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord), but the people until Jesus' death were still under the period called the dispensation of the law. Today, we live in the dispensation of grace. During the time of the apostles and disciples, certain things were done a bit differently than they were today. Before this time, I believe each of the disciples (excluding Judas Iscariot), had come to a saving knowledge of the Lord.

But until now, the Holy Spirit had not been given unto them. When Jesus breathed upon them, the Holy Ghost indwelt them. The expression "breathed on them" is used only one other time in the bible. In Genesis, God breathed into Adam the breath of life. By being indwelt with the Holy Spirit, the disciples would be sustained by the power of God through the spirit. In just a few days, Christ would come and baptize the church with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. He would endue them with power from upon high.

Eph 4:23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

Eph 4:24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Eph 4:25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

Eph 4:26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

Eph 4:27 Neither give place to the devil.

Eph 4:28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

Eph 4:29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

Eph 4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

It is very important to understand that Jesus alone can forgive sin. It was not given to the disciples to forgive the sin, but to preach the gospel, and all that truly repent and believe would receive forgiveness of their sins. Forgiveness of sins is only through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament, all of those sin offerings could not take away one sin, but they pointed to the one who would come and die, Jesus Christ. Effectively, God granted salvation "on credit" to those in the Old Testament, knowing that Jesus would come at the appointed time, live the sinless life, and die on Calvary on the set day ordained. Today, we look back and see by faith what Jesus did for us, and we accept this salvation that is given which is so wonderful, yet free to all who will come.

V. Christ's Appearance to Thomas and the Disciples

John 20:24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

John 20:25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

Thomas, the pessimist of the disciples, was not present when Jesus appeared. When the rest of the disciples saw him again and told him that Jesus had appeared, he in great doubt, declared, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe."

Some might ask, why was Thomas not with the other ten disciples when they gathered together? I could ask "Why is every member of our church not here today?"

Sometimes we are providentially hindered, but most times we simply lack the faith to come and assemble as God has commanded us to do. Wherever Thomas was, he missed one of the greatest blessings ever given. When we miss any church service, we don't know what kind of blessing we are missing. God directs each man who preaches as to what he is to preach, and God uses those messages to keep us on track and in fellowship with Him. We are the ones who lose out when we fail to come. What great peace and joy God gives to the child who is obedient, and honors God with his or her presence in the church.

Heb 10:23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)

Heb 10:24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

Heb 10:25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

If we want to be filled with the fruits of the Spirit, we must be obedient. We cannot be Spirit filled people if we are not in synch with God, and to be in synch with Him is to be in the mind of Christ. Even though truth was not always proclaimed in the synagogues, Jesus still as was His custom, came and worshipped on the sabbath day all through His ministry. And if you want an example to follow that will never mislead you, Jesus is the one.

Luke 4:16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

Gal 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

Gal 5:23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Gal 5:24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

Gal 5:25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

What happens if you don't assemble with other believers? You start to doubt God, and begin to walk in your own powers. And your faith begins to waver, and you are a prime target for Satan to destroy. Look at Thomas' comment, "I won't believe unless." Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. That is walking by sight, not by faith, and without faith, it is impossible to please God.

John 20:26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.

John 20:27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

Eight days later (some think the next Sunday evening), Thomas got his opportunity. Once again, the disciples were gathered together in a private room with the doors shut. Jesus once again appeared in their midst, complete with His same invocation of peace. Jesus, knowing Thomas's doubt, therefore invited him to touch His wounds. He then admonished Thomas to "be not faithless, but believing." That injunction remains to this day.

John 20:28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

John 20:29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

Thomas believing cried out to Jesus, "My Lord and my God." His statement was not so much exclamation as it was addressed to Jesus. In one instant, Thomas comprehended the significance of the resurrected Christ before him. He could be none other than the Lord His God. His grasp of the Deity of Christ was clear. There was no question. The resurrection of Jesus Christ verified his Deity. Jesus received His appellation as God, verifying Thomas' correct judgment.

In verse 29, Jesus went on to note that those who believe without the benefit of sight are even more blessed than he who had believed only after seeing. A greater degree of faith is necessary to take God's Word at face value. Everyone, since the earliest days of the church, has come to Christ on that basis.

Joh 1:11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

Joh 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

I want you to note that both times when Jesus entered, the door was shut. Only a ghost or a spirit (or God) could enter this way. And again, Jesus wants them to not fear, but to have peace.

