Welcome to the study of this book of the Bible! Here we offer you a detailed table of contents (detailed outline in chart format). In order to gain the most from this material please print out and keep a copy of this table near you and refer to it as you read the gospel.

Many know the Scriptures were not written with chapters and verses, and that they were added centuries later. Sometimes the divisions by chapters and verses are somewhat arbitrary. They do not always follow the 'patterns' of the book. Here we offer an effort in which we try to keep in mind the theological, thematic, chronological and literary emphases of the Bible book. Of course this work is not perfect but at the same time I hope the material will help you in your personal Bible study, as well as, in the preparation of group studies, messages and conferences.

Let me to give you a little background to this. In the early 1970s in a conversation with Stuart Park about the Gospel of John he asked whether I had noticed the visits Jesus made to Jerusalem for various feasts. He also asked whether I had noticed that a the end of each section and just before a feast there were those who believed in Christ. If my memory serves me, sometime later in another conversation he mentioned a thought from David Gooding concerning the first six subsections up to the wedding in Cana as an outline of spiritual history. I was thankful that Stuart did not say too much. He primed the pump for me.

In the mid 1970s while on board the ship Logos in Asia I did some study in John but set it aside to concentrate on the Gospel of Mark. However, in the spring of 2005 I began an intensive study of John and the following table of contents was the result. Since then I have 'tweaked' the material on several occasions and am sure I will continue to do so. I realize others may approach the patterns and structure in John a little differently, and I am not sure my approach is the best. I am familiar with the work of two other teachers/commentators, and I believe they group Tabernacles, John 7:1-10:21, and the Dedication, 10:22-11:54 together, which may be a better way to organize that portion of the gospel. In any case may the Lord use this material to bless you and help you, as you learn and share God’s Word
### THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: SPIRITUAL FEASTS
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THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: SPIRITUAL FEASTS

PROCEDURE BY DIVISIONS THROUGH THE GOSPEL:

1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was fully God (1:1 NETtext). In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (1:1 ESV). And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth (1:14 AV-KJV). This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him (2:11 AV-KJV).

2:13 Passover, March-April, at which Jesus cleansed the temple and many believed on him seeing his miracles but he did not trust them for he knew what was in man. He challenged Nicodemus to believe. At the end of this section a nobleman and his family believed. The nobleman, having not yet seen the healing of his son until he reached home, believed (4:50, 53).

5:1 (Dedication, December). The Sabbath. The works of Jesus. He healed the paralytic on the Sabbath. Peter, and the disciples who remained, believed. Peter said, we believe … and know that you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God (6:69).

7:1 Tabernacles, September-October. They sought a way to kill him. The world hates Jesus. The man born blind believed … and worshipped.

10:22 Dedication, December. The identity of Jesus. He is the Messiah and Son of God. Martha and Mary, and many others believed. Martha said, “But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee” (11:22 AV-KJV), and “I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world” (11:27 AV-KJV).

11:55 Passover, March-April. Many went up to Jerusalem for their purification. Jesus carried out the purification of all purifications, the purification of the human soul. Thomas, once he saw Jesus and his wounds, believed (20:28-31).

21:1 Jesus met his disciples for the third time after his resurrection, at the Sea of Galilee. Has the reader seen the glory of Jesus Christ and believed (21:24-25)?

The Feasts:

1. They were meetings between God and his people.
THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: SPIRITUAL FEASTS

2. They marked the times.
3. They were meetings of great joy.
4. At the same time they were solemn occasions.
5. There were sacrifices.
6. They cleansed their homes of all yeast.
7. They were cleansed of their sins.
8. The feasts commemorated events in the history of Israel; their rescue from Egypt, the rest on the seventh day, the journeys in the desert, the rededication of the temple and the entry into the Promised Land.
9. Images central to these feasts were blood, water, light, adoration, palm branches,
10. They do not include Pentecost, reserved for the coming of the Holy Spirit.
11. The temple of God in the person of Christ (His body, 2:19-22) went up to the temple of God in the form of a physical building in Jerusalem. In other words at each feast where Jesus was present God was present in the person of Jesus.
12. At the end of each division we find people who believed in Jesus, except the last at the end of the gospel, because the readers themselves are those persons who must then decide to believe or not.

WHY THIS APPROACH TO THE GOSPEL OF JOHN?

