

Expansions on the Gospel of St. John

Introduction

Not long ago I had finished a similar “expansion” document with regard to the Gospel of St. Matthew. There or in the Introduction I had expressed some hesitation and even fear of undertaking such a task. The reason? So much material had been written on the matter that adding more would be a waste of time. If that were true of Matthew’s Gospel, it would apply equally if not more to the Gospel of St. John.

With this cautionary note in mind, I decided to go ahead with the project to see what would come of it. Actually I thought the document on St Matthew’s Gospel didn’t turn out to be that bad. Why not try out my luck with St John? Regardless of the outcome, at least I gave it a shot. If I had allowed fear or hesitation to get in the way, I would regret it for a long time. Something would have been missing. As for the current document, comforting thought was that because it’s an exercise done in the spirit of *lectio divina*, what could go wrong?

That brings up an important point which qualifies this document as it does with most others on this homepage. That is to say, it is composed with the intent of reading the Gospel of St. John as an exercise of *lectio divina*. With this orientation in mind, the document isn’t to be read as you would do so with a book. Because of this the series of notations...expansions...verse by verse can make it come across as somewhat choppy or in a word, not especially readable. While indeed a defect, this is secondary. The sole intent is to assist the reader to approach the Gospel in the spirit of *lectio divina*. One might call it “*selah* reading.” *Selah* is a word inserted here and there in the Psalter as a break or pause. With this in mind, it’s best to read this document as one extended *selah*.

As for use of the word “expansion,” it represents a broadening out the text...St. John’s Gospel...in order to dispose the reader for the end result, to rest in the presence of God. And so it’s a kind of extended prayer which stays within the confines of the text at hand. With this in mind, there’s no problem in alternating between doing *lectio* and putting the text down or as noted above, to engaged in a *selah*. Both can go on indefinitely which is why it’s so wonderful. Thus the approach at hand may be likened to a kind of diffuse awareness enabling one to incorporate a whole variety of insights without getting bogged down in them. If the orientation were more focused, such would not be the case. A person would become weary all the more quickly.

Transliterated Greek words which occur more than one time are marked by a +. This is simply to prevent repeating their definition. Should the word convey a different sense which sometimes is the case, that will be noted. Postings will be made from time to time until the document at hand is complete.

Chapter One

Arche or beginning also means a commencement or perhaps better, the first principle of anything from which all else flows. It's one of those un-translatable words best left untouched. Mere mention of *arche* can't help but make one wonder if something had existed before it, and if so, what? This question has a modern counterpart. For example, we can't help but wonder in a child-like fashion what (if anything) had existed before the universe came into being. That's equivalent to asking if there was something before something. Obviously such matters are way beyond us, so best to leave them as such. We will admit, however, that we can't help but pose such a question in private regardless of what anyone thinks.

The phrase *en arche* bring to mind the opening words of Genesis, *re'shyth* prefaced with the corresponding preposition *b-* or "in." Associated with this word is the activity of *bara'* or to create in the sense of fashioning as well as by cutting. *Bara'* implies something well-thought out, not done willy-nilly. Also it's presupposed that some material is at hand, most likely the famous *tohu* and *bohu*, emptiness and waste. For us the prospect of working with it is out of the question but with God, it's suits him perfectly. John amplifies this *re'shyth*, if you will, saying that the Word or *Logos* was present in a reality corresponding to it, *arche* or first principle.

At first *Logos* and *arche* might appear to be two different things...true but in another way they are not. The very presence of the former within the latter is necessary in order to give it substance, to make it function as a first principle of all that issues from it. Keeping in mind the Genesis verse, *bara'* is the divine creative energy at hand. As for *Logos*, one way to understand it better is to equate it with the Hebrew verb *davar*, to speak but to speak in the sense of giving utterance, not just blurting out words. So *bara'* may be taken as that which is spoken or more accurately, uttered. It's association with the *Logos* means that something magical can happen. In other words, what is uttered appears out of nowhere and is not simply heard.

As for the *Logos* itself, it doesn't live in isolation. Someone has to be responsible for uttering it. That's why John doesn't waste any time about speaking of this source as a cause and effect reality. Instead, he introduces the small but important preposition *pros* which signals direction towards-which. In other words, the *Logos* isn't spoken and left dangling out there. Rather, at all times or from all eternity it has this *pros*-ness. That means that *Logos* is ever approaching God while simultaneously present to God. It's able to hold these two opposites in perfect balance or harmony. As soon as God speaks *Logos* and establishes a *pros* relationship, immediately the *Logos* turns this *pros* back to him. This, of course, goes on continuously outside space and time. Actually this isn't a bad description of *davar*. For this reason John concludes his opening verse with the simple but obvious "and the Word (*Logos/Davar*) was God." Here he omits *pros* because the direction towards-which it represents has returned to God and, as it were, is getting ready for another run at it.

One can't help but wonder where John got all this. He doesn't seem to be fabricating it because his words are too sublime and speak directly to each and every one of us. We can assume that John who was present at the so-called Last Supper, absorbed what Jesus had communicated not just to him but to the other disciples. More precisely, as 13.23 says, John "was lying close to the breast of Jesus." *Kolpos* also means bosom and is with the preposition *en*, literally "in the bosom of

Jesus.” Such is the source compared with the other eleven disciples. Now he could spell out Jesus’ words—the *logoi* from the *Logos*—in imitation of the divine *pros* relationship between Jesus and the Father. In a way, those chapters can be summed up neatly in the first verse at hand. Because *logoi* and *Logos* are involved, John brings to conclusion his Gospel with no mere exaggeration “I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.” In other words, these books which contain *logoi* never can fully embrace nor comprehend the divine *Logos*.

A footnote, if you will, with regard to both examples of “in the beginning” as found in Genesis and St. John’s Gospel. Throughout the Bible we find the word “behold” or something similar to it which is rendered as *hineh* and *idou*, Hebrew and Greek respectively. They serve to draw attention to something of great importance the author is about to communicate. In a way the phrase “in the beginning” is like that. It’s ideally suited for such a purpose at the beginning of a text as with Genesis and St. John’s Gospel. *Arche* and *re’shyth* contain much more in that they are designed not only to grab one’s attention but to sustain it for the duration of the text. In fact, it’s helpful to bear in mind the introductory verses containing these words at the end of their respective books in order to bear out this observation.

The first person singular *houtos* opening vs. 2 is translated as “he” but literally as “this” which refers, of course, to the *Logos*. At the same time we don’t have an idea of who (or what) it might be. We know from experience that it’s Jesus Christ, but we don’t receive confirmation of his proper name until vs. 17. Most likely John is primarily concerned about firmly establishing the transcendent nature of this *Logos* as related to (*pros*) God. If he does not, people might have all kinds of distorted ideas about Jesus. Is he God? Is he just a man? Is he a kind of man-God? Again, the first eighteen verses of John’s Gospel represents a desire to “translate” what he heard directly from Jesus at the Last Supper and make it accessible to newly formed Christians as well as those who aren’t Christians.

As for *houtos*, vs. 2 says that “he” was in the beginning or *arche* + which was *pros* God. John uses the past tense which in reality doesn’t apply but can be taken simply as the way he presents the matter. So what’s the difference, if any, between this *pros* and the *pros* of vs. 1 with regard to the *Logos*? At first glance it seems John is repeating himself, for *houtos* = *Logos*. Perhaps he’s trying to prime his readers in order to prepare them for making a shift. On one hand are Jews with their monotheistic religion and on the other, those who subscribe to various forms of polytheism. Hopefully both extremes can come to a point where they can accept the person of Jesus Christ as both transcendent and human. Obviously a gamble but what other choice does John have?

Vs. 2 begins with “he” or *houtos* and spills over into vs. 3 as an extended sentence. So John is aware of being caught in an unavoidable paradox where he has to balance the relationship between the divine and human. Obviously he wants to make this connection in the person of Jesus Christ as he heard at the Last Supper. All in all John is laying the groundwork for what later would develop into a theology of the Trinity. Any misunderstandings lay with those who willfully insert their personal interpretations or by not reading the text with care or as we can say in the context of this essay, by not adapting the prayerful attitude found up with *lectio divina*.

In vs. 3 note the different sense conveyed by the two prepositions *dia* and *choris*, through and without, as they refer to *houtos*. To the first belongs *panta* and to the second belongs *oude*, all and not anything. So we have a stark contrast leaving no room for any other agent other than *houtos* or *Logos* as being responsible for bringing things into existence. As for the verb “made” as used in the RSV, it’s *gignomai*, to come into being. It suggests, if you will, a live type of birth as opposed to something that has been fabricated. The way *gignomai* is presented is that *houtos* doesn’t sit down and decide what is to come into being and what is not. Rather, there’s a spontaneous kind of coming into existence of *panta* or everything. In other words, there’s distance or space between *houtos* and *panta* in which *gignomai* operates.

The question for us is how do we perceive this. It would be absurd to consider an image of Jesus Christ as a human being constantly making decision with regard to *gignomai*. He’d be so tied up that it would leave no time for other things. Implied, then, is a space we can put in terms of awareness where focus isn’t upon individual things but a perception of their overall commonality. That consists in being begotten, of springing into existence, or in a word, *gignomai*. Once we do, we let the object or objects engage in an almost playful action which enables *panta* or “the all” to freely run their course. Regardless of how wildly stuff differs—to be sure it does so in an almost unbelievable fashion—all have their begotten-ness rooted within *houtos* or the *Logos*.

In vs. 4 John refines what he said in vs. 3 by saying that in him...*houtos/Logos*...is *zoe* or life in the physical sense. Such life is more specific to human beings, *ton anthropon* or “of men.” However, it is qualified by a close association with light or *phos*. Actually the two are inseparable. Light, in turn, is associated with each and every human being. This is true whether a person realizes or not the connection between himself and *houtos/Logos*. While all things (the *panta* of vs. 3) are made...*gignomai*...through the *Logos*, it doesn’t mean that human beings as part of this *panta* are aware of the light. In other words, they have it but generally don’t know it or at best have a dim awareness of it. *Panta* obviously applies to all animate beings but simply lack the capacity to be illumined. So with most people not aware of this light-life, they’re no better off than some other animate being.

In vs. 5 John says that the light or *phos* shines in the darkness, *phaino* also as to become visible in its exact opposite, *skotia* more as an all pervasive gloom. So if *phos* = *zoe* as vs. 4 claims, *zoe* is the means by which this *phos* becomes manifest or *phaino*. Note that *phaino* just does its thing without attempting to accomplish a goal or intent. Also it doesn’t expect a response from those upon whom it sheds light. However, it’s very presence in the darkness suggests any kind of struggle. This is a huge insight that easily can be overlooked but must be stressed by reason of its importance. Either light (life) or darkness will prevail. However, as John says, darkness doesn’t overcome the light, *katalambano* being a vivid way of putting it or literally to seize or to grasp down, *kata-*. The idea is that darkness cannot push down light, for light is immune to such efforts however strenuous they may be.

Vs. 6 gets more personal by mentioning John though he isn’t identified as the Baptist. Note the passive “was sent” or *apostello* which is the verbal root for apostle, this pretty much summing up John’s mission in life. More specifically, this sending is *para* God or more as from the side of God.

It's as though John had been there as his companions all along, left and became incarnate. We have no details as to his identity as in other Gospel texts. In a very real way, John's *para* God suffices more than enough for that. So while John comes from *para* God, he takes his place alongside the *Logos*. As John the evangelist recounts a good number of times, this parallels Jesus as being *para* God, the Baptist being not on the same plane but by way of participation. So in a very real way we have two persons with this special relationship coming on the scene. Again, Jesus isn't introduced by his proper name until vs. 17. Once John has written this, one wonders how his listeners responded to him. It'd come as no surprise that he's speaking not of a man but some kind of heavenly being.

In vs. 7 John the Baptist is described as literally having come "into testimony," *eis* plus *marturia* or witness in the sense of that which is based upon personal evidence. The preposition *eis* suggests that John had been fully present with regard to the light or *phos* +. It can be traced to when he and Jesus had met in the womb of their mothers (cf. Lk 1.41). Right after *marturia* comes the verb from which it's derived, *martureo* or to attest, again with emphasis upon personal experience and knowledge. It has a special orientation, that is, everyone believes (*pisteuo*) not so much John but the light to which he is bearing witness.

In order to make clear the distinction between light and John bearing witness so the two won't be confused, vs. 8 restates what is said in the previous verse. Again we have John as bearing witness (*martureo*) "around" or *peri* the light. Use of *peri* in this literal sense is interesting insofar that *martureo* (and we can include *pisteuo*) embraces...surrounds...the light.

And so all this talk about light and darkness prepares us to meet the person of Jesus Christ in vs. 17. Darkness means more than evil, the absence of good. Because it infers night, that means it's the time for sleeping. It's opposite is daylight, obviously the light. Thus we can take John speaking of being awake versus being asleep which is more pertinent to the human condition as we experience it. Evil is there, of course, but not as pervasive compared with outright sleeping.

Vs. 9 is careful to call the light or *phos* + being discussed as *alethinos* or true. Here it's role is to enlighten human beings, *photizo* as the verbal root of *phos*. Note the way *phos* is presented, *erchomenon* or the present participle of *erchomai*, the common verb to come. Right away you'd think that people would rush out en masse to meet this light, confident that their being as already enlightened or *photizo* would automatically point the way. John gives the *kosmos* or sum total of everything as to this coming. There's no need for anything more specific by reason of *photizo* as within each person which he considers as sufficient. The tragedy is that people are in darkness or as said above, are asleep (snoring might be more like it, out like a light). Instead of looking within, they look without and cannot find this true light. No small wonder they feel frustrated and are ready to take out their anger on anyone who claims to be this light which is exactly what happens later to Jesus Christ.

Vs. 10 shifts gears, if you will, from the previous verse which says the true light was coming into the world to already being in the world. In a way, John is saying that the light which is interior to all human beings has taken on a form outside themselves. That means everyone should be able to

spot this person at once but of course they do not. So despite the world being made by this true light, it did not recognize him, *ginosko*. Again, we could apply the idea of being asleep here; not just that but preferring...actually refusing...to be awakened. As for the notion of being made, it isn't quite accurate. Better to put it as being begotten or *gignomai* + as noted earlier.

All this talk about being awake and being asleep, light and darkness, is presented in a tragic way as we see in vs. 11. There he came literally "into his own," the verb *erchomai* + with *eis* as it pertains to *idios* which connotes that which is personal as well as private. Here it's also the people as expressed by the same word. However, they did not accept him, the *para-* of *paralambano* suggesting those closest to Jesus did not take him into the intimate embrace, of being beside as well as with them. One example that strikes home early on in his ministry is from Lk 4.29: "And they rose up and put him out of the city and led him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built that they might throw him down headlong." What got Jesus in trouble was referring to two historical examples of non-Jews, the widow of Zarephath and Naaman the Syrian. Indeed, both are representative of that *panta* of vs. 3 which the Jews were unable to accept.

Vs. 12 comes to the rescue of the just delineated rejection of *houtos* who still is not identified but contained in the verb *lambano*, to take or to receive. That is to say, *houtos* is welcomed by *hosos* or "all," the RSV translation often rendered as "as much as," "as great as." The tiny word *de* is rendered here as "but." *De* is a conjunctive alternately translated as "whereas," "on the other hand." It serves to set off an undetermined number of people from those who are *idios*, implying that they are in a minority. They are distinguished by believing or *pisteuo* + literally "into (*eis*) his name" or *onoma*. +. At this stage *onoma* = *Logos*. Even for a tiny minority of people to make this connection is a big step because it's destined to take root. Compare *hosos* with *panta* of vs. 7 and *pisteuo*. The former boils down to concrete acceptance whereas the latter may be taken as a looking forward to the future.

As for the *pisteuo* of vs. 12, it results in *houtos* giving a special kind of authority or *exousia* to become children of God. The verb is *gignomai* + which as noted several times earlier is translated as "made." John leaves it up to each of us to see how *pisteuo* becomes *exousia* and how *exousia* becomes children (*teknon*) of God. So if a child, that means there must be parents. Does it happen at once or in stages? It seems to be neither but a recognition of something that always has been and continues to be with regard to being human. We could say it goes back to vs. 4, *zoe* and *phos* or life and light. Perhaps without realizing it John is introducing a new way of viewing how we as human beings are related to God. While true, at the same time it's a recognition of something that always has been.

Vs. 13 continues as an extended sentence which develops *pisteuo* → *exousia* → *teknon* but expands what it means to be as such, a child of God. As with a physical child there's birth, *gennaio*. However, John qualifies this by the negative three "froms" or *ek*: blood, will of the flesh and of man. The second and third seem pretty much the same. A footnote in the NIV puts both respectively as "natural descent" and "a husband's will." *Thelema* is the noun for will and found with both. With regard to flesh it could apply to a union outside lawful wedlock, *sarx* as flesh often used in a negative sense. As for *sarx*, often that's presented as at odds with God. In the

second instance *thelema* can apply to lawful wedlock which is why the NIV has the reference as just presented.

Vs. 13 concludes with *gennaō* as it pertains to God, the fourth example of “from” (*ek*). This birth is set off against the first three meaning there’s a certain parallel but a huge difference. Here *gennaō* is a realization of what John states in vs. 3 or *gignomai* which is better rendered as to come into being instead of being made. Actually it’s close enough to *gennaō* in order to draw a parallel. Everyone by default knows what *gennaō* means. Applying it to God is something else, applying what’s essential to continuance of the human race with regard to something that transcends it. Easily we can imagine that these words were confusing to those who first read them, and it’s something of a miracle that their proper understanding has come down to us.

John realizes the difficulty of what he had just posited, of how it can be easily misunderstood, which is why in vs. 14 he’s quick to mention the *Logos* + once again, having begun his Gospel with it. This *Logos* became flesh, *gignomai* with regard to *sarx* (both +). He hopes these two words as applicable to human birth will help understand the way *Logos*, despite being of a wholly different (divine) order, participated in the life of a flesh and blood person. Still, does the *Logos* remain separate from *sarx* as one would with regard to putting on a garment or was the *sarx* real and *Logos* some kind of ghostly presence? Both misunderstandings are easy to accept, having come into existence fairly soon and in a way, remain present today.

One way of getting out of this uncomfortable dilemma which John knew was a present threat is to come right out and say as clearly as possible and without ambiguity that the *Logos* had dwelt among us. This is put in terms people could clearly grasp, that the *Logos* literally pitched his tent *en* or in us, the verb being *skenoo* which suggests either being a nomad moving from place to place or staying in a place temporarily. If taken literally, the *Logos* is in (*en*) us for the time being, not permanently. At the same time *skenoo* doesn’t detract from the *Logos* being life and light (cf. vs. 4). In other words, the *Logos* is paying a visit and living just like the rest of us, an existence which on one hand is temporary yet on the other, points to that which is permanent or eternal.

Vs. 14 continues with the Greek text saying first that “we have beheld his glory.” The verb is *theomai*, more along the lines of perceiving or seeing beyond with the physical eye. As for the object, it’s *doxa* or glory or more specifically, the glory of the only Son from the Father. Here John is moving away from emphasis upon the wholly transcendent *Logos* to *Logos* which has pitched his tent in us and on to seeing his glory. Now this glory is *monogenes*, literally only or alone (*monos*) with regard to one who has been begotten, *gennaō* +. As for the relationship, it’s put in terms as *para* the Father or from-alongside the Father...very close but not identified with the Father. While John may be expanding on this from the Last Supper discourse, surely he can’t but recall his presence on the mountain when Jesus was transfigured. Again, it’s an example where John’s memory has been filled with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost or more precisely, his faculty of *anamnesis*, the ability to recollect fully in the sense of being present-with as it informs the present.

The RSV has vs. 15 in parentheses though such is not the case with the NIV perhaps because Jesus won’t be introduced properly for several more verses. However, he finds it necessary to introduced

John as a witness, the verb *martureo* as found in vs. 8. The difference is that in the verse at hand the Baptist is quoted, a pre-insertion if you will, of a mission statement with regard to how he relates to Jesus Christ. Upon seeing Jesus (though his name isn't mentioned here), John immediately exclaims that he comes after him and by reason of his divine status is ahead of him. I.e., we have a distinction between *opiso* and *emprosthen*, after and in front of. These words reveal that John has a proper understanding of what was said thus far as the *Logos* being the light and life of a man. Both are within each person yet exist beforehand. To realize that is John's essential mission which he puts in terms of repentance. So for him it consists of being aware of dependence upon a reality that not only is before him but after him. In other words, John is communicating a new way to perceive oneself here and now with regard to transcendent reality.

While the RSV begins vs. 16 with the conjunctive "and," the Greek has *hoti* usually as "because," also as "although." *Hoti* as "because" is better in that it shows why the *Logos* pitched his tent in us, that is, going back before vs. 15 which as noted, is in parentheses. This *Logos* is endowed with fullness or *pleroma*, the totality of his being which by reason of being full implies that it needs to spill over somehow somewhere. Implied is that if a person has this *pleroma*, there's nothing to do; being it is sufficient in and by itself. All else who share the same *pleroma* by this very awareness. John puts this fullness as something which has been received (*lambano* +), that is, grace upon grace or *charis* (also as favor, kindness) with the preposition *anti* which also can mean instead of. *Anti* suggests replacement while the first *charis* can refer to the former covenant whereas the second *charis* is the new covenant. Although the two differ, still they consist of *charis*, so it's a matter of degree.

This difference between two types of *charis* is spelled out in vs. 17 where John distinguishes between the law or *nomos* (i.e., *Torah*) and *charis* along with truth (*aletheia*). Both are associated with two persons. The first is Moses and the second is Jesus Christ, this being the first and long anticipated mention of his name inferring his presence not so much as an abstract entity but as a flesh and blood person.

John brings to conclusion this association of the *Logos*-as-Jesus Christ in vs. 18 before describing the activity of John the Baptist and Jesus coming to him. He takes care to establish or to re-establish the complete transcendence of God by saying that nobody has ever seen him, *horaō* also as to perceive, catch sight of or to notice. Then John adds *monogenes* + or only-begotten as in vs. 14 which modifies God and that he is present literally "into (*eis*) the bosom" of his Father. The *kolpos* of Jesus is found above in reference to 13.23 where John had rested, a good a place as any enabling John to transfer this over to Jesus in the Father. And so the first eighteen verses of his Gospel which introduce Jesus Christ as *Logos* conclude with Jesus as being the one responsible for manifesting the Father. This is true despite all the emphasis placed on Jesus thus far and sets the stage for speaking of the Father. That, of course, is necessary in order to introduce the Holy Spirit.

In vs. 19 John the Evangelist turns "historical." That is to say, he has successfully introduced Jesus-as-*Logos* and now confidently can move on to his ministry. In a way, the first eighteen verses are a substitute for the accounts of Jesus' early life. Perhaps John figured that the three synoptic Gospels would provide the necessary details far better than he, freeing him up to take a more

theological approach. Thus before Jesus comes on stage, we have the testimony (*marturia* +) of John leading us off. However, the evangelist is keenly aware of the connection of his opening verses and now in vs. 19 which he begins deliberately with the conjunctive *kai* or “and.”

The *marturia* of vs. 19 is put into practice when John had to deal with some priests and Levites sent from Jerusalem. As soon as he got word of their impending visit and before they arrived, he prepared himself by becoming more fully aware of that light or *phos* spoken of in vs. 7. If he failed to do this, chances are this delegation would walk all over him because as official representatives of the Jewish religion they were far more sophisticated than he or anyone who was at the Jordan River being baptized. Actually many present must have felt intimidated at the prospect of their arrival and stayed a healthy distance away from them.

The priests and Levites wasted no time. They had to find out who John was, what he was about and hurry back to Jerusalem as quickly as possible to file a report. Authorities there would decide the next step. “Who are you?” are the first words that came out of their mouths. Such words signal the conflict between John and religious authorities that later will apply to Jesus Christ. The response is interesting. John doesn’t reply in the conventional sense but confesses, *homologeō*. It means to share a common view or mind about a given matter as inferred by the adjective *homos* (like, similar) prefaced to the verbal root. In the verse at hand it’s followed immediately by the fact of affirming that he’s not the Christ but adds *homologeō* for a second time. This shows his commitment and determination to be at service to the Christ who has yet to appear on the scene. After all, that’s why the priests and Levites came to John or more accurately to garner information about who, what and where is this so-called *Christos* or Anointed One.

The authorities from Jerusalem snapped right back at John in vs. 21, *oun* translated as “then” and alternately as “really” and shows not so much surprise but contempt as well as impatience. Right away they fire off two questions as to his identity:

-Is John actually the prophet Elijah? In the popular imagination Elijah was expected to return and announce the coming of the Messiah. Such is the concluding verse of the Hebrew scriptures with Mal 4.5: “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes.”

-The second question has to do with the prophet. No identity is given but can be traced to Dt 18.15: “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me (Moses) from among you, from your brethren—him you shall heed.” Somehow this had stuck in the collective memory of Israel and over time morphed into something akin to the Malachi verse just above.

To both John replies with an emphatic “no.” Still in vs. 22 the priests and Levites press him, John knowing that he’s in charge because they were manifesting considerable anxiety which was written all over the faces. Just the fact of asking the above mentioned questions was sufficient proof. If they didn’t get a proper response or better, something in line what their bosses in Jerusalem were expected, they might as well not return. Finally one last burst of desperation in vs. 22: “What do you say about yourself?” John pauses for a second. At first he doesn’t wish to explain away what he was doing out in the wilderness but on second thought, why not give a response, albeit a cryptic

one? In that way those in Jerusalem might stay off his case. After all, reports had been filtering back as to his activity.

John does respond pretty much in the spirit of Elijah and the Deuteronomy prophet. At the same time he had to make known to a wider audience what he was about. If he were in a town or city, it would be different, but being out in the desert roused suspicions because so many people made their way there at some risk to their lives. Not only that, they came back transformed which scared the authorities. Now John gives a response which was of no real comfort to his interlocutors. In fact, in vs. 23 he quotes Is 40.3 which runs according to the verse at hand: "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord.'" He's quick to mention the source, Isaiah, which certainly was familiar to the priests and Levites. As for the verse in full, it runs as "A voice cries: 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.'"

There is no specific identity as to this voice (*qol*) which could be Isaiah himself and is used with the verb *qara'*. Actually the two words sound the same, *qol qore'*. Indeed, that must have puzzled the delegation sent to interrogate John. Within desert this voice bids those who might be listening to prepare or *panah* which fundamentally means to turn and thus intimates repentance. *Panah* has two objects, *derek* and *mislal*. The former can apply to a way of life whereas the latter suggests a raised embankment and is used with the preposition *l*, literally as "to our God."

Vs. 24 gets more specific as to whom had sent the priests and Levites, that is, the Pharisees, literally "from (*ek*) the Pharisees." They had to get an answer from John and get it fast. They accept that he isn't Elijah, the Christ nor the prophet which puzzles them as to why he is engaged in baptizing. Although the act of *baptizo* isn't spelled out, we can assume that it's for repentance, of restoring one's relationship with God. The delegation must have gotten John during a break in his activity while those awaiting baptism stood in line nearby somewhat apprehensive that these men would shut down John's operation and make them go home. Actually that's why they had come out out to John. Behind all this lurks the threat of violence, that the Pharisees would use force should John persist.

In vs. 26 John really puts it to the priests and Levites. He says outrightly that he's baptizing with water but someone is already present in their midst. Although he doesn't identify this person, John infers that he will baptize not with water but use another means. As for this mystery man already present in their midst, *mesos* is the adjective but more central, if it can be put as such, that is, in the middle. Despite this centrality, those from Jerusalem don't have a clue as to his identity. And so the mystery deepens.

While John continues with cryptic-like talk, the text says nothing as to how the priests and Levites respond. You'd think they would ransack the area and people lined up along the banks of the Jordan looking for this man described only as *mesos*. However, they do not which makes them slink back all the way to Jerusalem, too embarrassed to continue questioning John. En route desperately they rehearsed over and over again how they would communicate to the Pharisees what they had been sent out to accomplish. We have no answer to this but can presume that the

Pharisees roundly chastised the priests and Levites, having at once sent more of their own to the Jordan. This time they wouldn't speak with John but secretly spy on the crowd to at last get to the bottom of what was going on out there in the desert.

To those sent out to John, he had provided a clue as to this person in their very midst. That is to say, in vs. 23 he says that this man will come after him. John being unworthy to untie the thong of his sandal which is the task of a slave. So that means anyone else coming out to spy on John would have to watch for him making that gesture. While this gesture may be taken not in the literal sense, the general idea is to be on the look out for someone to whom John gives obeisance.

In vs. 29 action shifts from talk about Jesus Christ by John as *Logos* and as a mystery man for the priests and Levites to him at last coming on the scene. John sees (*blepo* or to have the faculty of sight) Jesus coming toward him, *pros*. From where isn't specified but keeping in mind *mesos* or he emerges from the very midst or middle of those waiting to be baptized. The atmosphere possibly had a festive quality about it, people having made their way to the Jordan River and perhaps staying there for a few days. Such was the *mesos* from which Jesus emerged...*pros* his cousin John.

Upon seeing Jesus John exclaims in vs. 29 "behold" which is the verb *horaō*. Compare with *blepo* just mentioned as regular seeing, if you will. *Horao* is more a recognition, a sharper type of perception which takes *blepo* into consideration and centers in upon the object of vision. Although Jesus and John were cousins, this recognition didn't depend upon seeing someone familiar, for John has been in the desert for a very long time. It was akin to the *skirtao* + or leaping or when the two were fetuses in the wombs of their mothers (cf. Lk 1.41). No one else saw this *skirtao*, but certainly it was present in a more developed fashion.

John doesn't call Jesus by his proper name but hails him as Lamb of God. Not only that, this lamb will take away the sin of the world, *airo* being the verb which suggests a lifting up or removal. Reference to the Passover lamb is obvious to all present. Note the singular *hamartia* or sin of the world, that the world (*kosmos* +) is burdened with this singular weight which makes it all the more heavier and burdensome than if it consisted of multiple parts. Also in a way the singular sin makes it more convenient for the Lamb of God to focus upon as well as to bear.

Right after this acknowledgment which John makes to all present in vs. 30 he repeats what he had uttered earlier in vs. 15, that at last there's present one who ranks before him. In both instances the adverb *emprosthen* + and adjective *protos* are used, before and first. Nevertheless, John had that indelible *skirtao* or leaping etched in his being when he and Jesus were fetuses as noted just above. Surely the same applied to Jesus. John contrasts this in the next verse by saying that he did not know him, *oida* also as to have information about which could pertain to Jesus as Lamb of God. He qualifies this *oida* in the next breath by saying that he came specifically to baptize with water. Such a rite of purification will reveal the Lamb of God to Israel. The verb here is *phaneroo* or to manifest in the sense of to make public. While this is happening literally to a small number of people, such a manifestation is more than a passing sight. It's registered in the minds of those who've come to be baptized by John and spread out from there. More importantly we can say that

John the Evangelist had recorded the event from eye witnesses on whom it had a lasting impact. So in a way, the *phaneroo* of Jesus is continuing into the present and will do so into the future.

Vs. 32 spells out this *phaneroo* in terms of a reoccurring word in John's Gospel we've come across thus far despite the few number of verses. That word is *martureo* + (*marturia* + or the noun also inferred) which in the context at hand means that John sees Jesus coming toward him with no explicit mention of the two actually meeting. The same also applies in the next verse. So while we have the Baptist finally seeing Jesus-in-the-flesh, they don't make contact except at some distance. Even more intriguing, Jesus isn't recorded as being baptized. He drops by, if you will, approaches (*pros*) John but then moves on almost as though his *pros* were right through John.

As for John's witness in vs. 32, it consists of two verbs, *martureo* and *horao* (both +). They are centered upon the Spirit or *Pneuma*, something which essentially cannot be seen, that which is breathed out or wind. The only way to present what cannot be presented is by comparison, and for this reason we have the small but important *hos* or "as." Without missing a beat John comes up with the image of a dove to represent *Pneuma* coming down from heaven, *ouranos* here not necessarily from the divine dwelling place but heaven-as-sky. Once it had descended (*katabaino*), it remains upon Jesus, *meno* with the preposition *epi*. Obviously this doesn't mean that Jesus is walking around with a dove perched on his head but is now endowed or recognized as endowed with another person or the Holy Spirit, to put it awkwardly.

In vs. 33 John claims not to know Jesus, *oida* + or to perceive, behold. He just said this in vs. 31 which, if you will, is a partial truth because of that recognition implied by the verb *skirtao* when John and Jesus were in the wombs of their mothers. This clearly establishes that John knows Jesus essentially. However, John has to speak of Jesus now as Messiah for the benefit of others so that both men will retain their proper roles. And so John claims that someone had sent him to baptize but doesn't say explicitly that it's Jesus. John's role—again that emphasis upon *martureo*—is to point out Jesus as baptizing with the Holy Spirit or *Pneuma* +. That's why again we have the two verbs *martureo* and *horao* that Jesus is Son of God. John doesn't spell out how Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit. How does he immerse a person with something imperceptible as the wind? For now that question is left unanswered which is why there's no discussion between John and Jesus. Again, *martureo*, *horao* and *skirtao* suffice for any exchange of words.

Vs. 29 begins with mention of the "next day" or the day after John's confrontation with the priests and Levites from Jerusalem and moves on to his bearing witness to Jesus without the two speaking. Then we have another "next day" in vs. 35 when once again John sees Jesus walking along and exclaims as he does in vs. 29 behold (*horao*+) with regard to the Lamb of God without mentioning that he takes away the sin of the world. John says this while with two of his disciples, one of whom turns out to be Andrew identified in vs. 30. brother of Simon Peter. As soon as they heard their master utter these words about Jesus, they left to follow him, *akoloutheo* connoting accompaniment. Something must have clicked to leave John whose reputation was above all reproach for a man of whom he had spoken of but in essence was unknown. Perhaps it was John's earlier words about Jesus as *Logos* that brought it about.

There's no record of Andrew and the other disciple taking leave of John nor did John expect it. This isn't because they were acting in a cold-hearted way but recognizing, even in a vague seminal way, that they were exchanging discipleship for a human being to someone who was divine. John, of course, was delighted that he was responsible for contributing to Jesus' first disciples. As soon as Andrew and the other man left Jesus didn't extend a welcome commonly understood but said in all fairness to John, "What do you seek" (*zeteo*)? They give no reply because they were incapable of it, but because this happened so suddenly, that wasn't of any special importance. The two men addressed Jesus as rabbi or teacher (*didaskalos*), something they'd never call John. Instead of giving Jesus an answer to *zeteo* they asked where he was staying. Jesus complied and off they went though there's no indication of where that had been.

Since they were in the desert, most likely they stayed in tents. That, of course, was incidental to the story. We have no record of the conversation between the three, but Jesus must have asked about John's preaching. They were all too eager to fill in what John said about Jesus. Perhaps they were reluctant to ask if he really was the divine *Logos* but the fact that they abandoned John then and there showed they had some insight. They must have asked Jesus about that baptism of which John had spoken, namely, Jesus baptizing with the Holy Spirit. That was only natural to ask by reason of their association with John who, in fact, stated that plainly.

In vs. 40 Andrew is identified as having heard John speak which must have been both of repentance and Jesus as *Logos*, so he and his companion were well prepared to make the switch. Andrew didn't waste time contacting his brother Simon which means that he too must have been with John though he's not identified as being the other man. He could have come on his own to the Jordan River both to hear John and to visit his brother, checking up on him. This means that Jesus was encamped nearby, not far from Simon, which is why Andrew told him that we (first person plural, possibly including his companion) have found the Messiah which vs. 41 equates as the Christ, *Christos* +.

Upon bringing Simon to Jesus, Jesus takes a good look at him, *emlepo* connotes doing it intently, *em-* also as *en-* which means "in." Jesus addresses him in a way that makes him both confident and uncomfortable, *ei* translated as "so" which has a lot to do with it. Jesus doesn't expect a response; Simon isn't in a position to do so since was put on the spot. Jesus then says with a definite air of authority which at the time is totally beyond Simon's comprehension that he'll be called Cephas which means Peter. Both proper names mean rock. Nevertheless, Simon must have taken some delight in this and readily concurred with the change of names. At the same time he was puzzled as to what it meant. Surely he must have become the butt of jokes by his brother Andrew who similarly was puzzled.

Vs. 43 is the third instance of the "next day," the other two being in vss. 29 and 35. Surely a conversation must have lasted late at night between Jesus, Andrew, Simon now called Peter and the other man who possibly is with them but remains unidentified. Now Jesus decided to go to Galilee. As it will be revealed a few verses later, this is the place from which the two come. Most likely they suggested that Jesus go there to pick up two potential disciples. Without waiting any longer, Jesus takes them up on their word. Upon arriving there, Jesus finds Philip. Actually Philip is

first of two who will become intimates of Jesus who simply commands that he follow him, *akoloutheo* +. Philip along with Andrew and Peter decided to recommend Nathanael. Jesus, in fact, doesn't seek him out but allows Philip to do so knowing that he will make the proper choice despite any initial reluctance.

Easily we can picture Philip running up to Nathanael that we...the others with him...have found the one of whom Moses had spoken. Note that he quotes from Moses and doesn't blurt out that he had found the Messiah, for that would be too dramatic. Surely reference to Moses would be enough, more than enough, to persuade Nathanael or any devout Jew. The reference Philip uses is Dt 18.18: "I will raise up for them a prophet like you (Moses) from among their brethren; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him." Note that Dt 18.15 is cited with regard to vs. 25, it being in the same context. What's important is that this prophet will come from among the same people as Israel, not an import. *Qerev* prefaced with the preposition *min* or "from" suggests from the very midst or middle. From this center the Lord will put his words-as-expression or *davar* in the prophet's mouth who will them *davar* + or speak them.

Philip expected Nathanael to come off with a response similar to his enthusiasm but instead is stopped dead in his tracks with a strong tinge of sarcasm and even disgust. Apparently Nazareth had a Podunk-like reputation or even worse. How dare Philip equate that place with the venerable Moses. This didn't dissuade Philip who invited Nathanael to check it out for himself, so off they went. You have to credit Nathanael for at least doing this, given his strong attitude. En route Philip must have done his best to paint a glowing picture of Jesus, of how John the Baptist had recognized him as being the Lamb of God, etc. Indeed that seemed pretty far-fetched.

When Jesus caught sight of Nathanael approaching, he gave him the ultimate complement, that indeed (*alethos* or truly) that he was an Israelite with no guile or *dolos* which also means deceit or treachery. Nathanael's curiosity is perked at once, asking Jesus how does he know this. Indeed, there just might be something about this fellow from worthless Nazareth. Jesus said that he saw Nathanael under a fig tree well before Philip had called him. This evoked an immediate response, that indeed Jesus is the Son of God, the same words used by John the Baptist in vs. 34. Not only that, he blurts out that Jesus is the King of Israel, something that made Jesus uncomfortable by reason of its political overtones. Anyway, Nathanael lacked that *dolos*, so all this could be overlooked.