He comes for Thomas' benefit, that he would not be in unbelief. Notice that Thomas did not have to reach into the holes in Jesus' hands nor thrust his hand unto the wounded side, but he proclaims: "My Lord and my God." Oh, if all mankind could come to the knowledge of the truth. And verse 29 is for you and me. "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." How can someone not believe when even the stars declare the handiwork of God. But day after day, thousands go out of this world unprepared to meet God.

All you have to do is pick up a newspaper to see how death comes all too quickly. Dozens of people who think they had many days left, find out that today may be their last day on earth. Look at the tragedy in Loveland, Colorado in April of 1999 when 15 high school students and teachers were killed when those two young men came in with the bombs and firearms. You may think you'll live until you are 88 years old, and if that is God's will and time set for you, you may live that long. But many die and never reach their 18th birthday. The bible proclaims that now is the accepted time. Today is the day of salvation.

2 Cor 6:2 (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)

Prov 27:1 Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.

James 4:12 There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

James 4:13 Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:

James 4:14 Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

James 4:15 For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.

James 4:16 But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.

VI. Purpose of the Writing of the Gospel of John

John 20:30 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

John 20:31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

John evidently begins what originally was his intended conclusion of his gospel. There were many signs and miracles which Jesus did which are not recorded in John's gospel.

The mention of "in the presence of his disciples" lends credence to the statement in implying there were ample eyewitnesses. The bodily resurrection of Jesus had just been amply recorded by John. The bodily resurrection of Jesus is the keystone of the arch of Christian truth. It verified that Jesus is the Christ. Moreover, it left no doubt that He is the Son of God. Those who in simple faith will trust Him will find life, not only eternally, but in its fullness through the blessed name of Jesus.

The Lord did many things that are not recorded. We don't know how many multitudes that were healed, how many blind were made to see, how many dead were brought back to life. We only have a small segment of Christ's life documented. John did not attempt to write a biography of Jesus' life. What he did write was the exact Words God wanted us to have, that as verse 31 so clearly states, "That ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His name. "

2 Pet 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Col 2:20 Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,

Col 2:21 (Touch not; taste not; handle not;

Col 2:22 Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?

Col 2:23 Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

Col 3:1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

Col 3:2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

Col 3:3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

Col 3:4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

John Gill said this about the many things the Lord did in his life.

John 20:30

And many other signs truly did Jesus,.... Besides these wonderful appearances to his disciples once and again, when the doors were shut about them: and which signs refer not to what was done before, but after his resurrection; and which he did,

in the presence of his disciples; for he appeared to, and conversed with no other but them after his resurrection:

which are not written in this book; of John's Gospel; though they may be elsewhere; such as his appearing to the two disciples going to Emmaus, and to the eleven on a mountain in Galilee, and to five hundred brethren at once, which other inspired writers speak of: and many there are which he did; which are not particularly written in this, nor in any other book; for he was seen of his disciples forty days, and showed himself alive, by many infallible proofs; all of which are not recorded.

VII. Jesus Taken Before High Priest

John 18:24 Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.

I think it is interesting that the high priest did not reprimand the officer for striking our Lord. And most likely it was because it please him. We know that Jesus was willingly laying His life down for you and that we might have salvation. But he does call to their attention that what they are doing is illegal and contrary to the very Mosaic Law that they so highly esteemed. They have no witness that He has done evil, and yet they smite Him. They are the ones who are breaking the law.

What was wrong with this? First, you were to have no trial that began at night nor ended at night. A trial was not to begin and end on the same day either. And they certainly were not allowed to strike a prisoner who had not yet been found guilty. Jesus answered the man and asks for an answer... "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil.." He had not ever spoken or done evil, but all through his

ministry he was accused of doing wrong and being empowered by Satan himself. But Jesus was from God, and always spoke the truth.

Mark 3:22 And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.

Mark 3:23 And he called them unto him, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan?

Mark 3:24 And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

Mark 3:25 And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

Mark 3:26 And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end.

We see Annas had sent Jesus bound unto this high priest, Caiaphas, and the Sanhedrin which we read about last week. Caiaphas was the one who wanted Christ to die that the whole nation not perish. In his mind, Jesus was a great evil one that stood against organized religion, and he needed to be stopped.

John 18:25 And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not.

John 18:26 One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?

John 18:27 Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew.