It was in the late 1960’s that Stuart Park and I spent a few moments discussing the Gospel of John while working together in Spain on the OM team in Madrid. He suggested that the gospel was divided according to Jesus’ visits to Jewish feasts in Jerusalem and that in the events following each feast there would be an individual or group of people who believed. In 1974 while on the Logos in Colombo, Sri Lanka, I began to study John but didn’t go very far, as I had made a commitment to study Mark’s Gospel in depth. At the beginning of 2004 while on Logos 2 in Latin America I worked on John 2:13 through 4:54 (Jesus went up to a Passover) and realized the 6 stories were linked together around the themes of man’s spiritual condition (what was in him), being born again, growth (he must increase), drink (eternal life drink), food (my food), and a family (believing family), in other words “spiritual life and its maintenance”. For the last three months (May-July of 2005) I have been surveying and analyzing John and the results are “outlined” in the Table of Contents. I am editing further in February 2015.

Could it be just coincidence that if you arrange the visits of Jesus to Jerusalem at Jewish feasts that the first and last are Passovers which in turn relate to what the Passover commemorated, among other things, life for some because a first born took their place while death for others because they ignored or rejected the first born substitute offered for them? (John 3:14-17, 36 and 18:38-40) Could it be just coincidence that the second and fourth feasts are probably both the
Dedication, and that the material in each of those sections come in two “stories” each and at least one of the main emphases are the offences to both the Jews and Jesus’ disciples? The feast that stands alone is that of the Tabernacles, remembering the 40 years of living in tents while the generation that came out of Egypt slowly died off because of their sin and rebellion, and the 3 “stories” in this section of John have much to do with the issue of sin.

When we examine the relationship between the stories of those who believed we find these emphases: on the first level “believing and (not) seeing” (The Galilean nobleman believed Jesus’ word without seeing his son healed as yet and Thomas was told ‘Blessed are those who have not seen yet have believed’.); on the second level “believing and knowing” (Peter said, ’We have believed and know you are…’ and Martha said that she believed and knew God would give Jesus whatever he asked.); and finally on the bottom level “believing and worshipping” (The man born blind believed and worshipped him.). John led by the Holy Spirit, selected the feasts presented in this gospel, and if they are juxtaposed (put side by side) there seems some evidence for their “point and purpose”. If we cannot say for certain that this arrangement was in John’s mind as he wrote we can say it was possible, and further, that it might be a helpful tool in remembering and teaching the material in this gospel.

For me this has not been just a dry intellectual pursuit. I was spoken to very deeply concerning sins in my life. When Jesus said to the woman taken in adultery, “Go and sin no more”, I went for days mourning sins in my life and made a greater commitment to following the Lord, confessing my sin and running from sin! I experienced a level of spiritual revival! I realized when looking at the three levels of believing and (not) seeing, believing and knowing and believing and worship that it is not enough to be blessed because I believe not having seen; nor enough to martial all the arguments as to why I know who and what Jesus did; but to also believe and worship him! Yes, go beyond my limited intellect interests and possibilities and worship him, worship him in spirit and truth! However, let’s be reminded that this kind of worship is no blind faith or leap in the dark.

This worship is based on faith in the historical witnesses both sacred and secular to Jesus’ existence, his great works, his incredible teaching, his sufferings, death by crucifixion, burial in a recognized tomb and his resurrection. We cannot know everything. Our knowledge, as humanity, is expanding, but it is not infinite, nor does any one of us know everything. Far from it! Huge areas of life for the religious and non-religious person, the atheist and the believer in God, the scientist and the opera singer, the farmer and the pharmacologist, we all relate to by faith.

There is no one on earth who does not live by faith in people and animals, plants and chemicals, nature and weather, theories and things. The married person has faith in their partner; the physicist has faith in the order of the universe; even
the person who sits down on a chair demonstrates faith in the chair. I have never seen anyone who sat in a chair in our home ask that it first be sent to a lab for testing before sitting in it.

Even if we put faith in someone or thing and it is an unworthy object of our faith we still demonstrate that we used faith in relating to it. I sat in a folding chair in someone’s garden and it collapsed under me and I fell to the ground. I put faith in the chair. In a church auditorium I sat in a plastic chair; the rear legs folded; and I fell backwards to the floor! On the first occasion I was much lighter than I was on the later occasion, but apparently the folding chair was worn out. Don’t let professed atheists tell you we Christians live by faith and they live by hard facts. We all live with a mix of facts and faith. Whether they like it or not atheists live by faith, but not faith in Jesus.