In vs. 51 which brings Chapter One to a close Jesus said that Nathanael will see greater things than Jesus having caught sight of him under a fig tree. He also poses a rhetorical question, one which Nathanael is powerless to answer about believing in Jesus by reason of acknowledging as having seen him. Jesus uses the words "truly truly" which consist of *horao* + or to see and the adverb *alethos* + or truly. Compared with what had just happened, Nathanael will see the heavens opened and God's angels ascending and descending upon the Son of man. In other words, what Jacob had seen in a dream will become a reality with Jesus.

The source of this *anabaino* and *katabaino* + is Gn 28.12: “And he (Jacob) dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it!” The Hebrew word for ladder is *sulam*, the only instance it’s found in the Bible. We can assume that Nathanael was familiar with this incident and at once held Jesus in awe as being that ladder or mediator between heaven and earth. Addition of angels made it all the more impressive. Nevertheless, all this is destined to be revealed in the future but Nathanael felt it present even now. This too must have impressed Andrew, Peter and Philip. Philip too could take credit for having introduced Nathanael to Jesus, that he was someone special and might be singled out later for some important role.

Chapter Two

Verses one through twelve deal with the wedding at Cana, vs. 1 opening with the conjunctive *kai* + usually translated as “and.” However, it goes untranslated in the **RSV** and shows the close connection between what occurred towards the end of Chapter One and what we have now. For some reason or other John speaks of the “third day” which could refer to the marriage taking place, for example, the third day after the Sabbath. That seems probable because the Sabbath was the central point of the week and essential for keeping account of the passage of time. Jesus was invited though only his mother Mary is mentioned as being present. Joseph is omitted which suggests that he had died relatively young; also no other relatives are noted which doesn’t mean they weren’t present. Just the fact that John speaks of Mary suggests that she will have a role to play. That, of course, will be revealed shortly.

Vs. 2 has Jesus as having accepted an invitation to a wedding along with his disciples, Andrew, Peter, Philip and Nathanael. Chances are all or some of them knew either the bride, bridegroom or both. It seems that this was the first time Mary, her son and his companions came together. Right away Mary as only a mother could do, quickly assessed each one of them. That set the stage for would could have been a heated conversation between the two, Mary of course as mother having the upper hand. Obviously Jesus felt he was unfairly being put on the spot because he had to explain why he chose each of the four men with him and answer what seemed to him useless questions. All this must have taken place in private apart from the disciples. However, they could tell just by looking at the two that there was tension between them. Chances are Mary was worried, not unduly so, as to the character of each of the four men. Jesus had been with them a short time and hadn’t had sufficient time to check them out. Also Mary wondered what they were going to do now. That, for sure, getting a bit awkward. Although she was concerned about whom her son was hanging around with, of greater interest was John the Baptist. After all, Elizabeth is his mother, hence the two being related to her.

In vs. 3 the wine served during the wedding gave out, *hustereo* also as to fall short which may also imply that sufficient quantity wasn’t provided, a miscalculation by those responsible for the celebration. Mary seems to be privy to this and brings it to the attention to her son, she allowing her motherly instinct to kick in and wanting to prevent any embarrassment. Quietly she informed her son most likely before the guests realized what was going on but is discreet enough not to ask

how he'd handle the situation if at all. Was he going to ask the disciples with him to rush out quietly and get more wine? That's one reasonable supposition behind her request. Then we have the famous response by Jesus when he addresses his mother as woman. A footnote in the NIV observes "The Greek does not have the adjective 'Dear,' but it is necessary to convey the correct sense since the potentially abrupt 'woman' could be understood as a harsh form of address."

Along with this Jesus says, literally "What to me and to you?" We have to keep in mind that he had just had a heated conversation with his mother about the four unknown men with him (one of whom Jesus had changed his name for some reason or another) plus her son giving what seemed to his mother scant information about John the Baptist. In other words, she has little or no information to convey about Elizabeth who just heard rumors about her son out in the desert who recently had been investigated by authorities from Jerusalem. Also Mary had to bring up something he'd rather not discuss during this joyous wedding celebration, namely, that his hour or *hora* has not come. *Hora* refers to a point in time for an occasion, that occasion if mentioned by itself would be designated as a *kairos* event. At this stage of the game Mary was really annoyed at the way her son was treating her. What on earth was this hour about? Thankfully the give and take between mother and son wasn't in front of the wedding guests, especially the bride and bridegroom. That would have spoiled the whole affair if this were done in the open. Nevertheless, tension between mother and son remained and was due to go unresolved all the way to when Mary was at the foot of the cross.

The situation with regard to providing wine was getting more critical. Clearly what Jesus said about his hour or *hora* applies here. It was running out and something had to be done immediately to save the day. Mary knew that both she and her son were familiar to most people at the celebration. She decided to take the initiative before anyone else, even the hosts, knew what was going on. Perhaps part of this was that Mary wanted to smooth over relations with her son even though she continued to remain uncomfortable about the four men associated with him. Thus she told the servants waiting on the guests to do whatever her son asks of them, even rush out to the store but to keep a low profile. The noun for such a position is *diakanos* or one whose task is to act as an intermediary, this differing from *doulos*, essentially a slave.

It so happened that nearby were six large containers of water intended for purification, they being put in place earlier for the guests to cleanse themselves of any impurity incurred during the proceedings. Apparently some of water had been used already which prompted Jesus to ask the servants to fill them to the very top. Once they had done this, they are to bring some of the contents to the steward in charge of the feast, *architriklinos*. It was he who knew about the lack of wine and tried not to panic but didn't know what to do. After all, he was responsible for the miscalculation when it came to the wine. Those who brought the wine didn't inform him as to its source. They knew it was wine from the water jugs but naturally were filled with disbelief. One error on their part and they just might literally lose their heads.

The steward knew what he was tasting to be wine. When it was brought to him he assumed it would be as such and was relieved that there just may be enough to last for the rest of the wedding celebration. He too was fully aware that if there was no wine, that's the end of his career.

Not knowing what to make of the situation and dissatisfied with a lack of response from his underlings, discreetly he decided to summon the man-in-charge, the bridegroom. Without bringing up the issue of a lack of wine—the chief steward wanted to avoid that issue at all costs—he asked about the source of the wine he had just tasted. The customary practice of serving the best wine first and the lesser quality later is reversed. It seems that no one knew how this came about except the servants who dealt directly with the wine from the jars of water set aside for purification. Even if they told the steward and bridegroom they wouldn't believe it. And so everyone continued on with the wedding celebration blissfully unaware that an embarrassing situation had been averted.

The best part of all this which goes unrecorded is that the tension between Jesus and his mother was lessened. By no means did go away, but both could agree that the outcome of the wedding was to their common consent.

Vs. 11 states that this is the first sign Jesus had done, *arche* + suggestive of the first in a sequence and *semeion* being that which signals something more significant or meaningful than the appearance. In and by itself this *semeion* is confined to a limited group of people. However, the fact that John records it and Jesus' disciples are present mean that it will have wider ramifications though not at the present. Jesus, of course, was fully aware of this. John rightly calls the *semeion* a manifestation of his glory, the verb *phaneroo* directly related to *doxa* (both +). The disciples believed or *pisteuo* + literally "into him." They are singled as out worthy of mention whereas the other participants at the wedding feast, bridegroom and bride included, are not. Everyone else was simply too taken up with the wedding and subsequent celebration, especially the unexpected treat of wine served later.

Vs. 12 has Jesus leaving Cana and going to Capernaum with quite a wide variety of people accompanying him, his mother, brothers and disciples. Despite the tension between mother and son, Mary tags along obviously wanting to know what he was up to. As for brothers (*adelphos*), most likely this covers a relatively wide assortment of relatives not uncommon for the time and culture. During the walk as well as their stay in Capernaum those accompanying him were filled about questions as to what had happened in Cana. Like the wedding guests, they were just as ignorant of the change of water into wine and needed to be informed as to what really occurred. Here we can presume is where that first sign was duly recorded for posterity. Both Jesus' actions and his words had a far more lasting effect than if they came from any given historical figure, that is, they had a unique way of inserting themselves into one's memory or faculty of *anamnesis* as noted earlier.

After a brief stay in Capernaum, Jesus goes up to Jerusalem—up both physically and symbolically—for celebration of the Passover. No one is mentioned as accompanying him; perhaps the same retinue joined in. After all, the Passover was the most solemn of all holy days. We can assume that they arrived several days in advance in order to obtain what was necessary for the celebration but still had to contend with the crowds. The population of Jerusalem surged as at no other time of the year which is why the temple courtyard will filled with all sorts of vendors. This upset Jesus so much that quickly he made a whip of cords to drive them out, overturning the tables of money-

changers as well. The courtyard was fairly large, and perhaps Jesus didn't cover the entire area. Vs. 15 says that he drove them all out which may be an exaggeration. However, he impressed the other vendors so much that they beat it out there as quickly as they could. The same, of course, applied to the crowds. Jesus exclaims that these people were making the house of his Father a house of trade or *emporion*. Obviously he was overheard calling the temple his Father's house which must have astonished them.

Vs. 17 begins with how the disciples respond to Jesus' action, that is, they remember it or better, insert it into their collective memory, the verb being *mimneskomai* which ties in with the faculty of *anamnesis* noted earlier. Actually it's vital, for without it we would not have a record of what had happened. Perhaps without fully realizing what was going on, they associated this action with a quote from Ps 69.9. It runs in full as "For zeal for your house has consumed me, and the insults of those who insult you have fallen on me." Zeal or *qin'ath* implies jealousy and '*akal* is the common verb for to eat. Such zeal for things divine has negative ramifications for the psalmist who suffers insults or *cheraph* (singular). Such a *cherpah* initially directed towards God indirectly falls upon the psalmist. As for the verse at hand, the verb *kataesthio* means to eat up ravenously, the preposition *kata-* meaning down as to gulp down food. Although Jesus caused quite a commotion, chances are that the vendors quickly filtered back. This was the most profitable time of the year, so their very livelihood depended upon the Passover rush.

Naturally what Jesus had done upset those present but again, given the large area of the temple courtyard and throngs of people for the Passover, it was limited to a small area. People in other parts of the courtyard were completely oblivious as to what was going on. Besides, the noise was something else. Nevertheless, some Jews asked him for a sign or *seimeion* + to show them for what he had done. After all, clearly they heard him speak of the temple as his Father's house. If that's true, then the Father must have given him this *semeion*. It should be noted that this is towards the beginning of Jesus' ministry, and he was an unknown entity. No one at the time knew where he was from or what he was about. Perhaps some may have confused him with John the Baptist who, it seems, never set foot in Jerusalem.

The *semeion* Jesus gave was something the Jews didn't expect. In fact, it went above their heads and understandably so. He said in a provocative manner that if the temple is destroyed, he will raise it up in three days. *Luo* + is the verb which more precisely means to loosen, as though the stones simply will give way at once. At once people thought of what their Roman occupiers might do and in fact did carry out a generation or two later. Raising the temple up or *egeiro* within such a short period of time is utterly impossible. Then again, Jesus called the temple his Father's house, and the Father just might be capable of such a task. To this the Jews responded in a predictable, literally fashion. They speak of the long time it took to build the temple...forty-six years...and three days is nothing compared to that time span which is about one human generation.

Jesus didn't let on that he was speaking of his body, the new temple. That would be incomprehensible even if he said so openly. Again, Jesus is an unknown entity who had made his way to the capitol during Passover when all sorts of people flooded the city. Vs. 22 puts this in

context, namely, that Jesus' words became clear to his disciples only after the resurrection. The verb *mimneskomai* as in vs. 17 is the second mention of that making-present through the faculty of *anamnesis* which is at the very heart of the Gospel, not just John's but the other three when it's used. Vs. 22 puts it in proper context, the disciples believing (*pisteuo* +) the scriptures along with the word or *logos* + that Jesus as *Logos* had spoken. There doesn't seem to be a clear-cut reference to a particular verse or verses or to the Hebrew scriptures as a whole. Possibly the latter is more like it.

Vs. 23 continues the theme of *semeion* + or sign put as what Jesus had done (*poieo*) which remains unspecified but most likely physical healings. That is, people believe in Jesus, *pisteuo* + being used here in a sense different from vs. 22 with regard to the disciples just noted. In a way, Passover was a good opportunity for this. At no other time would there be such a wide variety of people, many having come from abroad. These would be ideal candidates to spread Jesus' mission well beyond the borders of Israel. At the same time the commotion was a cover-up or protection against prying eyes from the religious and secular (Roman) authorities. Too much was going on to keep tabs on everyone. Even if word about Jesus healing people reached them, it was incidental. As long as order was being kept.

Chapter Two concludes on a wary note. Jesus willingly engaged in making signs as just noted but didn't trust himself to the people, *pisteuo* + again. He wanted to refrain from gaining notoriety, especially now at Passover, which would have political overtones. He was fully aware of what could happen and required no one to bear witness to this, *martureo* +. And so the chapter ends with Jesus knowing (*ginosko* +) what was in a man. These words come as no surprise during the Passover, for in a few short years Jesus would be in Jerusalem during that feast when he would be betrayed and crucified.

Chapter Three

The second letter of this opening verse is the conjunctive *de* + which the **RSV** translates as "now," this being a way to prep the reader for something new and important about to be described. That happens to be the important figure of Nicodemus whose pedigree, if you will, John puts as "a man of the Pharisees" and "a ruler of the Jews." Now the stage is set for Nicodemus to come to (*pros*) Jesus where night is mentioned specifically. The very fact that this meeting takes place at night says everything about Jesus' relationship with the religious authorities right at the beginning of his ministry. The point of contention is, of course, Jesus having made quite a scene of upsetting the vendors in the temple courtyard. Other than we have no record of any tense relationship between him and official Judaism. As for where Jesus is staying during the Passover, most likely it's a rented place along with those accompanying him as noted in vs. 12. Surely at least one of them had contacts in the city to make suitable arrangements. In fact, he may have done this well in advance to accommodate a relatively large party during the busiest time of the year, that is, Passover.

Nicodemus addresses Jesus as Rabbi or teacher (*didaskalos* +) which shows great respect, he using the first person plural which could infer that others of his class felt the same but were reluctant to

admit it. Adding the fact that Jesus comes from God is even more remarkable. The basis of this claim rests on the signs or *semeion* + Jesus had performed, the ones mentioned in 1.23 but left unspecified. Nicodemus and his silent companions acknowledge that they could be done only by God or more accurately, that God is with (*meta*) Jesus. Wonderful as these signs might be, knowing the source or who was responsible for them is more important. As noted above, such signs must consist of healing though there's nothing specific as to their nature.

Jesus doesn't show the least bit of being flattered by Nicodemus. Instead, in vs. 3 he comes close to rebuffing him, using a double *amen* translated as "truly, truly." He re-enforces this, if you will, by adding "I say to you." In other words, Jesus is addressing this respected religious leader as an equal, as a Rabbi which Nicodemus called him in vs. 2. At the same time he's putting him in his place. Nicodemus accepted this as a proper response which set the stage, if you will, for a dialogue between the two men. Jesus challenges this man without mincing words, namely, the necessity to be born from above (the RSV has 'anew'), *gennaō* with the adverb *anothen*, from above. Such a birth is necessary for seeing the kingdom of God, *horao* +. And so if one is born without this above-ness being operative in one's awareness, that person remains completely blind.

Vs. 4 has Nicodemus asking somewhat naively how someone who's an adult be born when old. Obviously a person can't enter the womb of his mother and come out once again. Jesus maintains his respect for this venerable member of the clergy yet doesn't hesitate to put him on guard. He does this by a double *amen* + and "I say to you" which he had just used in vs. 3. Jesus refines what birth he's talking about. Instead of being born in the physical sense, water and the Spirit (*Pneuma* +) are essential for the birth he has in mind. As for *Pneuma*, it's mentioned in 1.33 as recognized by John. Also the element of water associated with baptism and practiced by John at the Jordan River seemed to be something of a novelty, it not being found in the Hebrew scriptures.

It's quite possible that word of this had reached Nicodemus which wouldn't be surprising, for at that time word traveled more quickly than we imagine. So Nicodemus was trying to put two and two together as best he could but apparently had no point of reference in the way he had been taught to comprehend what Jesus was communicating to him. As for water and *Pneuma*, both are requirements for entering the kingdom of God, *eisrchomai* with the preposition *eis*; in other words, two "intos" with regard to this kingdom. Now Jesus shifts Nicodemus' original question as to being born by saying yes, what is born of the flesh is flesh (*sarx* +) whereas what is born of *Pneuma* + is *pneuma*. Note the difference between the two, the latter being derived from the former. As for the verb, it's *gennaō* + as Jesus uses it in vs. 3.

In vs. 7 Jesus tells Nicodemus not to marvel (*thaumazo*, also as to be impressed, to be caught off guard) at his words about being born literally from above (*anothen* +), this apparently something brand new for him. It seems Jesus is a bit surprised that someone so knowledgeable in his religion was unfamiliar with this. Then again, the religious tradition doesn't seem to have such references, but you'd think Nicodemus would have understood what was at issue.

Jesus still sees astonishment and confusion on the face of Nicodemus so decides to flesh out on what he had said earlier with regard to the Spirit. He uses an example of that which is most

similar to it, wind, this also rendered as *pneuma*. Everyone is familiar with the wind in motion or as it makes various sounds but don't have a clue as to its source or destination. Also it can vary in intensity from a gentle breeze to a hurricane. In other words, *pneuma* more often than not is very fickle. As for its movement, it's rendered by the two verbs *erchomai* + and *hupago*, the latter also as to go away or to depart. If *pneuma* is so unpredictable yet felt, it must be a very strange type of existence for a person to be born of the *Pneuma*, actually undesirable and even disturbing if one is unfamiliar with it. Although we don't have Nicodemus asking Jesus about this, surely he wondered to himself if such a person or persons do or can exist. If so, how would they comport themselves? One thing is certain. Such a person would be pretty much alone not knowing his origin nor destination. Hearing would be an important factor in his life yet even this cannot be grasped, just listened to.

This talk about something so ungraspable must have confused Nicodemus even more instead of helping him out. No small wonder that in vs. 9 he exclaims "How can this be?" Jesus didn't waste a moment responding or actually rebuking him. He puts the question in terms of another question. If Nicodemus is a teacher or *didaskalso* + as he had called Jesus in vs. 2, why is he ignorant (i.e., lacks *ginosko* +) of what Jesus had just explained with regard to the Spirit? Nicodemus must have felt that indeed he was put in his place. Although Jesus continues to speak with him, pretty much he fades away until he appears briefly in 7.50 and later to take away Jesus' body. Unlike our perception of the Pharisees, Nicodemus must be credited with being open to what Jesus had taught, else he would have been among those who had condemned him.

For the third time in a row in vs. 11 Jesus comes off with a double *amen* + to Nicodemus followed by "I say to you." He's singled out for this treatment, if you will, by reason of his high status, so Jesus wants to make sure not just he but his associates grasp what he's trying to communicate. Should Jesus succeed, he might...just might...have official Judaism on his side. This time, however, Jesus speaks in the first person plural which, in light of the threefold use of the double *amen* plus "I say to you," is designed to give his words greater authority, one which Nicodemus seems disposed to accept. He tells Nicodemus straight out that he doesn't receive "our" testimony, *lambano* and *marturia* + or witness even though "we" are speaking of what "we" know, *eidon* also as to see, to perceive. Jesus knows he can really lay it on thick with Nicodemus, a way of testing his resolve and hopefully to win him over.

In vs. 12 Jesus continues speaking in rather harsh words to Nicodemus who remains silent throughout, reverting to the first person singular. He contrasts talk about things of the earth with those of heaven, *epigeios* and *epouranios*. Note the preposition *epi* or upon prefaced to each in the sense of with regard to, "upon earth" and "upon heaven." It would be useless to speak of the former if they can't be grasped. Apply this to the latter? Might as well forget about it.

Next in vs. 13 Jesus shifts to speaking about his origin and says outrightly that he has come down from heaven and that no one except himself has ascended there. The two verbs are *katabaino* and *anabaino* (both +), that is, the prepositions *kata* and *ana* prefaced to the same verbal root *baino*. Jesus presents this as speaking of another person, that is, the Son of man which he mentioned last in 1.51 to Nathanael.

In vs. 14 compares the Son of man to when Moses had lifted up the serpent in the desert. The occasion? When the Israelites had complained about the manna as “worthless food” and were punished by the Lord with fiery serpents which bit them, causing quite a few casualties. As for the cure, the Lord himself told Moses “Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live” [Num 21.9]. “Fiery serpent” consists of two nouns, *nachash* and *saraph*, the former being the one which had tempted the woman and described as “more subtle than any other wild creature that the Lord God had made” [Gn 3.1]. As for the pole or *nes*, it also means a banner with military connotations. As for anyone wishing to be cured of his bite, the solution was simple. All one had to do was to look at this *nes*, *ra’ah* being the verb. Note the similar sound of *nachash* and *nashak*, serpent and to bite.

To replace the seeing of the bronze serpent, the verse at hand has Jesus offering life which is eternal, *aionios* essentially that which has no beginning nor end. However, such life is dependent upon believing (*pisteuo* +) in him.

Jesus continues speaking with Nicodemus, having moderated his tone because he could see that despite having rebuked him, he remained eager to learn. Jesus would have stopped then and there should Nicodemus show any hesitation. Actually what Nicodemus hears are the first detailed words as to Jesus’ identity, perhaps more than the four disciples whom Jesus had chosen. In back of Jesus’ mind was this man going to share what he had learned with his fellow Pharisees? Judging from the wider picture, even if he did so later on, it didn’t seem to have had much effect.

In vs. 16 Jesus reveals to Nicodemus his mission which consists of perhaps the best known verse from the New Testament. It’s one of those things that has become so familiar that we breeze right over it with little consideration. It can be examined in terms of three parts. The first is about God giving his own Son because he loved the world. The common verb *didomi* or to give connotes granting permission, appointing or even establishing. What springs directly from such *didomi* is the verb *agapao* (verbal root of *agape*) with regard to *kosmos* +. This verb which is so essential to Christianity can be rendered as to having affection and once taken as such, makes all the difference.

The second part is connected with the first by *hoste* or “so that” which suggests a given result being followed by what had just come before it. What follows is the giving of God’s Son who is *monogenes* + or only-begotten, his only one. The third and final part of vs. 16 begins with *hina* or “in order that” which shows something else which follows, that is, from *hoste*. This consists in any person (*pas* being all inclusive) who believes (*pisteuo* +) not so much the Son but conditionally, if you will, that is, literally into (*eis*) the Son. Such into-ness spills over into the following. Such a person will not perish but have life which is eternal or *aionios* +, the verb being *apollumai* which is more forceful and suggestive of something coming from without, that is, to experience destruction.

Vs. 17 follows directly upon *agapao*→*didomi* or loving and giving with regard to the Son and world respectively. That is to say, God sent the Son (here not as *monogenes*) into the world or *kosmos* +.

The verb is *apostello*, to dispatch in order to accomplish a mission. Compare with *didomi* above or God giving his Son who is *monogenes*. *Didomi* conveys the sense of permanence, that the world now possesses the only-begotten Son whereas *apostello* suggests giving but with the certainty of a return. I.e., the former is one-way whereas the latter is reciprocal.

As for the reciprocal *apostello* with regard to the Son, he is not to condemn the world but that it be saved through him. In other words, we have a contrast between what would be expected as *krino* or judging and therefore having a sentence delivered, most likely as harsh as possible, and *sozo* or saving the world. Both are prefaced with *hina* +, “in order that” which implies a result that will follow quickly. In other words, this saving comes about through the Son instead of *krino* coming through him. *Sozo* connotes both preserving as well as rescuing. At this early stage Jesus doesn’t go into details as to how this saving will take place. If he were to jump ahead and speak of his death and resurrection, clearly that would be too much for Nicodemus to comprehend. Not even the disciples grasped this despite having been with Jesus for three years. As for the Son, Nicodemus was able to associate the fact that Jesus was speaking of himself and not of someone else. That was more than enough to make him follow Jesus in the coming years closely but to do so in a discreet manner. Thus in a way Nicodemus is an ambivalent character.

Vs. 18 has the Son already present in the world engaged in his mission of saving people though someone like Nicodemus is unaware of what this consists of. A precondition for it—and *sozo* is later seen as preeminently tied in with the passion and death of Jesus—is believing in the Son, *pisteuo* + which leads to being “into (*eis*) the Son.” In other words, such active belief consists of an almost physical transfer from one place into another or better, from one condition into another. Right away such *pisteuo-eis* results in the person so doing it not to be condemned or *krino* +, that is, judged and having a sentence handed down to him. The exact opposite holds true for a person who does not believe, this being modified by into (*eis*) the name of the Son of God who is only-begotten. *Onoma* in this context is Jesus Christ which, of course, refers to the double nature of his person and hence mission, the one who both saves and is anointed.

While such talk indeed is not only refreshing but revolutionary, in vs. 19 Jesus speaks of judgment or *krisis*. Like the verbal root from which it’s derived (*krino*), *krisis* implies the giving of a sentence. Such *krisis* is not like anything one would expect. Rather, it consists of a presence-in, light or *phos* + which has come into the world and in 1.4 is identified with life. In other words, the light doesn’t have to do anything, just be. Even before this has taken place, men loved darkness (*skotos* more precisely as gloom), the verb *agapao* + being used, the same one with regard to God loving the world. Thus *agapao* can work in two opposite directions. At the root of this *agapao* with regard to gloom is that already the deeds of men were evil, *poneros* implying that which is worthless both socially and morally.

And so this precondition to what is *poneros* makes a person hate the light, *miseo* also as to have a strong aversion, keeping him away from it and not desiring to approach (*pros*, direction towards-which) it, the verb being *erchomai* +. Instinctively such a person knows that this aversion to *pros* will expose his deeds or *ergon*, also as occupation. The verb is *elegcho*, also as to scrutinize, to examine carefully.

In contrast to what vs. 20 describes, vs. 21 brings to conclusion what turns out to be a kind of monologue by Jesus to Nicodemus. As for Nicodemus, he hasn't uttered a word since vs. 4, his question as to how a person can be born a second time. As noted above, hopefully this Pharisee's position will influence his peers which unfortunately doesn't seem to have come true. This last verse before Jesus departs concerns a person who does what is true or more accurately, what is truth or *aletheia* +. Such true has a unique way of bringing him to (*pros*, again direction towards-which) the light. In this way his deeds that have been done in God will be clear to all, *ergazomai* being the verbal root of *ergon* + or deeds. The verb is *phaneroo* + also as to become visible with regard to that which previously had not been seen.

Vs. 22 shifts gears with the opening words "after this" or after the extended talk with Nicodemus which to him must have been both inspiring and confusing. Throughout it all he didn't ask Jesus a single question, having been effectively silenced when he asked about being born a second time. Nothing is said about Jesus' experience in Jerusalem for the Passover nor how long he stayed there. We can assume it was relatively short, he and his disciples (his mother and brothers not mentioned) having made their way to Judea. It is there that Jesus engages in baptizing, the details of which aren't given. However, keep in mind that Jesus' baptizing may have been different, John the Baptist having acknowledged this back in 1.33, "he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit" [1.33]. How that fits in is better left unsaid but simply put out there.

Apparently nearby John was continuing his practice at a place described as having much water. So we have two men...cousins...engaged in the same practice which must have been confusing to people, Jesus' disciples included. Vs. 24 expressly says that John had not yet been put into prison implying that he was being monitored closely whereas such was not the case with Jesus. Many must have wondered who was a disciple of whom?

Vs. 25 recounts a discussion (*zetesis*, fundamentally as search, investigation) between the disciples of John and a Jew with regard to purifying or *katharizmos*, this and the act of baptizing perhaps being confused. At once the discussion shifts to the disciples bothered over Jesus and his disciples engaged in their baptizing. When addressing John they referred to Jesus as the one to whom he had borne witness, *martureo* +. However, what really concerned them was not that Jesus was competing with John but that they, the disciples or ones complaining, were in danger of losing their job and hence their reputation by being associated with the Baptist. Although we have no word from Jesus' disciples, we can assume they felt the same.

This prompted John to provide a teaching moment, one that will for good settle the difference between John's mission and that of Jesus. This will go on for the remainder of the chapter. John's disciples address him as Rabbi, this the first time in the Gospel such a title is used with regard to John. Right away John saw through their self-centered concern and responded by saying that a person receives only what's given to him from heaven, *lambano* and *didomi* (both +). Then he gets right to the point, namely, that you...his very own disciples...who are bringing the complaint are bearing witness (*martureo* +) that their master isn't the Christ or the anointed one. Rather, from

the beginning they concurred with John that he had been sent before him, *apostello* + being the verb.

John now puts all this in the context of participants at a wedding. While the bridegroom has his bride, the friend (*philos*) of the bridegroom is standing near and listening to him, *histemi* and *akouo*. This friend is something like a best man, one who has a special role to play during the wedding ceremony itself. His readiness to be of service is indicated by a disposition to rejoice (*chairo*) at the bridegroom's voice which sums up *histemi* and *akouo*, making them one and the same. That is to say, his joy is now full or *pleroo* or brought to fulfillment. Implied is that the friend is ready to be of service to the bride should she request it. Such joy is mirrored in a spontaneous willingness to decrease while the bridegroom (and let's include the bride) is increasing, *auxano* and *elattoo*. We could say that while each is going their own separate ways, there's a violation of space and time, if you will. The further apart they get, the closer they become.

In vs. 31 John elaborates upon this *auxano-elattoo* as it pertains to Jesus Christ but without mentioning his name. There are two words for the English "above:" *anothen* + and *epano* (from above and above), both containing the preposition *ana* or above, up to. The latter has the preposition *epi*- prefaced to it, upon or literally "upon above." Using both with regard to Jesus is intended to show his divinity. In contrast to both aboves we have in the same verbs mention of earth or *ge* also as land with two uses of the preposition *ek* and reading literally "from the earth" in both instances. Compared with heaven and the two uses of "above," the person associated with (*ek*) the earth speaks of it, *laleo* here in the sense has the same language as the earth. Then John throws in that the one coming from heaven (*erchomai* + with *ek*) is above everything, *epano*. After all, *epano* = *ouranos* + or heaven.

In vs. 32 John speaks of himself without mentioning himself. That is to say, he puts himself as bearing witness or *martureo* + which is equivalent to having seen and having heard (*horao* and *akouo*, both +). While that is fine in and by itself, the tragedy is that no one has received this testimony, *lambano* and *marturia* (both +). Yet at the same time while John is baptizing, Jesus is doing the same thing nearby. Keep in mind the fact that John said Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit as noted above.

Vs. 33 continues as part of an extended sentence from the previous verse, namely, that despite the tragedy of not receiving John's testimony, there are some who do so. By reason of this, receiving John's testimony is equivalent to setting a seal, that is to say, that God is true (*alethes*). The verb here is *sphragizo* which is a kind of security measure to prevent tampering with a document. In sum, *sphragizo* and *marturia* are pretty much equivalent.

In vs. 34 John continues speaking about Jesus without mentioning his name, that is, to his own disciples. Chances are his words are going way above their heads just as it was between Jesus and Nicodemus. The one whom God has sent utters God's words, *apostello* and *laleo* (both +) with regard to *rhema* (plural). This noun refers to a thing or object compared with *logos*, word-as-expression. Such *apostello/laleo* ties into the way God gives the Spirit or *Pneuma* + which is not by

measure, *metros* with the preposition *ek*, literally as “from measure.” In other words, human measurement does not apply here simply because *Pneuma* refers to something which can’t be seen as one’s breath.

Vs. 35 continues from the previous one as an extended sentence. Note the connection between the Father loving the Son and his giving everything into his hand. In other words, *agapao* = *didomi* (both +). This should make it easier for a person to believe literally “into (*eis*) the Son,” *pisteuo* +, it being equated with life which is *aionios* +. The opposite of this *pisteuo*? The person who doesn’t obey the Son won’t see life which means that *peitho* (*apeitho* being the alpha privative) or obeying is on the same plane as seeing life, *horao* and *zoe* (both +). Unfortunately for a person who neither believes nor obeys will have God’s wrath coming to rest upon him. The noun is *orge*, also anger with the verb *meno* + which is more along the lines of remaining, of abiding made all the more burdensome by the preposition *epi*, “upon him.”

Chapter Four

With regard to the first verse of this chapter, compare the **RSV** translation with that of the **NIV**, the former being a bit off:

“The Pharisees heard that Jesus was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John.”

“Now when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John.”

The two opening words of this chapter serve to indicate a shift, *hos oun* or “now when.” That is to say, from the interaction between the disciples of Jesus and those of John the Baptist to Jesus entering Samaria. As for the word “gaining,” it’s the comparative of *polus*, much, many. Although the text says that Jesus was responsible for baptizing, right away John inserts that he wasn’t doing it himself but his disciples. Compare with 3.22: “After this Jesus and his disciples went into the land of Judea; there he remained with them and baptized.” However, Jesus leaves Judea and returned to Galilee. As for this comparison with John the Baptist, regardless of any difficulty in making sense of the text, the overall point is to show both the similarity and difference between what the two men represent. In sum, Jesus fulfills what John had been doing in his ministry of baptizing. This had been clear right from the beginning.

Once Jesus left Judea vs. 4 says that by necessity to get to Galilee he had to pass through Samaria, the verb *devo* also as to compel. This is putting it somewhat oddly, indicating that Jesus felt that by going this way...essentially a detour...he was about to accomplish an important part of his mission. The text sheds more light on this by saying more specifically that Jesus came to a town called Sychar. This place is significant for two reasons. The first insofar it symbolizes reconciliation between the two brothers Jacob and Esau or more specifically, a village near Shechem where Jacob celebrated this reconciliation by having “erected an altar and called it El-Elohe-Israel” [Gn 33.20] or God, the God of Israel. Perhaps in Jesus’ day part of this altar remained or in its place a monument to mark the spot. The second significance is with respect to land Jacob apparently gave

to his son Joseph prior to his death, a kind of will and last testament: “Moreover I have given to you rather than to your brothers one mountain slope (*shekem* in Hebrew or shoulder) which I took from the hand of the Amorites with my sword and with my bow” [Gn 48.22].

In addition to this, vs. 6 speaks of the well of Jacob being at Sychar, a place where Jesus decides to stop at the sixth hour or around noon just when the heat of the day was starting to take hold. He was tired due to his journey, *kopiaio* more as to be weary due to work and *hodoiporia*. The latter can be rendered more specifically as a journey on the road. Most likely he and his disciples planned to rest in some shade nearby before moving on. The prospect of spending the night in enemy territory was less than desirable. As for the location of this well, the NIV has a footnote saying that it’s “mentioned nowhere else in Scripture.”

In vs. 7 a woman comes to the well at the same time Jesus was there or just before it becomes too hot in order to draw water. She’s specifically mentioned as being from Samaria to emphasize where Jesus is currently in, territory essentially at odds with Israel. In other words, Jesus was in a place whose inhabitants were hostile to Jews and even worse, coming into contact with a woman from this alien territory. This sets off a lengthy discussion which continues through vs. 42. Being alone, Jesus figures it’s safe to ask the woman for a drink. Obviously he could have gotten it himself but used the situation for a specific teaching moment. The text adds deliberately that the disciples had gone into the nearby town to procure supplies. If they hung around, they would have caused unnecessary and unwelcome criticism, something Jesus wasn’t inclined to deal with.

This woman who remains unidentified is surprised that Jesus is asking her for a drink of water. How she recognizes him as most likely from Israel isn’t given. Perhaps it was his accent or he told her outright that he was passing through. She puts the awkward situation succinctly, namely, that Jews have nothing to do with Samaritans, *sugchoreo* consisting of the verbal root *choreo*, to make room or to give way prefaced with the preposition *sug-* or with. Instead of putting her at ease in what we could call a conventional fashion, Jesus surprises her with something she finds hard if not impossible to accept. In other words, she doesn’t know the gift (*dorea*) of God being extended to her along with the person who’s asking for a drink of water. If she was aware of this, she would have been disposed to receive water which is living. Implied is that because she doesn’t know, she might not get such water and regret it for the rest of her life.

The woman persists and confuses this living water with Jacob’s well which is very deep. We may take this as missing a golden opportunity because it’s so obvious, but it represents a literal way of looking at things just as people did back then. She asks if Jesus is greater than Jacob, a revered patriarch, supposedly responsible for having dug the well and providing water for his family and livestock. We can detect some sneering in the background on her part, for after all, Jesus is not a Samaritan but an alien.

The dialogue continues, again thankfully with no interference from the disciples. Jesus states the obvious, namely, that anyone who takes water from the well at hand will thirst again, this having special meaning in a desert environment where water is scarce. It differs radically from the water Jesus is willing to give to anyone which will quench thirst forever. Not only that, it will come from

a spring welling up to life which is eternal, literally “into (*eis*) that which is eternal or *aiōnios* +.” Without missing a beat the woman...the Samaritan...asks Jesus for this water but understandably hasn’t a clue as to what’s involved. Who wouldn’t make such a request? Having water which is eternal is one thing but to have a well springing up and never failing is quite another. That’s like comparing money from the bank with having the bank which contains the money.

In vs. 16 Jesus decides to put this woman to the test, asking her to bring to the well her husband. Right from the get-go she had a strong hunch that Jesus would put this to her and uttered the half-truth that she has no husband. We might tend to think rather crudely that Jesus could read her mind when she failed to acknowledge having had five husbands. After all, both were by this well dug by Jacob during the heat of the day. Such a holy spot, despite not being mentioned in scripture, had a role to play insofar that it disposed the woman to be “read” quite easily. In fact, without being conscious of the fact, she was waiting for someone to come along so she could resolve her irregular marital situation. All Jesus had to do was put the question to her, nothing more.

The woman said in a rather matter-of-fact manner that Jesus was a prophet, using the verb *theoreo* or to observe in a sustained sort of way. She was correct, but it took someone especially disposed to recognize this especially because Jews and Samaritans didn’t get along for centuries. She continues saying that her fathers or ancestors had worshiped on this mountain or Mount Gerizim. The verb is *proskuneo*, the root *kuneo* meaning to kiss or give reverence prefaced with the preposition *pros*, indicative of direction towards-which. “And when the Lord your God brings you into the land which you are entering to take possession of it, you shall set the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal” [Dt 11.29]. As a Samaritan, the woman subscribes to this whereas she recognizes that Jesus, being a Jew, Jerusalem is the place (*topos*) for such *proskuneo*. One such reference for this is Ps 122.3-4: “Jerusalem, built as a city which is bound firmly together, to which the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord.”

Jesus couldn’t contest that which is clearly stated in scripture, yet in vs. 21 he takes the initiative to break this centuries old impasse. While both have legitimate claims, Jesus sees in this woman an opportunity to acknowledge their age-old disagreement and resolve it. He states bluntly that she, a Samaritan, worships what she doesn’t know whereas we (the Jews) worship what we know. Use of the first person plural betrays not arrogance but speaking from a position of authority. In other words, he posits a juxtaposition between *proskuneo* and *eidon* (both +), the latter implying to see in the sense of perceive. Not only that, salvation or *soteria* comes from the Jews, this word suggestive of security and safety. A footnote in the **RSV** has a quote from Is 2.3 worth mentioning in this regard: “And many peoples shall come and say, ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.’ For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”

Without a doubt, the woman was first attracted to what Jesus said as well as having personal knowledge of her situation but quickly was taken aback when he spoke so authoritatively with regard to that perennial bone of contention, Samaritans vs. Jews. Any tension dissolves with the first word of vs. 23, “but” or *alla*. This changes everything. Jesus recognizes the two fundamental

ways of worshipping God and says that it is about to change. He speaks of an hour coming, *hora* + being a more specific event, a kind of honing in implied in *kairos* or special occasion. Jesus addresses her as “woman” which here is not unlike that double *amen* when he’s about to speak in a formal manner. She, by the way, could not help but pick up on this, having no other choice but to listen.