Meanwhile, back in the courtyard around the fire, Peter continued to warm himself. Others present asked, "Art not thou also one of his disciples?" For the second time, Peter denied Him. Finally, a relative of the servant whose ear Peter had cut off approached him and said, "Did not I see thee in the garden with him?" Peter, perhaps fearing being discovered as the assailant and being charged with attempted murder, denied Him again. "And immediately the cock crew." The synoptic accounts add further details of the rooster crowing twice, of Peter cursing, and of him fleeing in despair as he realized what he done. Jesus now would be taken to Pilate.

If you study the other accounts of the Gospel, you see that Peter went out and wept bitterly. Most likely, when Jesus was taken out, he caught a glimpse of the bloody face where those had beaten and abused Christ. And perhaps Jesus looked over at Peter to remind Him how earlier He had warned him that he would deny Jesus three times before the night was over.

While Peter was denying Jesus, Christ was fulfilling the very things it took for Peter to have forgiveness of those sins that he transgressed against the Holy One. And praise God, even after all this failure, it was Peter that God chose to preach one of the greatest messages ever in a few short days on the day of Pentecost. Even when we fail the Lord miserably, when we come back in true repentance, God is always there to take us back and use us. What a wonderful Savior we have.

John 13:37 Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.

John 13:38 Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.

Mat 26:33 Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.

Mat 26:34 Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

Mat 26:35 Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

Mat 26:69 Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.

Mat 26:70 But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.

Mat 26:71 And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth.

Mat 26:72 And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.

Mat 26:73 And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee.

Mat 26:74 Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.

Mat 26:75 And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

Luke 22:59 And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilaeen.

Luke 22:60 And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.

Luke 22:61 And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

Luke 22:62 And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

VIII. Jesus Taken to Pilate

John 18:28 Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.

John 18:29 Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man?

John 18:30 They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.

Following Jesus' inquisition before Caiaphas, the high priest, they took him "unto the hall of judgment" (which literally is the Praetorium). This probably was the magnificent palace Herod the Great had built in Jerusalem which was occupied by the Roman governor (pro- curator) when in Jerusalem. It conceivably also may have been in the Castle Antonia which was the Roman fortress built adjacent to the temple. It was early, shortly after dawn, preparatory to the Passover. Rabbinical tradition forbade a Jew from entering into the dwelling of a gentile, thus rendering him unclean. Because it was Passover, the Jewish religious leadership remained in the outer court lest they defile themselves just prior to the Passover.

We see the epitome of hypocrisy here in the Jews leading Christ to the judgment hall, but being unwilling to go in since they were keeping themselves pure for the passover. Who was the sacrifice that allows our sins to be forgiven? Jesus Christ of course. He is our passover, the way that God passes over our sins and puts the penalty wholly on Christ. The Just who died for the unjust.

J. Vernon McGee had these words to say about these verses.

"There is quite an interesting byplay here that I want you to see. Here we see "religion" and the person of Jesus Christ side by side. Here is the One who has come to fulfill the Passover. He is going to die on the Cross because they are bringing the death sentence against Him. But because they want to eat the Passover, these men won't go inside the judgment hall. That would pollute them. They will not do that. Are they meticulously religious? Yet they are plotting the death of the very One who is the fulfillment of the Passover! My friend, how this should cause you to search your heart at this time. Are you merely religious or are you joined to the Lord Jesus Christ? There is another interesting byplay to watch here. The Jews absolutely would not go into the judgment hall and thus contaminate themselves, but they brought Jesus to be taken into the judgment hall to be tried."

Everyone of us needs to examine the motives for why we do what we do. Are we serving God in righteous and truth, or are we just here to make ourselves feel a little bit better about our failures. Maybe we want others to see us serving God. If any reason we are here other than to honor and glorify the Lord, our motives are wrong. And if we are so set in our ways and our little lists that people have to measure up to, how can we be used of the Lord?

We need to forget about worrying about everyone else measuring up, and be certain that we are pure and clean in our own hearts before God. If we can only please one, that one should be God. How do

we please Him? By following the commandments, and doing those things that He would have us to do. As our former missionary Buddy Woolbright said a few years back, there is no safer place in the world to be than right in the perfect place of service that God would have us to be. If it is here in our town, or in the remotest area of Africa, God will protect and provide.

Mat 7:1 Judge not, that ye be not judged.