I have enjoyed “refills” on some days just thinking about the Introduction and Conclusion where we see Jesus changing 6 large jars of water, of 20 or 30 gallons each, filled to the brim, turned into good wine; and the net of the disciples filled to breaking point with 153 large fish! We are told that the Word became flesh and “tabernacled” (or even, “templed” amongst us, referring to the temple of his body! 2:21) among us, full of grace and truth, and we have all received of his fullness, grace and more grace! At the end of the gospel John remarks that if all Jesus did were written down the world would be full to overflowing with all the books!

Jesus is proclaimed as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! Under the Law of Moses one animal could substitute for one person or family but Jesus’ sacrifice for sin is good for the whole world! Peter was told to feed Jesus’ lambs and sheep. He would have plenty of material to do that with. John’s Gospel seems to be a book about feasts and feasting! For me this has been and continues to be an ongoing spiritual feast, which I am sure has no end!

(There is some repetition in the following notes because they were jotted down first, and what has gone before is really the raison de être of my approach to this gospel and its immediate impact on my life, and produced later. There is yet much to be done!)

NOTES: (These are partial, “working” notes and need editing)
I have given this title to my thoughts on the Gospel of John because it not only deals with five of the Jewish feasts as indicated by the table of contents but we find two feasts in the introduction and conclusion of this gospel. The first feast is found at the end of the introduction, at the beginning of chapter two, which is the marriage feast at Cana. The second feast is the breakfast with Jesus after he had given them a net full of 153 large fish by the Sea of Galilee. The physical or material feasts that took place were figures of the spiritual feasting that could be had if one understood the import of the material feasts of food. Four, of the five Jewish feasts, God had instituted in the Law of Moses. The Feast of Dedication had been instituted much later but as in the case of the other feasts it too represented something that had happened spiritually in Israel. It was the rededication of the temple after it had been defiled. The feasts that had been set up by God in the Law of Moses were feasts required of Israel, which reminded them of God and his relationship to them. In the Gospel of John the feast in Cana is where Jesus turned the water into wine, which was the first sign that he did manifesting his glory and his disciples believed on him. The last feast or meal recorded in John is by the Sea of Galilee when Jesus supplied his disciples with so many fish. This miracle demonstrated again his ability to supply their needs, not just physically but for their ministry to others as well. After that breakfast feast he told Peter to “feed my lambs”.
THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: SPIRITUAL FEASTS

THE WORD…THE WORLD
THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: SPIRITUAL FEASTS

THE WORD … THE WORLD

The Word is the subject as the gospel opens. 1:1 The Word made the world. 1:3 Things Jesus did would fill the world. 21:24, 25
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THE FULLNESS OF GOD
THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: SPIRITUAL FEASTS

THE FULLNESS OF GOD

Abundant Life
Probably one of the most famous verses in the Gospel of John, besides John 3:16, is John 10:10. They are the words of Jesus, “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I am come that they may have life and that they may have it more abundantly” (NKJV). Another way of describing the life Jesus gives is to say ‘life lived to the full’.

Abundant Grace, Wine, Fish and Books
The introduction to the gospel tells us that the Word was full of grace and truth and that we have received of his fullness, grace upon grace! He demonstrated this fullness in the physical world by filling six large stone jars, each containing about 20 to 30 gallons, with good wine at the wedding in Cana (2:1-12), and, in the conclusion to the gospel, filling a net of fish with 153 large fish, to the breaking point, and yet not broken. In the very last words of the gospel the disciple who is writing says that if all the things Jesus did were written down the world would be so full of books it could not contain them all (21:24 and 25).

Appear Before The Lord
The Israelites were required to appear before the Lord in the feasts he had instituted (Exodus 23:14). Those were times when Jerusalem was full to overflowing! History tells us that as other feasts, like that of Dedication, were added, the festival spirit, the sheer numbers of visitors, the lighting in the city and the rejoicing were sights to see. John opens his gospel telling us that his gospel is about the Word, who is God the Creator, and God who became a man and lived amongst us. It is therefore not surprising to find God in the flesh going up to his own festivals in his city, Jerusalem.