As for the coming (*erchomai* +) of this hour, Jesus says that already it is present, literally “and now is.” Indeed, as it stands right now, the woman—again, keeping in mind this is Samaria—is the only person alive who is witness to this hour. However, there’s an element of the future involved. Jesus continues by saying that true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The noun for such persons is *proskunetes*, obviously derived from *proskuneo*. God is the Father who belongs to both Samaritans and Jews. As for the *proskuneo* at hand, it is twofold: *pneuma* and *aletheia* (both +) or spirit and truth which transcends the two verses cited above with regard to Mount Gerizim and Jerusalem even though Jesus does not mention both places. While this is going on, the Father is active as well. He doesn’t sit idly but is actively seeking for persons to worship him, *zeteo* + with regard to *proskuneo*.

Although Jesus says that true worshipers worship the Father in spirit along with the truth, vs. 24 aligns this with the nature of the Father himself, that is, he is spirit or *pneuma*, this demanding that *proskuneo* be in accord with such a nature. While Jesus is aware that he’s speaking with one person, he knows that quickly word of this conversation will spread. As to how John knew this (he wasn’t privy to the conversation), he as a true worshiper would recognize it when dealing with Jesus even though the subject may not have been brought up directly.

In vs. 25 the woman acknowledges that the Messiah is coming, this term = *Christos* or Anointed One. Once he has come, he will show all things to us, first person plural possibly referring to his desire to include the Samaritans or even the Samaritans minus the Jews. The verb is *anaggello* or more precisely, to carry back (*ana*) information. Because of her confidence in this, Jesus figures it she’s ripe for revealing himself to her, that he is the Messiah or *Christos*.

Such a dramatic statement, one that can’t be over-estimated, is broken off immediately as it should by the appearance of the disciples which is well put by the first words of vs. 27, “just then” or literally “upon this” *epi touto*. Even from afar they could see Jesus was speaking with a woman—Samaritan isn’t mentioned, that being enough—and picked up their pace to find out what was going on. Curiosity, of course, go the better of them. As they drew closer, they didn’t bother asking. As vs. 28 puts it succinctly, the woman left her water jar just to get out of the way. After all, she learned quite a lot in such a short time.

Now the scene shifts to the woman running off to the townsfolk about her recent encounter with Jesus. Even though it was still around high noon, she couldn’t run fast enough, going from house to house, people preferring to be indoors to avoid the heat. Everyone was familiar with her situation, something not uncommon in village life, that she had been married five times. Nevertheless, they were so taken by her enthusiasm that they figured it was worth going out to the well and see if what she had claimed was true. Obviously they didn’t want to miss out on

something so momentous. Soon they'd find out the real story. And so everyone went to Jesus at the well despite it now being later and even hotter. As for the disciples, there's no record of their conversation with Jesus. We can assume they were surprised, even shocked and put in their place. Jesus told them to calm down and wait for the woman to return with most of the townsfolk. Now the stage was set for that which would change everything.

Vs. 31 has the disciples asking Jesus to take some nourishment, perhaps a way to shift the direction of the tense conversation they were having or to take the heat off them for having criticized the woman who was a Samaritan, a double-barreled condemnation in itself. Calling Jesus Rabbi was simply an added prop in this regard, if you will. Jesus didn't pay the slightest attention and came off with a statement not unlike one he had just given the woman. With her he spoke of water and with the disciples, of food. In the meantime the woman is going from house to house summoning the inhabitants of the village to come to the well.

As for the food (*brosis* also the act of eating), Jesus has to give, it's followed by a predictable question the disciples asked each other, that is, who had brought it without telling anyone. Jesus knew this would happen and took it in stride, not surprised that such a discussion was taking place among his followers. Now he puts this talk about food (*broma*, usually food which is solid) as being twofold: the will of him who sent him, *thelema* + and to accomplish his word, *teleioo* in the sense of bringing to completion *ergon* +. By now the disciples knew that that when Jesus spoke like that he was referring to the Father. At least they made that much progress.

In vs. 35 Jesus continues the theme of food, reminding the disciples of a common saying which he puts in terms of a rhetorical question, that is, the harvest follows after four months. In other words, the harvest cannot be rushed, but in the case at hand, it's too late. The harvest has arrived: "see how the fields are already white" as this verse continues. In vs. 36 Jesus amplifies his remarks on the theme at hand, namely, that the person who reaps will obtain the following two: he receives wages and gathers fruit for eternal life or literally "into (*eis*) eternal life," the adjective being *aiwnios* +. In this occasion it's a win-win situation. Both sower and reaper rejoice (*chairō* +) at having received the same reward. Jesus again brings up a common saying or *logos* + in vs. 37, namely, that One sows and another reaps."

The disciples figured they were being both educated as well as chastised, something they didn't expect. Jesus now applies this talk about sowing and reaping to themselves, that already he has sent (*apostello* +) them on an unusual mission. That consists of being sent to reap that which they hadn't labored or more specifically, will take over what other persons have labored. Obviously it seems completely unjust but attractive to the disciples. They wondered why this is so and that some day the tables might be turned. How would they react then? The disciples—again no mention of all twelve but by now assuming they numbered as such—can't help but think of the woman who soon will return with the entire village to meet Jesus. Might these people...outcast Samaritans...represent what Jesus is talking about? At this point things are left up in the air, deliberately so.

As for the Samaritans, in vs. 39 they aren't mentioned specifically as having come to meet Jesus though it's implied. John is more interested in whether or not they believe in him which they do, the verb being *pisteuo* +. So in a very real way this unidentified woman is a kind of apostle. The verse at hand puts this literally as "word of witness" where *logos* and *martureo* are as one. The selling point was that Jesus had told the woman everything she had done in her life. If not her, then why not they? Those belonging to Jesus thus move in and take over the initial work she had done for them, thereby reconciling the age-old division between Jew and Samaritan. If that can be overcome, why not the rest of mankind? It was way too early for that, but the stage had been set for it to become a real possibility. All in all it begins in vs. 40 where Jesus stayed with the Samaritans for two days. We can just imagine the conversations that took place which had dumbfounded the disciples who, like all Jews, were raised to consider Samaritans as virtual heretics.

As a result of the important, indeed vital, two day stay with the Samaritans, vs. 41 says that many more came to believe in Jesus compared with those in vs. 39 who believed the woman's testimony. The locals tell the woman-apostle as will be the case with future apostles that their belief in Jesus Christ rests in personal testimony as with the woman. Such belief is tied in with knowing (*eidon* +) that Jesus is Savior of the world. Note that they call him *Soter* instead of Messiah or *Christos*, the only use of this noun in the Gospel.

Vs. 43 has Jesus departing from the well of Jacob in Samaria to Galilee after being with the local inhabitants for two full days. The discussions must have been amazing, something today we'd designate as ecumenical. As for the woman-as-apostle got this underway, we can assume that some if not all five of her former husbands were present. All in all, there must have been an amazing reconciliation. Even though Jesus left and isn't recorded as having returned to Samaria, we can assume that his visit left a deep impression on the apostles accompanying him. Later on or after the resurrection and Pentecost, they made Samaria a high priority, already having sown the seeds of faith there.

In contrast to the unexpected hero-like welcome in Samaria, upon arriving in Galilee with joyous memories still echoing in his ears, Jesus testifies that a prophet has no honor in his own country, *time* also as value or price. The verb *martureo* + is used which seems rather formal and reflects the fact that Jesus was quite miffed at his reception. Nevertheless, the inhabitants did extend a welcome to him, *dechomai* fundamentally as to receive. This cool reception seems to be based upon the possibility that he would perform miracles, not that he was the Messiah as the Samaritans had come to recognize. Indeed, word must have reached those in Galilee ahead of Jesus' arrival that such was the case. Their response? Don't believe it but milk Jesus for what he's worth. Their point of reference? Many of them had been in Jerusalem during the Passover and saw what he had done there. On top of their minds was that he had caused quite a commotion in the temple courtyard. Some of the Galileans may have been manning the money changers' tables, etc., and were the subject of Jesus' wrath.

In light of this cool reception, Jesus decided to remain in Galilee but return to Cana where memory of him having provided wine was still fresh. That's all the text says, but we can assume he

and his disciples had received a warm welcome after his cool reception elsewhere. Then at Capernaum the son of a local official was ill, *basilikos* being an adjective connoting that which is royal and presumably a local politician, not one directly affiliated with the Roman occupiers. This official also heard about Jesus being in the vicinity so out of desperation he begged him to heal his son, *erotao* also as to put a question along with the preposition *pros* or direction towards-which, indicative of his desperation.

Jesus comes off with a rebuke which must have taken the official by surprise. Behind this was still feeling of having been miffed by the local inhabitants. Hence he exclaims that you—not so much the official proper but essentially all Galileans—have a need to see signs and wonders, *semeion* + and *teras*, the latter more as an omen or prodigy and thus more awe-inspiring compared with the former. Without them you won't believe. So instead of actually going to see the boy, Jesus tells the official not to worry, that his son will live which turned out to be true. As with the Samaritans, this official believed the *pisteuo* and *logos* that Jesus had spoken (both +), he by reason of his position of authority being a kind of outsider even if a native of Galilee.

While the official did believe Jesus, the remaining verses of this chapter intimate some lingering doubt or hesitation. That is to say, some of his servants told him of the good news which prompted him to ask more precisely the time his son had been healed. Note that the text doesn't say explicitly that he ran home as quickly as possible, just that "he was going down" [vs. 52] which indicates a normal pace; i.e., no rush to see his son. It's almost as though he didn't want to see what had happened and therefore have his hopes dashed prematurely. Only once the servants confirmed that the boy was healed at the seventh hour, the same time the official was with Jesus, did he believe along with his household. Actually vs. 50 has the man believing but more specifically the *logos* of Jesus. Now he had first-hand knowledge to back up the *logos* or report, a fact which if Jesus knew about, would have miffed him all the more. Such was his ambivalent experience in his home territory of Galilee. The first verse of the next chapter has him headed for Jerusalem.

Chapter Five

Jesus couldn't get out of Galilee fast enough, admittedly taken aback at not having been recognized as Messiah as had been the case with the traditionally hated Samaritans. Surely the Galileans got word of this recognition and used it as another occasion to sneer at them for having been so gullible. Just think. Imagine the Samaritans recognizing a human being as God or close to it. Now Jesus goes up to Jerusalem for an unspecified feast (*eorte*). A footnote in the NIV says it could have been either the Passover or Feast of Tabernacles. The same footnote goes on to list three occasions of the Passover, a way of calculating the duration of Jesus' ministry: 2.13-23, 11.55 and 12.1. If the *eorte* at hand was the Passover, there had been a year's interval between the first one or when he passed through Samaria and remained in Galilee. However, it doesn't seem to have been long because he headed off to Jerusalem not wanting to cause any trouble.

Upon entering the city Jesus heads for the pool of Bethesda (Bethzatha in the **RSV**) where people with a wide variety of physical afflictions were in the habit of gathering. Supposedly the water of that pool stirred from time to time signaling a time to enter and hopefully be cured. The verb *tarasso* means to move by shaking as well as to trouble. There must have been far more than usual, some hoping to receive alms from those coming for the Passover. Among all those hanging around as well as their attendants was a man who had been there an incredibly long time, thirty-eight years. Vs. 6 has Jesus putting a question to him in a somewhat strange but direct fashion, that is, asking if he wants to be healed. He responds by saying he has no one to bring into the water when it stirs up. Note that by almost ignoring the question or better, not having listened to Jesus, he expects nothing to happen. Each day of his life bordered upon losing hope but still was hanging in there. As for the question, indeed a nice gesture from an apparently nice man, but that's it. He knew from being at the pool for thirty-eight long years someone would have helped him or that he would simply give up and go home. However, the latter was no longer an option. By now this place by the pool had become his home. In other words, he had become a fixture of sorts but an unfortunate one.

Jesus understood this all too well so in vs. 8 he decides to tell this man to rise, take his pallet and walk which he did and disappears from the scene until a few verses later on. You'd think that after thirty-eight years the man would have thanked Jesus but did not. That's the sad part about this incident. Nevertheless the healing didn't go unnoticed by others who immediately must have swarmed all over Jesus. It so happens that it was the Sabbath when Jesus had cured this man. When some Jews got wind of this cure, they were outraged. In reality some were not, for how often does such an extraordinary event occur? Chances are the outrage was feigned, an opportunity to get at Jesus. These men aren't mentioned as specific religious authorities such as Pharisees but most likely were of that cast. They put a rhetorical question to the just cured man about carrying around his pallet on the Sabbath. Apart from this ridiculous statement fabricated to bring an equally ridiculous accusation against Jesus, you wonder why he was carrying it. You'd think that after thirty-eight years of laying on the pallet he'd discard it at once. Perhaps he wanted to keep the pallet as a reminder or was so accustomed to it that he carried it around without giving a thought.

The Jews asked the cured man who had cured him, knowing well it was Jesus but responded by saying he hadn't a clue due to people crowding in all around. Perhaps this accounted for him not showing gratitude, though that doesn't seem to be the case. Anyone who hadn't been able to walk for thirty-eight years and then got up certainly would seek out the person responsible for this miracle of miracles. As noted, the cure took place at the Passover or Feast of Tabernacles when the area about the pool was filled beyond capacity. And so the situation of finding who was responsible for this was left unresolved. A bit later Jesus found this man in the temple or more precisely, the temple courtyard, the same place where he had chased out vendors during the last Passover (cf. 2.13 +). He could have returned there, disappointed that what he had done the last time had no effect whatsoever. However, he figured it was more important to find the man he had cured, having gotten word as to him being grilled by the Jews. Actually John gives no reason why Jesus takes the pains to find out. Did he feel miffed as not being thanked? Once Jesus located the man, he told him not to sin anymore. It's a rather strange command. The first thought that comes

to mind is what kind of sin this man would be capable of or had been capable of during the past thirty-eight years?

After this encounter or when the text says that the man didn't respond to Jesus, he simply goes away, almost in a casual fashion, and tells the Jews. He does this on his own either not knowing their hostility toward Jesus or out of a desire to see Jesus get in trouble for some perverted reason or the other. Perhaps in back of his mind was that he was laid out for a long thirty-eight years with no one to help. Surely Jesus had visited Jerusalem during part of that time but did nothing for him. The reason why the Jews despised Jesus was, of course on the shallowest of all pretexts, that he cured the man on the Sabbath. Because they were too cowardly to approach Jesus at this moment they decided to take it out the man he cured, that is, rebuking him for carrying his pallet on the Sabbath. In essence, they were jealous and too proud to admit it.

Finally Jesus came across the Jews amid the commotion of the temple courtyard and in vs. 16 took the initiative to confront them. It'd come as no surprise that the cured man stood not far off to see what would happen, he being too chicken to stand up for Jesus. Also he feared that what they might do to Jesus they might do to him. Jesus answered the only way he was capable of, that is, in vs. 17 he says that his Father still is work just like he is right now. Note the small word *eos* or "until." It connotes the end of a period of time or continuance. Here *eos* with regard to the verb *ergazomai* (it's used twice, also as to do or to accomplish) means that the Father has a definite end in mind but hasn't attained it yet. Even more importantly, both the Father and Jesus are engaged in the same *ergazomai*. Then vs. 18 states the obvious as pointed out already, so obvious it almost doesn't have to be recorded. All the more the Jews sought to kill Jesus, *apokteino* also to eliminate. The Jews now had two reasons for this. In addition to violating the Sabbath, Jesus called God his own Father. The latter makes him equal to the Father, one of the worse things anyone could claim. They could tell that Jesus wasn't out of his mind, for if that were evident, they wouldn't be paying such close attention to him. Now the Jews are hell-bent of tripping up Jesus or rather, let him trip himself up by continuing to speak as such.

From vs. 19 to the end of this chapter John presents Jesus as giving witness to his relationship with the Father, the verb *apokrinomai* meaning to answer or to reply. Actually he prefers the more formal title compared with, for example, "my Father." In a way, credit is due to those who allow him to speak so long without interruption. Perhaps their intent was to let him say as much as possible, for the more he speaks of the Father, the more ammunition they have and the more ammunition, the quicker they can convict him. While this is going on you can't help but wonder about Nicodemus, how he fits in. we can be sure that he kept close attention but remained silent. As for Jesus speaking throughout these verses, he prefers "the Son" over, for example, "his Son" which would apply more directly to that of the Father.

From the Jews' point of view the ammunition Jesus provides is the way he speaks with authority, for example, unabashedly using the double *amen* + along with "I say to you" which he has done earlier. Parallel to vs. 17 with the Father and Son working or *ergazomai* is *poieo* + or to do as used with regard to both persons in vs. 19. In the case at hand Jesus adds vision to the mix, that is to say, what the Son sees the Father with respect to his *poieo*, the verb *blepo* + being used, to have

the faculty of sight. At face value this seems to be a slavish copying but is far from it. It's a union of two occasions of *poieo*, of cooperation for such *poieo*. As soon as the Son sees the Father—as soon as *blepo*→*poieo*, *poieo* becomes from both, not working independently nor parallel to each other.

The words “nothing of his own accord” (*aph' heautou ouden*, literally ‘from himself nothing’) applied to the Son sound like the Son is powerless or like a robot. The same applies to John's further words about the Father's *poieo* and the Son following in his steps. A key word here is the adverb *homoios* or “likewise.” It bridges the *poieo* between Father and Son through the Son's *blepo*. Actually there's something almost humorous about this. The Son is so attentive to the Father, following his every move, that nothing can distract him. It's a type of focus that humanly speaking can be sustained only as with regard to that special relaxed attention we see among children playing games and copying things from the adult world.

Vs. 20 begins with the important *gar* or “for” with reference to the Father's relationship with the Son, carrying over the *blepo* just mentioned to *phileo* or loving him. At first you'd think the verb *agapao* + would be used from which *agape* is derived. However, John wishes to show a close familial association between the two, *philos* + being a noun derived from *phileo* meaning a friend. Thus we have a more tender relationship outlined here. Then there follows naturally the Father showing the Son, *deiknumi* implying a pointing out or exhibiting. This is more intimate than the *blepo* of vs. 19 where the Son sees what the Father is doing. While all this is transpiring continually, the Father has in store greater works (*ergon* +) than these to show the Son. The whole purpose is to cause us to marvel, *thaumazo* + also to be impressed with regard to *ergon* or works which can infer the coming passion, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus.

In vs. 21 Jesus brings up a thorny issue which must have sent the Jews listening to him over the top. We don't have their reaction but easily can imagine their faces becoming red with rage, wanting to jump on him and kill him on the spot. The verse begins with not so much a comparison but a parallel intimated by *hosper* or “for” which also can be translated more fully as “just as.” It's followed or better, amplified, by *houtos* + along with *kai* + rendered as “so also.” The issue at hand is the resurrection. There are two verbs associated with the Father, that is, *hosper*: *egeiro* + and *zoopoieo*, to raise and to give or better with the root *poieo* in mind, to make...to make life. We can assume that first by necessity comes *egeiro* (as dead, if you will) followed immediately by *zoopoieo* or making-life. Also note the way this is presented. It is as though the Father is raising the dead and giving life on a constant basis, cranking it out, to put it somewhat crudely but not far off the mark.

Next in vs. 21 we have that which follows *hosper* or *houtos* (so also) which is related directly to the Son. Now it's the Son who gives life or *zoopoieo* to whom ever he pleases (*thelo* also as to wish or to desire) which derives directly from the Father doing the same. The way it's phrased is quite charming, really. We have the Father's *zoopoieo* functioning in a general sort of way, and along comes the Son who decides to specify it. That is, he takes the Father's *zoopoieo* from him and does so freely and respectively but says something like let me do it my way which you'll discover to be an improvement, the role of *thelo* playing a key role in all this. Now the Son, with the Father

looking on with great enthusiasm, starts *zoopoieo* or starts metering it out accordingly...this one first then that one followed by the other and so forth down the line. Obviously he doesn't crank this out in a tedious manner. However, the way he carries it out is put this way to reveal how both Father and Son operate as well as cooperate. Detailing it as such makes it all very delightful.

Vs. 22 moves on and describes a similar reciprocal interaction between Father and Son, this time as it pertains to judging or *krino* +. For various reasons we've come to conceive divine judging where most of the time the Father is constantly angry with us. However, the verse at hand doesn't play into that ingrained image. What's such a relief—and you don't hear about this at all—is that the Father doesn't judge at all. It isn't his thing which implies he has a certain aversion to it and doesn't wish our distorted opinion of him to think that he's on a mission to get us. Instead, the Father has given not just judgment (*krisis* +) but all judgment to the Son. Addition of "all" means he wants nothing to do with it. By reason of his close relationship the Son he understands this clearly and freely takes it on.

It would be a very special privilege to witness this handing over of judgment, of passing it on. Though not spelled out, we can assume the Father said something like, look. Do what you want with it. I'll stand aside. The Son realizes fully that the Father isn't shirking his responsibility but is watching. In other words, the Son will judge in accord with this innate aversion of the Father to pass judgment. Surely awareness of this aversion will affect the way the Son judges. Always he'll have one eye looking over his shoulder to make sure he's doing what he's supposed to do. One wonders how in the concrete the Jews listening to Jesus are taking this. Their perception of God is closely bound up with him as judge. Indeed, this was blasphemy to the extreme to even question this. To them, Jesus' words has God forfeiting something so close to his God-ness and giving it to a mere mortal, the man Jesus standing before him. It's a marvel they didn't stone him on the spot.

Vs. 23 continues as an extended sentence beginning with *hina* or "so that." The purpose of this adverb is to show the result of the interaction between Father and Son. That is to say, everyone will now honor the Son, *timao* also to have reverence and for good reason. The judging originally in the hands of the Father now has been transferred successfully to the Son. That doesn't mean things will be easier but heralds a lack of harshness if it were just the Father. If left to his own devices, he'd come on strong, perhaps too strong for most of us. For examples of this, consider the many times God has interacted with Israel. The transfer in and by itself to the Son doesn't water down this divine judgment but fleshes it out, if you will.

Connecting the two divine persons in this verse is *kathos* translated as "even as." Once people have acclimated themselves to judgment in the hands of the Son, they can give due honor to the Father for his humility, humility insofar as he recognizes the limitations of his transcendence. This is putting it a bit awkwardly, but an overabundance of transcendence doesn't get you much recognition...glory and honor, yes...but in the end, isolation. Note too that vs. 23 ties the Father in with the Son through the words "who sent him." *Pempo* fundamentally means to commission and here intimates a gesture of delegation. Through such delegation the Father can remain transcendent as he's always been yet incorporate created beings which do not share his transcendence. Indeed, this is a great relief because he had been in the habit of lording it over

Israel when she had gone astray. This shift, of course, is something the Jews dealing with Jesus at the moment cannot and will not acknowledge.

And so vs. 23 concludes with another sentence which stands in and by itself. Once again Jesus brings up the whole question of honor (*timao* +). Actually it's a kind of double negative where a positive doesn't result and has universal application. The honor not given to the Son works carries over into not giving the same honor to the Father. Both come up empty-handed. Thus the reverence Jesus has in mind is withheld deliberately, even spitefully. Implied is that those whose duty it is to give reverence—that is, the Jews now present—know what it's involved and simply turned their backs on it. In this way they do not differ in the slightest from their ancestors. It should be kept in mind that while the Jews are an example in this, it's applicable across the board to everyone.

With regard to this discourse, vs. 25 has the second of three references concerning the double *amen* + and "I say to you," the last instance being in vs. 19. As noted elsewhere, when Jesus speaks as such, it's of supreme importance. Here it's with regard to hearing Jesus' word, *akouo* and *logos* (both +) or the *logos* coming from the *Logos*. Furthermore, both are intimately bound up with believing the one who sent him (*pisteuo* and *pempo*, both +), obviously the Father who isn't mentioned. So we have Jesus-as-Son speaking which, of course, means he's the center of attention, the one the Jews have before their eyes, but essentially is not this center of attention but the Father. Despite Jesus talking a lot about him, the Father remains out of sight. In essence hearing with regard to Jesus and believing with regard to the Father resolve this apparent conundrum. The result? A person is in possession of life which is eternal or *aionios* +, this happening instantaneously.

The second half of vs. 24 says of the person with life eternal or *aionios* + that he doesn't come into judgment, the verb *erchomai* + along with the preposition *eis* and *krisis* +. Instead, he has passed from death to life, *metabaino* literally as to pass over (*meta*, after in the sense here as beyond). Note the two similar verbs and their differences, *erchomai* and *baino* or to come and to walk or to step. As for the latter, another use of the preposition is operative, from (*ek*) death *eis* life with *eis* representing a final arrival. So the Father who's looking on must be pleased. He has relinquished judgment as noted in vs. 22, having handed it over to the Son. Interestingly the Son doesn't judge either according to vs. 24. the person who hears his *logos* and believes in the Father having eternal life. You'd think he'd be passing from life into life but not so. True if it were from life into Life. Rather, he is passing from death into Life. That means life as we know it is equivalent to death. It's a complete reversal of how we've been raised to think, life first followed by death.

Vs. 25 has the third and final double *amen* + and "I say to you," this one coming in the verse after the last one. That means Jesus is serious...doubly so...as to what he communicating. Although the Jews are primarily involved, somehow somewhere his words managed to reach a larger audience. While it can argued that someone other than the Jews were present, an alternate is that John as sensitive to Jesus as *Logos* was able to record his *logoi* without physically being present. It's not a question of magic but of how the *Logos* and *logoi* work hand-in-hand even at a distance.

Vs. 25 is concerned not so much with time in the ordinary sense but as an hour or *hora* + which is coming (*erchomai* +), the same *hora* Jesus spoke of with the Samaritan woman in 4.21. There it's in conjunction with worship, the context being that neither the Samaritans nor Jews have a prerogative as to where it is to be done. Here, however, *hora* is both coming as well as already present, *nun estin* or "now is." This union of *erchomai* and *nun estin* is with regard to when the dead will hear the voice (*phone*) of the Son of God. In other words, Jesus isn't speaking of the living but of the dead who despite being as such, nevertheless will come alive. So we have both the present tense and the future tense operative simultaneously. That means one has to be situated within the present *hora* to become aware of the future or the dead to hear the Son's voice. Thus as soon as a person hears Jesus' *phone*, not *logos*, which means the actual organ which produces the *logos*, life results. All in all it's very simple, almost too much so, to gain if one desires to pass from death to life in accord with vs. 24.

Vs. 26 begins with *hosper* + as in vs. 21 with the corresponding *houtos* + or "so also." It's with regard to the Father raising the dead and the Son doing the same. Surely Jesus was aware of the parallel, the verse at hand saying that the Father has life (*zoe* +) in himself, that it's a constitutive part of his being which, of course, his identity as Father. He is completely open to sharing this life with the Son, hence the *houtos* which is indicative of the fact that life in and by itself cannot be contained but shared. While the verb *didomi* + or to give is in the past tense, it means this giving is constant. And so both Father and Son share the exact same *zoe* and in the exact same amount and kind to put it in such terms.

Vs. 27 continues as an extended sentence beginning with the conjunctive *kai* + with the intent of fleshing out, as it were, the *hosper-houtos* relationship just described. Here we have a second *didomi* + or giving as applied to the Son by the Father, *didomi* being more along the lines of sharing. Here it's with regard to the Father's authority or *exousia* + to make judgment, *poieo* and *krisis* (both +). It rests on the fact that the one to whom this is given is the Son of man. Theology now calls him the Second Person of the Trinity which in and by itself it's more than sufficient reason requiring no further explanation.

When hearing of this relationship between the Father and Son (as the Jews see it, Father = God and Son = Jesus as man) there's a spontaneous tendency to marvel (*thaumazo* +). However, in vs. 28 Jesus says there's no need for this. Again he speaks of the hour or *hora* +, the same context as in vs. 25, as it pertains to something that will happen in the near future. That is to say, those who are buried will hear the voice (*akouo* and *phone*, both +) of the Son of man. What this voice says isn't specified but most likely will be something akin to "Lazarus, come out" Jesus will utter later in 11.43. We can assume that this voice or *phone* will convey a *logos* which only the *Logos* has authority to utter. Note that the verse at hand has "all" who are in the tomb, not just those whom the Son or Father had singled out beforehand.

The universal nature of this *phone* becomes evident in vs. 29 which follows as a continuous sentence. Those who have done good as well as evil will come forth, *ekporeuo* connoting a marching out as in a procession. The two adjectives are the common *agathos* and the less familiar *phaulos*, the latter intimating that which is of an inferior grade and lacking proper moral behavior.

The two groups will have two separate destinations. The first will enter into (*eis*) the resurrection of life whereas the second into (*eis*) the resurrection of judgment or *krisis* +. Thus resurrection or *anastasis* is step #1 followed by step #2, each being diametrically opposed to each other. So before this, the dead are...well...dead. Returning to life doesn't mean automatic bliss but is a preparatory stage for one's final destination. No temporal duration exists here, but it's put this way for clarification.

In vs. 30 Jesus continues to speak of his relationship as Son with the Father though here doesn't mention him explicitly. He can do (*poieo* +) nothing on his own or literally "from myself," "authority" not being in the Greek text. At first glance that sounds somewhat subservient and at worse, as though he has no identity of his own. This misperception can be enhanced by Jesus saying that he judges as he hears, *krino* and *akouo* (both +). Taking this literally, the Son doesn't see the Father; his judging depends upon hearing or paying close attention to his words, *logoi* being presumed. This attentiveness makes Jesus' judgment just (*krisis* + and *dikaiois*). The basis for such confidence is that Jesus attributes seeking the will (*thelema* +) of the Father who had sent him, not his own. John doesn't get into the exercise of this judgment but is more intent upon locating it. Those who will be subject to it will find out for themselves where they ultimately land.

Actually the words Jesus says of himself are ideal for a human judge, worth examining in detail and applying in real life. He puts his function in terms of giving witness, *martureo* +. If it's self-centered then it has no value, but if focused upon what Jesus calls "another one" (*allos*) who's bearing witness to him, that witness or *marturia* by its very nature is true. So in many ways Jesus is off the hook with regard to passing judgment. He does it not as a robot with full awareness of the one who had sent him. Again, at this point the Father is not mentioned which makes Jesus' words all the more enticing and mysterious. Also we get a sense of what his judging will be like though we lack the details.

In vs. 33 Jesus turns attention directly to the Jews with whom he has been speaking all along thus far. He reminds them of how they had sent a delegation (spies is more like it) to John the Baptist, *apostello* + with *pros*. While John doesn't dwell on their interaction with him nor the report they brought back to Jerusalem, he points out that he had borne witness to the truth, *martureo* and *aletheia* (both). At this point Jesus has no need to expound further, the Jews knowing exactly what he's talking about which, of course, makes them uncomfortable. As for this testimony, it's mentioned right off the bat in 1:7: "He came for testimony, to bear witness to the light." Here, of course, is the noun *marturia* and the verb *martureo* (both +). Thus for John as well as for Jesus the act of giving testimony is very important. Actually, it's central to the mission and identity of both men. Implied is that both have seen and have heard first hand something of great value and are in the process of delineating it. That's all they can do. Those listening to them can either accept or reject it which puts Jesus at ease insofar as he following a predetermined plan. This isn't entirely accurate but a way to say that Jesus is more concerned about having the Father work through him which allows him that ease lacking in persons who act and think they represent the ultimate responsibility.

In vs. 34 Jesus clarifies that the testimony he receives is not coming from man, the preposition *para* suggestive of alongside, in the company of. Thus being on the same plan as humans in the constitutive sense is avoided. I.e., Jesus is present among men yet not of them. In the same verse Jesus continues with a second sentence of sorts beginning with *alla* + or “but.” It’s a way spoken with due clarity and sincerity that Jesus intends the testimony he receives (*lambano* +) not from man but from the Father is to save (*sozo* +) you, those right there in front of him. Thus *marturia* = salvation and salvation = Jesus, his proper name being exactly that. While this indeed is wonderful, there’s the question of how a person takes this into himself. Jesus doesn’t get into that now but will do so on the eve of his death. There he will introduce the Holy Spirit who will be the one to effect all this.

Jesus acknowledges that you—including those present who had gone out to see John the Baptist—came away impressed both by his message and seeing all those whom he had been baptizing. While some of the Jews had been spies with the intent to thwart him, they returned with a change of heart. Jesus speaks longingly of the Baptist in vs. 36 almost as though he were reminiscing about him as already dead. There’s a certain truth to this. While John isn’t dead yet, his testimony...his *marturia*...lies in the past in the sense of having been fulfilled. Those speaking with Jesus need to know the transference of this *marturia*, if you will, which he has been making as plain as day but is not getting through to them, try as hard as he might. While unfortunate, in the long term that’s fine insofar as his words are being recorded and saved for future members of the church he will establish through the apostles.

In the second half of vs. 36 Jesus makes appeal not so much to any testimony of his nor to the Father but to works or *ergon* + which had been given to him. We could spell this out by imagining the Father handing over to the Son these *ergon*. On one hand their ownership has now changed hands, so to see them is to see what once had been the Father’s property. Did the Son alter them? No, but preserved them in their original form but added his own twist. As for such works, they remain incomplete and are not fully fleshed out. This intimates that Jesus’ mission has to continue for a while, hence the present tense of *teleioo* +, to accomplish or bring to completion. The Jews pick up on this not fully but have an overall idea that they’re not done with Jesus...yet. After all, Jesus’ talk about witness and the Father has to become more visible so they can decide what to do with him. Actually Jesus is in the very act of doing such *ergon* which the Father has sent the Son to bear witness. The verb *apostello* + is in the past whereas the verb *martureo* + is in the present. The latter serves to bring the agent doing the former into visibility, if you will, which is why the subject at hand is *ergon*, things done out there for all to see.

To date Jesus has been speaking freely about the Father, a mysterious entity who to the Jews may or not be the same as the Lord in their religion. Now in vs. 37 Jesus feels the need to bring more to the fore this enigmatic entity. The Father had sent me (the Son), *pempo* + being the verb which here is the same or almost the same as having borne witness (*martureo* +) concerning me, *peri* being the preposition. This is pretty straight-forward and ties in what Jesus had said already, that is, simply getting it out there. Now he switches to something quite intriguing. He uses the second person but as singular, not plural, which makes his words personal, more to the point by presenting two pairs of negatives. You haven’t heard his voice nor have you seen his form: *akouo-*

phone (both +) and *eidōs-horao* +. As for *eidōs*, that can be taken as a shape or structure as it appears to someone. So far so good for those listening.

Vs. 38 continues as an extended sentence connected with the conjunctive *kai* + or “and.” Although the Father is completely transcendent which would be in accord with traditional Jewish belief, Jesus says that his listeners don’t have his word abiding in them. They don’t practice what they are preaching. The verb *meno* + is more along the lines of remaining with regard to *logos*. We could assume that when Jesus is speaking of *logos* he’s referring to the *Torah*. The precondition for this *meno*? Believing (*pisteuo* +) the one whom the Father has sent. The verb *apostello* + as to send has special significance for Jesus. It’s part of his very nature to be as such and in a way, removes any burden from himself and puts it on the Father.

In vs. 39 Jesus observes a practice dear to those he’s with, namely, their searching the scriptures, *eraunao* also as to apply oneself diligently to learning. Nothing wrong here. The same with thinking that such searching is equivalent to life which is *aiōnios* + or eternal. Thus in a sense, searching is eternal or pretty close to it. As for the verb *dokeo*, it involves supposing, of approaching a given fact or truth on the evidence of one’s ability only and without relying on any outside source.

As pretty much a second sentence in this same verse, the conjunctive *kai* + almost slides in there unexpectedly. That is to say, Jesus says the scriptures are bearing witness or *martureo* + concerning (*peri*) himself. So we have here Jews for whom study of *Torah* is important—it’d come as no surprise that they had done it earlier in the day—and Jesus who is the scripture in and by itself. To *eraunao* one is to *erauno* the other, the two being completely interchangeable.

Vs. 40 continues as an extended sentence, short and to the point. It begins with the conjunctive *kai* + translated aptly as “yet” which betrays a certain frustration as well as sadness on Jesus’ part. The Jews are unwilling (*thelo* + also as to wish, to desire) to come to Jesus in order to have life. Note that the Jews are already present, that is, physically. It’s another thing to come to Jesus, *pros* indicative of directness. As for the life he offers, it’s just that plain and simple, not described as eternal. He as such life already is eternal.

Now follow two short verses, again, right to the point. Jesus doesn’t receive glory from men, (*doxa* +) which judging by the context of these verses, he isn’t getting anyway. Vs. 42 begins with *alla* + or “but” which reveals a certain feeling of having been rebuffed. That is to say, Jesus is fully aware that the Jews lack the *agape* + of God. To lack that is equivalent to having no soul. Jesus’ knowledge of this is right out there for anyone to grasp.

In vs. 43 Jesus claims to have come in the name of his Father, the personal pronoun being used instead of the definite article which had been the case until now. Actually the last case is vs. 17 with none before that. Such a statement is not unlike one coming you’d expect from a newly appointed ambassador presenting his credentials. However, those to whom he comes do not accept (*lambano* +) them or rather, do not accept Jesus himself. Jesus compares this more or less

formal presentation to someone who comes but does so in his own name. That person the Jews will automatically accept (*lambano* +).

By now or towards the end of his discourse Jesus becomes frustrated. He comes off with the first of two rhetorical questions, the second being this chapter's last verse. As for the one at hand or vs. 44, Jesus questions how any of those present can believe (*pisteuo* +) when attempting to do two opposite things at once. That consists of receiving glory from each other on one hand and not seeking the glory (*doxa* +) that comes from God. The two verbs involved are *lambano* + and *zeteo* (both +) or to receive and to seek. Each is with the preposition *para*, essentially as from alongside of. The first verb is with *allellos* and the second verb with *Theos* modified by the adjective *monos*: one another and God only or better, God alone. Any response, of course, is impossible, and the Jews to whom the question is posed know it at once which infuriates them though they keep quiet about it.

By now we're familiar with Jesus speaking pretty much as being on the same plane as the Father. In vs. 45 he elevates this, the Father = God with whom Moses interacted. In light of this, freely he relinquishes any desire to accuse or lay charge against anyone, the verb being *kategoreo*. Moses will step in and do this because the Jews have put their hope in him, *elpizo* with the preposition *eis*, literally "hoped into him." Such hope lies in the fact that Moses is author of *Torah* and therefore just as present to the Jews as he had been when physically alive. Jesus doesn't deny this, of course, but says that if they believed (*pisteuo* +) in Moses, they'd have the same belief in Jesus.