Mat 7:2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

Mat 7:3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

Mat 7:4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

Mat 7:5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

The Sanhedrin and the high priests were only too willing to get up in the middle of the night upon hearing Jesus had been caught. However, no doubt, Pilate did not share that willingness. Though it probably was after dawn, it still was very early. He undoubtedly was not happy about being roused by, of all people, the Jewish leadership. He likely went out upon a balcony overlooking the courtyard to meet them. He, presumably in a tone of aggravation, asked, "What accusation bring ye against this man?" The word translated as accusation {kathgoria *kategoria*}, from whence the English word 'category' derives, has the sense of criminal 'charges.'

The reply of the Jewish leadership bordered upon insolence. They were no lovers of Rome or Pontius Pilate. They barely tolerated each other. However, here, the Jews needed the permission of Rome to execute Jesus. Therefore, they rather insolently answered, "If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee." The word translated as malefactor (*kakopoiov kakopoiios*) has the sense of 'bad guy,' 'crook,' or essentially a 'criminal.'

John 18:31 Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death:

John 18:32 That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.

John 18:33 Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews?

The Jews failed to inform Pilate that they already had held their own proceedings. (They incidentally violated two provisions of Jewish law: {1} holding a trial for a capital case during the night, and {2} passing condemnation on the same day as the trial.) Pilate not realizing that initially therefore, perhaps with no little irritation, told them, "Take ye him, and judge him according to your law." The

Jews protested that it was not legal for them to execute a man. They did not want a fair trial. They wanted legal permission to execute Jesus. John records years later how that statement (and no doubt that which was to follow) fulfilled something Jesus had said in John 12:32-33 concerning the cross. The exact same phrase is used in both places.

Joh 12:32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

Joh 12:33 This he said, signifying what death he should die.

Pilate does not seem to want to have to deal with Jesus at all. He goes in and he comes out. He asks question after question, and finds no fault in Christ. I think Pilate clearly sensed that something was wrong. He tells them to judge Jesus themselves. But they tell him that it was not lawful for them to put Jesus to death, so they want Pilate to do it. We know earlier in our study that Jesus had prophesied that the Jewish religious rulers would condemn Him to death and deliver Him over to the Gentiles. According to the old law, the Jews would had to have stoned him to death. But according to prophecy, Jesus was to be crucified.

In learning the Jews had capital intentions, Pilate therefore grudgingly returned back into the judgment hall and asked Jesus, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" Though this allegation had not been thus far noted, Pilate no doubt was generally aware of Jesus and His ministry in Jerusalem.

John 18:34 Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?

John 18:35 Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?

John 18:36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

Jesus answered with His own question. "Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?" It was Jesus way of respectfully asking how Pilate had heard this of Him although He knew the Sanhedrin were His accusers.

Pilate, scornfully sneered, "Am I a Jew?" Not only was the answer to this rhetorical question obvious, so also is his disdain of Jews in general. In exasperation, he continued, "Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?" In essence, Pilate bluntly asked Jesus, 'What did you *really* do?'

Jesus' answer, though perhaps enigmatic to Pilate, nevertheless revealed insight into His entire earthly ministry. His kingdom was not as yet political or physical. If it were, His servants would have fought on His behalf. Notwithstanding Peter's futile attempt to cut off an adversary's head in the garden, Jesus' disciples had never sought physical confrontation or even political aspirations. He, in fact, had fled from even the appearance of such in Galilee. He concluded with the profound truth that His kingdom is "not from thence." It is not of this world. It is not of human politics. It is higher.

Pilate would like to help Jesus, but he does not seem to know how. Jesus questions how that Pilate knew He was the king? Pilate is in the middle, and says that even his own nation have delivered Him up to be condemned. Jesus once again answers with truth that is hard for Pilate to understand... "My kingdom is not of this world..." "One day, in the millennial kingdom, Jesus will finally take His proper throne as the king of the Jewish nation. He will one day sit on the throne of David. But not now, not at this time. The Jews are against Christ.

John 18:37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

John 18:38 Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all.

Intrigued, Pilate asked Him again, if He was a king. Jesus replied by merely noting, "Thou sayest that I am a king." In other words, Jesus replied 'You say I am.' Jesus continued, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."

Jesus stood as truth incarnate. He was the author of truth. His entire ministry bore witness to that end. In a world of perpetual deception and dishonesty, He, as a beacon of light, bore witness to God's truth. Tragically, men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. Pilate replied with his famous cynical answer, "What is truth?" The irony then and now is that the world and its leadership are often strangers to truth.