God And Man Meet
As John moves with Jesus through his writing Jesus fulfills the meaning of the festivals. In the first Passover recorded in John 2:13 and following verses Jesus cleans the market place out of the temple so that there was room for God and man to meet there. After all, wasn’t that the main reason the feasts were instituted, for God and man to be together? The temple and the feast were not instituted so a huge market place could be set up in Jerusalem. Market places are a part of life and Jerusalem had its markets. That is okay! But the temple and the feasts were not the place, nor the time for a market. It was the place and the time for God and man to have a special time of fellowship, worship and rejoicing together.
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In the Festival of Tabernacles Jesus cried out that whoever believed in him, out of his belly, or inward being, would flow rivers of living water, referring to the Holy Spirit who would be given to all those who believed. The fullness of God would flow out of us who believed in Jesus. When the apostles preached in Jerusalem the leaders of the Jews marveled at the grace with which they ministered and spoke taking note of the fact that though they were not highly educated men, they had been with Jesus. They were living life to the full, abundant life, as Jesus had taught in John 10:10.

People Are The Temple
Today, the Bible tells us, we human beings who believe in Jesus are the temple of God. (1 Corinthians 3:16, 17) We also need to receive ongoing cleansing as 1 John 1:9 points out, and Jesus’ act of the cleansing of the temple in Jerusalem demonstrated. Ephesians 5:18 says we are not to be drunk with wine … but to be filled with the Spirit. God actually came down in his glory and lived in the temple in Jerusalem. (2 Chronicles 7:1, 2, 16) He exhorts us to be filled and refilled with him! Yes, filled and refilled! DL Moody said he needed the filling of the Spirit often because he leaked! George Verwer has said that the filling again and again of the Spirit is not a problem because we know where to get the “refills”! It is not that we are stupid and just don’t get this thing of being filled again and a gain. When I go to a Chinese buffet I fill my plate; eat the food; and then go and fill it again with food! Have we forgotten about the fullness of God? Have we ignored the fullness of Christ? He gives grace and more grace. John the Baptist said, “He does not give the Spirit by measure.” (John 3:34) God is not stingy. You can receive and receive from him and he gives more and more, as much as we can receive.

The Fulfilling Sacrifice
Let’s also remember that God had said to Solomon that he had chosen the temple as a place of sacrifice. (2 Chronicles 7:12) As the people came to Jerusalem for the feasts there would be the offering of required sacrifices. Sacrifices for sin and for the protection of the people had gone on even before the temple was built. In Egypt the night the nation left the country they offered a sacrifice whose blood was put on the door posts and lintel protecting them from the angel of God who went through the land destroying all the first born. At the last Passover recorded in John, Jesus would give his life as a sacrifice for sin. This would fulfill the prophecies of the Old Testament like Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53, as well as the words of John the Baptist when he cried out, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

God Thinkers
As the Jewish pilgrims approached Jerusalem did their thoughts turn to God? Hopefully they did. They thought about the glory of God, the wisdom of God, the power of God, the holiness of God, the love of God, the mercies of God, the salvation of God, the provision of God and so many other wonderful things about God. They were to be consumed with God as a fire burns up the wood, and filled with God as the melting glaciers and rains fill the rivers to overflowing.
1. God’s full provision for his people. *Nehemiah 9:25* And they took strong cities and a rich land, and possessed houses full of all goods, wells already dug, vineyards and olive-yards, and fruit trees in abundance. And they ate and were filled, and became fat, and delighted themselves in Your great goodness. *Psalm 65:9* You visit the earth and water it; You greatly enrich it; the river of God is full of water; You provide their grain, for in this way You have prepared it (MKJV).

2. The fullness of God’s pity, mercies, graciousness and truth. *Psalm 86:15* But You, O God, are God full of pity, and gracious, long-suffering, and rich in mercy and truth. *Psalm 33:5* He loves righteousness and judgment; the earth is full of the mercy of Jehovah. *Psalm 78:38* But He, full of pity, forgave their iniquity, and did not destroy them; yea, many times He turned His anger away, and did not stir up all His wrath (MKJV).

3. The fullness of his wisdom. *Psalm 104:24* O Jehovah, how many are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all; the earth is full of Your riches (MKJV).