Before any objection could be thrown out at Jesus, he says that Moses had written of him. That put an overwhelming desire into the Jews to shut down Jesus on the spot. Instead of rushing to kill him, they restrained themselves to put it off momentarily. Of chief concern was to go through the *Torah* and pick out passages which Jesus mentioned. The result was determined beforehand. They could find nothing (or perhaps better, would not find anything) not because Moses failed to write of Jesus, but they were incapable of using their traditional way of reading *Torah* to see his relationship with it.

And so Chapter Five comes to a conclusion with the second rhetorical question Jesus proposes, this too not being able to evoke an adequate response. If the Jews don't believe what Moses had written, how can they believe the *logoi* of Jesus who is the *Logos*? In other words, Jesus is paralleling the *Torah* with him as divine *Logos*, something the Jews were not willing to accept. Over the centuries we've come to championing Jesus while condemning the Jews. However, if we put ourselves in that historical circumstance, they were perfectly correct to let Jesus have it. All in all this boils down to that idea of *marturia* or witness which dominates Chapter Five. The transmission of the *marturia* of Jesus to other persons essentially is risky business. The chances of it actually reaching not the ears of those present but their minds is slightly about zero percent. This is true now as it had been two thousand (and more) years ago.

Chapter Six

As insignificant as it seems, this new chapter begins with two ways of expressing Jesus' departure from both the commotion of Jerusalem during an unspecified feast as noted in 5.1 and his interaction with the Jews. It's expressed by the words "after these things" (singular in the RSV) and the adverb *peran*, "the other side" with respect to the Sea of Galilee. We have no clear cut idea of why Jesus went there, but that's insignificant to the teaching he's about to offer in this chapter. One thing is certain. He went as far away from Jerusalem as possible, putting a distance between him and the capitol.

Note that Jesus didn't come alone. It seemed he wanted to express himself more concretely and freely than he did with the Jews in Jerusalem. Exposure to the so-called multitude or *ochlos* revealed an ideal occasion for this, they not being sophisticated or well versed in religious matters as had been the case in Jerusalem with religious authorities. As for *ochlos*, that sounds pretty much like an unruly mob of something close to it. The Greek text has the adjective *polus* modifying the noun, much or great as in number. The reason for this throng is obvious. In Jerusalem they saw the signs (*semeion* +) Jesus had done, that is, having cured those who were diseased, *astheneo* usually applicable to a debilitating illness. Such persons who have followed Jesus all the way from Jerusalem must have made quite a ragtag procession. Surely the Roman and religious authorities couldn't help but take notice. Instead of intervening, they were relieved that Jesus and they were leaving the capitol. Now things could get back to normal after the feast at hand.

Jesus catches sight of a mountain which stands out among the others and decides to make use of it because it's more accessible for the crowds. Also it's a natural stage where his voice can reach down the slope more easily as he turned from one side to the other. Present, of course, were his disciples who could help relay his words further down the slope. Once Jesus had ascended the mountain with the crowd in train, he sat down with his disciples, these words suggestive of assuming a certain formality intended as a sign for those assembling behind him to take notice and prepare themselves for what comes next. Obviously they hoped for healing but that was not to happen on this occasion.

Interestingly vs. 4 points out that the Passover was at hand (*eggus*, near or close). You'd think Jesus as well as those with him would be in Jerusalem, the place from which he had just left. In other words, he and they went in the opposite direction. Mention of the Passover seems to say that the "feast of the Jews" of 5.1 was not that celebration. Regardless, John's insistence on the Passover here is important because of what Chapter Six is about. As his teaching will soon show, it will tie in with the Passover but be on a wholly different plane.

A further sign of Jesus about to engage in teaching with his disciples seated about him is that he lifts up his eyes and sees the multitude coming up the mountain to him. This implies that he and his disciples managed to get ahead and ascend the mountain on their own. Of course, they were more nimble whereas the crowd, by reason of its size, moved more slowly. As for lifting up his eyes, physically speaking Jesus did just the opposite. Here he was seated as on a throne surrounded by his court. To see the people coming toward him he literally had to look downward. While Jesus' intent is to teach, that of the crowd was to have him do more healing. Jesus was fully

aware of this which is why he asked Philip about buying enough bread to feed them. Obviously a question meant to test (*peirazo* connoting to test the character) Philip and the other disciples who were listening in. John inserts this as the reason why in vs. 6 Jesus knew in advance what he intended to do.

Philip went along unknowingly and responded that they didn't have enough money to purchase bread for such a crowd. Besides, they were in an isolated place. Since Passover was near, most people had made their way to Jerusalem or were at home, having locked up their businesses for the duration. That means that the those described as five thousand let alone women and children would have been much more. Still, a large number willing to be present on the mountain instead of Jerusalem. Andrew intervenes in vs. 8 by saying that a child happened to have some bread and fish, a meager amount not enough to feed even the disciples. He says in exasperation, that it wouldn't even begin to count as enough food. Throughout this exchange Jesus must have watched the expression on his disciples' faces with a certain amusement while they remained utterly confused and exasperated.

Without further ado, Jesus has his disciples make the people sit down on the grassy slope. They hoped that by reason of the mountain's isolation some people planned ahead to bring some bread or had local contacts to obtain some. In other words, the disciples were completely clueless. Making five thousand men sit down is no easy task, *aner* being man in the biological sense which means most likely a whole slew of women and children were present. Most came with the intent of being healed of this affliction or another, not to hear Jesus teach. If he did that on the side, no problem. As long as he satisfied their pressing needs.

Things got off to a good start. Jesus wanted to make everyone as comfortable as possible, hence mention of "much grass" in vs. 10 followed by the crowd getting as much bread and fish as they needed. The text doesn't say that Jesus multiplied the bread and fish, just that he distributed both, the common verbal root *didomai* (to give) prefaced with the preposition *dia* or through. What brought about the multiplication was the fact that before this *diadidomai*, he gave thanks or *eucharisteo* which has sacramental implications. That is to say, the verb intimates the multiplication of bread and fish not so much exponentially but spiritually. Those present, including the disciples, obviously didn't understand this in the least. Jesus kept us this *eucharisteo-diadidomai* until everyone draped themselves around the mountain's summit was satisfied.

It seems the people were content as having been fed, after which the disciples did clean-up duty. Indeed, to them it was a sign or *semeion* + which was right in accord with the same signs many had seen in Jerusalem. This took their minds off the need for any healing. With a sign like this, they thought, who needs the Passover? Surely by now or close to it, it was being celebrated (cf. vs. 4) in Jerusalem. Such an event traditionally is centered around the temple, not in isolation as is the case at hand. Perhaps it dawned on some present, especially the disciples, that something new was taking its place, new but not fully understood. That would come later. Surely word got back to the religious authorities who were incensed at all this.

Once these authorities got word, immediately they'd claim that Jesus was responsible for a kind of anti-Passover which would be a direct threat to Judaism and all it represented. Furthermore, as vs. 14 says concluding this section, the people exclaimed that Jesus is the prophet destined to come into the world. The RSV has a footnote referring to Dt 18.15 in this regard: "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brethren—him you shall heed." Vs. 15 continues as part of an extended sentence with regard to when the people preferred having such a prophet instead of hearing the Lord speak as he had done at Mount Horeb. In other words, they needed a mediator and think they have found one in the person of Jesus Christ. Actually Jesus is such a mediator but not as the people wanted him to be.

Vs. 15 contains an ominous sign, one Jesus feared (*ginosko* + or to know) that would happen. In their eagerness they were prepared to snatch him away forcefully, *harpazo* being the verb suggestive of violence to produce an outcome. In other words, they wanted to make Jesus a king. As for the disciples, nothing is said of how they responded in this tricky situation, most likely hoping it would simply go away. To counter this well-intentioned but unlikely idea, Jesus decided to withdraw once more to the mountain, *anachoreo* suggestive of taking refuge literally "into (*eis*) the mountain."

Apparently the people had withdraw from the mountaintop without getting any healing nor teaching. Being fed was good enough simply because it was miraculous and a sign of things to come. Jesus and his disciples descended as well which means this attempt to make him king took place at or near the base of the mountain. His decision to go "into the mountain" was a wise one done on the spot. People didn't figure that Jesus would go back up there again but head off somewhere else. Note that vs. 15 says Jesus went away on his own, *autos monos*, "he alone," not with any of his disciples. With this adjective (*monos*) in mind, we could say that indeed Jesus did go into or *eis* the mountain itself, thereby disappearing completely. Chances are that the disciples got caught up with the crowd's demand which meant that Jesus needed solitude to figure his next move. As for where he had gone, then, was a matter of great speculation and concern. Surely everyone ransacked the area, everywhere but *eis* the mountain.

According to vs. 16, Jesus remained *eis* the mountain until evening or better, twilight when he could more around more freely or undetected by the crowds. As for the disciples, they went ahead and crossed the Sea of Galilee unafraid that it was dark, for many of them as fishermen were familiar with the sea's vagaries. Why they did this was puzzling though as the text advances, the reason becomes clear. Nevertheless, Jesus told them to go ahead while he remained behind. Interestingly vs. 17 says that while it was dark, Jesus hadn't yet come to the disciples. The sense here is that the disciples thought Jesus would walk out to them in the middle of the lake. However, a strong wind (*anemos*) arose suggesting that soon the disciples would be in real trouble but somehow confident that Jesus would intervene since presumably he had told them about it earlier.

After having been tossed about for some time—again not strange to these fishermen but nonetheless unsettling—true to their hope but in a way that they didn't expect, they saw Jesus walking on the water as he approached them. This walking was far more tricky than when it was calm. Jesus had to make his way in between the waves which were like hills but were constantly

undulating this way and that. It must have been quite a sight, actually terrifying, in the darkness illumined now and again by flashes of lightning. The first words out of Jesus' mouth was not to be afraid (*phobeomai*). Although the text uses the common verb *lego* (to say), in actuality he must have screamed it out in order to be heard over the wind, rain, thunder and crashing of waves. Obviously the disciples were delighted, the verb being *ethelo*, fundamentally as to wish but to do so with gladness as is the case at hand. Although vs. 19 says they were four miles (twenty-five stadia according to the Greek text), at once the ship reached the shore. Instead of taking this literally, it can indicate that once Jesus was on board, the disciples were so overwhelmed with joy that the rest of the night and voyage seemed as nothing. As for the storm, we can presume it continued, for nothing is said as to its cessation.

The disciples had experienced two major miracles or signs (*semeion*) by Jesus, the multiplication of bread and fish followed by him walking on the water. You'd think that would be enough, but it was a preliminary for something greater Jesus would teach, great but not in a spectacular fashion with *semeion* as commonly understood. Upon arriving at Capernaum people must have flocked to see Jesus asking him and the disciples how they managed to survive the storm. It seemed better not to discuss what really happened, just that they were lucky to have survived.

After things had quieted down, on the next day those on the other side of the lake felt gyped. They saw only one boat, knowing that Jesus hadn't entered the same one as the disciples. So what happened? Everyone was confused and more so, angry that Jesus had abandoned them. They figured that Jesus had made off to Capernaum, so they crowded into as many boats as could hold them and sailed over there. Not all the five thousand minus women and children were involved. Many decided enough was enough and made their way back home. Perhaps they could do some catching up with regard to observing the Passover. Some were really angry at this, having been cheated out of observing the most holy day of them all. To top it off, Jesus didn't do any healing as they had expected. Multiplying bread and fish was great, but then again, so what? As for those determined to seek out Jesus, they were aware that a storm had raged on the lake throughout the previous night and were fearful that Jesus and his disciples may not have made it. With this in mind, everyone on boats traversing the Sea of Galilee kept a close eye-out on the water for any survivors, wreckage and hopefully no bodies floating on the surface.

Vs. 25 simply says that those who had crossed over to Capernaum found Jesus, but a lot more emotion is involved in this *heurisko* than the text says. Yes, Jesus and his disciples made it through the storm in one piece. Even though they pressed him as to how they fared, he and those who had been on the boat maintained a discreet silence. That most likely was behind their question as to asking when he got to Capernaum. Jesus detects both frustration and anger in their voices because they felt abandoned. They had a point, and Jesus decided on the spot to be more careful dealing with such people in the future. The lesson? Be more attentive to their needs which could lead them to do anything. First they wanted to make him a king (cf. vs. 15), now they were threatening him.

Please note! From this point or from vs. 26 through vs. 58 the verses are inserted along with their respective notations. The reason? This section of Chapter Six is complex in that it shows the

relationship between the Father and Jesus Christ, something the disciples and people in the synagogue at Capernaum where this takes place could barely fathom. One general observation to keep in mind with regard to this section. Pay attention to the verbs, most of which deal with various degrees of coming: the straight-forward coming, coming down and ascending. All in all it's very dynamic. Hopefully this outline will present the material more clearly, again, with a view to reading it as *lectio divina*. As for the notations, they had been written before this outline. The Gospel verses thus are worked into it.

26: Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek me not because you saw signs but because you ate your fill of the loaves.

Vs. 25 has the people addressing Jesus formally, that is, as rabbi. That title is associated with someone who teaches but judging from the text so far, little if any of this had been done. Thus rabbi can be understood as a sign of respect. If the people show this, Jesus just might comply and do something spectacular to follow up on the multiplication of bread and fish.

At the same time Jesus felt frustrated. That's why in vs. 26 he comes off with the double *amen* + followed by "I say to you." It's a way of exerting control over the situation which at any minute could get out of hand. He tells it like it is, namely, that the Jews are seeking him because of the bread and fish he had multiplied. In other words, Jesus = a free lunch. Once you get on this treadmill, it's hard to get off. After all, "they had followed him because they saw the signs which he did on those who were diseased" [vs. 2]. Indeed, the crowd was after both food and signs, very understandable for people who live their whole lives on a subsistence level. On top of it they were heavily taxed. So when Jesus speaks as such he's really defending himself or perhaps better put, diverting the heat away from himself to something of great importance he's about to communicate.

27: Do not labor for the food which perishes but for the food which endures to eternal life which the Son of man will give to you; for on him has God the Father set his seal."

Vs. 27 is pivotal in this chapter insofar as Jesus uses the miraculous feeding followed by coming across the Sea of Galilee in a ferocious storm to introduce something brand new yet familiar. Chapter Six deals with the issue of food or more to the point, of subsistence. Jesus is fully aware of this near primitive level and wishes not so much to improve the situation by providing more material goods but by elevating the issue at hand, of bringing it to a new level. That, it will turn out to be, what's now called the Eucharist.

As for the verse at hand, Jesus tells the people not to labor (*ergazomai* +) for food destined to perish but for what lasts for all eternity. Here the noun *broxis* + or food also means the act of consuming it. Everyone knows that such food, while vital to sustain life, is passing, *apollumi* being the verb which conveys the sense of utter destruction. Implied, of course, is that what Jesus is about to say transcends this *apollumi*. Compared with the food subject to *apollumi* is the kind that lasts, *meno* +also as to remain in the sense of abiding literally "into (*eis*) eternal life." The

adjective is *aiōnios* + which applies to that with no beginning or end. Taken at face value, that implies a whole lot of *ergazomai*, and who's willing to do it?

Vs. 27 continues by saying that the Son of man is, if you will, the paymaster. He's the one who will dispense the food. So if he's the long desired Messiah, people will respond all the more...way more...when it comes to the *ergazomai* required for such nourishment. Certainly it's worth the effort in light of the miraculous feeding.

Jesus sets this Son of man apart even more by saying that God the Father had set his seal on him, *sphragizo* implying an official acknowledgment from someone in power. The seal cannot be broken unless by that person's authority or someone to whom it has been delegated. Judging by the nature of this verse, no one, not even the Father, will violate the seal.

28: Then they said to him, "What must we do to be doing the works of God?"

This verse begins with *oun* + or "therefore" which reveals that the people trying to absorb all this are dying to blurt out an adequate response to Jesus. It comes across in the form of a straight-forward question which, while as genuine as all get-out, reveals they haven't a clue as to what's going on. As very practical people...peasants really...they think in terms of action, of doing this or doing that to object a specific result. As for this doing, note the two different words for the same one in English according to the **RSV**. First comes *poieo* followed by *ergazomai* also to do but involves more effort and planning, both followed by *ergon* (all three +) or work, the result of the latter verb.

In a very real sense, these people knew the answer which lays in what they've been doing all along, that is, observing Jewish religious norms and customs. Their sincerity was written all over their faces, something that impressed Jesus and in a way, made him regret having left them so suddenly on the other side of the lake. Jesus doesn't seem to have expected this willingness, taking him aback as he recalled the similar straight-forward willingness displayed by the disciples when he had called them. After all, they were cut from the same cloth as the people before him. The only thing Jesus could do while finding himself put on the spot was to respond with a similar straight-forward answer.

29: Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent."

And so the straight-forward answer here consists in telling the people that the work or *ergon* + of God consists in believing literally into (*eis*) him whom God has sent, *apostello* + conveying as it does a sense of mission. As for *ergon* in vs. 29, note that it's singular compared with the plural in vs. 28 where the people use it. Perhaps this is an incidental distinction, but the singular *ergon* is more unified with regard to *pisteuo* and doesn't involved doing in the way the people conceived it.

30: So they said to him, "Then what sign do you do that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform?"

As with vs. 28, the one at hand begins with *oun* translated here as “thus” and shows the same sincerity the people have with regard to Jesus. Actually it’s one of the few interactions with a distinctly positive character that’s sustained. So despite the initial promise, Jesus can’t help but have a sinking feeling because yet again he’s asked for a sign or *semeion* +. Actually he’s frustrated. The people just cannot get this *semeion* thing out of their heads, wanting to see one in action, if you will, so they may believe (*pisteuo* +). that means their faith is pretty shallow. Implied is no seeing, no believing. Indeed, Jesus is tempted to walk away at this point, having a legitimate excuse. This desire...actually demand...for a sign is put in the context of another question they ask of Jesus in the same verse. What kind of work will he do? The question consists of one verb, *ergazomai* +, the same verb in vs. 28, “in order to do the works of God.”

31: Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”

As for this question of bread, again a fundamental theme laying beneath Chapter Six brought up is food but food in the sense of providing enough sustenance to keep people going. And so all the talk about *poieo*, *ergazomai* and *ergon* boil down to this inescapable reality. So when the people pose this to Jesus they have in mind the recent multiplication of bread and fish on the other side of the Sea of Galilee. The translation, if you will? Please do it again.

Jesus sees in the people and awareness of their ancestors whom the Lord provided for in the desert. Actually this was not unlike the other side of the Sea of Galilee. And so both that generation long past and the current one are joined; not only that, all intervening generations are included.

32: Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven.

Without missing an opportunity indicated by yet another *oun* +, double *amen* + and “I say to you” in vs. 32, Jesus signals to the people that he has taken their case to heart. Actually he doesn’t contract the quote from Exodus but in a way, hedges it. Moses wasn’t responsible for this bread...this *lechem* or sustenance...from heaven but my Father who gives bread which Jesus distinguishes from the manna as true, *alethinou* +. And so externally there’s no difference which thus far sounds just fine.

33: For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

Thus far or in vs. 33 Jesus sees satisfaction on the faces of those with whom he’s speaking which enables him to start shifting the original sense of manna-as-*lechem*. Note that emphasis is being put upon this bread as having come down from heaven meaning Jesus stays true to the original sense of the Exodus text but is starting to enhance it little by little, most likely without his listeners knowing where he’s leading. Again, keep in mind that they have their attention fixed on being fed to avoid starvation, nothing more. Who couldn’t disagree that this bread which has come down from heaven is to give life or *zoe* + to the world or *kosmos* +?

Vs. 33 has the first of seven references to the preposition “down” or *kata* as prefaced to the verbal root *baino* + or to come down, to descend. Thus such down-ness has an important role to play for the rest of Chapter Six, it representing the realm where people live and go about their business. To it Jesus comes not so much as an outsider but one who is to provide nourishment, that of course, being a dominant theme here. Spontaneously the people—by now a spokesman or two or more must have emerged—asked to be given this bread not just once but always, *pan tote* or at all times, *pan* = all and *tote* = now.

34: They said to him, "Lord, give us this bread always."

A request as straight-forward and honest as could be. How could Jesus refuse?

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

With such an honest straight-forward response which perhaps took Jesus by more surprise than he anticipated, he now finds himself a perfect position to begin presenting a teaching that for the Jews or anyone else, disciples included, was brand new. Best of all, it will be based up the original meaning of the Exodus quote which it should be remembered, the people brought it up, not Jesus. You can't but wonder what would have happened if they didn't. The multiplication of bread and fish which took place so recently would remain just that, a miracle but nothing more.

Now that Jesus has come down in the same fashion as the manna did in the Sinai wilderness, we can assume he wishes people to approach him. For that reason it's helpful to pay attention to the Exodus account as to how the Israelites related to this manna. Note the distinction between hungering and being thirsty: coming to Jesus or *erchomai* + with the directness of *pros* (direction towards-which) prevents hunger whereas believing (*pisteuo* +) literally into (*eis*) him prevents thirst. Both don't happen here and there but *popote* or never.

Keep in mind the context! The Israelites had murmured against the Lord out of hunger; this being echoed in the recent multiplication of bread and fish. Thus as was the mentality at that time, so is the mentality the same *hic et nunc* with Jesus. As for the incident in Chapter Sixteen of Exodus, vs. 16 opens with “This is what the Lord has commanded” with regard to the manna, *davar* being the same word as that had been spoken. Note that of concern here only is the manna. Nothing is said of the quails which contain far more nourishment. The same applies to the fish with regard to Jesus. Now this *davar* is about to be translated, if you will, into action or the bread-like substance to be gathered into one omer per person, omer being a measure, this term applicable to wheat.

In vs. 17 the people gathered an omer apiece in accord with the need of each family which in the next verse functions as a means of measurement for the “bread” in the form of hoarfrost. Two verbs show the balance achieved, *hadaph* and *chasar* (to be abundant and to lack). Regardless of which one favored, the proper measure was meted out. How this was done is not mentioned though presumably divine intervention was involved. As for any remainder which applies to those

who were greedy, Moses commands “Let no man leave any of it until the morning” [vs. 19]. Such bread had appeared in the morning, the time when it was gathered, so the verse at hand seems to apply to the following morning when new bread can be gathered. That “bread” which exceeded the proper amount produced worms and became foul (cf. vs. 20). As a result, “Moses was angry with them.” *Qatsaph* is the verb which fundamentally means to break out. This manifestation of anger is followed by what can be taken as an offshoot of it: “but when the sun grew hot, it melted” [vs. 21]. Such melting is consistent with the bread’s nature of being like hoarfrost or thin, frozen wafers which had to be consumed rather quickly.

The Israelites had learned how to gather properly the bread though nothing is said about an excess or lack of quails, a source of what seems to be a better source of nutrition. Regulation of this bread is more important, perhaps because it was “like wafers made with honey” [vs. 31], quite delicate, and offered a more immediate stimulus in arid conditions. Gathering of it continued until “day six” when “they gathered twice as much bread, two omers apiece” [vs. 22]. It is to the Israelites’ credit that they recalled the Lord’s words to Moses in vs. 6 that “what they bring in will be twice as much as they gather daily.” Such doubling of the portion on day six is deliberate because “Tomorrow is a day of solemn rest, a holy Sabbath to the Lord” [vs. 23] when no gathering is permitted. Here is the first mention in the Bible of a Sabbath). It is to be holy or *qodesh* to the Lord.

36: But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe.

This verses which begins with *alla* + or “but” comes off with a warning. Despite Jesus being seen...out there for any and all to behold... the people persist in not believing. Actually this is a reoccurring theme in the Hebrew scriptures and says something about the human condition. As for this seeing, we can take Jesus-as-bread which he said so plainly in vs. 35. So what does he do now? The usual, having recourse to the Father. It is the Father who gives Jesus all those who come to him, *didomi* + resulting in the directness of *pros*. Beyond that Jesus can do basically nothing.

37: All that the Father gives me will come to me; and him who comes to me I will not cast out.

Actually in this verse *didomi* is used twice, the second time when Jesus says he won’t cast out such a person, the *ek* (out) of *ekballo* being exactly the contrary. Such coming to Jesus, of course, is directly dependent upon the just mentioned *didomi* of the Father or that first *pros*, “come to me.”

38: For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me;

Now for the second *katabaino* + which begins with *hoti* + or “for” to show the connection between this twofold *pros* and *katabaino*. Instead of being as bread or better, in addition to being bread, Jesus does this *katabaino* not on his own accord or *thelema* +. That would imply either he was indifferent or had contested going with the Father which would have been a heated argument. Thus we have Jesus down here (i.e., *katabaino*) pretty much against his will which in one way, doesn’t sound very attractive or inviting. Now that he’s here, he has to carry out the *thelma* of the Father.

39: and this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up at the last day.

This verse flows directly from the previous one as a continuous sentence linked by the conjunctive *kai* + or “and.” Jesus is quick to spell out the Father’s will who had sent him, *pempo* + also as to commission and thus differing from what we’d expect, *apostello* being sent on a mission. *Pempo* does fit in better because it’s tied in with Jesus saying he intends not to lose anything given him. Such giving or *didomi* + isn’t specified but presumed to be from the Father. Instead of losing there’s raising up, *apollumi* + vs. *anistemi*. Note that Jesus doesn’t use personal pronouns or the like. Instead, it’s impersonal (*auto*) with regard to the last day, *eschatos* suggestive of that which is the very end. Perhaps this *auto* can apply to humanity as a whole which, of course, would include individuals. As for those listening to all this, such talk is not entirely unfamiliar, for people were familiar with the idea of the end of the world and the coming of the Messiah. Thus between now or when Jesus is speaking and the last day we have an indefinite period of time to gather, if you will, that manna in the person of Jesus-as-bread from heaven.

40: For this is the will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

Here Jesus makes it clear that his Father’s will or *thelema* + is tantamount. While we could say that Jesus had some reservation about doing it, nevertheless, there is a concession on the Father’s part to the Son. That consists of everyone seeing and believing the Son (*theoreo* and *pisteuo*, both +), the latter with *eis* or “into him.” It results in having life which is *aionios* + or eternal in the here and now. It’s extended to another time, if you will, or when Jesus will raise this person up (*anistemi* +) on the last day. Thus we can say that the essential part of seeing and believing goes along just fine until it’s followed by being raised up, this as secondary in the sense of being sequential.

41: The Jews then murmured at him because he said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven."

Everything seems to be going along quite well thus far. However, in this verse we have the Jews murmuring at Jesus, *gogguzo* (with *peri*, also as around, concerning) needing no translation because its very pronunciation conveys what it signifies. Are these the same people as those who had been present at the multiplication of bread and fish and who had followed Jesus across the Sea of Galilee? Perhaps some of them. Then again, it could refer to others who got wind of this extended discussion and found themselves as having been drawn in. As for the *gogguzo* at hand, one can’t help but compare in in light of the Exodus quote regarding manna or more specifically, the Israelites murmuring in the desert which had the positive effect of the Lord providing for them (cf. Ex 16.9). All this makes perfect sense, the Jews even quoting Jesus’ words about him being the bread of heaven. Perhaps that in and by itself might be passable, but the real bone of contention is this bread...Jesus...as having come down from heaven and thus by nature is divine. Such is the third use of the verb *katabaino* +.

A kind of footnote at this juncture as Jesus delves into his relationship with the Father and how that ties in with those persons who relate to both. While magnificent and subtle, worthy of spending oodles of time to ponder, the verses at hand tend to be repetitious. While the notations on them may be helpful, quickly it becomes evident that in a way they're not needed. So with that caveat in mind, the text continues as follows.

42: They said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven?'"

Here the Jews pose a question as to Jesus' origins, words that must have cut him to the quick, perhaps more than any insults he had endured throughout his life. Also he did his best to keep such words away from any family members. They said aloud to all around them that he is the son of Joseph whose parents they know. Such words also must have shaken the disciples who wondered if they should remain with Jesus. For Jesus or for anyone else to claim one's origin in heaven as a descent to the human race...mere mortals...is absurd a claim as anyone could make. It should be kept in mind that such an observation is understandable in village life where everyone knew everyone's business and where privacy was virtually non-existent. Also those making the accusation had quickly forgotten what Jesus had done for them, having been fed with bread and fish. After all, it was they who had followed him up the mountain.

43: Jesus answered them, "Do not murmur among yourselves.

Jesus responds to all this the only way he can by telling his so-called accusers not to murmur among themselves, *gogguzo* + or literally "with one another." If these people claimed to know Jesus' parents, it's true the other way around. Jesus knew them and if he wanted to, could make their dir public. With that background in mind, Jesus could continue with his claim of saying that no one can approach him unless the Father who had sent him draws this person. As in vs. 39 we find *pempo* + or to send in the sense of being commissioned.

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

Note the verb *helko* or to draw, also to pull which implies the Father is tugging on a rope to bring a person to Jesus. Implied is that already the Father has lassoed this person. Now it's simply a matter of bringing him close. Anyone so caught may have reservations. What makes this attractive is Jesus saying that once the lassoed person is pulled to him, he will keep him around indefinitely until the last day at which time he will raise him up, *anistemi* +.

45: It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Every one who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me.

Jesus proceeds without delay to back up his claim by citing the most authoritative source around, the prophets, singling out Isaiah generally considered to be the best. The quote from 54.13 runs in

full as “All your sons shall be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the prosperity of your sons.” *Lamad* (*didaktos* in the Greek text) is the verb to teach which connotes being chastised or being made accustomed to and hence to become a disciple. The Hebrew text doesn’t have the preposition “by” and reads literally, “they shall be taught the Lord.” Jesus doesn’t add the second part of the verse, that is, the idea of prosperity or *shalom* which fundamentally means peace as well as wholeness. This idea of *lamad*, so familiar to the Jews with regard to *Torah* so it really struck home. Still, they were in no position, none whatsoever, of equating such *lamad* with the divinity of Jesus.

As for this *lamad*, it involves a master-disciple relationship when it comes to transmitting anything religious or spiritual. With regards to the Father, the same approach is inferred by the verb *manthano*, to gain knowledge or instruction. It’s intimately bound up with hearing (*akouo* +) not so much from the Father but *para* the Father, that is to say, as being beside him or in his company. And so this *akouo/manthano* enables a person to come to Jesus, *pros* again implying directness.

46: Not that any one has seen the Father except him who is from God; he has seen the Father.

Jesus now qualifies this relationship with the Father by saying that no person has seen (*horao* +) him. So far so good regarding the Jews but immediately revoked by them. This happens when Jesus infers that he is the one who is from God or has this *para* relationship with him which qualifies him as having seen (*horao* again) the Father. Note the past tense of the two instances of verb which implies being-in-the-body.

After such bold but necessary words (else we would not know the identity of Jesus), he prepares those listening to him with another instance of a double *amen* + and “I say to you.” This time it’s a person who believes or *pisteuo* +...no object but presumably Jesus because such *pisteuo* results in life which is *aionios* + or eternal, the last time this being mentioned being vs. 40.

As he said in vs. 35, Jesus simply puts out there that he’s the bread of life in vs. 48 which is all this verse has to offer. Jesus spells out himself-as-bread in the next verse by referring to the fathers of those listening, this being a way vaguely not unlike a put-down though one down in all gentleness. They are the same Israelites in the desert to whom the Lord gave quails and manna. Jesus says the same thing in vs. 31 but doesn’t mention the fact that they died. Everyone, of course, was aware of this fact. However, if a person eats of the bread which comes down (another *katabaino* + reference) from heaven, it will be Jesus whom they will eat. Once they do, they will not die. Now Jesus transfers this bread from heaven into something that doesn’t have its origin there, that his, his own flesh (*sarx* +) or body-ness. All this is so easy to reject because beneath the words lies the fundamental distinction between above and below, the two being connected (and hence rejected) by the verb *katabaino* as it has been making its appearance in these verses.

47: Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life.

Note that believing here has no object, *pisteuo* = *zoe* which is *aionios* (all +).

The following four verses have no notations since what they contain is found elsewhere in the verses at hand. Nevertheless, they are posted.

48: I am the bread of life.

49: Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died.

50: This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat of it and not die.

51: I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh."

52: The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

This verse reflects the just mentioned conundrum faced by the Jews when they disputed among themselves, *machomai* being a strong verb meaning to fight or to contend and amplified by the preposition *pros*, inferring that such intensity is directed toward one another with no exception. The question they bring to bear on the matter boils down to what we all know is the familiar one of cannibalism. By no means does Jesus attempt to alleviate their confusion.

53: So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you;

Jesus presses on here with very uncomfortable language about the need to eat the flesh of the Son of man and to drink his blood. If not, a person simply lacks life or *zoe* +. No getting around that.

54: he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

This verse continues as an extended sentence about a person doing what Jesus just said, that is, with regard to *zoe* which is *aionios* (both again +). Despite the various ways Jesus presents this—and he does his best to make palatable that which clearly is not palatable—twice he throws in the adjective *alethes* (true) which is necessary for giving clarity to that which is close to being unacceptable. The consolation? The person so engaged in eating and drinking Jesus Christ abides in him and he in that person, the verb being *meno* + fundamentally as to remain in the sense of abiding. In away, this *meno* does away with the idea of cannibalism because the person you eat is dead, not alive. So if the Jews paid close attention as clearly as they weren't at the moment, this would have put Jesus' words in perspective.

As with vss. 48-51, the following have no notations since what they contain is found elsewhere in the verses at hand. Nevertheless, they are posted.

55: For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

56: He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.

57: As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me.

Note *kathos* and the conjunctive *kai* + with regard to “as” and “so.” *Kathos* begins the verse with the Father described for the first time as living (the verb *zao* +) and his sending of me, that is, Jesus is using the first person singular with regard to this *apostello* +. The *zao* of the Father is intimately connected with Jesus also as *zao* which is literally “through (*dia*) the Father.” Now this double *zao* is transmitted (*kai* as ‘so’) by the person who eats Jesus, again as first person singular and not as someone else nor as an object. Such eating will result in that person having life (*zao*) literally “through (*dia*) me.”

Again, Jesus contrasts these words about himself as bread which has come down (*katabaino* +) from heaven. It’s superior to what had supported Israel’s fathers because it will enable anyone eating this bread/Jesus to live (*zao* +) literally “into eternity,” *eis* with *aion* which is related to the often mentioned adjective *aionios* and also can refer to a long period of time. Now in vs. 59 we have the exact location where Jesus is speaking, the synagogue at Capernaum.

As with vss. 48-51, the following one verse has no notations since what it contains is found elsewhere in the verses at hand. Nevertheless, it is posted.

58: This is the bread which came down from heaven, not such as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live for ever."

End of insertion of both verses and notations.

Vs. 60 shifts attention away from those whom Jesus is addressing in the synagogue at Capernaum which at last is identified place to his disciples who were present. The verse says that many of them (*pollos* seems to refer to more than the immediate twelve) labeled Jesus’ words as a hard saying, a *logos* + described as *skleros* which fundamentally means rough or harsh. Out of frustration they posed a rhetorical question as to who can hear this *logos*. It’d come as no surprise they were echoing the majority of those present in the synagogue, many of whom they knew and perhaps were relatives. We could almost hearing these people ridicule the disciples, saying something like why on earth are you associating with this man? Indeed, their earlier words in vs. 42 were hard to get out of their minds when people say that they’re familiar with the parents of this Jesus who’s speaking. All this means it must have gotten back to them, that is, to Mary and other relatives as well as Joseph if he were alive at the time.

Those listening to Jesus, disciples included, are simple people. They might be giving him the benefit of the doubt that he isn’t speaking about cannibalism. If that is true which still remains uncertain, how is this giving of Jesus’ body after the manner of the bread from heaven recorded in Exodus actually to be implemented? In other words, show us how it’s to be done. Unfortunately Jesus doesn’t clarify that which you think he would. And so it’s natural that many had doubts

about him and his claims. Hindsight shows that all this will be sorted out at the Last Supper. Despite this disappointment, in the long run things pan out for the better.

Vs. 61 has Jesus not just knowing (*oida* +) about how his disciples were murmuring or *gogguzo* + but puts it more poignantly as “in himself.” It’s almost as though this *gogguzo* made its way into the very being of Jesus. However, who could blame them for taking issue with such strong words? His question to them about their taking offense or *skandalizo* is both appropriate and naive. Appropriate because this verb means to trip up, to stumble and naive in that what would anyone expect from someone who seems to be speaking in terms of cannibalism.

In vs. 62 Jesus follows up this question with another which ties in with all his talk as it relates to *katabaino* or a descent from heaven, that is, as it ties in with the manna incident. Jesus comes close to taunting his disciples. What would be their reaction if they see the Son of man ascending (*anabaino* +) to the place he had come from or was before or *proteron*? Note that he’s careful to use the phrase “Son of man” (last time is vs. 53) which is more objective. If he were to refer this directly to himself (the disciples knew was the case, but he takes this approach for safety’s sake), all would abandon him on the spot.

Jesus wisely and gently shifts his words in vs. 63 to the spirit or *pneuma* + which gives life, *zoopoieo* +, the verb *poieo* as to make suggesting active, constant work. Compared with this the flesh (*sarx* +) is useless, *opheleo* as to profit with *ouden*, nothing...to profit nothing. Next Jesus says that his words or *rhema* + (also as thing, object) are *pneuma* and *zoe*, both +. In other words, such *rhema* are not physical entities after the manner of bread or anything corporeal. This is followed immediately in vs. 64 with *alla* + or “but” where Jesus acknowledges that some who are present do not believe, *pisteuo* +. He puts a different slant on this. Instead of speaking about those in the synagogue, in effect he’s referring to the person who would betray him, *paradidomi*, literally to give beside or *para*, *para* being those who will take custody of him. Obviously this caused quite a stir at first but once the dust had settled, many thought his words weren’t far off the mark. Again, his strong words about eating his flesh and drinking his blood would contribute to this *paradidomi*...and for the good of the people.

Vs. 65 begins with the conjunctive *kai* + translated as “and” to remind those with Jesus, especially his disciples, that already he had told them no one can come to him unless the Father permits it: *pros* = Jesus and *ek* = Father, the two linked by the verb *didomi* or to give or to grant.

By now it was clear that Jesus could go no further. It boiled down to accept or reject which is why many disciples left, *mathetes* here not referring to the twelve intimates but next several rings around them, if you will. Once these people have fallen off—we could see them exiting the synagogue sheepishly wishing not to be seen but couldn’t help but be seen—Jesus turns to the twelve. The way it’s put is that these men remained steadfast with a mixture of loyalty and perhaps more to the point, with clear realization that they had no place to go. And so they remained in the synagogue itself after everyone had dispersed. Although Peter expressed the fact that Jesus had the *rhema* + of life which is eternal or *aiionios* +, he too when you came down to it, was stuck with no option. He blurts out that he and the others have come to believe and to know

(*pisteuo* and *ginosko*, both +) that Jesus is the Holy One of God, *Hagios* perhaps not so much as divine but as someone special. This, of course, will come into greater clarity later on.

While Jesus appreciates this profession of loyalty, he doesn't admit it. In vs. 70 he snaps back unexpectedly saying that despite having chosen all twelve of those right there before him, one is a devil, *diabolos* which fundamentally means one who engages in propagating slander or backbiting. Such a word is much stronger than, for example, a traitor. The next or last verse of this chapter says that this *diabolos* is Judas. And so the disciples are left confused and frightened. Despite their weakness, it is to their everlasting credit that they remained with Jesus though if we could ask each one, the response? Barely.¹**Expansions on the Gospel of St. John**

Introduction

Not long ago I had finished a similar "expansion" document with regard to the Gospel of St. Matthew. There or in the Introduction I had expressed some hesitation and even fear of undertaking such a task. The reason? So much material had been written on the matter that adding more would be a waste of time. If that were true of Matthew's Gospel, it would apply equally if not more to the Gospel of St. John.