They swim in a sea of dishonesty, deception, and deviousness. To them, there are no absolutes. Everything is relative. Today you hear the term situational ethics. This is another ploy of humanism. The only truth in situational ethics is you decide what is right or wrong based upon the situation. This isn't truth, it is a lie from Satan.

Pilate very well may not have been trying to be sarcastic. Truth to him was relative, of political advantage, and that which was expedient. Politicians and the world in general, to this day, have not changed. He then returned to his balcony and told the waiting Jews, "I find in him no fault at all." Why was that? I tell you why... there was no fault in him. NONE!

The word translated as fault (*aitia aitia*) literally has the sense of 'cause.' Pilate said, in effect, 'I find in him no cause of charges.'

We know that Jesus is calling out people for His name today which make up the church. But the church will not be the kingdom either. When He takes us out of this world, and comes back, Jesus will establish His kingdom. Pilate asks what is truth? Jesus is truth. The Word of God, which is synonymous with Christ is truth. Jesus is the Word, and the Word is truth. When he returns to the people, Pilate honestly and truthfully says "I find in him no fault at all." The reason was because there was no sin, no fault, never a bad thing in Jesus' life. And because of that, the world hated Him even

more. And the world despises Christians today, because we stand on those truths that Jesus taught and established.

Albert Barnes said this about verse 38 in his commentary.

This question had long agitated the world. It was the great subject of inquiry in all the schools of the Greeks. Different sects of philosophers had held different opinions, and Pilate now, in derision, asked him, whom he esteemed an ignorant fanatic, whether he could solve this long-agitated question. He might have had an answer. If he had patiently waited in sincerity, Jesus would have told him what it was. Thousands ask the question in the same way. They have a fixed contempt for the Bible; they deride the instructions of religion; they are unwilling to investigate and to wait at the gates of wisdom; and hence, like Pilate, they remain ignorant of the great Source of truth, and die in darkness and in error.

All might find truth if they would seek it; none ever will find it if they do not apply for it to the great source of light the God of truth, and seek it patiently in the way in which he has chosen to communicate it to mankind. How highly should we prize the Bible! And how patiently and prayerfully should we search the Scriptures, that we may not err and die forever! See the notes at [Joh 14:6](#).

I find in him no fault - See [Luk 23:4](#).

John 18:39 But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

John 18:40 Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.

As with so many politicians and judges, Pilate was an amoral man. Decisions were made based upon political expediency. Though he, as the Roman governor, did not have to stand for election; he did need the support of the body politic to rule without disruption. To have eruptions and political upheaval at hand would hurt his career. The wish of any Roman official posted to Palestine was to be promoted out of there. It was a backwater of the Roman Empire. His only aspiration was to please his superiors in Rome and be promoted to a better assignment. It would color every part of his dealing with Jesus.

Pilate reminded the Jewish leadership of the custom of releasing a prisoner unto them as a measure of good will toward them during the Passover season. Perhaps in perverse humor, he cynically offered to release Jesus, knowing full well how they would react. Predictably, like throwing a cat into a pack of dogs, they erupted vehemently.

The word translated as cried (*kraugazw kraugadzo*) has the sense of 'shouting.' They shouted back, "Not this man, but Barabbas." John records that Barabbas was a robber. Luke notes that he also was involved in insurgency against Rome and was a murderer. The two thieves with whom Jesus was crucified may well have been a part of Barabbas' band. Jesus likely died upon the cross intended for Barabbas. I promise you we all are guilty and could be legally put on a cross to die, but not Jesus. Jesus was without sin, yet dying in our stead.

The crowd chose a law breaker unto themselves over the sinless Son of God. They unknowingly violated the law they piously upheld while fulfilling the will of the Father. Perfect righteousness

manifested to the natural man brings a most powerful offense and brings the true nature to the surface. The same holds true today. The gospel offends until it is received.

So because of tradition, Pilate could release someone at the passover. There were two there condemned already. Jesus who had done no wrong, and Barabbas, who was a robber. So Pilate asked which would the people have released. The leaders had stirred up the people to be against Jesus, and they cried out... Barabbas. How horrible that the one who loved them the most was the one that was condemned to the Cross.

Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent. In Matthew, we have these words:

Mat 27:17 Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?

Mat 27:18 For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.

Mat 27:19 When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.

Mat 27:20 But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.

Mat 27:21 The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas.

Mat 27:22 Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified.

Mat 27:23 And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.