4. The fullness of God’s righteousness. *Psalm 48:10* According to Your name, O God, so is Your praise to the ends of the earth. Your right hand is full of righteousness; let mount Zion rejoice!

5. God’s fullness of power, justice and might in the prophets. *Micah 3:8* But I am full of power by the Spirit of Jehovah, and justice, and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin.


**Full Of Glory**
The National Football League runs adds about the glory of the NFL. Another game of football, soccer, claims its glories. But there is a higher glory which we can imagine, as we read about how God filled his house with glory!

1. Ezekiel saw the glory of the Lord fill his house. *Ezekiel 10:4* And the glory of Jehovah rose from the cherub, over the threshold of the house. And the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of Jehovah’s glory. MKJV

2. Years later when the remnant sent by Cyrus the Great returned from captivity to build God’s house in Jerusalem he encouraged them with this promise. *Haggai 2:7* I will fill this house with glory (MKJV).

**Broken Dreams**
The band Green Day recorded its first song in the early 90’s but they are still producing. In 2004 they brought out a song called “Boulevard of Broken Dreams”. The lyrics and music are haunting. The atmosphere hangs empty. There is
searching going on. The “thief” has come, stolen, killed and destroyed. A moan of emptiness echoes up and down the lines of the song. We need God and the fullness of God or life becomes meaningless and empty, and just as Green Day articulates it, we “walk alone”!

The palmists echoes some of the sentiments of the song by Green Day.
1. Psalm 69:20 Reproach has broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness; and I looked for some to mourn with me, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none.
2. Psalm 88:3 For my soul is full of troubles, and my life draws near the grave.

However, God wants to replace the fullness of a heavy heart with his fullness.

Have we allowed other things and loves to fill us and replace God’s fullness in us? The Jews in Jesus day had filled the temple with a market.
1. Isaiah 1:21 How has the faithful city become a harlot? It was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it, but now murderers. Isaiah 2:6 For You have forsaken Your people the house of Jacob, because they have become full from the east, and are fortune-tellers like the Philistines. And they clap their hands with the children of strangers.
2. Isaiah 2:7 And their land is full of silver and gold (maybe platinum). There is no end of their treasures and their land is full of horses (or horse power); nor an end of their chariots (or 4 x 4s).
3. Isaiah 2:8 And their land is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made. Romans 1:29 being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; being full of envy, murder, quarrels, deceit, evil habits, becoming whisperers…

We need more of Jesus who fills all in all with the fullness of God.
1. Luke 4:1 And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.
2. Ephesians 1:23 …the fullness of him who fills everything.
3. Colossians 1:19 …to have all his (God’s) fullness dwell in him.
4. Colossians 2:9 In Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives (MKJV).

In the early church there were examples to us of believers full of the fullness of God.
1. The deacons. Acts 6:3 Therefore, brothers, look out among you seven men being witnessed to, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this duty.
2. Tabitha. Acts 9:36 And in Joppa was a certain disciple named Tabitha (which translated is called Dorcas). She was full of good works and kind deeds which she did.
3. Philip. Acts 11:24 For he was a good man and full of the Holy Spirit and faith. And many people were added to the Lord. The church in Rome.
4. The Roman Believers 15:14 And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brothers, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

Just think of some of the “fullness” goals God has for us!

1. Psalm 16:11 You will fill me with joy.
2. Roans. 15:13 The God of hope fill you with all joy.
3. John 15:11 I have spoken these things to you so that My joy might remain in you and your joy might be full.
4. John 16:24 Before now you have asked nothing in My name; ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be full.
5. Ephesians 4:13 And this until we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a full-grown man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;
6. Philippians 1:11 …filled with the fruits of righteousness.
7. Philippians 1:9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in full knowledge and in all perception;
8. Colossians 2:2 that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and to all riches of the full assurance of the understanding, to the full knowledge of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;
9. Philemon 1:6 that the fellowship of your faith may operate in a full knowledge of every good thing in you in Christ Jesus.
10. Hebrews 6:1 Therefore, having left the discourse of the beginning of Christ, let us go on to full growth, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,
11. 2John 1:8 Look to yourselves, so that we may not lose those things which we worked out, but that we may receive a full reward. MKJV

Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians is bursting with the fullness of God and includes height, depth, breadth, length and fullness. Ephesians 3:14-19 14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

God invites us, no, he commands us, to:
1. Psalm 81:10 Open wide your mouth and I will fill it.
2. Eph. 5:18 Be filled with the Spirit (MKJV).
Spiritual Fullness Overflows Into other Areas

Let’s remember that the fullness of God in the spiritual realm can overflow in other ways and directions to bless people. Believers in south Asia are founding education centers to help the poorest, those without a caste. I quote from a report from Joseph D______:

From Booze to Books

God is using … Education Centers to make a permanent change in the lives of thousands of … children across the nation. I was particularly encouraged by this story from the state of B______ where I served for some time in my early years in my country.

Education Centers exist among the poor and outcast of … society. Being located in these places often means ministering to people who work on the fringe of society in professions that are not always legal or moral. In the M_______i … Education Center in B______, there are several families that come from an interesting line of work: they produce and distribute … an alcoholic beverage which is gathered from date palms.

K____, a kindergarten student in M_______i is from one such home. K____’s father spends each afternoon climbing high into the date palm trees. Here he scores the stems holding the dates and places a clay pitcher over the end of the stem. As the stem works to heal itself, it produces a juice high in sugar. K____’s father leaves the pitcher tied to the stem and overnight the pitcher slowly fills with the juice from the tree. Each tree produces a couple of liters of juice daily, which is collected and stored in plastic containers at their home. In the heat the juice naturally ferments into alcohol in a few days and K____’s father can take it to the market to sell.

K____’s father and grandfather both work in this job. When K____ gets
older, it is expected that he will follow in the family line. However, his parents and grandparents know that making toddy is not a good job because the alcohol they sell often causes problems in many homes. Plus, selling the toddy requires that K____’s family pay bribes to stay in business otherwise government officials will force them to discontinue this illegal practice. In an attempt to prepare K____ to avoid this business in the future, his father and mother decided to enroll him in the new … Education Center that opened near their home.

With an education, K____ will be able to do many things his father and grandfather were never able to do. With an /English/ education, K____ will have even greater opportunities. K____’s parents make sure he does his homework each evening, reciting his alphabets and completing his math assignments without fail. K____ has already started to excel academically.

K____ is the first person in his family to get an English education. By the end of next year when he is reading and writing, he will be the first literate member of his family. K____’s family desires that K____ break free from the family’s toddy business. Because of the education he is receiving from the M_______i … Education Center, he will be able to secure employment allowing him to be a productive member of their community.

In this way and in many others, our … Education Centers are transforming … society one child at a time. (a report from Joseph D______, 2005)

The future? I don’t know all the details about my personal future but we do have the big picture! Isaiah 11:9 … for the earth will be full of the glory of the Lord (MKJV).

Here’s how Emilio, who was away from the Lord, has been experiencing the “fullness” of God.

Emilio Comes Back
"We want to take some time from our busy schedule to update you on the exciting happenings in Paraguay and specifically our town of San Juan Bautista. Most surround the Franklin Graham "Festival of Hope" held last month in the capital city, Asuncion. The stadium was past full capacity (35,000) all 3 nights with many thousands going forward to talk with counselors. Even people who didn't attend were aware of something big happening as news programs and talk shows were commenting about the crowds. Locally, we had arranged a satellite hook-up and broadcast the Festival over the local cable TV station and on a giant screen in the main plaza of our town for those who don't have cable. We didn't have many people coming and sitting in the seats we had rented, but many watched from the benches around the plaza and more watched at home. Still we had 34 people come forward indicating some sort of interest.

We'll share a few stories to show you how God has been at work... among them … Another amazing story is about the life of a young man named Emilio. His mom, Prismelia, attends the meeting here. In the 5 years that we have lived in town, Emilio has been a rebellious, wild partier though we heard that earlier he had accepted the Lord and was active in the church. About the time of the Festival he got a severe infection with horrible sores on his lips and in his mouth. He spent a week in the hospital here and then was transferred to a special clinic in Asuncion where tests and more tests were run. He slowly got better, but the doctors were never able to diagnose him. Through it all, God got his attention and he returned to San Juan a totally changed person. He is talking to all his former drinking buddies and has led several to the Lord already. Almost daily he brings someone by the house to talk with Dale as he says he wasted so many years; now he wants to make up for lost time!" (Newsletter of Dale Konkol, June 16, 2005)
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THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: SPIRITUAL FEASTS
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SIGNS: WRITTEN AND UNWRITTEN
THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: SPIRITUAL FEASTS

SIGNS AND WORKS

Jars of wine and a net of fish – Jesus did signs, which manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him (2:12) They were demonstrations in the physical world of his fullness.