With this cautionary note in mind, I decided to go ahead with the project to see what would come of it. Actually I thought the document on St Matthew's Gospel didn't turn out to be that bad. Why not try out my luck with St John? Regardless of the outcome, at least I gave it a shot. If I had allowed fear or hesitation to get in the way, I would regret it for a long time. Something would have been missing. As for the current document, comforting thought was that because it's an exercise done in the spirit of *lectio divina*, what could go wrong?

That brings up an important point which qualifies this document as it does with most others on this homepage. That is to say, it is composed with the intent of reading the Gospel of St. John as an exercise of *lectio divina*. With this orientation in mind, the document isn't to be read as you would do so with a book. Because of this the series of notations...expansions...verse by verse can make it come across as somewhat choppy or in a word, not especially readable. While indeed a defect, this is secondary. The sole intent is to assist the reader to approach the Gospel in the spirit of *lectio divina*. One might call it "*selah* reading." *Selah* is a word inserted here and there in the Psalter as a break or pause. With this in mind, it's best to read this document as one extended *selah*.

As for use of the word "expansion," it represents a broadening out the text...St. John's Gospel...in order to dispose the reader for the end result, to rest in the presence of God. And so it's a kind of extended prayer which stays within the confines of the text at hand. With this in mind, there's no problem in alternating between doing *lectio* and putting the text down or as noted above, to engaged in a *selah*. Both can go on indefinitely which is why it's so wonderful. Thus the approach at hand may be likened to a kind of diffuse awareness enabling one to incorporate a whole variety of insights without getting bogged down in them. If the orientation were more focused, such would not be the case. A person would become weary all the more quickly.

Transliterated Greek words which occur more than one time are marked by a +. This is simply to prevent repeating their definition. Should the word convey a different sense which sometimes is the case, that will be noted. Postings will be made from time to time until the document at hand is complete.

Chapter One

Arche or beginning also means a commencement or perhaps better, the first principle of anything from which all else flows. It's one of those un-translatable words best left untouched. Mere mention of *arche* can't help but make one wonder if something had existed before it, and if so, what? This question has a modern counterpart. For example, we can't help but wonder in a child-like fashion what (if anything) had existed before the universe came into being. That's equivalent to asking if there was something before something. Obviously such matters are way beyond us, so best to leave them as such. We will admit, however, that we can't help but pose such a question in private regardless of what anyone thinks.

The phrase *en arche* bring to mind the opening words of Genesis, *re'shyth* prefaced with the corresponding preposition *b-* or "in." Associated with this word is the activity of *bara'* or to create in the sense of fashioning as well as by cutting. *Bara'* implies something well-thought out, not done willy-nilly. Also it's presupposed that some material is at hand, most likely the famous *tohu* and *bohu*, emptiness and waste. For us the prospect of working with it is out of the question but with God, it's suits him perfectly. John amplifies this *re'shyth*, if you will, saying that the Word or *Logos* was present in a reality corresponding to it, *arche* or first principle.

At first *Logos* and *arche* might appear to be two different things...true but in another way they are not. The very presence of the former within the latter is necessary in order to give it substance, to make it function as a first principle of all that issues from it. Keeping in mind the Genesis verse, *bara'* is the divine creative energy at hand. As for *Logos*, one way to understand it better is to equate it with the Hebrew verb *davar*, to speak but to speak in the sense of giving utterance, not just blurting out words. So *bara'* may be taken as that which is spoken or more accurately, uttered. It's association with the *Logos* means that something magical can happen. In other words, what is uttered appears out of nowhere and is not simply heard.

As for the *Logos* itself, it doesn't live in isolation. Someone has to be responsible for uttering it. That's why John doesn't waste any time about speaking of this source as a cause and effect reality. Instead, he introduces the small but important preposition *pros* which signals direction towards-which. In other words, the *Logos* isn't spoken and left dangling out there. Rather, at all times or from all eternity it has this *pros*-ness. That means that *Logos* is ever approaching God while simultaneously present to God. It's able to hold these two opposites in perfect balance or harmony. As soon as God speaks *Logos* and establishes a *pros* relationship, immediately the *Logos* turns this *pros* back to him. This, of course, goes on continuously outside space and time. Actually this isn't a bad description of *davar*. For this reason John concludes his opening verse with the

simple but obvious “and the Word (*Logos/Davar*) was God.” Here he omits *pros* because the direction towards-which it represents has returned to God and, as it were, is getting ready for another run at it.

One can't help but wonder where John got all this. He doesn't seem to be fabricating it because his words are too sublime and speak directly to each and every one of us. We can assume that John who was present at the so-called Last Supper, absorbed what Jesus had communicated not just to him but to the other disciples. More precisely, as 13.23 says, John “was lying close to the breast of Jesus.” *Kolpos* also means bosom and is with the preposition *en*, literally “in the bosom of Jesus.” Such is the source compared with the other eleven disciples. Now he could spell out Jesus' words—the *logoi* from the *Logos*—in imitation of the divine *pros* relationship between Jesus and the Father. In a way, those chapters can be summed up neatly in the first verse at hand. Because *logoi* and *Logos* are involved, John brings to conclusion his Gospel with no mere exaggeration “I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.” In other words, these books which contain *logoi* never can fully embrace nor comprehend the divine *Logos*.

A footnote, if you will, with regard to both examples of “in the beginning” as found in Genesis and St. John's Gospel. Throughout the Bible we find the word “behold” or something similar to it which is rendered as *hineh* and *idou*, Hebrew and Greek respectively. They serve to draw attention to something of great importance the author is about to communicate. In a way the phrase “in the beginning” is like that. It's ideally suited for such a purpose at the beginning of a text as with Genesis and St. John's Gospel. *Arche* and *re'shyth* contain much more in that they are designed not only to grab one's attention but to sustain it for the duration of the text. In fact, it's helpful to bear in mind the introductory verses containing these words at the end of their respective books in order to bear out this observation.

The first person singular *houtos* opening vs. 2 is translated as “he” but literally as “this” which refers, of course, to the *Logos*. At the same time we don't have an idea of who (or what) it might be. We know from experience that it's Jesus Christ, but we don't receive confirmation of his proper name until vs. 17. Most likely John is primarily concerned about firmly establishing the transcendent nature of this *Logos* as related to (*pros*) God. If he does not, people might have all kinds of distorted ideas about Jesus. Is he God? Is he just a man? Is he a kind of man-God? Again, the first eighteen verses of John's Gospel represents a desire to “translate” what he heard directly from Jesus at the Last Supper and make it accessible to newly formed Christians as well as those who aren't Christians.

As for *houtos*, vs. 2 says that “he” was in the beginning or *arche* + which was *pros* God. John uses the past tense which in reality doesn't apply but can be taken simply as the way he presents the matter. So what's the difference, if any, between this *pros* and the *pros* of vs. 1 with regard to the *Logos*? At first glance it seems John is repeating himself, for *houtos* = *Logos*. Perhaps he's trying to prime his readers in order to prepare them for making a shift. On one hand are Jews with their monotheistic religion and on the other, those who subscribe to various forms of polytheism. Hopefully both extremes can come to a point where they can accept the person of Jesus Christ as both transcendent and human. Obviously a gamble but what other choice does John have?

Vs. 2 begins with “he” or *houtos* and spills over into vs. 3 as an extended sentence. So John is aware of being caught in an unavoidable paradox where he has to balance the relationship between the divine and human. Obviously he wants to make this connection in the person of Jesus Christ as he heard at the Last Supper. All in all John is laying the groundwork for what later would develop into a theology of the Trinity. Any misunderstandings lay with those who willfully insert their personal interpretations or by not reading the text with care or as we can say in the context of this essay, by not adapting the prayerful attitude found up with *lectio divina*.

In vs. 3 note the different sense conveyed by the two prepositions *dia* and *choris*, through and without, as they refer to *houtos*. To the first belongs *panta* and to the second belongs *oude*, all and not anything. So we have a stark contrast leaving no room for any other agent other than *houtos* or *Logos* as being responsible for bringing things into existence. As for the verb “made” as used in the RSV, it’s *gignomai*, to come into being. It suggests, if you will, a live type of birth as opposed to something that has been fabricated. The way *gignomai* is presented is that *houtos* doesn’t sit down and decide what is to come into being and what is not. Rather, there’s a spontaneous kind of coming into existence of *panta* or everything. In other words, there’s distance or space between *houtos* and *panta* in which *gignomai* operates.

The question for us is how do we perceive this. It would be absurd to consider an image of Jesus Christ as a human being constantly making decision with regard to *gignomai*. He’d be so tied up that it would leave no time for other things. Implied, then, is a space we can put in terms of awareness where focus isn’t upon individual things but a perception of their overall commonality. That consists in being begotten, of springing into existence, or in a word, *gignomai*. Once we do, we let the object or objects engage in an almost playful action which enables *panta* or “the all” to freely run their course. Regardless of how wildly stuff differs—to be sure it does so in an almost unbelievable fashion—all have their begotten-ness rooted within *houtos* or the *Logos*.

In vs. 4 John refines what he said in vs. 3 by saying that in him...*houtos/Logos*...is *zoe* or life in the physical sense. Such life is more specific to human beings, *ton anthropon* or “of men.” However, it is qualified by a close association with light or *phos*. Actually the two are inseparable. Light, in turn, is associated with each and every human being. This is true whether a person realizes or not the connection between himself and *houtos/Logos*. While all things (the *panta* of vs. 3) are made...*gignomai*...through the *Logos*, it doesn’t mean that human beings as part of this *panta* are aware of the light. In other words, they have it but generally don’t know it or at best have a dim awareness of it. *Panta* obviously applies to all animate beings but simply lack the capacity to be illumined. So with most people not aware of this light-life, they’re no better off than some other animate being.

In vs. 5 John says that the light or *phos* shines in the darkness, *phaino* also as to become visible in its exact opposite, *skotia* more as an all pervasive gloom. So if *phos* = *zoe* as vs. 4 claims, *zoe* is the means by which this *phos* becomes manifest or *phaino*. Note that *phaino* just does its thing without attempting to accomplish a goal or intent. Also it doesn’t expect a response from those upon whom it sheds light. However, it’s very presence in the darkness suggests any kind of

struggle. This is a huge insight that easily can be overlooked but must be stressed by reason of its importance. Either light (life) or darkness will prevail. However, as John says, darkness doesn't overcome the light, *katalambano* being a vivid way of putting it or literally to seize or to grasp down, *kata-*. The idea is that darkness cannot push down light, for light is immune to such efforts however strenuous they may be.

Vs. 6 gets more personal by mentioning John though he isn't identified as the Baptist. Note the passive "was sent" or *apostello* which is the verbal root for apostle, this pretty much summing up John's mission in life. More specifically, this sending is *para* God or more as from the side of God. It's as though John had been there as his companions all along, left and became incarnate. We have no details as to his identity as in other Gospel texts. In a very real way, John's *para* God suffices more than enough for that. So while John comes from *para* God, he takes his place alongside the *Logos*. As John the evangelist recounts a good number of times, this parallels Jesus as being *para* God, the Baptist being not on the same plane but by way of participation. So in a very real way we have two persons with this special relationship coming on the scene. Again, Jesus isn't introduced by his proper name until vs. 17. Once John has written this, one wonders how his listeners responded to him. It'd come as no surprise that he's speaking not of a man but some kind of heavenly being.

In vs. 7 John the Baptist is described as literally having come "into testimony," *eis* plus *marturia* or witness in the sense of that which is based upon personal evidence. The preposition *eis* suggests that John had been fully present with regard to the light or *phos* +. It can be traced to when he and Jesus had met in the womb of their mothers (cf. Lk 1.41). Right after *marturia* comes the verb from which it's derived, *martureo* or to attest, again with emphasis upon personal experience and knowledge. It has a special orientation, that is, everyone believes (*pisteuo*) not so much John but the light to which he is bearing witness.

In order to make clear the distinction between light and John bearing witness so the two won't be confused, vs. 8 restates what is said in the previous verse. Again we have John as bearing witness (*martureo*) "around" or *peri* the light. Use of *peri* in this literal sense is interesting insofar that *martureo* (and we can include *pisteuo*) embraces...surrounds...the light.

And so all this talk about light and darkness prepares us to meet the person of Jesus Christ in vs. 17. Darkness means more than evil, the absence of good. Because it infers night, that means it's the time for sleeping. It's opposite is daylight, obviously the light. Thus we can take John speaking of being awake versus being asleep which is more pertinent to the human condition as we experience it. Evil is there, of course, but not as pervasive compared with outright sleeping.

Vs. 9 is careful to call the light or *phos* + being discussed as *alethinos* or true. Here it's role is to enlighten human beings, *photizo* as the verbal root of *phos*. Note the way *phos* is presented, *erchomenon* or the present participle of *erchomai*, the common verb to come. Right away you'd think that people would rush out en masse to meet this light, confident that their being as already enlightened or *photizo* would automatically point the way. John gives the *kosmos* or sum total of everything as to this coming. There's no need for anything more specific by reason of *photizo* as

within each person which he considers as sufficient. The tragedy is that people are in darkness or as said above, are asleep (snoring might be more like it, out like a light). Instead of looking within, they look without and cannot find this true light. No small wonder they feel frustrated and are ready to take out their anger on anyone who claims to be this light which is exactly what happens later to Jesus Christ.

Vs. 10 shifts gears, if you will, from the previous verse which says the true light was coming into the world to already being in the world. In a way, John is saying that the light which is interior to all human beings has taken on a form outside themselves. That means everyone should be able to spot this person at once but of course they do not. So despite the world being made by this true light, it did not recognize him, *ginosko*. Again, we could apply the idea of being asleep here; not just that but preferring...actually refusing...to be awakened. As for the notion of being made, it isn't quite accurate. Better to put it as being begotten or *gignomai* + as noted earlier.

All this talk about being awake and being asleep, light and darkness, is presented in a tragic way as we see in vs. 11. There he came literally "into his own," the verb *erchomai* + with *eis* as it pertains to *idios* which connotes that which is personal as well as private. Here it's also the people as expressed by the same word. However, they did not accept him, the *para-* of *paralambano* suggesting those closest to Jesus did not take him into the intimate embrace, of being beside as well as with them. One example that strikes home early on in his ministry is from Lk 4.29: "And they rose up and put him out of the city and led him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built that they might throw him down headlong." What got Jesus in trouble was referring to two historical examples of non-Jews, the widow of Zarephath and Naaman the Syrian. Indeed, both are representative of that *panta* of vs. 3 which the Jews were unable to accept.

Vs. 12 comes to the rescue of the just delineated rejection of *houtos* who still is not identified but contained in the verb *lambano*, to take or to receive. That is to say, *houtos* is welcomed by *hosos* or "all," the RSV translation often rendered as "as much as," "as great as." The tiny word *de* is rendered here as "but." *De* is a conjunctive alternately translated as "whereas," "on the other hand." It serves to set off an undetermined number of people from those who are *idios*, implying that they are in a minority. They are distinguished by believing or *pisteuo* + literally "into (*eis*) his name" or *onoma*. +. At this stage *onoma* = *Logos*. Even for a tiny minority of people to make this connection is a big step because it's destined to take root. Compare *hosos* with *panta* of vs. 7 and *pisteuo*. The former boils down to concrete acceptance whereas the latter may be taken as a looking forward to the future.

As for the *pisteuo* of vs. 12, it results in *houtos* giving a special kind of authority or *exousia* to become children of God. The verb is *gignomai* + which as noted several times earlier is translated as "made." John leaves it up to each of us to see how *pisteuo* becomes *exousia* and how *exousia* becomes children (*teknon*) of God. So if a child, that means there must be parents. Does it happen at once or in stages? It seems to be neither but a recognition of something that always has been and continues to be with regard to being human. We could say it goes back to vs. 4, *zoe* and *phos* or life and light. Perhaps without realizing it John is introducing a new way of viewing how

we as human beings are related to God. While true, at the same time it's a recognition of something that always has been.

Vs. 13 continues as an extended sentence which develops *pisteuo* → *exousia* → *teknon* but expands what it means to be as such, a child of God. As with a physical child there's birth, *gennaō*. However, John qualifies this by the negative three "froms" or *ek*: blood, will of the flesh and of man. The second and third seem pretty much the same. A footnote in the NIV puts both respectively as "natural descent" and "a husband's will." *Thelema* is the noun for will and found with both. With regard to flesh it could apply to a union outside lawful wedlock, *sarx* as flesh often used in a negative sense. As for *sarx*, often that's presented as at odds with God. In the second instance *thelema* can apply to lawful wedlock which is why the NIV has the reference as just presented.

Vs. 13 concludes with *gennaō* as it pertains to God, the fourth example of "from" (*ek*). This birth is set off against the first three meaning there's a certain parallel but a huge difference. Here *gennaō* is a realization of what John states in vs. 3 or *gignomai* which is better rendered as to come into being instead of being made. Actually it's close enough to *gennaō* in order to draw a parallel. Everyone by default knows what *gennaō* means. Applying it to God is something else, applying what's essential to continuance of the human race with regard to something that transcends it. Easily we can imagine that these words were confusing to those who first read them, and it's something of a miracle that their proper understanding has come down to us.

John realizes the difficulty of what he had just posited, of how it can be easily misunderstood, which is why in vs. 14 he's quick to mention the *Logos* + once again, having begun his Gospel with it. This *Logos* became flesh, *gignomai* with regard to *sarx* (both +). He hopes these two words as applicable to human birth will help understand the way *Logos*, despite being of a wholly different (divine) order, participated in the life of a flesh and blood person. Still, does the *Logos* remain separate from *sarx* as one would with regard to putting on a garment or was the *sarx* real and *Logos* some kind of ghostly presence? Both misunderstandings are easy to accept, having come into existence fairly soon and in a way, remain present today.

One way of getting out of this uncomfortable dilemma which John knew was a present threat is to come right out and say as clearly as possible and without ambiguity that the *Logos* had dwelt among us. This is put in terms people could clearly grasp, that the *Logos* literally pitched his tent *en* or in us, the verb being *skenoo* which suggests either being a nomad moving from place to place or staying in a place temporarily. If taken literally, the *Logos* is in (*en*) us for the time being, not permanently. At the same time *skenoo* doesn't detract from the *Logos* being life and light (cf. vs. 4). In other words, the *Logos* is paying a visit and living just like the rest of us, an existence which on one hand is temporary yet on the other, points to that which is permanent or eternal.

Vs. 14 continues with the Greek text saying first that "we have beheld his glory." The verb is *theomai*, more along the lines of perceiving or seeing beyond with the physical eye. As for the object, it's *doxa* or glory or more specifically, the glory of the only Son from the Father. Here John is moving away from emphasis upon the wholly transcendent *Logos* to *Logos* which has pitched

his tent in us and on to seeing his glory. Now this glory is *monogenes*, literally only or alone (*monos*) with regard to one who has been begotten, *gennaō* +. As for the relationship, it's put in terms as *para* the Father or from-alongside the Father...very close but not identified with the Father. While John may be expanding on this from the Last Supper discourse, surely he can't but recall his presence on the mountain when Jesus was transfigured. Again, it's an example where John's memory has been filled with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost or more precisely, his faculty of *anamnesis*, the ability to recollect fully in the sense of being present-with as it informs the present.

The **RSV** has vs. 15 in parentheses though such is not the case with the **NIV** perhaps because Jesus won't be introduced properly for several more verses. However, he finds it necessary to introduce John as a witness, the verb *martureō* as found in vs. 8. The difference is that in the verse at hand the Baptist is quoted, a pre-insertion if you will, of a mission statement with regard to how he relates to Jesus Christ. Upon seeing Jesus (though his name isn't mentioned here), John immediately exclaims that he comes after him and by reason of his divine status is ahead of him. I.e., we have a distinction between *opiso* and *emprosthen*, after and in front of. These words reveal that John has a proper understanding of what was said thus far as the *Logos* being the light and life of a man. Both are within each person yet exist beforehand. To realize that is John's essential mission which he puts in terms of repentance. So for him it consists of being aware of dependence upon a reality that not only is before him but after him. In other words, John is communicating a new way to perceive oneself here and now with regard to transcendent reality.

While the **RSV** begins vs. 16 with the conjunctive "and," the Greek has *hoti* usually as "because," also as "although." *Hoti* as "because" is better in that it shows why the *Logos* pitched his tent in us, that is, going back before vs. 15 which as noted, is in parentheses. This *Logos* is endowed with fullness or *pleroma*, the totality of his being which by reason of being full implies that it needs to spill over somehow somewhere. Implied is that if a person has this *pleroma*, there's nothing to do; being it is sufficient in and by itself. All else who share the same *pleroma* by this very awareness. John puts this fullness as something which has been received (*lambano* +), that is, grace upon grace or *charis* (also as favor, kindness) with the preposition *anti* which also can mean instead of. *Anti* suggests replacement while the first *charis* can refer to the former covenant whereas the second *charis* is the new covenant. Although the two differ, still they consist of *charis*, so it's a matter of degree.

This difference between two types of *charis* is spelled out in vs. 17 where John distinguishes between the law or *nomos* (i.e., *Torah*) and *charis* along with truth (*aletheia*). Both are associated with two persons. The first is Moses and the second is Jesus Christ, this being the first and long anticipated mention of his name inferring his presence not so much as an abstract entity but as a flesh and blood person.

John brings to conclusion this association of the *Logos*-as-Jesus Christ in vs. 18 before describing the activity of John the Baptist and Jesus coming to him. He takes care to establish or to re-establish the complete transcendence of God by saying that nobody has ever seen him, *horaō* also as to perceive, catch sight of or to notice. Then John adds *monogenes* + or only-begotten as in vs. 14 which modifies God and that he is present literally "into (*eis*) the bosom" of his Father. The

kolpos of Jesus is found above in reference to 13.23 where John had rested, a good a place as any enabling John to transfer this over to Jesus in the Father. And so the first eighteen verses of his Gospel which introduce Jesus Christ as *Logos* conclude with Jesus as being the one responsible for manifesting the Father. This is true despite all the emphasis placed on Jesus thus far and sets the stage for speaking of the Father. That, of course, is necessary in order to introduce the Holy Spirit.

In vs. 19 John the Evangelist turns “historical.” That is to say, he has successfully introduced Jesus-as-*Logos* and now confidently can move on to his ministry. In a way, the first eighteen verses are a substitute for the accounts of Jesus’ early life. Perhaps John figured that the three synoptic Gospels would provide the necessary details far better than he, freeing him up to take a more theological approach. Thus before Jesus comes on stage, we have the testimony (*marturia* +) of John leading us off. However, the evangelist is keenly aware of the connection of his opening verses and now in vs. 19 which he begins deliberately with the conjunctive *kai* or “and.”

The *marturia* of vs. 19 is put into practice when John had to deal with some priests and Levites sent from Jerusalem. As soon as he got word of their impending visit and before they arrived, he prepared himself by becoming more fully aware of that light or *phos* spoken of in vs. 7. If he failed to do this, chances are this delegation would walk all over him because as official representatives of the Jewish religion they were far more sophisticated than he or anyone who was at the Jordan River being baptized. Actually many present must have felt intimidated at the prospect of their arrival and stayed a healthy distance away from them.

The priests and Levites wasted no time. They had to find out who John was, what he was about and hurry back to Jerusalem as quickly as possible to file a report. Authorities there would decide the next step. “Who are you?” are the first words that came out of their mouths. Such words signal the conflict between John and religious authorities that later will apply to Jesus Christ. The response is interesting. John doesn’t reply in the conventional sense but confesses, *homologeo*. It means to share a common view or mind about a given matter as inferred by the adjective *homos* (like, similar) prefaced to the verbal root. In the verse at hand it’s followed immediately by the fact of affirming that he’s not the Christ but adds *homologeo* for a second time. This shows his commitment and determination to be at service to the Christ who has yet to appear on the scene. After all, that’s why the priests and Levites came to John or more accurately to garner information about who, what and where is this so-called *Christos* or Anointed One.

The authorities from Jerusalem snapped right back at John in vs. 21, *oun* translated as “then” and alternately as “really” and shows not so much surprise but contempt as well as impatience. Right away they fire off two questions as to his identity:

-Is John actually the prophet Elijah? In the popular imagination Elijah was expected to return and announce the coming of the Messiah. Such is the concluding verse of the Hebrew scriptures with Mal 4.5: “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes.”

-The second question has to do with the prophet. No identity is given but can be traced to Dt 18.15: “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me (Moses) from among you,

from your brethren—him you shall heed.” Somehow this had stuck in the collective memory of Israel and over time morphed into something akin to the Malachi verse just above.

To both John replies with an emphatic “no.” Still in vs. 22 the priests and Levites press him, John knowing that he’s in charge because they were manifesting considerable anxiety which was written all over the faces. Just the fact of asking the above mentioned questions was sufficient proof. If they didn’t get a proper response or better, something in line what their bosses in Jerusalem were expected, they might as well not return. Finally one last burst of desperation in vs. 22: “What do you say about yourself?” John pauses for a second. At first he doesn’t wish to explain away what he was doing out in the wilderness but on second thought, why not give a response, albeit a cryptic one? In that way those in Jerusalem might stay off his case. After all, reports had been filtering back as to his activity.

John does respond pretty much in the spirit of Elijah and the Deuteronomy prophet. At the same time he had to make known to a wider audience what he was about. If he were in a town or city, it would be different, but being out in the desert roused suspicions because so many people made their way there at some risk to their lives. Not only that, they came back transformed which scared the authorities. Now John gives a response which was of no real comfort to his interlocutors. In fact, in vs. 23 he quotes Is 40.3 which runs according to the verse at hand: “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord.’” He’s quick to mention the source, Isaiah, which certainly was familiar to the priests and Levites. As for the verse in full, it runs as “A voice cries: ‘In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.’”

There is no specific identity as to this voice (*qol*) which could be Isaiah himself and is used with the verb *qara’*. Actually the two words sound the same, *qol qore’*. Indeed, that must have puzzled the delegation sent to interrogate John. Within desert this voice bids those who might be listening to prepare or *panah* which fundamentally means to turn and thus intimates repentance. *Panah* has two objects, *derek* and *mislal*. The former can apply to a way of life whereas the latter suggests a raised embankment and is used with the preposition *l-*, literally as “to our God.”

Vs. 24 gets more specific as to whom had sent the priests and Levites, that is, the Pharisees, literally “from (*ek*) the Pharisees.” They had to get an answer from John and get it fast. They accept that he isn’t Elijah, the Christ nor the prophet which puzzles them as to why he is engaged in baptizing. Although the act of *baptizo* isn’t spelled out, we can assume that it’s for repentance, of restoring one’s relationship with God. The delegation must have gotten John during a break in his activity while those awaiting baptism stood in line nearby somewhat apprehensive that these men would shut down John’s operation and make them go home. Actually that’s why they had come out out to John. Behind all this lurks the threat of violence, that the Pharisees would use force should John persist.

In vs. 26 John really puts it to the priests and Levites. He says outrightly that he’s baptizing with water but someone is already present in their midst. Although he doesn’t identify this person, John infers that he will baptize not with water but use another means. As for this mystery man

already present in their midst, *mesos* is the adjective but more central, if it can be put as such, that is, in the middle. Despite this centrality, those from Jerusalem don't have a clue as to his identity. And so the mystery deepens.

While John continues with cryptic-like talk, the text says nothing as to how the priests and Levites respond. You'd think they would ransack the area and people lined up along the banks of the Jordan looking for this man described only as *mesos*. However, they do not which makes them slink back all the way to Jerusalem, too embarrassed to continue questioning John. En route desperately they rehearsed over and over again how they would communicate to the Pharisees what they had been sent out to accomplish. We have no answer to this but can presume that the Pharisees roundly chastised the priests and Levites, having at once sent more of their own to the Jordan. This time they wouldn't speak with John but secretly spy on the crowd to at last get to the bottom of what was going on out there in the desert.

To those sent out to John, he had provided a clue as to this person in their very midst. That is to say, in vs. 23 he says that this man will come after him. John being unworthy to untie the thong of his sandal which is the task of a slave. So that means anyone else coming out to spy on John would have to watch for him making that gesture. While this gesture may be taken not in the literal sense, the general idea is to be on the look out for someone to whom John gives obeisance.

In vs. 29 action shifts from talk about Jesus Christ by John as *Logos* and as a mystery man for the priests and Levites to him at last coming on the scene. John sees (*blepo* or to have the faculty of sight) Jesus coming toward him, *pros*. From where isn't specified but keeping in mind *mesos* or he emerges from the very midst or middle of those waiting to be baptized. The atmosphere possibly had a festive quality about it, people having made their way to the Jordan River and perhaps staying there for a few days. Such was the *mesos* from which Jesus emerged...*pros* his cousin John.

Upon seeing Jesus John exclaims in vs. 29 "behold" which is the verb *horaō*. Compare with *blepo* just mentioned as regular seeing, if you will. *Horao* is more a recognition, a sharper type of perception which takes *blepo* into consideration and centers in upon the object of vision. Although Jesus and John were cousins, this recognition didn't depend upon seeing someone familiar, for John has been in the desert for a very long time. It was akin to the *skirtao* + or leaping or when the two were fetuses in the wombs of their mothers (cf. Lk 1.41). No one else saw this *skirtao*, but certainly it was present in a more developed fashion.

John doesn't call Jesus by his proper name but hails him as Lamb of God. Not only that, this lamb will take away the sin of the world, *airo* being the verb which suggests a lifting up or removal. Reference to the Passover lamb is obvious to all present. Note the singular *hamartia* or sin of the world, that the world (*kosmos* +) is burdened with this singular weight which makes it all the more heavier and burdensome than if it consisted of multiple parts. Also in a way the singular sin makes it more convenient for the Lamb of God to focus upon as well as to bear.

Right after this acknowledgment which John makes to all present in vs. 30 he repeats what he had uttered earlier in vs. 15, that at last there's present one who ranks before him. In both instances

the adverb *emprosthēn* + and adjective *protos* are used, before and first. Nevertheless, John had that indelible *skirtao* or leaping etched in his being when he and Jesus were fetuses as noted just above. Surely the same applied to Jesus. John contrasts this in the next verse by saying that he did not know him, *oida* also as to have information about which could pertain to Jesus as Lamb of God. He qualifies this *oida* in the next breath by saying that he came specifically to baptize with water. Such a rite of purification will reveal the Lamb of God to Israel. The verb here is *phaneroo* or to manifest in the sense of to make public. While this is happening literally to a small number of people, such a manifestation is more than a passing sight. It's registered in the minds of those who've come to be baptized by John and spread out from there. More importantly we can say that John the Evangelist had recorded the event from eye witnesses on whom it had a lasting impact. So in a way, the *phaneroo* of Jesus is continuing into the present and will do so into the future.

Vs. 32 spells out this *phaneroo* in terms of a reoccurring word in John's Gospel we've come across thus far despite the few number of verses. That word is *martureo* + (*marturia* + or the noun also inferred) which in the context at hand means that John sees Jesus coming toward him with no explicit mention of the two actually meeting. The same also applies in the next verse. So while we have the Baptist finally seeing Jesus-in-the-flesh, they don't make contact except at some distance. Even more intriguing, Jesus isn't recorded as being baptized. He drops by, if you will, approaches (*pros*) John but then moves on almost as though his *pros* were right through John.

As for John's witness in vs. 32, it consists of two verbs, *martureo* and *horao* (both +). They are centered upon the Spirit or *Pneuma*, something which essentially cannot be seen, that which is breathed out or wind. The only way to present what cannot be presented is by comparison, and for this reason we have the small but important *hos* or "as." Without missing a beat John comes up with the image of a dove to represent *Pneuma* coming down from heaven, *ouranos* here not necessarily from the divine dwelling place but heaven-as-sky. Once it had descended (*katabaino*), it remains upon Jesus, *meno* with the preposition *epi*. Obviously this doesn't mean that Jesus is walking around with a dove perched on his head but is now endowed or recognized as endowed with another person or the Holy Spirit, to put it awkwardly.

In vs. 33 John claims not to know Jesus, *oida* + or to perceive, behold. He just said this in vs. 31 which, if you will, is a partial truth because of that recognition implied by the verb *skirtao* when John and Jesus were in the wombs of their mothers. This clearly establishes that John knows Jesus essentially. However, John has to speak of Jesus now as Messiah for the benefit of others so that both men will retain their proper roles. And so John claims that someone had sent him to baptize but doesn't say explicitly that it's Jesus. John's role—again that emphasis upon *martureo*—is to point out Jesus as baptizing with the Holy Spirit or *Pneuma* +. That's why again we have the two verbs *martureo* and *horao* that Jesus is Son of God. John doesn't spell out how Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit. How does he immerse a person with something imperceptible as the wind? For now that question is left unanswered which is why there's no discussion between John and Jesus. Again, *martureo*, *horao* and *skirtao* suffice for any exchange of words.

Vs. 29 begins with mention of the "next day" or the day after John's confrontation with the priests and Levites from Jerusalem and moves on to his bearing witness to Jesus without the two

speaking. Then we have another “next day” in vs. 35 when once again John sees Jesus walking along and exclaims as he does in vs. 29 behold (*horaos*+) with regard to the Lamb of God without mentioning that he takes away the sin of the world. John says this while with two of his disciples, one of whom turns out to be Andrew identified in vs. 30. brother of Simon Peter. As soon as they heard their master utter these words about Jesus, they left to follow him, *akoloutheo* connoting accompaniment. Something must have clicked to leave John whose reputation was above all reproach for a man of whom he had spoken of but in essence was unknown. Perhaps it was John’s earlier words about Jesus as *Logos* that brought it about.

There’s no record of Andrew and the other disciple taking leave of John nor did John expect it. This isn’t because they were acting in a cold-hearted way but recognizing, even in a vague seminal way, that they were exchanging discipleship for a human being to someone who was divine. John, of course, was delighted that he was responsible for contributing to Jesus’ first disciples. As soon as Andrew and the other man left Jesus didn’t extend a welcome commonly understood but said in all fairness to John, “What do you seek” (*zeteo*)? They give no reply because they were incapable of it, but because this happened so suddenly, that wasn’t of any special importance. The two men addressed Jesus as rabbi or teacher (*didaskalos*), something they’d never call John. Instead of giving Jesus an answer to *zeteo* they asked where he was staying. Jesus complied and off they went though there’s no indication of where that had been.

Since they were in the desert, most likely they stayed in tents. That, of course, was incidental to the story. We have no record of the conversation between the three, but Jesus must have asked about John’s preaching. They were all too eager to fill in what John said about Jesus. Perhaps they were reluctant to ask if he really was the divine *Logos* but the fact that they abandoned John then and there showed they had some insight. They must have asked Jesus about that baptism of which John had spoken, namely, Jesus baptizing with the Holy Spirit. That was only natural to ask by reason of their association with John who, in fact, stated that plainly.

In vs. 40 Andrew is identified as having heard John speak which must have been both of repentance and Jesus as *Logos*, so he and his companion were well prepared to make the switch. Andrew didn’t waste time contacting his brother Simon which means that he too must have been with John though he’s not identified as being the other man. He could have come on his own to the Jordan River both to hear John and to visit his brother, checking up on him. This means that Jesus was encamped nearby, not far from Simon, which is why Andrew told him that we (first person plural, possibly including his companion) have found the Messiah which vs. 41 equates as the Christ, *Christos* +.

Upon bringing Simon to Jesus, Jesus takes a good look at him, *emblepo* connotes doing it intently, *em-* also as *en-* which means “in.” Jesus addresses him in a way that makes him both confident and uncomfortable, *ei* translated as “so” which has a lot to do with it. Jesus doesn’t expect a response; Simon isn’t in a position to do so since was put on the spot. Jesus then says with a definite air of authority which at the time is totally beyond Simon’s comprehension that he’ll be called Cephas which means Peter. Both proper names mean rock. Nevertheless, Simon must have taken some delight in this and readily concurred with the change of names. At the same time he was puzzled

as to what it meant. Surely he must have become the butt of jokes by his brother Andrew who similarly was puzzled.

Vs. 43 is the third instance of the “next day,” the other two being in vss. 29 and 35. Surely a conversation must have lasted late at night between Jesus, Andrew, Simon now called Peter and the other man who possibly is with them but remains unidentified. Now Jesus decided to go to Galilee. As it will be revealed a few verses later, this is the place from which the two come. Most likely they suggested that Jesus go there to pick up two potential disciples. Without waiting any longer, Jesus takes them up on their word. Upon arriving there, Jesus finds Philip. Actually Philip is first of two who will become intimates of Jesus who simply commands that he follow him, *akoloutheo* +. Philip along with Andrew and Peter decided to recommend Nathanael. Jesus, in fact, doesn’t seek him out but allows Philip to do so knowing that he will make the proper choice despite any initial reluctance.

Easily we can picture Philip running up to Nathanael that we...the others with him...have found the one of whom Moses had spoken. Note that he quotes from Moses and doesn’t blurt out that he had found the Messiah, for that would be too dramatic. Surely reference to Moses would be enough, more than enough, to persuade Nathanael or any devout Jew. The reference Philip uses is Dt 18.18: “I will raise up for them a prophet like you (Moses) from among their brethren; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.” Note that Dt 18.15 is cited with regard to vs. 25, it being in the same context. What’s important is that this prophet will come from among the same people as Israel, not an import. *Qerev* prefaced with the preposition *min* or “from” suggests from the very midst or middle. From this center the Lord will put his words-as-expression or *davar* in the prophet’s mouth who will them *davar* + or speak them.

Philip expected Nathanael to come off with a response similar to his enthusiasm but instead is stopped dead in his tracks with a strong tinge of sarcasm and even disgust. Apparently Nazareth had a Podunk-like reputation or even worse. How dare Philip equate that place with the venerable Moses. This didn’t dissuade Philip who invited Nathanael to check it out for himself, so off they went. You have to credit Nathanael for at least doing this, given his strong attitude. En route Philip must have done his best to paint a glowing picture of Jesus, of how John the Baptist had recognized him as being the Lamb of God, etc. Indeed that seemed pretty far-fetched.

When Jesus caught sight of Nathanael approaching, he gave him the ultimate complement, that indeed (*alethos* or truly) that he was an Israelite with no guile or *dolos* which also means deceit or treachery. Nathanael’s curiosity is perked at once, asking Jesus how does he know this. Indeed, there just might be something about this fellow from worthless Nazareth. Jesus said that he saw Nathanael under a fig tree well before Philip had called him. This evoked an immediate response, that indeed Jesus is the Son of God, the same words used by John the Baptist in vs. 34. Not only that, he blurts out that Jesus is the King of Israel, something that made Jesus uncomfortable by reason of its political overtones. Anyway, Nathanael lacked that *dolos*, so all this could be overlooked.