John recorded some of the signs in his gospel but not all of them. Those that were written down by him were written so that we may believe. He was giving us a report, an adequate report not an exhaustive report, of Jesus’ signs and works so that we may believe and have life in him. He quoted Isaiah in John chapter 12:38 as asking, “Who has believed our report?” John asked and we ask, “Who is willing to believe the report he and others have written down about Jesus and all he did?” This report was not only adequate, it was the report of eyewitnesses. Dr. Luke tells us he wrote what he wrote down in his gospel in an orderly manner having done his research on the matters. These were not people who decided to jot down a mix of a little truth and a little fiction, to concoct a juicy story, on a Sunday afternoon. They were definitely concerned about the cry of Isaiah the prophet, “Who has believed our report?” Isaiah went on to ask, “And to whom has the arm, or strength and power, of the Lord been revealed?” Jesus did sign after sign and still they made comments like, “Tell us plainly, once and for all, are you the Christ?” (John 10:24) Jesus answered them by saying, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me…” (John 10:25 NASB-u).

They weren’t even like the people from Missouri. In Missouri they say, “Show me!” but then I assume that Missourians believe once they are shown. These people saw and heard about so many signs and yet did not believe.

How frustrating it is to arrive in a town or city you are not familiar with, where there are few street signs. You may have a map and directions but if there are no signs you are lost. John paints a spiritual landscape in his gospel with signs that pointed to Jesus and through Jesus to the Father. I have been in contact with a student doing his PhD in computer science and as I write to him and send him Bibles and books I am constantly trying to point him to Jesus and through Jesus to the Father in heaven. One passage I quoted in a letter is John 14:1-11 and in that passage Jesus constantly identifies himself with the Father and tells us that he is the only way to the Father. (Verse 6)

SIGN AND SIGNS (NASB-U)

JOH 2:11 This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.

JOH 2:18 The Jews then said to Him, "What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?"

JOH 2:23 ¶ Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing.
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JOH 3:2 this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

JOH 4:48 So Jesus said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you simply will not believe."

JOH 4:54 This is again a second sign that Jesus performed when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.

JOH 6:2 A large crowd followed Him, because they saw the signs which He was performing on those who were sick.

JOH 6:14 Therefore when the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world."

JOH 6:26 ¶ Jesus answered them and said, " Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled.

JOH 6:30 So they said to Him, "What then do You do for a sign, so that we may see, and believe You? What work do You perform?

JOH 7:31 But many of the crowd believed in Him; and they were saying, "When the Christ comes, He will not perform more signs than those which this man has, will He?"

JOH 9:16 Therefore some of the Pharisees were saying, "This man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath." But others were saying, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And there was a division among them.

JOH 10:41 Many came to Him and were saying, "While John performed no sign, yet everything John said about this man was true."

JOH 11:47 ¶ Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, "What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs.

JOH 12:18 For this reason also the people went and met Him, because they heard that He had performed this sign.

JOH 12:37 But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him.

JOH 20:30 ¶ Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book ....

WORKS

JOH 5:20 "For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and the Father will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel.

JOH 5:36 "But the testimony which I have is greater than the testimony of John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish -- the very works that I do -- testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me.

JOH 6:28 Therefore they said to Him, "What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?"

JOH 7:3 Therefore His brothers said to Him, "Leave here and go into Judea, so that Your disciples also may see Your works which You are doing.
JOH 9:3 Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him.

JOH 9:4 "We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work.

JOH 10:25 Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me.

JOH 10:32 Jesus answered them, "I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?"

JOH 10:37 "If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me;

JOH 10:38 but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father."

JOH 14:10 "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.

JOH 14:11 "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves.

JOH 14:12 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father.

JOH 15:24 "If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well.
THE LAMB...MY LAMBS
“THE LAMB” AND “MY LAMBS”

To most of us a lamb means virtually nothing. Many of us do not live in agrarian societies and even if agrarian they may not major in sheep farming. New Zealanders and Brits or Spaniards may see sheep more often than some of us.