In vs. 51 which brings Chapter One to a close Jesus said that Nathanael will see greater things than Jesus having caught sight of him under a fig tree. He also poses a rhetorical question, one which Nathanael is powerless to answer about believing in Jesus by reason of acknowledging as having seen him. Jesus uses the words “truly truly” which consist of *horao* + or to see and the adverb *alethos* + or truly. Compared with what had just happened, Nathanael will see the heavens opened and God’s angels ascending and descending upon the Son of man. In other words, what Jacob had seen in a dream will become a reality with Jesus.

The source of this *anabaino* and *katabaino* + is Gn 28.12: “And he (Jacob) dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it!” The Hebrew word for ladder is *sulam*, the only instance it’s found in the Bible. We can assume that Nathanael was familiar with this incident and at once held Jesus in awe as being that ladder or mediator between heaven and earth. Addition of angels made it all the more impressive. Nevertheless, all this is destined to be revealed in the future but Nathanael felt it present even now. This too must have impressed Andrew, Peter and Philip. Philip too could take credit for having introduced Nathanael to Jesus, that he was someone special and might be singled out later for some important role.

Chapter Two

Verses one through twelve deal with the wedding at Cana, vs. 1 opening with the conjunctive *kai* + usually translated as “and.” However, it goes untranslated in the **RSV** and shows the close connection between what occurred towards the end of Chapter One and what we have now. For some reason or other John speaks of the “third day” which could refer to the marriage taking place, for example, the third day after the Sabbath. That seems probable because the Sabbath was the central point of the week and essential for keeping account of the passage of time. Jesus was invited though only his mother Mary is mentioned as being present. Joseph is omitted which suggests that he had died relatively young; also no other relatives are noted which doesn’t mean they weren’t present. Just the fact that John speaks of Mary suggests that she will have a role to play. That, of course, will be revealed shortly.

Vs. 2 has Jesus as having accepted an invitation to a wedding along with his disciples, Andrew, Peter, Philip and Nathanael. Chances are all or some of them knew either the bride, bridegroom or both. It seems that this was the first time Mary, her son and his companions came together. Right away Mary as only a mother could do, quickly assessed each one of them. That set the stage for would could have been a heated conversation between the two, Mary of course as mother having the upper hand. Obviously Jesus felt he was unfairly being put on the spot because he had to explain why he chose each of the four men with him and answer what seemed to him useless questions. All this must have taken place in private apart from the disciples. However, they could tell just by looking at the two that there was tension between them. Chances are Mary was worried, not unduly so, as to the character of each of the four men. Jesus had been with them a short time and hadn’t had sufficient time to check them out. Also Mary wondered what they were going to do now. That, for sure, getting a bit awkward. Although she was concerned about whom

her son was hanging around with, of greater interest was John the Baptist. After all, Elizabeth is his mother, hence the two being related to her.

In vs. 3 the wine served during the wedding gave out, *hustereo* also as to fall short which may also imply that sufficient quantity wasn't provided, a miscalculation by those responsible for the celebration. Mary seems to be privy to this and brings it to the attention to her son, she allowing her motherly instinct to kick in and wanting to prevent any embarrassment. Quietly she informed her son most likely before the guests realized what was going on but is discreet enough not to ask how he'd handle the situation if at all. Was he going to ask the disciples with him to rush out quietly and get more wine? That's one reasonable supposition behind her request. Then we have the famous response by Jesus when he addresses his mother as woman. A footnote in the **NIV** observes "The Greek does not have the adjective 'Dear,' but it is necessary to convey the correct sense since the potentially abrupt 'woman' could be understood as a harsh form of address."

Along with this Jesus says, literally "What to me and to you?" We have to keep in mind that he had just had a heated conversation with his mother about the four unknown men with him (one of whom Jesus had changed his name for some reason or another) plus her son giving what seemed to his mother scant information about John the Baptist. In other words, she has little or no information to convey about Elizabeth who just heard rumors about her son out in the desert who recently had been investigated by authorities from Jerusalem. Also Mary had to bring up something he'd rather not discuss during this joyous wedding celebration, namely, that his hour or *hora* has not come. *Hora* refers to a point in time for an occasion, that occasion if mentioned by itself would be designated as a *kairos* event. At this stage of the game Mary was really annoyed at the way her son was treating her. What on earth was this hour about? Thankfully the give and take between mother and son wasn't in front of the wedding guests, especially the bride and bridegroom. That would have spoiled the whole affair if this were done in the open. Nevertheless, tension between mother and son remained and was due to go unresolved all the way to when Mary was at the foot of the cross.

The situation with regard to providing wine was getting more critical. Clearly what Jesus said about his hour or *hora* applies here. It was running out and something had to be done immediately to save the day. Mary knew that both she and her son were familiar to most people at the celebration. She decided to take the initiative before anyone else, even the hosts, knew what was going on. Perhaps part of this was that Mary wanted to smooth over relations with her son even though she continued to remain uncomfortable about the four men associated with him. Thus she told the servants waiting on the guests to do whatever her son asks of them, even rush out to the store but to keep a low profile. The noun for such a position is *diakanos* or one whose task is to act as an intermediary, this differing from *doulos*, essentially a slave.

It so happened that nearby were six large containers of water intended for purification, they being put in place earlier for the guests to cleanse themselves of any impurity incurred during the proceedings. Apparently some of water had been used already which prompted Jesus to ask the servants to fill them to the very top. Once they had done this, they are to bring some of the contents to the steward in charge of the feast, *architriklinos*. It was he who knew about the lack of

wine and tried not to panic but didn't know what to do. After all, he was responsible for the miscalculation when it came to the wine. Those who brought the wine didn't inform him as to its source. They knew it was wine from the water jugs but naturally were filled with disbelief. One error on their part and they just might literally lose their heads.

The steward knew what he was tasting to be wine. When it was brought to him he assumed it would be as such and was relieved that there just may be enough to last for the rest of the wedding celebration. He too was fully aware that if there was no wine, that's the end of his career. Not knowing what to make of the situation and dissatisfied with a lack of response from his underlings, discreetly he decided to summon the man-in-charge, the bridegroom. Without bringing up the issue of a lack of wine—the chief steward wanted to avoid that issue at all costs—he asked about the source of the wine he had just tasted. The customary practice of serving the best wine first and the lesser quality later is reversed. It seems that no one knew how this came about except the servants who dealt directly with the wine from the jars of water set aside for purification. Even if they told the steward and bridegroom they wouldn't believe it. And so everyone continued on with the wedding celebration blissfully unaware that an embarrassing situation had been averted.

The best part of all this which goes unrecorded is that the tension between Jesus and his mother was lessened. By no means did it go away, but both could agree that the outcome of the wedding was to their common consent.

Vs. 11 states that this is the first sign Jesus had done, *arche* + suggestive of the first in a sequence and *semeion* being that which signals something more significant or meaningful than the appearance. In and by itself this *semeion* is confined to a limited group of people. However, the fact that John records it and Jesus' disciples are present mean that it will have wider ramifications though not at the present. Jesus, of course, was fully aware of this. John rightly calls the *semeion* a manifestation of his glory, the verb *phaneroo* directly related to *doxa* (both +). The disciples believed or *pisteuo* + literally "into him." They are singled out as worthy of mention whereas the other participants at the wedding feast, bridegroom and bride included, are not. Everyone else was simply too taken up with the wedding and subsequent celebration, especially the unexpected treat of wine served later.

Vs. 12 has Jesus leaving Cana and going to Capernaum with quite a wide variety of people accompanying him, his mother, brothers and disciples. Despite the tension between mother and son, Mary tags along obviously wanting to know what he was up to. As for brothers (*adelphos*), most likely this covers a relatively wide assortment of relatives not uncommon for the time and culture. During the walk as well as their stay in Capernaum those accompanying him were filled about questions as to what had happened in Cana. Like the wedding guests, they were just as ignorant of the change of water into wine and needed to be informed as to what really occurred. Here we can presume is where that first sign was duly recorded for posterity. Both Jesus' actions and his words had a far more lasting effect than if they came from any given historical figure, that is, they had a unique way of inserting themselves into one's memory or faculty of *anamnesis* as noted earlier.

After a brief stay in Capernaum, Jesus goes up to Jerusalem—up both physically and symbolically—for celebration of the Passover. No one is mentioned as accompanying him; perhaps the same retinue joined in. After all, the Passover was the most solemn of all holy days. We can assume that they arrived several days in advance in order to obtain what was necessary for the celebration but still had to contend with the crowds. The population of Jerusalem surged as at no other time of the year which is why the temple courtyard will filled with all sorts of vendors. This upset Jesus so much that quickly he made a whip of cords to drive them out, overturning the tables of money-changers as well. The courtyard was fairly large, and perhaps Jesus didn't cover the entire area. Vs. 15 says that he drove them all out which may be an exaggeration. However, he impressed the other vendors so much that they beat it out there as quickly as they could. The same, of course, applied to the crowds. Jesus exclaims that these people were making the house of his Father a house of trade or *emporion*. Obviously he was overheard calling the temple his Father's house which must have astonished them.

Vs. 17 begins with how the disciples respond to Jesus' action, that is, they remember it or better, insert it into their collective memory, the verb being *mimneskomai* which ties in with the faculty of *anamnesis* noted earlier. Actually it's vital, for without it we would not have a record of what had happened. Perhaps without fully realizing what was going on, they associated this action with a quote from Ps 69.9. It runs in full as "For zeal for your house has consumed me, and the insults of those who insult you have fallen on me." Zeal or *qin'ath* implies jealousy and *'akal* is the common verb for to eat. Such zeal for things divine has negative ramifications for the psalmist who suffers insults or *cheraph* (singular). Such a *cherpah* initially directed towards God indirectly falls upon the psalmist. As for the verse at hand, the verb *kataesthio* means to eat up ravenously, the preposition *kata-* meaning down as to gulp down food. Although Jesus caused quite a commotion, chances are that the vendors quickly filtered back. This was the most profitable time of the year, so their very livelihood depended upon the Passover rush.

Naturally what Jesus had done upset those present but again, given the large area of the temple courtyard and throngs of people for the Passover, it was limited to a small area. People in other parts of the courtyard were completely oblivious as to what was going on. Besides, the noise was something else. Nevertheless, some Jews asked him for a sign or *seimeion* + to show them for what he had done. After all, clearly they heard him speak of the temple as his Father's house. If that's true, then the Father must have given him this *semeion*. It should be noted that this is towards the beginning of Jesus' ministry, and he was an unknown entity. No one at the time knew where he was from or what he was about. Perhaps some may have confused him with John the Baptist who, it seems, never set foot in Jerusalem.

The *semeion* Jesus gave was something the Jews didn't expect. In fact, it went above their heads and understandably so. He said in a provocative manner that if the temple is destroyed, he will raise it up in three days. *Luo* + is the verb which more precisely means to loosen, as though the stones simply will give way at once. At once people thought of what their Roman occupiers might do and in fact did carry out a generation or two later. Raising the temple up or *egeiro* within such a short period of time is utterly impossible. Then again, Jesus called the temple his Father's house,

and the Father just might be capable of such a task. To this the Jews responded in a predictable, literally fashion. They speak of the long time it took to build the temple...forty-six years...and three days is nothing compared to that time span which is about one human generation.

Jesus didn't let on that he was speaking of his body, the new temple. That would be incomprehensible even if he said so openly. Again, Jesus is an unknown entity who had made his way to the capitol during Passover when all sorts of people flooded the city. Vs. 22 puts this in context, namely, that Jesus' words became clear to his disciples only after the resurrection. The verb *mimneskomai* as in vs. 17 is the second mention of that making-present through the faculty of *anamnesis* which is at the very heart of the Gospel, not just John's but the other three when it's used. Vs. 22 puts it in proper context, the disciples believing (*pisteuo* +) the scriptures along with the word or *logos* + that Jesus as *Logos* had spoken. There doesn't seem to be a clear-cut reference to a particular verse or verses or to the Hebrew scriptures as a whole. Possibly the latter is more like it.

Vs. 23 continues the theme of *semeion* + or sign put as what Jesus had done (*poieo*) which remains unspecified but most likely physical healings. That is, people believe in Jesus, *pisteuo* + being used here in a sense different from vs. 22 with regard to the disciples just noted. In a way, Passover was a good opportunity for this. At no other time would there be such a wide variety of people, many having come from abroad. These would be ideal candidates to spread Jesus' mission well beyond the borders of Israel. At the same time the commotion was a cover-up or protection against prying eyes from the religious and secular (Roman) authorities. Too much was going on to keep tabs on everyone. Even if word about Jesus healing people reached them, it was incidental. As long as order was being kept.

Chapter Two concludes on a wary note. Jesus willingly engaged in making signs as just noted but didn't trust himself to the people, *pisteuo* + again. He wanted to refrain from gaining notoriety, especially now at Passover, which would have political overtones. He was fully aware of what could happen and required no one to bear witness to this, *martureo* +. And so the chapter ends with Jesus knowing (*ginosko* +) what was in a man. These words come as no surprise during the Passover, for in a few short years Jesus would be in Jerusalem during that feast when he would be betrayed and crucified.

Chapter Three

The second letter of this opening verse is the conjunctive *de* + which the **RSV** translates as "now," this being a way to prep the reader for something new and important about to be described. That happens to be the important figure of Nicodemus whose pedigree, if you will, John puts as "a man of the Pharisees" and "a ruler of the Jews." Now the stage is set for Nicodemus to come to (*pros*) Jesus where night is mentioned specifically. The very fact that this meeting takes place at night says everything about Jesus' relationship with the religious authorities right at the beginning of his ministry. The point of contention is, of course, Jesus having made quite a scene of upsetting the

vendors in the temple courtyard. Other than we have no record of any tense relationship between him and official Judaism. As for where Jesus is staying during the Passover, most likely it's a rented place along with those accompanying him as noted in vs. 12. Surely at least one of them had contacts in the city to make suitable arrangements. In fact, he may have done this well in advance to accommodate a relatively large party during the busiest time of the year, that is, Passover.

Nicodemus addresses Jesus as Rabbi or teacher (*didaskalos* +) which shows great respect, he using the first person plural which could infer that others of his class felt the same but were reluctant to admit it. Adding the fact that Jesus comes from God is even more remarkable. The basis of this claim rests on the signs or *semeion* + Jesus had performed, the ones mentioned in 1.23 but left unspecified. Nicodemus and his silent companions acknowledge that they could be done only by God or more accurately, that God is with (*meta*) Jesus. Wonderful as these signs might be, knowing the source or who was responsible for them is more important. As noted above, such signs must consist of healing though there's nothing specific as to their nature.

Jesus doesn't show the least bit of being flattered by Nicodemus. Instead, in vs. 3 he comes close to rebuffing him, using a double *amen* translated as "truly, truly." He re-enforces this, if you will, by adding "I say to you." In other words, Jesus is addressing this respected religious leader as an equal, as a Rabbi which Nicodemus called him in vs. 2. At the same time he's putting him in his place. Nicodemus accepted this as a proper response which set the stage, if you will, for a dialogue between the two men. Jesus challenges this man without mincing words, namely, the necessity to be born from above (the **RSV** has 'anew'), *gennaō* with the adverb *anothen*, from above. Such a birth is necessary for seeing the kingdom of God, *horao* +. And so if one is born without this above-ness being operative in one's awareness, that person remains completely blind.

Vs. 4 has Nicodemus asking somewhat naively how someone who's an adult be born when old. Obviously a person can't enter the womb of his mother and come out once again. Jesus maintains his respect for this venerable member of the clergy yet doesn't hesitate to put him on guard. He does this by a double *amen* + and "I say to you" which he had just used in vs. 3. Jesus refines what birth he's talking about. Instead of being born in the physical sense, water and the Spirit (*Pneuma* +) are essential for the birth he has in mind. As for *Pneuma*, it's mentioned in 1.33 as recognized by John. Also the element of water associated with baptism and practiced by John at the Jordan River seemed to be something of a novelty, it not being found in the Hebrew scriptures.

It's quite possible that word of this had reached Nicodemus which wouldn't be surprising, for at that time word traveled more quickly than we imagine. So Nicodemus was trying to put two and two together as best he could but apparently had no point of reference in the way he had been taught to comprehend what Jesus was communicating to him. As for water and *Pneuma*, both are requirements for entering the kingdom of God, *eiserchomai* with the preposition *eis*; in other words, two "intos" with regard to this kingdom. Now Jesus shifts Nicodemus' original question as to being born by saying yes, what is born of the flesh is flesh (*sarx* +) whereas what is born of *Pneuma* + is *pneuma*. Note the difference between the two, the latter being derived from the former. As for the verb, it's *gennaō* + as Jesus uses it in vs. 3.

In vs. 7 Jesus tells Nicodemus not to marvel (*thaumazo*, also as to be impressed, to be caught off guard) at his words about being born literally from above (*anothen* +), this apparently something brand new for him. It seems Jesus is a bit surprised that someone so knowledgeable in his religion was unfamiliar with this. Then again, the religious tradition doesn't seem to have such references, but you'd think Nicodemus would have understood what was at issue.

Jesus still sees astonishment and confusion on the face of Nicodemus so decides to flesh out on what he had said earlier with regard to the Spirit. He uses an example of that which is most similar to it, wind, this also rendered as *pneuma*. Everyone is familiar with the wind in motion or as it makes various sounds but don't have a clue as to its source or destination. Also it can vary in intensity from a gentle breeze to a hurricane. In other words, *pneuma* more often than not is very fickle. As for its movement, it's rendered by the two verbs *erchomai* + and *hupago*, the latter also as to go away or to depart. If *pneuma* is so unpredictable yet felt, it must be a very strange type of existence for a person to be born of the *Pneuma*, actually undesirable and even disturbing if one is unfamiliar with it. Although we don't have Nicodemus asking Jesus about this, surely he wondered to himself if such a person or persons do or can exist. If so, how would they comport themselves? One thing is certain. Such a person would be pretty much alone not knowing his origin nor destination. Hearing would be an important factor in his life yet even this cannot be grasped, just listened to.

This talk about something so ungraspable must have confused Nicodemus even more instead of helping him out. No small wonder that in vs. 9 he exclaims "How can this be?" Jesus didn't waste a moment responding or actually rebuking him. He puts the question in terms of another question. If Nicodemus is a teacher or *didaskalso* + as he had called Jesus in vs. 2, why is he ignorant (i.e., lacks *ginosko* +) of what Jesus had just explained with regard to the Spirit? Nicodemus must have felt that indeed he was put in his place. Although Jesus continues to speak with him, pretty much he fades away until he appears briefly in 7.50 and later to take away Jesus' body. Unlike our perception of the Pharisees, Nicodemus must be credited with being open to what Jesus had taught, else he would have been among those who had condemned him.

For the third time in a row in vs. 11 Jesus comes off with a double *amen* + to Nicodemus followed by "I say to you." He's singled out for this treatment, if you will, by reason of his high status, so Jesus wants to make sure not just he but his associates grasp what he's trying to communicate. Should Jesus succeed, he might...just might...have official Judaism on his side. This time, however, Jesus speaks in the first person plural which, in light of the threefold use of the double *amen* plus "I say to you," is designed to give his words greater authority, one which Nicodemus seems disposed to accept. He tells Nicodemus straight out that he doesn't receive "our" testimony, *lambano* and *marturia* + or witness even though "we" are speaking of what "we" know, *eidon* also as to see, to perceive. Jesus knows he can really lay it on thick with Nicodemus, a way of testing his resolve and hopefully to win him over.

In vs. 12 Jesus continues speaking in rather harsh words to Nicodemus who remains silent throughout, reverting to the first person singular. He contrasts talk about things of the earth with those of heaven, *epigeios* and *epouranios*. Note the preposition *epi* or upon prefaced to each in the

sense of with regard to, “upon earth” and “upon heaven.” It would be useless to speak of the former if they can’t be grasped. Apply this to the latter? Might as well forget about it.

Next in vs. 13 Jesus shifts to speaking about his origin and says outrightly that he has come down from heaven and that no one except himself has ascended there. The two verbs are *katabaino* and *anabaino* (both +), that is, the prepositions *kata* and *ana* prefaced to the same verbal root *baino*. Jesus presents this as speaking of another person, that is, the Son of man which he mentioned last in 1.51 to Nathanael.

In vs. 14 compares the Son of man to when Moses had lifted up the serpent in the desert. The occasion? When the Israelites had complained about the manna as “worthless food” and were punished by the Lord with fiery serpents which bit them, causing quite a few casualties. As for the cure, the Lord himself told Moses “Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live” [Num 21.9]. “Fiery serpent” consists of two nouns, *nachash* and *saraph*, the former being the one which had tempted the woman and described as “more subtle than any other wild creature that the Lord God had made” [Gn 3.1]. As for the pole or *nes*, it also means a banner with military connotations. As for anyone wishing to be cured of his bite, the solution was simple. All one had to do was to look at this *nes*, *ra’ah* being the verb. Note the similar sound of *nachash* and *nashak*, serpent and to bite.

To replace the seeing of the bronze serpent, the verse at hand has Jesus offering life which is eternal, *aiionios* essentially that which has no beginning nor end. However, such life is dependent upon believing (*pisteuo* +) in him.

Jesus continues speaking with Nicodemus, having moderated his tone because he could see that despite having rebuked him, he remained eager to learn. Jesus would have stopped then and there should Nicodemus show any hesitation. Actually what Nicodemus hears are the first detailed words as to Jesus’ identity, perhaps more than the four disciples whom Jesus had chosen. In back of Jesus’ mind was this man going to share what he had learned with his fellow Pharisees? Judging from the wider picture, even if he did so later on, it didn’t seem to have had much effect.

In vs. 16 Jesus reveals to Nicodemus his mission which consists of perhaps the best know verse from the New Testament. It’s one of those things that has become so familiar that we breeze right over it with little consideration. It can be examined in terms of three parts. The first is about God giving his own Son because he loved the world. The common verb *didomi* or to give connotes granting permission, appointing or even establishing. What springs directly from such *didomi* is the verb *agapao* (verbal root of *agape*) with regard to *kosmos* +. This verb which is so essential to Christianity can be rendered as to having affection and once taken as such, makes all the difference.

The second part is connected with the first by *hoste* or “so that” which suggests a given result being followed by what had just come before it. What follows is the giving of God’s Son who is *monogenes* + or only-begotten, his only one. The third and final part of vs. 16 begins with *hina* or “in order that” which shows something else which follows, that is, from *hoste*. This consists in any

person (*pas* being all inclusive) who believes (*pisteuo* +) not so much the Son but conditionally, if you will, that is, literally into (*eis*) the Son. Such into-ness spills over into the following. Such a person will not perish but have life which is eternal or *aiionios* +, the verb being *apollumai* which is more forceful and suggestive of something coming from without, that is, to experience destruction.

Vs. 17 follows directly upon *agapao*→*didomi* or loving and giving with regard to the Son and world respectively. That is to say, God sent the Son (here not as *monogenes*) into the world or *kosmos* +. The verb is *apostello*, to dispatch in order to accomplish a mission. Compare with *didomi* above or God giving his Son who is *monogenes*. *Didomi* conveys the sense of permanence, that the world now possesses the only-begotten Son whereas *apostello* suggests giving but with the certainty of a return. I.e., the former is one-way whereas the latter is reciprocal.

As for the reciprocal *apostello* with regard to the Son, he is not to condemn the world but that it be saved through him. In other words, we have a contrast between what would be expected as *krino* or judging and therefore having a sentence delivered, most likely as harsh as possible, and *sozo* or saving the world. Both are prefaced with *hina* +, “in order that” which implies a result that will follow quickly. In other words, this saving comes about through the Son instead of *krino* coming through him. *Sozo* connotes both preserving as well as rescuing. At this early stage Jesus doesn’t go into details as to how this saving will take place. If he were to jump ahead and speak of his death and resurrection, clearly that would be too much for Nicodemus to comprehend. Not even the disciples grasped this despite having been with Jesus for three years. As for the Son, Nicodemus was able to associate the fact that Jesus was speaking of himself and not of someone else. That was more than enough to make him follow Jesus in the coming years closely but to do so in a discreet manner. Thus in a way Nicodemus is an ambivalent character.

Vs. 18 has the Son already present in the world engaged in his mission of saving people though someone like Nicodemus is unaware of what this consists of. A precondition for it—and *sozo* is later seen as preeminently tied in with the passion and death of Jesus—is believing in the Son, *pisteuo* + which leads to being “into (*eis*) the Son.” In other words, such active belief consists of an almost physical transfer from one place into another or better, from one condition into another. Right away such *pisteuo-eis* results in the person so doing it not to be condemned or *krino* +, that is, judged and having a sentence handed down to him. The exact opposite holds true for a person who does not believe, this being modified by into (*eis*) the name of the Son of God who is only-begotten. *Onoma* in this context is Jesus Christ which, of course, refers to the double nature of his person and hence mission, the one who both saves and is anointed.

While such talk indeed is not only refreshing but revolutionary, in vs. 19 Jesus speaks of judgment or *krisis*. Like the verbal root from which it’s derived (*krino*), *krisis* implies the giving of a sentence. Such *krisis* is not like anything one would expect. Rather, it consists of a presence-in, light or *phos* + which has come into the world and in 1.4 is identified with life. In other words, the light doesn’t have to do anything, just be. Even before this has taken place, men loved darkness (*skotos* more precisely as gloom), the verb *agapao* + being used, the same one with regard to God loving the world. Thus *agapao* can work in two opposite directions. At the root of this *agapao* with

regard to gloom is that already the deeds of men were evil, *poneros* implying that which is worthless both socially and morally.

And so this precondition to what is *poneros* makes a person hate the light, *miseo* also as to have a strong aversion, keeping him away from it and not desiring to approach (*pros*, direction towards-which) it, the verb being *erchomai* +. Instinctively such a person knows that this aversion to *pros* will expose his deeds or *ergon*, also as occupation. The verb is *elegcho*, also as to scrutinize, to examine carefully.

In contrast to what vs. 20 describes, vs. 21 brings to conclusion what turns out to be a kind of monologue by Jesus to Nicodemus. As for Nicodemus, he hasn't uttered a word since vs. 4, his question as to how a person can be born a second time. As noted above, hopefully this Pharisee's position will influence his peers which unfortunately doesn't seem to have come true. This last verse before Jesus departs concerns a person who does what is true or more accurately, what is truth or *aletheia* +. Such truth has a unique way of bringing him to (*pros*, again direction towards-which) the light. In this way his deeds that have been done in God will be clear to all, *ergazomai* being the verbal root of *ergon* + or deeds. The verb is *phaneroo* + also as to become visible with regard to that which previously had not been seen.

Vs. 22 shifts gears with the opening words "after this" or after the extended talk with Nicodemus which to him must have been both inspiring and confusing. Throughout it all he didn't ask Jesus a single question, having been effectively silenced when he asked about being born a second time. Nothing is said about Jesus' experience in Jerusalem for the Passover nor how long he stayed there. We can assume it was relatively short, he and his disciples (his mother and brothers not mentioned) having made their way to Judea. It is there that Jesus engages in baptizing, the details of which aren't given. However, keep in mind that Jesus' baptizing may have been different, John the Baptist having acknowledged this back in 1.33, "he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit" [1.33]. How that fits in is better left unsaid but simply put out there.

Apparently nearby John was continuing his practice at a place described as having much water. So we have two men...cousins...engaged in the same practice which must have been confusing to people, Jesus' disciples included. Vs. 24 expressly says that John had not yet been put into prison implying that he was being monitored closely whereas such was not the case with Jesus. Many must have wondered who was a disciple of whom?

Vs. 25 recounts a discussion (*zetesis*, fundamentally as search, investigation) between the disciples of John and a Jew with regard to purifying or *katharizmos*, this and the act of baptizing perhaps being confused. At once the discussion shifts to the disciples bothered over Jesus and his disciples engaged in their baptizing. When addressing John they referred to Jesus as the one to whom he had borne witness, *martureo* +. However, what really concerned them was not that Jesus was competing with John but that they, the disciples or ones complaining, were in danger of losing their job and hence their reputation by being associated with the Baptist. Although we have no word from Jesus' disciples, we can assume they felt the same.

This prompted John to provide a teaching moment, one that will for good settle the difference between John's mission and that of Jesus. This will go on for the remainder of the chapter. John's disciples address him as Rabbi, this the first time in the Gospel such a title is used with regard to John. Right away John saw through their self-centered concern and responded by saying that a person receives only what's given to him from heaven, *lambano* and *didomi* (both +). Then he gets right to the point, namely, that you...his very own disciples...who are bringing the complaint are bearing witness (*martureo* +) that their master isn't the Christ or the anointed one. Rather, from the beginning they concurred with John that he had been sent before him, *apostello* + being the verb.

John now puts all this in the context of participants at a wedding. While the bridegroom has his bride, the friend (*philos*) of the bridegroom is standing near and listening to him, *histemi* and *akouo*. This friend is something like a best man, one who has a special role to play during the wedding ceremony itself. His readiness to be of service is indicated by a disposition to rejoice (*chairō*) at the bridegroom's voice which sums up *histemi* and *akouo*, making them one and the same. That is to say, his joy is now full or *plerōo* or brought to fulfillment. Implied is that the friend is ready to be of service to the bride should she request it. Such joy is mirrored in a spontaneous willingness to decrease while the bridegroom (and let's include the bride) is increasing, *auxano* and *elattoo*. We could say that while each is going their own separate ways, there's a violation of space and time, if you will. The further apart they get, the closer they become.

In vs. 31 John elaborates upon this *auxano-elattoo* as it pertains to Jesus Christ but without mentioning his name. There are two words for the English "above:" *anothen* + and *epano* (from above and above), both containing the preposition *ana* or above, up to. The latter has the preposition *epi*- prefaced to it, upon or literally "upon above." Using both with regard to Jesus is intended to show his divinity. In contrast to both aboves we have in the same verbs mention of earth or *ge* also as land with two uses of the preposition *ek* and reading literally "from the earth" in both instances. Compared with heaven and the two uses of "above," the person associated with (*ek*) the earth speaks of it, *laleo* here in the sense has the same language as the earth. Then John throws in that the one coming from heaven (*erchomai* + with *ek*) is above everything, *epano*. After all, *epano* = *ouranos* + or heaven.

In vs. 32 John speaks of himself without mentioning himself. That is to say, he puts himself as bearing witness or *martureo* + which is equivalent to having seen and having heard (*horaō* and *akouo*, both +). While that is fine in and by itself, the tragedy is that no one has received this testimony, *lambano* and *marturia* (both +). Yet at the same time while John is baptizing, Jesus is doing the same thing nearby. Keep in mind the fact that John said Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit as noted above.

Vs. 33 continues as part of an extended sentence from the previous verse, namely, that despite the tragedy of not receiving John's testimony, there are some who do so. By

reason of this, receiving John's testimony is equivalent to setting a seal, that is to say, that God is true (*alethes*). The verb here is *sphragizo* which is a kind of security measure to prevent tampering with a document. In sum, *sphragizo* and *marturia* are pretty much equivalent.

In vs. 34 John continues speaking about Jesus without mentioning his name, that is, to his own disciples. Chances are his words are going way above their heads just as it was between Jesus and Nicodemus. The one whom God has sent utters God's words, *apostello* and *laleo* (both +) with regard to *rhema* (plural). This noun refers to a thing or object compared with *logos*, word-as-expression. Such *apostello/laleo* ties into the way God gives the Spirit or *Pneuma* + which is not by measure, *metros* with the preposition *ek*, literally as "from measure." In other words, human measurement does not apply here simply because *Pneuma* refers to something which can't be seen as one's breath.

Vs. 35 continues from the previous one as an extended sentence. Note the connection between the Father loving the Son and his giving everything into his hand. In other words, *agapao* = *didomi* (both +). This should make it easier for a person to believe literally "into (*eis*) the Son," *pisteuo* +, it being equated with life which is *aiionios* +. The opposite of this *pisteuo*? The person who doesn't obey the Son won't see life which means that *peitho* (*apeitho* being the alpha privative) or obeying is on the same plane as seeing life, *horaio* and *zoe* (both +). Unfortunately for a person who neither believes nor obeys will have God's wrath coming to rest upon him. The noun is *orge*, also anger with the verb *meno* + which is more along the lines of remaining, of abiding made all the more burdensome by the preposition *epi*, "upon him."

Chapter Four

With regard to the first verse of this chapter, compare the **RSV** translation with that of the **NIV**, the former being a bit off:

"The Pharisees heard that Jesus was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John."

"Now when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John."

The two opening words of this chapter serve to indicate a shift, *hos oun* or "now when." That is to say, from the interaction between the disciples of Jesus and those of John the Baptist to Jesus entering Samaria. As for the word "gaining," it's the comparative of *polus*, much, many. Although the text says that Jesus was responsible for baptizing, right away John inserts that he wasn't doing it himself but his disciples. Compare with 3.22: "After this Jesus and his disciples went into the land of Judea; there he remained with them and baptized." However, Jesus leaves Judea and returned to Galilee. As for this comparison with John the Baptist, regardless of any difficulty in making sense of the text, the overall point is to show both the similarity and difference between what the two men represent. In sum, Jesus fulfills what John had been doing in his ministry of baptizing. This had been clear right from the beginning.

Once Jesus left Judea vs. 4 says that by necessity to get to Galilee he had to pass through Samaria, the verb *deo* also as to compel. This is putting it somewhat oddly, indicating that Jesus felt that by going this way...essentially a detour...he was about to accomplish an important part of his mission. The text sheds more light on this by saying more specifically that Jesus came to a town called Sychar. This place is significant for two reasons. The first insofar it symbolizes reconciliation between the two brothers Jacob and Esau or more specifically, a village near Shechem where Jacob celebrated this reconciliation by having “erected an altar and called it El-Elohe-Israel” [Gn 33.20] or God, the God of Israel. Perhaps in Jesus’ day part of this altar remained or in its place a monument to mark the spot. The second significance is with respect to land Jacob apparently gave to his son Joseph prior to his death, a kind of will and last testament: “Moreover I have given to you rather than to your brothers one mountain slope (*shekem* in Hebrew or shoulder) which I took from the hand of the Amorites with my sword and with my bow” [Gn 48.22].

In addition to this, vs. 6 speaks of the well of Jacob being at Sychar, a place where Jesus decides to stop at the sixth hour or around noon just when the heat of the day was starting to take hold. He was tired due to his journey, *kopiaio* more as to be weary due to work and *hodoiporia*. The latter can be rendered more specifically as a journey on the road. Most likely he and his disciples planned to rest in some shade nearby before moving on. The prospect of spending the night in enemy territory was less than desirable. As for the location of this well, the NIV has a footnote saying that it’s “mentioned nowhere else in Scripture.”

In vs. 7 a woman comes to the well at the same time Jesus was there or just before it becomes too hot in order to draw water. She’s specifically mentioned as being from Samaria to emphasize where Jesus is currently in, territory essentially at odds with Israel. In other words, Jesus was in a place whose inhabitants were hostile to Jews and even worse, coming into contact with a woman from this alien territory. This sets off a lengthy discussion which continues through vs. 42. Being alone, Jesus figures it’s safe to ask the woman for a drink. Obviously he could have gotten it himself but used the situation for a specific teaching moment. The text adds deliberately that the disciples had gone into the nearby town to procure supplies. If they hung around, they would have caused unnecessary and unwelcome criticism, something Jesus wasn’t inclined to deal with.

This woman who remains unidentified is surprised that Jesus is asking her for a drink of water. How she recognizes him as most likely from Israel isn’t given. Perhaps it was his accent or he told her outright that he was passing through. She puts the awkward situation succinctly, namely, that Jews have nothing to do with Samaritans, *sugchoreo* consisting of the verbal root *choreo*, to make room or to give way prefaced with the preposition *sug-* or with. Instead of putting her at ease in what we could call a conventional fashion, Jesus surprises her with something she finds hard if not impossible to accept. In other words, she doesn’t know the gift (*dorea*) of God being extended to her along with the person who’s asking for a drink of water. If she was aware of this, she would have been disposed to receive water which is living. Implied is that because she doesn’t know, she might not get such water and regret it for the rest of her life.

The woman persists and confuses this living water with Jacob’s well which is very deep. We may take this as missing a golden opportunity because it’s so obvious, but it represents a literal way of

looking at things just as people did back then. She asks if Jesus is greater than Jacob, a revered patriarch, supposedly responsible for having dug the well and providing water for his family and livestock. We can detect some sneering in the background on her part, for after all, Jesus is not a Samaritan but an alien.

The dialogue continues, again thankfully with no interference from the disciples. Jesus states the obvious, namely, that anyone who takes water from the well at hand will thirst again, this having special meaning in a desert environment where water is scarce. It differs radically from the water Jesus is willing to give to anyone which will quench thirst forever. Not only that, it will come from a spring welling up to life which is eternal, literally “into (*eis*) that which is eternal or *aionios* +.” Without missing a beat the woman...the Samaritan...asks Jesus for this water but understandably hasn’t a clue as to what’s involved. Who wouldn’t make such a request? Having water which is eternal is one thing but to have a well springing up and never failing is quite another. That’s like comparing money from the bank with having the bank which contains the money.

In vs. 16 Jesus decides to put this woman to the test, asking her to bring to the well her husband. Right from the get-go she had a strong hunch that Jesus would put this to her and uttered the half-truth that she has no husband. We might tend to think rather crudely that Jesus could read her mind when she failed to acknowledge having had five husbands. After all, both were by this well dug by Jacob during the heat of the day. Such a holy spot, despite not being mentioned in scripture, had a role to play insofar that it disposed the woman to be “read” quite easily. In fact, without being conscious of the fact, she was waiting for someone to come along so she could resolve her irregular marital situation. All Jesus had to do was put the question to her, nothing more.

The woman said in a rather matter-of-fact manner that Jesus was a prophet, using the verb *theoreo* or to observe in a sustained sort of way. She was correct, but it took someone especially disposed to recognize this especially because Jews and Samaritans didn’t get along for centuries. She continues saying that her fathers or ancestors had worshiped on this mountain or Mount Gerizim. The verb is *proskuneo*, the root *kuneo* meaning to kiss or give reverence prefaced with the preposition *pros*, indicative of direction towards-which. “And when the Lord your God brings you into the land which you are entering to take possession of it, you shall set the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebel” [Dt 11.29]. As a Samaritan, the woman subscribes to this whereas she recognizes that Jesus, being a Jew, Jerusalem is the place (*topos*) for such *proskuneo*. One such reference for this is Ps 122.3-4: “Jerusalem, built as a city which is bound firmly together, to which the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord.”

Jesus couldn’t contest that which is clearly stated in scripture, yet in vs. 21 he takes the initiative to break this centuries old impasse. While both have legitimate claims, Jesus sees in this woman an opportunity to acknowledge their age-old disagreement and resolve it. He states bluntly that she, a Samaritan, worships what she doesn’t know whereas we (the Jews) worship what we know. Use of the first person plural betrays not arrogance but speaking from a position of authority. In other words, he posits a juxtaposition between *proskuneo* and *eidon* (both +), the latter implying to see in the sense of perceive. Not only that, salvation or *soteria* comes from the Jews, this word

suggestive of security and safety. A footnote in the **RSV** has a quote from Is 2.3 worth mentioning in this regard: “And many peoples shall come and say, ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.’ For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”

Without a doubt, the woman was first attracted to what Jesus said as well as having personal knowledge of her situation but quickly was taken aback when he spoke so authoritatively with regard to that perennial bone of contention, Samaritans vs. Jews. Any tension dissolves with the first word of vs. 23, “but” or *alla*. This changes everything. Jesus recognizes the two fundamental ways of worshiping God and says that it is about to change. He speaks of an hour coming, *hora* + being a more specific event, a kind of honing in implied in *kairos* or special occasion. Jesus addresses her as “woman” which here is not unlike that double *amen* when he’s about to speak in a formal manner. She, by the way, could not help but pick up on this, having no other choice but to listen.

As for the coming (*erchomai* +) of this hour, Jesus says that already it is present, literally “and now is.” Indeed, as it stands right now, the woman—again, keeping in mind this is Samaria—is the only person alive who is witness to this hour. However, there’s an element of the future involved. Jesus continues by saying that true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The noun for such persons is *proskunetes*, obviously derived from *proskuneo*. God is the Father who belongs to both Samaritans and Jews. As for the *proskuneo* at hand, it is twofold: *pneuma* and *aletheia* (both +) or spirit and truth which transcends the two verses cited above with regard to Mount Gerizim and Jerusalem even though Jesus does not mention both places. While this is going on, the Father is active as well. He doesn’t sit idly but is actively seeking for persons to worship him, *zeteo* + with regard to *proskuneo*.

Although Jesus says that true worshipers worship the Father in spirit along with the truth, vs. 24 aligns this with the nature of the Father himself, that is, he is spirit or *pneuma*, this demanding that *proskuneo* be in accord with such a nature. While Jesus is aware that he’s speaking with one person, he knows that quickly word of this conversation will spread. As to how John knew this (he wasn’t privy to the conversation), he as a true worshiper would recognize it when dealing with Jesus even though the subject may not have been brought up directly.

In vs. 25 the woman acknowledges that the Messiah is coming, this term = *Christos* or Anointed One. Once he has come, he will show all things to us, first person plural possibly referring to his desire to include the Samaritans or even the Samaritans minus the Jews. The verb is *anaggello* or more precisely, to carry back (*ana*) information. Because of her confidence in this, Jesus figures it she’s ripe for revealing himself to her, that he is the Messiah or *Christos*.

Such a dramatic statement, one that can’t be over-estimated, is broken off immediately as it should by the appearance of the disciples which is well put by the first words of vs. 27, “just then” or literally “upon this” *epi touto*. Even from afar they could see Jesus was speaking with a woman—Samaritan isn’t mentioned, that being enough—and picked up their pace to find out what was going on. Curiosity, of course, go the better of them. As they drew closer, they didn’t bother

asking. As vs. 28 puts it succinctly, the woman left her water jar just to get out of the way. After all, she learned quite a lot in such a short time.

Now the scene shifts to the woman running off to the townsfolk about her recent encounter with Jesus. Even though it was still around high noon, she couldn't run fast enough, going from house to house, people preferring to be indoors to avoid the heat. Everyone was familiar with her situation, something not uncommon in village life, that she had been married five times. Nevertheless, they were so taken by her enthusiasm that they figured it was worth going out to the well and see if what she had claimed was true. Obviously they didn't want to miss out on something so momentous. Soon they'd find out the real story. And so everyone went to Jesus at the well despite it now being later and even hotter. As for the disciples, there's no record of their conversation with Jesus. We can assume they were surprised, even shocked and put in their place. Jesus told them to calm down and wait for the woman to return with most of the townsfolk. Now the stage was set for that which would change everything.

Vs. 31 has the disciples asking Jesus to take some nourishment, perhaps a way to shift the direction of the tense conversation they were having or to take the heat off them for having criticized the woman who was a Samaritan, a double-barreled condemnation in itself. Calling Jesus Rabbi was simply an added prop in this regard, if you will. Jesus didn't pay the slightest attention and came off with a statement not unlike one he had just given the woman. With her he spoke of water and with the disciples, of food. In the meantime the woman is going from house to house summoning the inhabitants of the village to come to the well.

As for the food (*brosis* also the act of eating), Jesus has to give, it's followed by a predictable question the disciples asked each other, that is, who had brought it without telling anyone. Jesus knew this would happen and took it in stride, not surprised that such a discussion was taking place among his followers. Now he puts this talk about food (*broma*, usually food which is solid) as being twofold: the will of him who sent him, *thelema* + and to accomplish his word, *teleioo* in the sense of bringing to completion *ergon* +. By now the disciples knew that that when Jesus spoke like that he was referring to the Father. At least they made that much progress.

In vs. 35 Jesus continues the theme of food, reminding the disciples of a common saying which he puts in terms of a rhetorical question, that is, the harvest follows after four months. In other words, the harvest cannot be rushed, but in the case at hand, it's too late. The harvest has arrived: "see how the fields are already white" as this verse continues. In vs. 36 Jesus amplifies his remarks on the theme at hand, namely, that the person who reaps will obtain the following two: he receives wages and gathers fruit for eternal life or literally "into (*eis*) eternal life," the adjective being *aiionios* +. In this occasion it's a win-win situation. Both sower and reaper rejoice (*chairō* +) at having received the same reward. Jesus again brings up a common saying or *logos* + in vs. 37, namely, that One sows and another reaps."

The disciples figured they were being both educated as well as chastised, something they didn't expect. Jesus now applies this talk about sowing and reaping to themselves, that already he has sent (*apostello* +) them on an unusual mission. That consists of being sent to reap that which they

hadn't labored or more specifically, will take over what other persons have labored. Obviously it seems completely unjust but attractive to the disciples. They wondered why this is so and that some day the tables might be turned. How would they react then? The disciples—again no mention of all twelve but by now assuming they numbered as such—can't help but think of the woman who soon will return with the entire village to meet Jesus. Might these people...outcast Samaritans...represent what Jesus is talking about? At this point things are left up in the air, deliberately so.

As for the Samaritans, in vs. 39 they aren't mentioned specifically as having come to meet Jesus though it's implied. John is more interested in whether or not they believe in him which they do, the verb being *pisteuo* +. So in a very real way this unidentified woman is a kind of apostle. The verse at hand puts this literally as "word of witness" where *logos* and *martureo* are as one. The selling point was that Jesus had told the woman everything she had done in her life. If not her, then why not they? Those belonging to Jesus thus move in and take over the initial work she had done for them, thereby reconciling the age-old division between Jew and Samaritan. If that can be overcome, why not the rest of mankind? It was way too early for that, but the stage had been set for it to become a real possibility. All in all it begins in vs. 40 where Jesus stayed with the Samaritans for two days. We can just imagine the conversations that took place which had dumbfounded the disciples who, like all Jews, were raised to consider Samaritans as virtual heretics.

As a result of the important, indeed vital, two day stay with the Samaritans, vs. 41 says that many more came to believe in Jesus compared with those in vs. 39 who believed the woman's testimony. The locals tell the woman-apostle as will be the case with future apostles that their belief in Jesus Christ rests in personal testimony as with the woman. Such belief is tied in with knowing (*eidon* +) that Jesus is Savior of the world. Note that they call him *Soter* instead of Messiah or *Christos*, the only use of this noun in the Gospel.

Vs. 43 has Jesus departing from the well of Jacob in Samaria to Galilee after being with the local inhabitants for two full days. The discussions must have been amazing, something today we'd designate as ecumenical. As for the woman-as-apostle got this underway, we can assume that some if not all five of her former husbands were present. All in all, there must have been an amazing reconciliation. Even though Jesus left and isn't recorded as having returned to Samaria, we can assume that his visit left a deep impression on the apostles accompanying him. Later on or after the resurrection and Pentecost, they made Samaria a high priority, already having sown the seeds of faith there.

In contrast to the unexpected hero-like welcome in Samaria, upon arriving in Galilee with joyous memories still echoing in his ears, Jesus testifies that a prophet has no honor in his own country, *time* also as value or price. The verb *martureo* + is used which seems rather formal and reflects the fact that Jesus was quite miffed at his reception. Nevertheless, the inhabitants did extend a welcome to him, *dechomai* fundamentally as to receive. This cool reception seems to be based upon the possibility that he would perform miracles, not that he was the Messiah as the Samaritans had come to recognize. Indeed, word must have reached those in Galilee ahead of

Jesus' arrival that such was the case. Their response? Don't believe it but milk Jesus for what he's worth. Their point of reference? Many of them had been in Jerusalem during the Passover and saw what he had done there. On top of their minds was that he had caused quite a commotion in the temple courtyard. Some of the Galileans may have been manning the money changers' tables, etc., and were the subject of Jesus' wrath.

In light of this cool reception, Jesus decided to remain in Galilee but return to Cana where memory of him having provided wine was still fresh. That's all the text says, but we can assume he and his disciples had received a warm welcome after his cool reception elsewhere. Then at Capernaum the son of a local official was ill, *basilikos* being an adjective connoting that which is royal and presumably a local politician, not one directly affiliated with the Roman occupiers. This official also heard about Jesus being in the vicinity so out of desperation he begged him to heal his son, *erotao* also as to put a question along with the preposition *pros* or direction towards-which, indicative of his desperation.

Jesus comes off with a rebuke which must have taken the official by surprise. Behind this was still feeling of having been miffed by the local inhabitants. Hence he exclaims that you—not so much the official proper but essentially all Galileans—have a need to see signs and wonders, *semeion* + and *teras*, the latter more as an omen or prodigy and thus more awe-inspiring compared with the former. Without them you won't believe. So instead of actually going to see the boy, Jesus tells the official not to worry, that his son will live which turned out to be true. As with the Samaritans, this official believed the *pisteuo* and *logos* that Jesus had spoken (both +), he by reason of his position of authority being a kind of outsider even if a native of Galilee.

While the official did believe Jesus, the remaining verses of this chapter intimate some lingering doubt or hesitation. That is to say, some of his servants told him of the good news which prompted him to ask more precisely the time his son had been healed. Note that the text doesn't say explicitly that he ran home as quickly as possible, just that "he was going down" [vs. 52] which indicates a normal pace; i.e., no rush to see his son. It's almost as though he didn't want to see what had happened and therefore have his hopes dashed prematurely. Only once the servants confirmed that the boy was healed at the seventh hour, the same time the official was with Jesus, did he believe along with his household. Actually vs. 50 has the man believing but more specifically the *logos* of Jesus. Now he had first-hand knowledge to back up the *logos* or report, a fact which if Jesus knew about, would have miffed him all the more. Such was his ambivalent experience in his home territory of Galilee. The first verse of the next chapter has him headed for Jerusalem.

Chapter Five

Jesus couldn't get out of Galilee fast enough, admittedly taken aback at not having been recognized as Messiah as had been the case with the traditionally hated Samaritans. Surely the Galileans got word of this recognition and used it as another occasion to sneer at them for having been so gullible. Just think. Imagine the Samaritans recognizing a human being as God or close to it. Now Jesus goes up to Jerusalem for an unspecified feast (*eorte*). A footnote in the NIV says it

could have been either the Passover or Feast of Tabernacles. The same footnote goes on to list three occasions of the Passover, a way of calculating the duration of Jesus' ministry: 2.13-23, 11.55 and 12.1. If the *eorte* at hand was the Passover, there had been a year's interval between the first one or when he passed through Samaria and remained in Galilee. However, it doesn't seem to have been long because he headed off to Jerusalem not wanting to cause any trouble.

Upon entering the city Jesus heads for the pool of Bethesda (Bethzatha in the **RSV**) where people with a wide variety of physical afflictions were in the habit of gathering. Supposedly the water of that pool stirred from time to time signaling a time to enter and hopefully be cured. The verb *tarasso* means to move by shaking as well as to trouble. There must have been far more than usual, some hoping to receive alms from those coming for the Passover. Among all those hanging around as well as their attendants was a man who had been there an incredibly long time, thirty-eight years. Vs. 6 has Jesus putting a question to him in a somewhat strange but direct fashion, that is, asking if he wants to be healed. He responds by saying he has no one to bring into the water when it stirs up. Note that by almost ignoring the question or better, not having listened to Jesus, he expects nothing to happen. Each day of his life bordered upon losing hope but still was hanging in there. As for the question, indeed a nice gesture from an apparently nice man, but that's it. He knew from being at the pool for thirty-eight long years someone would have helped him or that he would simply give up and go home. However, the latter was no longer an option. By now this place by the pool had become his home. In other words, he had become a fixture of sorts but an unfortunate one.

Jesus understood this all too well so in vs. 8 he decides to tell this man to rise, take his pallet and walk which he did and disappears from the scene until a few verses later on. You'd think that after thirty-eight years the man would have thanked Jesus but did not. That's the sad part about this incident. Nevertheless the healing didn't go unnoticed by others who immediately must have swarmed all over Jesus. It so happens that it was the Sabbath when Jesus had cured this man. When some Jews got wind of this cure, they were outraged. In reality some were not, for how often does such an extraordinary event occur? Chances are the outrage was feigned, an opportunity to get at Jesus. These men aren't mentioned as specific religious authorities such as Pharisees but most likely were of that cast. They put a rhetorical question to the just cured man about carrying around his pallet on the Sabbath. Apart from this ridiculous statement fabricated to bring an equally ridiculous accusation against Jesus, you wonder why he was carrying it. You'd think that after thirty-eight years of laying on the pallet he'd discard it at once. Perhaps he wanted to keep the pallet as a reminder or was so accustomed to it that he carried it around without giving a thought.

The Jews asked the cured man who had cured him, knowing well it was Jesus but responded by saying he hadn't a clue due to people crowding in all around. Perhaps this accounted for him not showing gratitude, though that doesn't seem to be the case. Anyone who hadn't been able to walk for thirty-eight years and then got up certainly would seek out the person responsible for this miracle of miracles. As noted, the cure took place at the Passover or Feast of Tabernacles when the area about the pool was filled beyond capacity. And so the situation of finding who was responsible for this was left unresolved. A bit later Jesus found this man in the temple or more

precisely, the temple courtyard, the same place where he had chased out vendors during the last Passover (cf. 2.13 +). He could have returned there, disappointed that what he had done the last time had no effect whatsoever. However, he figured it was more important to find the man he had cured, having gotten word as to him being grilled by the Jews. Actually John gives no reason why Jesus takes the pains to find out. Did he feel miffed as not being thanked? Once Jesus located the man, he told him not to sin anymore. It's a rather strange command. The first thought that comes to mind is what kind of sin this man would be capable of or had been capable of during the past thirty-eight years?

After this encounter or when the text says that the man didn't respond to Jesus, he simply goes away, almost in a casual fashion, and tells the Jews. He does this on his own either not knowing their hostility toward Jesus or out of a desire to see Jesus get in trouble for some perverted reason or the other. Perhaps in back of his mind was that he was laid out for a long thirty-eight years with no one to help. Surely Jesus had visited Jerusalem during part of that time but did nothing for him. The reason why the Jews despised Jesus was, of course on the shallowest of all pretexts, that he cured the man on the Sabbath. Because they were too cowardly to approach Jesus at this moment they decided to take it out the man he cured, that is, rebuking him for carrying his pallet on the Sabbath. In essence, they were jealous and too proud to admit it.

Finally Jesus came across the Jews amid the commotion of the temple courtyard and in vs. 16 took the initiative to confront them. It'd come as no surprise that the cured man stood not far off to see what would happen, he being too chicken to stand up for Jesus. Also he feared that what they might do to Jesus they might do to him. Jesus answered the only way he was capable of, that is, in vs. 17 he says that his Father still is work just like he is right now. Note the small word *eos* or "until." It connotes the end of a period of time or continuance. Here *eos* with regard to the verb *ergazomai* (it's used twice, also as to do or to accomplish) means that the Father has a definite end in mind but hasn't attained it yet. Even more importantly, both the Father and Jesus are engaged in the same *ergazomai*. Then vs. 18 states the obvious as pointed out already, so obvious it almost doesn't have to be recorded. All the more the Jews sought to kill Jesus, *apokteino* also to eliminate. The Jews now had two reasons for this. In addition to violating the Sabbath, Jesus called God his own Father. The latter makes him equal to the Father, one of the worse things anyone could claim. They could tell that Jesus wasn't out of his mind, for if that were evident, they wouldn't be paying such close attention to him. Now the Jews are hell-bent of tripping up Jesus or rather, let him trip himself up by continuing to speak as such.

From vs. 19 to the end of this chapter John presents Jesus as giving witness to his relationship with the Father, the verb *apokrinomai* meaning to answer or to reply. Actually he prefers the more formal title compared with, for example, "my Father." In a way, credit is due to those who allow him to speak so long without interruption. Perhaps their intent was to let him say as much as possible, for the more he speaks of the Father, the more ammunition they have and the more ammunition, the quicker they can convict him. While this is going on you can't help but wonder about Nicodemus, how he fits in. we can be sure that he kept close attention but remained silent. As for Jesus speaking throughout these verses, he prefers "the Son" over, for example, "his Son" which would apply more directly to that of the Father.

From the Jews' point of view the ammunition Jesus provides is the way he speaks with authority, for example, unabashedly using the double *amen* + along with "I say to you" which he has done earlier. Parallel to vs. 17 with the Father and Son working or *ergazomai* is *poieo* + or to do as used with regard to both persons in vs. 19. In the case at hand Jesus adds vision to the mix, that is to say, what the Son sees the Father with respect to his *poieo*, the verb *blepo* + being used, to have the faculty of sight. At face value this seems to be a slavish copying but is far from it. It's a union of two occasions of *poieo*, of cooperation for such *poieo*. As soon as the Son sees the Father—as soon as *blepo*→*poieo*, *poieo* becomes from both, not working independently nor parallel to each other.

The words "nothing of his own accord" (*aph' heautou ouden*, literally 'from himself nothing') applied to the Son sound like the Son is powerless or like a robot. The same applies to John's further words about the Father's *poieo* and the Son following in his steps. A key word here is the adverb *homoios* or "likewise." It bridges the *poieo* between Father and Son through the Son's *blepo*. Actually there's something almost humorous about this. The Son is so attentive to the Father, following his every move, that nothing can distract him. It's a type of focus that humanly speaking can be sustained only as with regard to that special relaxed attention we see among children playing games and copying things from the adult world.

Vs. 20 begins with the important *gar* or "for" with reference to the Father's relationship with the Son, carrying over the *blepo* just mentioned to *phileo* or loving him. At first you'd think the verb *agapao* + would be used from which *agape* is derived. However, John wishes to show a close familial association between the two, *philos* + being a noun derived from *phileo* meaning a friend. Thus we have a more tender relationship outlined here. Then there follows naturally the Father showing the Son, *deiknumi* implying a pointing out or exhibiting. This is more intimate than the *blepo* of vs. 19 where the Son sees what the Father is doing. While all this is transpiring continually, the Father has in store greater works (*ergon* +) than these to show the Son. The whole purpose is to cause us to marvel, *thaumazo* + also to be impressed with regard to *ergon* or works which can infer the coming passion, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus.

In vs. 21 Jesus brings up a thorny issue which must have sent the Jews listening to him over the top. We don't have their reaction but easily can imagine their faces becoming red with rage, wanting to jump on him and kill him on the spot. The verse begins with not so much a comparison but a parallel intimated by *hosper* or "for" which also can be translated more fully as "just as." It's followed or better, amplified, by *houtos* + along with *kai* + rendered as "so also." The issue at hand is the resurrection. There are two verbs associated with the Father, that is, *hosper*: *egeiro* + and *zoopoieo*, to raise and to give or better with the root *poieo* in mind, to make...to make life. We can assume that first by necessity comes *egeiro* (as dead, if you will) followed immediately by *zoopoieo* or making-life. Also note the way this is presented. It is as though the Father is raising the dead and giving life on a constant basis, cranking it out, to put it somewhat crudely but not far off the mark.

Next in vs. 21 we have that which follows *hosper* or *houtos* (so also) which is related directly to the Son. Now it's the Son who gives life or *zoopoieo* to whom ever he pleases (*thelo* also as to wish or to desire) which derives directly from the Father doing the same. The way it's phrased is quite charming, really. We have the Father's *zoopoieo* functioning in a general sort of way, and along comes the Son who decides to specify it. That is, he takes the Father's *zoopoieo* from him and does so freely and respectfully but says something like let me do it my way which you'll discover to be an improvement, the role of *thelo* playing a key role in all this. Now the Son, with the Father looking on with great enthusiasm, starts *zoopoieo* or starts metering it out accordingly...this one first then that one followed by the other and so forth down the line. Obviously he doesn't crank this out in a tedious manner. However, the way he carries it out is put this way to reveal how both Father and Son operate as well as cooperate. Detailing it as such makes it all very delightful.

Vs. 22 moves on and describes a similar reciprocal interaction between Father and Son, this time as it pertains to judging or *krino* +. For various reasons we've come to conceive divine judging where most of the time the Father is constantly angry with us. However, the verse at hand doesn't play into that ingrained image. What's such a relief—and you don't hear about this at all—is that the Father doesn't judge at all. It isn't his thing which implies he has a certain aversion to it and doesn't wish our distorted opinion of him to think that he's on a mission to get us. Instead, the Father has given not just judgment (*krisis* +) but all judgment to the Son. Addition of "all" means he wants nothing to do with it. By reason of his close relationship the Son he understands this clearly and freely takes it on.

It would be a very special privilege to witness this handing over of judgment, of passing it on. Though not spelled out, we can assume the Father said something like, look. Do what you want with it. I'll stand aside. The Son realizes fully that the Father isn't shirking his responsibility but is watching. In other words, the Son will judge in accord with this innate aversion of the Father to pass judgment. Surely awareness of this aversion will affect the way the Son judges. Always he'll have one eye looking over his shoulder to make sure he's doing what he's supposed to do. One wonders how in the concrete the Jews listening to Jesus are taking this. Their perception of God is closely bound up with him as judge. Indeed, this was blasphemy to the extreme to even question this. To them, Jesus' words has God forfeiting something so close to his God-ness and giving it to a mere mortal, the man Jesus standing before him. It's a marvel they didn't stone him on the spot.

Vs. 23 continues as an extended sentence beginning with *hina* or "so that." The purpose of this adverb is to show the result of the interaction between Father and Son. That is to say, everyone will now honor the Son, *timao* also to have reverence and for good reason. The judging originally in the hands of the Father now has been transferred successfully to the Son. That doesn't mean things will be easier but heralds a lack of harshness if it were just the Father. If left to his own devices, he'd come on strong, perhaps too strong for most of us. For examples of this, consider the many times God has interacted with Israel. The transfer in and by itself to the Son doesn't water down this divine judgment but fleshes it out, if you will.

Connecting the two divine persons in this verse is *kathos* translated as "even as." Once people have acclimated themselves to judgment in the hands of the Son, they can give due honor to the Father

for his humility, humility insofar as he recognizes the limitations of his transcendence. This is putting it a bit awkwardly, but an overabundance of transcendence doesn't get you much recognition...glory and honor, yes...but in the end, isolation. Note too that vs. 23 ties the Father in with the Son through the words "who sent him." *Pempo* fundamentally means to commission and here intimates a gesture of delegation. Through such delegation the Father can remain transcendent as he's always been yet incorporate created beings which do not share his transcendence. Indeed, this is a great relief because he had been in the habit of lording it over Israel when she had gone astray. This shift, of course, is something the Jews dealing with Jesus at the moment cannot and will not acknowledge.

And so vs. 23 concludes with another sentence which stands in and by itself. Once again Jesus brings up the whole question of honor (*timao* +). Actually it's a kind of double negative where a positive doesn't result and has universal application. The honor not given to the Son works carries over into not giving the same honor to the Father. Both come up empty-handed. Thus the reverence Jesus has in mind is withheld deliberately, even spitefully. Implied is that those whose duty it is to give reverence—that is, the Jews now present—know what it's involved and simply turned their backs on it. In this way they do not differ in the slightest from their ancestors. It should be kept in mind that while the Jews are an example in this, it's applicable across the board to everyone.

With regard to this discourse, vs. 25 has the second of three references concerning the double *amen* + and "I say to you," the last instance being in vs. 19. As noted elsewhere, when Jesus speaks as such, it's of supreme importance. Here it's with regard to hearing Jesus' word, *akouo* and *logos* (both +) or the *logos* coming from the *Logos*. Furthermore, both are intimately bound up with believing the one who sent him (*pisteuo* and *pempo*, both +), obviously the Father who isn't mentioned. So we have Jesus-as-Son speaking which, of course, means he's the center of attention, the one the Jews have before their eyes, but essentially is not this center of attention but the Father. Despite Jesus talking a lot about him, the Father remains out of sight. In essence hearing with regard to Jesus and believing with regard to the Father resolve this apparent conundrum. The result? A person is in possession of life which is eternal or *aionios* +, this happening instantaneously.

The second half of vs. 24 says of the person with life eternal or *aionios* + that he doesn't come into judgment, the verb *erchomai* + along with the preposition *eis* and *krisis* +. Instead, he has passed from death to life, *metabaino* literally as to pass over (*meta*, after in the sense here as beyond). Note the two similar verbs and their differences, *erchomai* and *baino* or to come and to walk or to step. As for the latter, another use of the preposition is operative, from (*ek*) death *eis* life with *eis* representing a final arrival. So the Father who's looking on must be pleased. He has relinquished judgment as noted in vs. 22, having handed it over to the Son. Interestingly the Son doesn't judge either according to vs. 24. the person who hears his *logos* and believes in the Father having eternal life. You'd think he'd be passing from life into life but not so. True if it were from life into Life. Rather, he is passing from death into Life. That means life as we know it is equivalent to death. It's a complete reversal of how we've been raised to think, life first followed by death.

Vs. 25 has the third and final double *amen* + and “I say to you,” this one coming in the verse after the last one. That means Jesus is serious...doubly so...as to what he communicating. Although the Jews are primarily involved, somehow somewhere his words managed to reach a larger audience. While it can argued that someone other than the Jews were present, an alternate is that John as sensitive to Jesus as *Logos* was able to record his *logoi* without physically being present. It’s not a question of magic but of how the *Logos* and *logoi* work hand-in-hand even at a distance.

Vs. 25 is concerned not so much with time in the ordinary sense but as an hour or *hora* + which is coming (*erchomai* +), the same *hora* Jesus spoke of with the Samaritan woman in 4.21. There it’s in conjunction with worship, the context being that neither the Samaritans nor Jews have a prerogative as to where it is to be done. Here, however, *hora* is both coming as well as already present, *nun estin* or “now is.” This union of *erchomai* and *nun estin* is with regard to when the dead will heard the voice (*phone*) of the Son of God. In other words, Jesus isn’t speaking of the living but of the dead who despite being as such, nevertheless will come alive. So we have both the present tense and the future tense operative simultaneously. That means one has to be situated within the present *hora* to become aware of the future or the dead to hear the Son’s voice. Thus as soon as a person hears Jesus’ *phone*, not *logos*, which means the actual organ which produces the *logos*, life results. All in all it’s very simple, almost too much so, to gain if one desires to pass from death to life in accord with vs. 24.

Vs. 26 begins with *hosper* + as in vs. 21 with the corresponding *houtos* + or “so also.” It’s with regard to the Father raising the dead and the Son doing the same. Surely Jesus was aware of the parallel, the verse at hand saying that the Father has life (*zoe* +) in himself, that it’s a constitutive part of his being which, of course, his identity as Father. He is completely open to sharing this life with the Son, hence the *houtos* which is indicative of the fact that life in and by itself cannot be contained but shared. While the verb *didomi* + or to give is in the past tense, it means this giving is constant. And so both Father and Son share the exact same *zoe* and in the exact same amount and kind to put it in such terms.

Vs. 27 continues as an extended sentence beginning with the conjunctive *kai* + with the intent of fleshing out, as it were, the *hosper-houtos* relationship just described. Here we have a second *didomi* + or giving as applied to the Son by the Father, *didomi* being more along the lines of sharing. Here it’s with regard to the Father’s authority or *exousia* + to make judgment, *poieo* and *krisis* (both +). It rests on the fact that the one to whom this is given is the Son of man. Theology now calls him the Second Person of the Trinity which in and by itself it’s more than sufficient reason requiring no further explanation.

When hearing of this relationship between the Father and Son (as the Jews see it, Father = God and Son = Jesus as man) there’s a spontaneous tendency to marvel (*thaumazo* +). However, in vs. 28 Jesus says there’s no need for this. Again he speaks of the hour or *hora* +, the same context as in vs. 25, as it pertains to something that will happen in the near future. That is to say, those who are buried will hear the voice (*akouo* and *phone*, both +) of the Son of man. What this voice says isn’t specified but most likely will be something akin to “Lazarus, come out” Jesus will utter later in 11.43. We can assume that this voice or *phone* will convey a *logos* which only the *Logos* has

authority to utter. Note that the verse at hand has “all” who are in the tomb, not just those whom the Son or Father had singled out beforehand.

The universal nature of this *phone* becomes evident in vs. 29 which follows as a continuous sentence. Those who have done good as well as evil will come forth, *ekporeuo* connoting a marching out as in a procession. The two adjectives are the common *agathos* and the less familiar *phaulos*, the latter intimating that which is of an inferior grade and lacking proper moral behavior. The two groups will have two separate destinations. The first will enter into (*eis*) the resurrection of life whereas the second into (*eis*) the resurrection of judgment or *krisis* +. Thus resurrection or *anastasis* is step #1 followed by step #2, each being diametrically opposed to each other. So before this, the dead are...well...dead. Returning to life doesn't mean automatic bliss but is a preparatory stage for one's final destination. No temporal duration exists here, but it's put this way for clarification.

In vs. 30 Jesus continues to speak of his relationship as Son with the Father though here doesn't mention him explicitly. He can do (*poieo* +) nothing on his own or literally “from myself,” “authority” not being in the Greek text. At first glance that sounds somewhat subservient and at worse, as though he has no identity of his own. This misperception can be enhanced by Jesus saying that he judges as he hears, *krino* and *akouo* (both +). Taking this literally, the Son doesn't see the Father; his judging depends upon hearing or paying close attention to his words, *logoi* being presumed. This attentiveness makes Jesus' judgment just (*krisis* + and *dikaios*). The basis for such confidence is that Jesus attributes seeking the will (*thelema* +) of the Father who had sent him, not his own. John doesn't get into the exercise of this judgment but is more intent upon locating it. Those who will be subject to it will find out for themselves where they ultimately land.

Actually the words Jesus says of himself are ideal for a human judge, worth examining in detail and applying in real life. He puts his function in terms of giving witness, *martureo* +. If it's self-centered then it has no value, but if focused upon what Jesus calls “another one” (*allos*) who's bearing witness to him, that witness or *marturia* by its very nature is true. So in many ways Jesus is off the hook with regard to passing judgment. He does it not as a robot with full awareness of the one who had sent him. Again, at this point the Father is not mentioned which makes Jesus' words all the more enticing and mysterious. Also we get a sense of what his judging will be like though we lack the details.

In vs. 33 Jesus turns attention directly to the Jews with whom he has been speaking all along thus far. He reminds them of how they had sent a delegation (spies is more like it) to John the Baptist, *apostello* + with *pros*. While John doesn't dwell on their interaction with him nor the report they brought back to Jerusalem, he points out that he had borne witness to the truth, *martureo* and *aletheia* (both). At this point Jesus has no need to expound further, the Jews knowing exactly what he's talking about which, of course, makes them uncomfortable. As for this testimony, it's mentioned right off the bat in 1.7: “He came for testimony, to bear witness to the light.” Here, of course, is the noun *marturia* and the verb *martureo* (both +). Thus for John as well as for Jesus the act of giving testimony is very important. Actually, it's central to the mission and identity of both men. Implied is that both have seen and have heard first hand something of great value and are in

the process of delineating it. That's all they can do. Those listening to them can either accept or reject it which puts Jesus at ease insofar as he following a predetermined plan. This isn't entirely accurate but a way to say that Jesus is more concerned about having the Father work through him which allows him that ease lacking in persons who act and think they represent the ultimate responsibility.

In vs. 34 Jesus clarifies that the testimony he receives is not coming from man, the preposition *para* suggestive of alongside, in the company of. Thus being on the same plan as humans in the constitutive sense is avoided. I.e., Jesus is present among men yet not of them. In the same verse Jesus continues with a second sentence of sorts beginning with *alla* + or "but." It's a way spoken with due clarity and sincerity that Jesus intends the testimony he receives (*lambano* +) not from man but from the Father is to save (*sozo* +) you, those right there in front of him. Thus *marturia* = salvation and salvation = Jesus, his proper name being exactly that. While this indeed is wonderful, there's the question of how a person takes this into himself. Jesus doesn't get into that now but will do so on the eve of his death. There he will introduce the Holy Spirit who will be the one to effect all this.

Jesus acknowledges that you—including those present who had gone out to see John the Baptist—came away impressed both by his message and seeing all those whom he had been baptizing. While some of the Jews had been spies with the intent to thwart him, they returned with a change of heart. Jesus speaks longingly of the Baptist in vs. 36 almost as though he were reminiscing about him as already dead. There's a certain truth to this. While John isn't dead yet, his testimony...his *marturia*...lies in the past in the sense of having been fulfilled. Those speaking with Jesus need to know the transference of this *marturia*, if you will, which he has been making as plain as day but is not getting through to them, try as hard as he might. While unfortunate, in the long term that's fine insofar as his words are being recorded and saved for future members of the church he will establish through the apostles.

In the second half of vs. 36 Jesus makes appeal not so much to any testimony of his nor to the Father but to works or *ergon* + which had been given to him. We could spell this out by imagining the Father handing over to the Son these *ergon*. On one hand their ownership has now changed hands, so to see them is to see what once had been the Father's property. Did the Son alter them? No, but preserved them in their original form but added his own twist. As for such works, they remain incomplete and are not fully fleshed out. This intimates that Jesus' mission has to continue for a while, hence the present tense of *teleioo* +, to accomplish or bring to completion. The Jews pick up on this not fully but have an overall idea that they're not done with Jesus...yet. After all, Jesus' talk about witness and the Father has to become more visible so they can decide what to do with him. Actually Jesus is in the very act of doing such *ergon* which the Father has sent the Son to bear witness. The verb *apostello* + is in the past whereas the verb *martureo* + is in the present. The latter serves to bring the agent doing the former into visibility, if you will, which is why the subject at hand is *ergon*, things done out there for all to see.

To date Jesus has been speaking freely about the Father, a mysterious entity who to the Jews may or not be the same as the Lord in their religion. Now in vs. 37 Jesus feels the need to bring more to

the fore this enigmatic entity. The Father had sent me (the Son), *pempo* + being the verb which here is the same or almost the same as having borne witness (*martureo* +) concerning me, *peri* being the preposition. This is pretty straight-forward and ties in what Jesus had said already, that is, simply getting it out there. Now he switches to something quite intriguing. He uses the second person but as singular, not plural, which makes his words personal, more to the point by presenting two pairs of negatives. You haven't heard his voice nor have you seen his form: *akouophone* (both +) and *eidoshorao* +. As for *eidosh*, that can be taken as a shape or structure as it appears to someone. So far so good for those listening.

Vs. 38 continues as an extended sentence connected with the conjunctive *kai* + or "and." Although the Father is completely transcendent which would be in accord with traditional Jewish belief, Jesus says that his listeners don't have his word abiding in them. They don't practice what they are preaching. The verb *meno* + is more along the lines of remaining with regard to *logos*. We could assume that when Jesus is speaking of *logos* he's referring to the *Torah*. The precondition for this *meno*? Believing (*pisteuo* +) the one whom the Father has sent. The verb *apostello* + as to send has special significance for Jesus. It's part of his very nature to be as such and in a way, removes any burden from himself and puts it on the Father.

In vs. 39 Jesus observes a practice dear to those he's with, namely, their searching the scriptures, *eraunao* also as to apply oneself diligently to learning. Nothing wrong here. The same with thinking that such searching is equivalent to life which is *aiionios* + or eternal. Thus in a sense, searching is eternal or pretty close to it. As for the verb *dokeo*, it involves supposing, of approaching a given fact or truth on the evidence of one's ability only and without relying on any outside source.

As pretty much a second sentence in this same verse, the conjunctive *kai* + almost slides in there unexpectedly. That is to say, Jesus says the scriptures are bearing witness or *martureo* + concerning (*peri*) himself. So we have here Jews for whom study of *Torah* is important—it'd come as no surprise that they had done it earlier in the day—and Jesus who is the scripture in and by itself. To *eraunao* one is to *erauno* the other, the two being completely interchangeable.

Vs. 40 continues as an extended sentence, short and to the point. It begins with the conjunctive *kai* + translated aptly as "yet" which betrays a certain frustration as well as sadness on Jesus' part. The Jews are unwilling (*thelo* + also as to wish, to desire) to come to Jesus in order to have life. Note that the Jews are already present, that is, physically. It's another thing to come to Jesus, *pros* indicative of directness. As for the life he offers, it's just that plain and simple, not described as eternal. He as such life already is eternal.

Now follow two short verses, again, right to the point. Jesus doesn't receive glory from men, (*doxa* +) which judging by the context of these verses, he isn't getting anyway. Vs. 42 begins with *alla* + or "but" which reveals a certain feeling of having been rebuffed. That is to say, Jesus is fully aware that the Jews lack the *agape* + of God. To lack that is equivalent to having no soul. Jesus' knowledge of this is right out there for anyone to grasp.

In vs. 43 Jesus claims to have come in the name of his Father, the personal pronoun being used instead of the definite article which had been the case until now. Actually the last case is vs. 17 with none before that. Such a statement is not unlike one coming you'd expect from a newly appointed ambassador presenting his credentials. However, those to whom he comes do not accept (*lambano* +) them or rather, do not accept Jesus himself. Jesus compares this more or less formal presentation to someone who comes but does so in his own name. That person the Jews will automatically accept (*lambano* +).

By now or towards the end of his discourse Jesus becomes frustrated. He comes off with the first of two rhetorical questions, the second being this chapter's last verse. As for the one at hand or vs. 44, Jesus questions how any of those present can believe (*pisteuo* +) when attempting to do two opposite things at once. That consists of receiving glory from each other on one hand and not seeking the glory (*doxa* +) that comes from God. The two verbs involved are *lambano* + and *zeteo* (both +) or to receive and to seek. Each is with the preposition *para*, essentially as from alongside of. The first verb is with *allellos* and the second verb with *Theos* modified by the adjective *monos*: one another and God only or better, God alone. Any response, of course, is impossible, and the Jews to whom the question is posed know it at once which infuriates them though they keep quiet about it.

By now we're familiar with Jesus speaking pretty much as being on the same plane as the Father. In vs. 45 he elevates this, the Father = God with whom Moses interacted. In light of this, freely he relinquishes any desire to accuse or lay charge against anyone, the verb being *kategoreo*. Moses will step in and do this because the Jews have put their hope in him, *elpizo* with the preposition *eis*, literally "hoped into him." Such hope lies in the fact that Moses is author of *Torah* and therefore just as present to the Jews as he had been when physically alive. Jesus doesn't deny this, of course, but says that if they believed (*pisteuo* +) in Moses, they'd have the same belief in Jesus.

Before any objection could be thrown out at Jesus, he says that Moses had written of him. That put an overwhelming desire into the Jews to shut down Jesus on the spot. Instead of rushing to kill him, they restrained themselves to put it off momentarily. Of chief concern was to go through the *Torah* and pick out passages which Jesus mentioned. The result was determined beforehand. They could find nothing (or perhaps better, would not find anything) not because Moses failed to write of Jesus, but they were incapable of using their traditional way of reading *Torah* to see his relationship with it.

And so Chapter Five comes to a conclusion with the second rhetorical question Jesus proposes, this too not being able to evoke an adequate response. If the Jews don't believe what Moses had written, how can they believe the *logoi* of Jesus who is the *Logos*? In other words, Jesus is paralleling the *Torah* with him as divine *Logos*, something the Jews were not willing to accept. Over the centuries we've come to championing Jesus while condemning the Jews. However, if we put ourselves in that historical circumstance, they were perfectly correct to let Jesus have it. All in all this boils down to that idea of *marturia* or witness which dominates Chapter Five. The transmission of the *marturia* of Jesus to other persons essentially is risky business. The chances of

it actually reaching not the ears of those present but their minds is slightly about zero percent. This is true now as it had been two thousand (and more) years ago.

Chapter Six

As insignificant as it seems, this new chapter begins with two ways of expressing Jesus' departure from both the commotion of Jerusalem during an unspecified feast as noted in 5.1 and his interaction with the Jews. It's expressed by the words "after these things" (singular in the **RSV**) and the adverb *peran*, "the other side" with respect to the Sea of Galilee. We have no clear cut idea of why Jesus went there, but that's insignificant to the teaching he's about to offer in this chapter. One thing is certain. He went as far away from Jerusalem as possible, putting a distance between him and the capitol.

Note that Jesus didn't come alone. It seemed he wanted to express himself more concretely and freely than he did with the Jews in Jerusalem. Exposure to the so-called multitude or *ochlos* revealed an ideal occasion for this, they not being sophisticated or well versed in religious matters as had been the case in Jerusalem with religious authorities. As for *ochlos*, that sounds pretty much like an unruly mob of something close to it. The Greek text has the adjective *polus* modifying the noun, much or great as in number. The reason for this throng is obvious. In Jerusalem they saw the signs (*semeion* +) Jesus had done, that is, having cured those who were diseased, *astheneo* usually applicable to a debilitating illness. Such persons who have followed Jesus all the way from Jerusalem must have made quite a ragtag procession. Surely the Roman and religious authorities couldn't help but take notice. Instead of intervening, they were relieved that Jesus and they were leaving the capitol. Now things could get back to normal after the feast at hand.

Jesus catches sight of a mountain which stands out among the others and decides to make use of it because it's more accessible for the crowds. Also it's a natural stage where his voice can reach down the slope more easily as he turned from one side to the other. Present, of course, were his disciples who could help relay his words further down the slope. Once Jesus had ascended the mountain with the crowd in train, he sat down with his disciples, these words suggestive of assuming a certain formality intended as a sign for those assembling behind him to take notice and prepare themselves for what comes next. Obviously they hoped for healing but that was not to happen on this occasion.

Interestingly vs. 4 points out that the Passover was at hand (*eggus*, near or close). You'd think Jesus as well as those with him would be in Jerusalem, the place from which he had just left. In other words, he and they went in the opposite direction. Mention of the Passover seems to say that the "feast of the Jews" of 5.1 was not that celebration. Regardless, John's insistence on the Passover here is important because of what Chapter Six is about. As his teaching will soon show, it will tie in with the Passover but be on a wholly different plane.

A further sign of Jesus about to engage in teaching with his disciples seated about him is that he lifts up his eyes and sees the multitude coming up the mountain to him. This implies that he and his disciples managed to get ahead and ascend the mountain on their own. Of course, they were more nimble whereas the crowd, by reason of its size, moved more slowly. As for lifting up his eyes, physically speaking Jesus did just the opposite. Here he was seated as on a throne surrounded by his court. To see the people coming toward him he literally had to look downward. While Jesus' intent is to teach, that of the crowd was to have him do more healing. Jesus was fully aware of this which is why he asked Philip about buying enough bread to feed them. Obviously a question meant to test (*peirazo* connoting to test the character) Philip and the other disciples who were listening in. John inserts this as the reason why in vs. 6 Jesus knew in advance what he intended to do.

Philip went along unknowingly and responded that they didn't have enough money to purchase bread for such a crowd. Besides, they were in an isolated place. Since Passover was near, most people had made their way to Jerusalem or were at home, having locked up their businesses for the duration. That means that the those described as five thousand let alone women and children would have been much more. Still, a large number willing to be present on the mountain instead of Jerusalem. Andrew intervenes in vs. 8 by saying that a child happened to have some bread and fish, a meager amount not enough to feed even the disciples. He says in exasperation, that it wouldn't even begin to count as enough food. Throughout this exchange Jesus must have watched the expression on his disciples' faces with a certain amusement while they remained utterly confused and exasperated.

Without further ado, Jesus has his disciples make the people sit down on the grassy slope. They hoped that by reason of the mountain's isolation some people planned ahead to bring some bread or had local contacts to obtain some. In other words, the disciples were completely clueless. Making five thousand men sit down is no easy task, *aner* being man in the biological sense which means most likely a whole slew of women and children were present. Most came with the intent of being healed of this affliction or another, not to hear Jesus teach. If he did that on the side, no problem. As long as he satisfied their pressing needs.

Things got off to a good start. Jesus wanted to make everyone as comfortable as possible, hence mention of "much grass" in vs. 10 followed by the crowd getting as much bread and fish as they needed. The text doesn't say that Jesus multiplied the bread and fish, just that he distributed both, the common verbal root *didomai* (to give) prefaced with the preposition *dia* or through. What brought about the multiplication was the fact that before this *diadidomai*, he gave thanks or *eucharisteo* which has sacramental implications. That is to say, the verb intimates the multiplication of bread and fish not so much exponentially but spiritually. Those present, including the disciples, obviously didn't understand this in the least. Jesus kept us this *eucharisteo-diadidomai* until everyone draped themselves around the mountain's summit was satisfied.

It seems the people were content as having been fed, after which the disciples did clean-up duty. Indeed, to them it was a sign or *semeion* + which was right in accord with the same signs many had seen in Jerusalem. This took their minds off the need for any healing. With a sign like this,

they thought, who needs the Passover? Surely by now or close to it, it was being celebrated (cf. vs. 4) in Jerusalem. Such an event traditionally is centered around the temple, not in isolation as is the case at hand. Perhaps it dawned on some present, especially the disciples, that something new was taking its place, new but not fully understood. That would come later. Surely word got back to the religious authorities who were incensed at all this.

Once these authorities got word, immediately they'd claim that Jesus was responsible for a kind of anti-Passover which would be a direct threat to Judaism and all it represented. Furthermore, as vs. 14 says concluding this section, the people exclaimed that Jesus is the prophet destined to come into the world. The RSV has a footnote referring to Dt 18.15 in this regard: "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brethren—him you shall heed." Vs. 15 continues as part of an extended sentence with regard to when the people preferred having such a prophet instead of hearing the Lord speak as he had done at Mount Horeb. In other words, they needed a mediator and think they have found one in the person of Jesus Christ. Actually Jesus is such a mediator but not as the people wanted him to be.

Vs. 15 contains an ominous sign, one Jesus feared (*ginosko* + or to know) that would happen. In their eagerness they were prepared to snatch him away forcefully, *harpazo* being the verb suggestive of violence to produce an outcome. In other words, they wanted to make Jesus a king. As for the disciples, nothing is said of how they responded in this tricky situation, most likely hoping it would simply go away. To counter this well-intentioned but unlikely idea, Jesus decided to withdraw once more to the mountain, *anachoreo* suggestive of taking refuge literally "into (*eis*) the mountain."

Apparently the people had withdraw from the mountaintop without getting any healing nor teaching. Being fed was good enough simply because it was miraculous and a sign of things to come. Jesus and his disciples descended as well which means this attempt to make him king took place at or near the base of the mountain. His decision to go "into the mountain" was a wise one done on the spot. People didn't figure that Jesus would go back up there again but head off somewhere else. Note that vs. 15 says Jesus went away on his own, *autos monos*, "he alone," not with any of his disciples. With this adjective (*monos*) in mind, we could say that indeed Jesus did go into or *eis* the mountain itself, thereby disappearing completely. Chances are that the disciples got caught up with the crowd's demand which meant that Jesus needed solitude to figure his next move. As for where he had gone, then, was a matter of great speculation and concern. Surely everyone ransacked the area, everywhere but *eis* the mountain.

According to vs. 16, Jesus remained *eis* the mountain until evening or better, twilight when he could move around more freely or undetected by the crowds. As for the disciples, they went ahead and crossed the Sea of Galilee unafraid that it was dark, for many of them as fishermen were familiar with the sea's vagaries. Why they did this was puzzling though as the text advances, the reason becomes clear. Nevertheless, Jesus told them to go ahead while he remained behind. Interestingly vs. 17 says that while it was dark, Jesus hadn't yet come to the disciples. The sense here is that the disciples thought Jesus would walk out to them in the middle of the lake. However,

a strong wind (*anemos*) arose suggesting that soon the disciples would be in real trouble but somehow confident that Jesus would intervene since presumably he had told them about it earlier.

After having been tossed about for some time—again not strange to these fishermen but nonetheless unsettling—true to their hope but in a way that they didn't expect, they saw Jesus walking on the water as he approached them. This walking was far more tricky than when it was calm. Jesus had to make his way in between the waves which were like hills but were constantly undulating this way and that. It must have been quite a sight, actually terrifying, in the darkness illuminated now and again by flashes of lightning. The first words out of Jesus' mouth was not to be afraid (*phobeomai*). Although the text uses the common verb *lego* (to say), in actuality he must have screamed it out in order to be heard over the wind, rain, thunder and crashing of waves. Obviously the disciples were delighted, the verb being *ethelo*, fundamentally as to wish but to do so with gladness as is the case at hand. Although vs. 19 says they were four miles (twenty-five stadia according to the Greek text), at once the ship reached the shore. Instead of taking this literally, it can indicate that once Jesus was on board, the disciples were so overwhelmed with joy that the rest of the night and voyage seemed as nothing. As for the storm, we can presume it continued, for nothing is said as to its cessation.

The disciples had experienced two major miracles or signs (*semeion*) by Jesus, the multiplication of bread and fish followed by him walking on the water. You'd think that would be enough, but it was a preliminary for something greater Jesus would teach, great but not in a spectacular fashion with *semeion* as commonly understood. Upon arriving at Capernaum people must have flocked to see Jesus asking him and the disciples how they managed to survive the storm. It seemed better not to discuss what really happened, just that they were lucky to have survived.

After things had quieted down, on the next day those on the other side of the lake felt gyped. They saw only one boat, knowing that Jesus hadn't entered the same one as the disciples. So what happened? Everyone was confused and more so, angry that Jesus had abandoned them. They figured that Jesus had made off to Capernaum, so they crowded into as many boats as could hold them and sailed over there. Not all the five thousand minus women and children were involved. Many decided enough was enough and made their way back home. Perhaps they could do some catching up with regard to observing the Passover. Some were really angry at this, having been cheated out of observing the most holy day of them all. To top it off, Jesus didn't do any healing as they had expected. Multiplying bread and fish was great, but then again, so what? As for those determined to seek out Jesus, they were aware that a storm had raged on the lake throughout the previous night and were fearful that Jesus and his disciples may not have made it. With this in mind, everyone on boats traversing the Sea of Galilee kept a close eye-out on the water for any survivors, wreckage and hopefully no bodies floating on the surface.

Vs. 25 simply says that those who had crossed over to Capernaum found Jesus, but a lot more emotion is involved in this *heurisko* than the text says. Yes, Jesus and his disciples made it through the storm in one piece. Even though they pressed him as to how they fared, he and those who had been on the boat maintained a discreet silence. That most likely was behind their question as to asking when he got to Capernaum. Jesus detects both frustration and anger in their voices

because they felt abandoned. They had a point, and Jesus decided on the spot to be more careful dealing with such people in the future. The lesson? Be more attentive to their needs which could lead them to do anything. First they wanted to make him a king (cf. vs. 15), now they were threatening him.

Please note! From this point or from vs. 26 through vs. 58 the verses are inserted along with their respective notations. The reason? This section of Chapter Six is complex in that it shows the relationship between the Father and Jesus Christ, something the disciples and people in the synagogue at Capernaum where this takes place could barely fathom. One general observation to keep in mind with regard to this section. Pay attention to the verbs, most of which deal with various degrees of coming: the straight-forward coming, coming down and ascending. All in all it's very dynamic. Hopefully this outline will present the material more clearly, again, with a view to reading it as *lectio divina*. As for the notations, they had been written before this outline. The Gospel verses thus are worked into it.

26: Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek me not because you saw signs but because you ate your fill of the loaves.

Vs. 25 has the people addressing Jesus formally, that is, as rabbi. That title is associated with someone who teaches but judging from the text so far, little if any of this had been done. Thus rabbi can be understood as a sign of respect. If the people show this, Jesus just might comply and do something spectacular to follow up on the multiplication of bread and fish.

At the same time Jesus felt frustrated. That's why in vs. 26 he comes off with the double *amen* + followed by "I say to you." It's a way of exerting control over the situation which at any minute could get out of hand. He tells it like it is, namely, that the Jews are seeking him because of the bread and fish he had multiplied. In other words, Jesus = a free lunch. Once you get on this treadmill, it's hard to get off. After all, "they had followed him because they saw the signs which he did on those who were diseased" [vs. 2]. Indeed, the crowd was after both food and signs, very understandable for people who live their whole lives on a subsistence level. On top of it they were heavily taxed. So when Jesus speaks as such he's really defending himself or perhaps better put, diverting the heat away from himself to something of great importance he's about to communicate.

27: Do not labor for the food which perishes but for the food which endures to eternal life which the Son of man will give to you; for on him has God the Father set his seal."

Vs. 27 is pivotal in this chapter insofar as Jesus uses the miraculous feeding followed by coming across the Sea of Galilee in a ferocious storm to introduce something brand new yet familiar. Chapter Six deals with the issue of food or more to the point, of subsistence. Jesus is fully aware of this near primitive level and wishes not so much to improve the situation by providing more material goods but by elevating the issue at hand, of bringing it to a new level. That, it will turn out to be, what's now called the Eucharist.

As for the verse at hand, Jesus tells the people not to labor (*ergazomai* +) for food destined to perish but for what lasts for all eternity. Here the noun *broxis* + or food also means the act of consuming it. Everyone knows that such food, while vital to sustain life, is passing, *apollumi* being the verb which conveys the sense of utter destruction. Implied, of course, is that what Jesus is about to say transcends this *apollumi*. Compared with the food subject to *apollumi* is the kind that lasts, *meno* + also as to remain in the sense of abiding literally “into (*eis*) eternal life.” The adjective is *aionios* + which applies to that with no beginning or end. Taken at face value, that implies a whole lot of *ergazomai*, and who’s willing to do it?

Vs. 27 continues by saying that the Son of man is, if you will, the paymaster. He’s the one who will dispense the food. So if he’s the long desired Messiah, people will respond all the more...way more...when it comes to the *ergazomai* required for such nourishment. Certainly it’s worth the effort in light of the miraculous feeding.

Jesus sets this Son of man apart even more by saying that God the Father had set his seal on him, *sphragizo* implying an official acknowledgment from someone in power. The seal cannot be broken unless by that person’s authority or someone to whom it has been delegated. Judging by the nature of this verse, no one, not even the Father, will violate the seal.

28: Then they said to him, "What must we do to be doing the works of God?"

This verse begins with *oun* + or “therefore” which reveals that the people trying to absorb all this are dying to blurt out an adequate response to Jesus. It comes across in the form of a straight-forward question which, while as genuine as all get-out, reveals they haven’t a clue as to what’s going on. As very practical people...peasants really...they think in terms of action, of doing this or doing that to object a specific result. As for this doing, note the two different words for the same one in English according to the RSV. First comes *poieo* followed by *ergazomai* also to do but involves more effort and planning, both followed by *ergon* (all three +) or work, the result of the latter verb.

In a very real sense, these people knew the answer which lays in what they’ve been doing all along, that is, observing Jewish religious norms and customs. Their sincerity was written all over their faces, something that impressed Jesus and in a way, made him regret having left them so suddenly on the other side of the lake. Jesus doesn’t seem to have expected this willingness, taking him aback as he recalled the similar straight-forward willingness displayed by the disciples when he had called them. After all, they were cut from the same cloth as the people before him. The only thing Jesus could do while finding himself put on the spot was to respond with a similar straight-forward answer.

29: Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent."

And so the straight-forward answer here consists in telling the people that the work or *ergon* + of God consists in believing literally into (*eis*) him whom God has sent, *apostello* + conveying as it does a sense of mission. As for *ergon* in vs, 29, note that it’s singular compared with the plural in

vs. 28 where the people use it. Perhaps this is an incidental distinction, but the singular *ergon* is more unified with regard to *pisteuo* and doesn't involved doing in the way the people conceived it.

30: So they said to him, "Then what sign do you do that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform?"

As with vs. 28, the one at hand begins with *oun* translated here as "thus" and shows the same sincerity the people have with regard to Jesus. Actually it's one of the few interactions with a distinctly positive character that's sustained. So despite the initial promise, Jesus can't help but have a sinking feeling because yet again he's asked for a sign or *semeion* +. Actually he's frustrated. The people just cannot get this *semeion* thing out of their heads, wanting to see one in action, if you will, so they may believe (*pisteuo* +). that means their faith is pretty shallow. Implied is no seeing, no believing. Indeed, Jesus is tempted to walk away at this point, having a legitimate excuse. This desire...actually demand...for a sign is put in the context of another question they ask of Jesus in the same verse. What kind of work will he do? The question consists of one verb, *ergazomai* +, the same verb in vs. 28, "in order to do the works of God."

31: Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'

As for this question of bread, again a fundamental theme laying beneath Chapter Six brought up is food but food in the sense of providing enough sustenance to keep people going. And so all the talk about *poieo*, *ergazomai* and *ergon* boil down to this inescapable reality. So when the people pose this to Jesus they have in mind the recent multiplication of bread and fish on the other side of the Sea of Galilee. The translation, if you will? Please do it again.

Jesus sees in the people and awareness of their ancestors whom the Lord provided for in the desert. Actually this was not unlike the other side of the Sea of Galilee. And so both that generation long past and the current one are joined; not only that, all intervening generations are included.

32: Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven.

Without missing an opportunity indicated by yet another *oun* +, double *amen* + and "I say to you" in vs. 32, Jesus signals to the people that he has taken their case to heart. Actually he doesn't contract the quote from Exodus but in a way, hedges it. Moses wasn't responsible for this bread...this *lechem* or sustenance...from heaven but my Father who gives bread which Jesus distinguishes from the manna as true, *alethinos* +. And so externally there's no difference which thus far sounds just fine.

33: For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

Thus far or in vs. 33 Jesus sees satisfaction on the faces of those with whom he's speaking which enables him to start shifting the original sense of manna-as-*lechem*. Note that emphasis is being put upon this bread as having come down from heaven meaning Jesus stays true to the original sense of the Exodus text but is starting to enhance it little by little, most likely without his listeners knowing where he's leading. Again, keep in mind that they have their attention fixed on being fed to avoid starvation, nothing more. Who couldn't disagree that this bread which has come down from heaven is to give life or *zoe* + to the world or *kosmos* +?

Vs. 33 has the first of seven references to the preposition "down" or *kata* as prefaced to the verbal root *baino* + or to come down, to descend. Thus such down-ness has an important role to play for the rest of Chapter Six, it representing the realm where people live and go about their business. To it Jesus comes not so much as an outsider but one who is to provide nourishment, that of course, being a dominant theme here. Spontaneously the people—by now a spokesman or two or more must have emerged—asked to be given this bread not just once but always, *pan tote* or at all times, *pan* = all and *tote* = now.

34: They said to him, "Lord, give us this bread always."

A request as straight-forward and honest as could be. How could Jesus refuse?

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

With such an honest straight-forward response which perhaps took Jesus by more surprise than he anticipated, he now finds himself a perfect position to begin presenting a teaching that for the Jews or anyone else, disciples included, was brand new. Best of all, it will be based up the original meaning of the Exodus quote which it should be remembered, the people brought it up, not Jesus. You can't but wonder what would have happened if they didn't. The multiplication of bread and fish which took place so recently would remain just that, a miracle but nothing more.

Now that Jesus has come down in the same fashion as the manna did in the Sinai wilderness, we can assume he wishes people to approach him. For that reason it's helpful to pay attention to the Exodus account as to how the Israelites related to this manna. Note the distinction between hungering and being thirsty: coming to Jesus or *erchomai* + with the directness of *pros* (direction towards-which) prevents hunger whereas believing (*pisteuo* +) literally into (*eis*) him prevents thirst. Both don't happen here and there but *popote* or never.

Keep in mind the context! The Israelites had murmured against the Lord out of hunger, this being echoed in the recent multiplication of bread and fish. Thus as was the mentality at that time, so is the mentality the same *hic et nunc* with Jesus. As for the incident in Chapter Sixteen of Exodus, vs. 16 opens with "This is what the Lord has commanded" with regard to the manna, *davar* being the same word as that had been spoken. Note that of concern here only is the manna. Nothing is said of the quails which contain far more nourishment. The same applies to the fish with regard to

Jesus. Now this *davar* is about to be translated, if you will, into action or the bread-like substance to be gathered into one omer per person, omer being a measure, this term applicable to wheat.

In vs. 17 the people gathered an omer apiece in accord with the need of each family which in the next verse functions as a means of measurement for the “bread” in the form of hoarfrost. Two verbs show the balance achieved, *hadaph* and *chasar* (to be abundant and to lack). Regardless of which one favored, the proper measure was meted out. How this was done is not mentioned though presumably divine intervention was involved. As for any remainder which applies to those who were greedy, Moses commands “Let no man leave any of it until the morning” [vs. 19]. Such bread had appeared in the morning, the time when it was gathered, so the verse at hand seems to apply to the following morning when new bread can be gathered. That “bread” which exceeded the proper amount produced worms and became foul (cf. vs. 20). As a result, “Moses was angry with them.” *Qatsaph* is the verb which fundamentally means to break out. This manifestation of anger is followed by what can be taken as an offshoot of it: “but when the sun grew hot, it melted” [vs. 21]. Such melting is consistent with the bread’s nature of being like hoarfrost or thin, frozen wafers which had to be consumed rather quickly.

The Israelites had learned how to gather properly the bread though nothing is said about an excess or lack of quails, a source of what seems to be a better source of nutrition. Regulation of this bread is more important, perhaps because it was “like wafers made with honey” [vs. 31], quite delicate, and offered a more immediate stimulus in arid conditions. Gathering of it continued until “day six” when “they gathered twice as much bread, two omers apiece” [vs. 22]. It is to the Israelites’ credit that they recalled the Lord’s words to Moses in vs. 6 that “what they bring in will be twice as much as they gather daily.” Such doubling of the portion on day six is deliberate because “Tomorrow is a day of solemn rest, a holy Sabbath to the Lord” [vs. 23] when no gathering is permitted. Here is the first mention in the Bible of a Sabbath). It is to be holy or *qodesh* to the Lord.

36: But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe.

This verses which begins with *alla* + or “but” comes off with a warning. Despite Jesus being seen...out there for any and all to behold... the people persist in not believing. Actually this is a reoccurring theme in the Hebrew scriptures and says something about the human condition. As for this seeing, we can take Jesus-as-bread which he said so plainly in vs. 35. So what does he do now? The usual, having recourse to the Father. It is the Father who gives Jesus all those who come to him, *didomi* + resulting in the directness of *pros*. Beyond that Jesus can do basically nothing.

37: All that the Father gives me will come to me; and him who comes to me I will not cast out.

Actually in this verse *didomi* is used twice, the second time when Jesus says he won’t cast out such a person, the *ek* (out) of *ekballo* being exactly the contrary. Such coming to Jesus, of course, is directly dependent upon the just mentioned *didomi* of the Father or that first *pros*, “come to me.”.

38: For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me;

Now for the second *katabaino* + which begins with *hoti* + or “for” to show the connection between this twofold *pros* and *katabaino*. Instead of being as bread or better, in addition to being bread, Jesus does this *katabaino* not on his own accord or *thelema* +. That would imply either he was indifferent or had contested going with the Father which would have been a heated argument. Thus we have Jesus down here (i.e., *katabaino*) pretty much against his will which in one way, doesn’t sound very attractive or inviting. Now that he’s here, he has to carry out the *thelma* of the Father.

39: and this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up at the last day.

This verse flows directly from the previous one as a continuous sentence linked by the conjunctive *kai* + or “and.” Jesus is quick to spell out the Father’s will who had sent him, *pempo* + also as to commission and thus differing from what we’d expect, *apostello* being sent on a mission. *Pempo* does fit in better because it’s tied in with Jesus saying he intends not to lose anything given him. Such giving or *didomi* + isn’t specified but presumed to be from the Father. Instead of losing there’s raising up, *apollumi* + vs. *anistemi*. Note that Jesus doesn’t use personal pronouns or the like. Instead, it’s impersonal (*auto*) with regard to the last day, *eschatos* suggestive of that which is the very end. Perhaps this *auto* can apply to humanity as a whole which, of course, would include individuals. As for those listening to all this, such talk is not entirely unfamiliar, for people were familiar with the idea of the end of the world and the coming of the Messiah. Thus between now or when Jesus is speaking and the last day we have an indefinite period of time to gather, if you will, that manna in the person of Jesus-as-bread from heaven.

40: For this is the will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

Here Jesus makes it clear that his Father’s will or *thelema* + is tantamount. While we could say that Jesus had some reservation about doing it, nevertheless, there is a concession on the Father’s part to the Son. That consists of everyone seeing and believing the Son (*theoreo* and *pisteuo*, both +), the latter with *eis* or “into him.” It results in having life which is *aionios* + or eternal in the here and now. It’s extended to another time, if you will, or when Jesus will raise this person up (*anistemi* +) on the last day. Thus we can say that the essential part of seeing and believing goes along just fine until it’s followed by being raised up, this as secondary in the sense of being sequential.

41: The Jews then murmured at him because he said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven."

Everything seems to be going along quite well thus far. However, in this verse we have the Jews murmuring at Jesus, *gogguzo* (with *peri*, also as around, concerning) needing no translation because its very pronunciation conveys what it signifies. Are these the same people as those who had been present at the multiplication of bread and fish and who had followed Jesus across the

Sea of Galilee? Perhaps some of them. Then again, it could refer to others who got wind of this extended discussion and found themselves as having been drawn in. As for the *gogguzo* at hand, one can't help but compare in light of the Exodus quote regarding manna or more specifically, the Israelites murmuring in the desert which had the positive effect of the Lord providing for them (cf. Ex 16.9). All this makes perfect sense, the Jews even quoting Jesus' words about him being the bread of heaven. Perhaps that in and by itself might be passable, but the real bone of contention is this bread...Jesus...as having come down from heaven and thus by nature is divine. Such is the third use of the verb *katabaino* +.

A kind of footnote at this juncture as Jesus delves into his relationship with the Father and how that ties in with those persons who relate to both. While magnificent and subtle, worthy of spending oodles of time to ponder, the verses at hand tend to be repetitious. While the notations on them may be helpful, quickly it becomes evident that in a way they're not needed. So with that caveat in mind, the text continues as follows.

42: They said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?"

Here the Jews pose a question as to Jesus' origins, words that must have cut him to the quick, perhaps more than any insults he had endured throughout his life. Also he did his best to keep such words away from any family members. They said aloud to all around them that he is the son of Joseph whose parents they know. Such words also must have shaken the disciples who wondered if they should remain with Jesus. For Jesus or for anyone else to claim one's origin in heaven as a descent to the human race...mere mortals...is absurd a claim as anyone could make. It should be kept in mind that such an observation is understandable in village life where everyone knew everyone's business and where privacy was virtually non-existent. Also those making the accusation had quickly forgotten what Jesus had done for them, having been fed with bread and fish. After all, it was they who had followed him up the mountain.

43: Jesus answered them, "Do not murmur among yourselves.

Jesus responds to all this the only way he can by telling his so-called accusers not to murmur among themselves, *gogguzo* + or literally "with one another." If these people claimed to know Jesus' parents, it's true the other way around. Jesus knew them and if he wanted to, could make their dir public. With that background in mind, Jesus could continue with his claim of saying that no one can approach him unless the Father who had sent him draws this person. As in vs. 39 we find *pempo* + or to send in the sense of being commissioned.

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

Note the verb *helko* or to draw, also to pull which implies the Father is tugging on a rope to bring a person to Jesus. Implied is that already the Father has lassoed this person. Now it's simply a matter of bringing him close. Anyone so caught may have reservations. What makes this attractive

is Jesus saying that once the lassoed person is pulled to him, he will keep him around indefinitely until the last day at which time he will raise him up, *anistemi* +.

45: It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Every one who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me.

Jesus proceeds without delay to back up his claim by citing the most authoritative source around, the prophets, singling out Isaiah generally considered to be the best. The quote from 54.13 runs in full as “All your sons shall be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the prosperity of your sons.” *Lamad* (*didaktos* in the Greek text) is the verb to teach which connotes being chastised or being made accustomed to and hence to become a disciple. The Hebrew text doesn't have the preposition “by” and reads literally, “they shall be taught the Lord.” Jesus doesn't add the second part of the verse, that is, the idea of prosperity or *shalom* which fundamentally means peace as well as wholeness. This idea of *lamad*, so familiar to the Jews with regard to *Torah* so it really struck home. Still, they were in no position, none whatsoever, of equating such *lamad* with the divinity of Jesus.

As for this *lamad*, it involves a master-disciple relationship when it comes to transmitting anything religious or spiritual. With regards to the Father, the same approach is inferred by the verb *manthano*, to gain knowledge or instruction. It's intimately bound up with hearing (*akouo* +) not so much from the Father but *para* the Father, that is to say, as being beside him or in his company. And so this *akouo/manthano* enables a person to come to Jesus, *pros* again implying directness.

46: Not that any one has seen the Father except him who is from God; he has seen the Father.

Jesus now qualifies this relationship with the Father by saying that no person has seen (*horaio* +) him. So far so good regarding the Jews but immediately revoked by them. This happens when Jesus infers that he is the one who is from God or has this *para* relationship with him which qualifies him as having seen (*horaio* again) the Father. Note the past tense of the two instances of verb which implies being-in-the-body.

After such bold but necessary words (else we would not know the identity of Jesus), he prepares those listening to him with another instance of a double *amen* + and “I say to you.” This time it's a person who believes or *pisteuo* +...no object but presumably Jesus because such *pisteuo* results in life which is *aiionios* + or eternal, the last time this being mentioned being vs. 40.

As he said in vs. 35, Jesus simply puts out there that he's the bread of life in vs. 48 which is all this verse has to offer. Jesus spells out himself-as-bread in the next verse by referring to the fathers of those listening, this being a way vaguely not unlike a put-down though one down in all gentleness. They are the same Israelites in the desert to whom the Lord gave quails and manna. Jesus says the same thing in vs. 31 but doesn't mention the fact that they died. Everyone, of course, was aware of this fact. However, if a person eats of the bread which comes down (another *katabaino* + reference) from heaven, it will be Jesus whom they will eat. Once they do, they will not die. Now Jesus transfers this bread from heaven into something that doesn't have its origin there, that his,

his own flesh (*sarx* +) or body-ness. All this is so easy to reject because beneath the words lies the fundamental distinction between above and below, the two being connected (and hence rejected) by the verb *katabaino* as it has been making its appearance in these verses.

47: Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life.

Note that believing here has no object, *pisteuo* = *zoe* which is *aionios* (all +).

The following four verses have no notations since what they contain is found elsewhere in the verses at hand. Nevertheless, they are posted.

48: I am the bread of life.

49: Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died.

50: This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat of it and not die.

51: I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh."

52: The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

This verse reflects the just mentioned conundrum faced by the Jews when they disputed among themselves, *machomai* being a strong verb meaning to fight or to contend and amplified by the preposition *pros*, inferring that such intensity is directed toward one another with no exception. The question they bring to bear on the matter boils down to what we all know is the familiar one of cannibalism. By no means does Jesus attempt to alleviate their confusion.

53: So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you;

Jesus presses on here with very uncomfortable language about the need to eat the flesh of the Son of man and to drink his blood. If not, a person simply lacks life or *zoe* +. No getting around that.

54: he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

This verse continues as an extended sentence about a person doing what Jesus just said, that is, with regard to *zoe* which is *aionios* (both again +). Despite the various ways Jesus presents this—and he does his best to make palatable that which clearly is not palatable—twice he throws in the adjective *alethes* (true) which is necessary for giving clarity to that which is close to being unacceptable. The consolation? The person so engaged in eating and drinking Jesus Christ abides in him and he in that person, the verb being *meno* + fundamentally as to remain in the sense of abiding. In away, this *meno* does away with the idea of cannibalism because the person you eat is

dead, not alive. So if the Jews paid close attention as clearly as they weren't at the moment, this would have put Jesus' words in perspective.

As with vss. 48-51, the following have no notations since what they contain is found elsewhere in the verses at hand. Nevertheless, they are posted.

55: For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

56: He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.

57: As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me.

Note *kathos* and the conjunctive *kai* + with regard to "as" and "so." *Kathos* begins the verse with the Father described for the first time as living (the verb *zao* +) and his sending of me, that is, Jesus is using the first person singular with regard to this *apostello* +. The *zao* of the Father is intimately connected with Jesus also as *zao* which is literally "through (*dia*) the Father." Now this double *zao* is transmitted (*kai* as 'so') by the person who eats Jesus, again as first person singular and not as someone else nor as an object. Such eating will result in that person having life (*zao*) literally "through (*dia*) me."

Again, Jesus contrasts these words about himself as bread which has come down (*katabaino* +) from heaven. It's superior to what had supported Israel's fathers because it will enable anyone eating this bread/Jesus to live (*zao* +) literally "into eternity," eis with *aion* which is related to the often mentioned adjective *aionios* and also can refer to a long period of time. Now in vs. 59 we have the exact location where Jesus is speaking, the synagogue at Capernaum.

As with vss. 48-51, the following one verse has no notations since what it contains is found elsewhere in the verses at hand. Nevertheless, it is posted.

58: This is the bread which came down from heaven, not such as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live for ever."

End of insertion of both verses and notations.

Vs. 60 shifts attention away from those whom Jesus is addressing in the synagogue at Capernaum which at last is identified place to his disciples who were present. The verse says that many of them (*pollois* seems to refer to more than the immediate twelve) labeled Jesus' words as a hard saying, a *logos* + described as *skleros* which fundamentally means rough or harsh. Out of frustration they posed a rhetorical question as to who can hear this *logos*. It'd come as no surprise they were echoing the majority of those present in the synagogue, many of whom they knew and perhaps were relatives. We could almost hearing these people ridicule the disciples, saying something like why on earth are you associating with this man? Indeed, their earlier words in vs. 42 were hard to get out of their minds when people say that they're familiar with the parents of

this Jesus who's speaking. All this means it must have gotten back to them, that is, to Mary and other relatives as well as Joseph if he were alive at the time.

Those listening to Jesus, disciples included, are simple people. They might be giving him the benefit of the doubt that he isn't speaking about cannibalism. If that is true which still remains uncertain, how is this giving of Jesus' body after the manner of the bread from heaven recorded in Exodus actually to be implemented? In other words, show us how it's to be done. Unfortunately Jesus doesn't clarify that which you think he would. And so it's natural that many had doubts about him and his claims. Hindsight shows that all this will be sorted out at the Last Supper. Despite this disappointment, in the long run things pan out for the better.

Vs. 61 has Jesus not just knowing (*oida* +) about how his disciples were murmuring or *gogguzo* + but puts it more poignantly as "in himself." It's almost as though this *gogguzo* made its way into the very being of Jesus. However, who could blame them for taking issue with such strong words? His question to them about their taking offense or *skandalizo* is both appropriate and naive. Appropriate because this verb means to trip up, to stumble and naive in that what would anyone expect from someone who seems to be speaking in terms of cannibalism.

In vs. 62 Jesus follows up this question with another which ties in with all his talk as it relates to *katabaino* or a descent from heaven, that is, as it ties in with the manna incident. Jesus comes close to taunting his disciples. What would be their reaction if they see the Son of man ascending (*anabaino* +) to the place he had come from or was before or *proteron*? Note that he's careful to use the phrase "Son of man" (last time is vs. 53) which is more objective. If he were to refer this directly to himself (the disciples knew was the case, but he takes this approach for safety's sake), all would abandon him on the spot.

Jesus wisely and gently shifts his words in vs. 63 to the spirit or *pneuma* + which gives life, *zoopoieo* +, the verb *poieo* as to make suggesting active, constant work. Compared with this the flesh (*sarx* +) is useless, *opheleo* as to profit with *ouden*, nothing...to profit nothing. Next Jesus says that his words or *rhema* + (also as thing, object) are *pneuma* and *zoe*, both +. In other words, such *rhema* are not physical entities after the manner of bread or anything corporeal. This is followed immediately in vs. 64 with *alla* + or "but" where Jesus acknowledges that some who are present do not believe, *pisteuo* +. He puts a different slant on this. Instead of speaking about those in the synagogue, in effect he's referring to the person who would betray him, *paradidomi*, literally to give beside or *para*, *para* being those who will take custody of him. Obviously this caused quite a stir at first but once the dust had settled, many thought his words weren't far off the mark. Again, his strong words about eating his flesh and drinking his blood would contribute to this *paradidomi*...and for the good of the people.

Vs. 65 begins with the conjunctive *kai* + translated as "and" to remind those with Jesus, especially his disciples, that already he had told them no one can come to him unless the Father permits it: *pros* = Jesus and *ek* = Father; the two linked by the verb *didomi* or to give or to grant.

By now it was clear that Jesus could go no further. It boiled down to accept or reject which is why many disciples left, *mathetes* here not referring to the twelve intimates but next several rings around them, if you will. Once these people have fallen off—we could see them exiting the synagogue sheepishly wishing not to be seen but couldn't help but be seen—Jesus turns to the twelve. The way it's put is that these men remained steadfast with a mixture of loyalty and perhaps more to the point, with clear realization that they had no place to go. And so they remained in the synagogue itself after everyone had dispersed. Although Peter expressed the fact that Jesus had the *rhema* + of life which is eternal or *aionios* +, he too when you came down to it, was stuck with no option. He blurts out that he and the others have come to believe and to know (*pisteuo* and *ginosko*, both +) that Jesus is the Holy One of God, *Hagios* perhaps not so much as divine but as someone special. This, of course, will come into greater clarity later on.

While Jesus appreciates this profession of loyalty, he doesn't admit it. In vs. 70 he snaps back unexpectedly saying that despite having chosen all twelve of those right there before him, one is a devil, *diabolos* which fundamentally means one who engages in propagating slander or backbiting. Such a word is much stronger than, for example, a traitor. The next or last verse of this chapter says that this *diabolos* is Judas. And so the disciples are left confused and frightened. Despite their weakness, it is to their everlasting credit that they remained with Jesus though if we could ask each one, the response? Barely.