Our UK office is situated in Shropshire in the west of England, near Wales, and those working there look out on sheep grazing in the fields. In the UK and other countries eating lamb not unusual. Personally I really enjoy eating lamb very much.

While living in England we once took a vacation in the West Country on a sheep farm and it was lambing season. If you check out the series of films about the vet James Herriot you will see sheep and lambs as well as other farm animals.

Years ago my grandfather used to have sheep amongst other animals, such as cows, pigs and chickens. The pigs and finally chickens were the last to go, then he concentrated on crops.

While growing up in Nigeria we saw cattle and sheep amongst the animals that the nomadic Fula or Fulani tended. One of the tensions that erupted into pitched battles was the tension caused when the cattle of the Fula wandered into the standing grain of the Hausa and ate the corn. My father was called out to the dispensary one day to find two Fula badly beaten waiting for treatment. Sheets of skin hung off their arms and they had gashes in their heads and great welts all over their bodies. Some one told me I should have seen the two Hausas with whom they had fought. They were in worse shape! Here were two people groups, both of the same religion, but with different life styles, different languages and means of support, one on the basis of cattle and the other on the basis of crops.

In ancient Egypt all shepherds were an abomination to the Egyptians and this is why Joseph’s father and brother were given a separate place to live in Goshen. Did this have something to do with the arable land which is limited to the Nile and its delta? Crops and cattle would be in competition. Even in Israel, once they settled as a nation, the job of tending sheep was not high on the scale. But the job of shepherd illustrates the Lord’s job with us his sheep. We are very like sheep and the Scriptures call us just that. David, God’s anointed leader of Israel had been a shepherd and so knew what it was to shepherd sheep; it was much like leading his people.

Opposite one another in the Introduction and Conclusion of John are the themes “The Lamb” and “My Lambs” and “My Sheep”. Jesus came as the Lamb of God who would die for us taking away the sins of the world. His death and blood were sufficient to take away the sins of everyone. As though to back this up, he supplied more than enough wine for the
THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: SPIRITUAL FEASTS

wedding in Cana. At the end of the gospel Jesus fills the net of Peter and the other disciples who went fishing with him and then tells him that he is to feed his lambs and sheep. Could Jesus supply Peter, or anyone who ministered to Jesus' sheep, with enough spiritual food to feed others? Of course he could! But it would only be possible if Peter loved Jesus more than the physical food (“more than these” referring to the fish) Jesus could give him.

Firstly we see Jesus described as a lamb and the background in the Old Testament, which led to this metaphor for Jesus. The simple definition of a metaphor is something that stands for something else. Jesus is a person, not a sheep, but when it comes to a sacrifice offered by God for our sins, he is the Lamb.

Genesis 22:8 Abraham said, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." So the two of them walked on together (NASB-u).

Isaiah 53:7 ¶ He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth (NASB-u).

1Peter 1:17-19, 17 ¶ If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth; 18 knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ (NASB-u).

The hymn asks, “What can wash away my sin?” And the answer rings back, “Nothing but the blood of Jesus!” Jesus stood for all those lambs, sheep, rams, bulls, heifers, pigeons and doves that were offered in sacrifice at the tabernacle and temple down through the centuries and none of them were ever able to take away sins permanently, nor could they take on more than the sins of one person or a family. Hebrews 10:4 makes it clear that the blood of animals could never take away sin. All the figures found in the temple and its rituals were called shadows! They were a shadow of the reality to come in Christ according to Hebrews 10:1.

Revelation 5:12 saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing" (NASB-u).

Not only is Jesus called the Lamb of God but those who follow him are called his lambs and his sheep, for he is our shepherd, another metaphor. There are those called to help Jesus feed the lambs and sheep, just as Peter was.

1Peter 2:25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

Don’t Give Up, Bernardo May Return
In this story we are encouraged to keep feeding the “lambs”. Long time readers of our prayer letters might remember about 3 years ago that we had Bible Studies with a young man named Bernardo. At the time he indicated that he accepted the Lord and was meeting with the church here. Then he stopped coming; we tried to encourage him when we saw him but, he seemed to have lost interest. Recently he began coming again and is doing a Bible Study with Dale. He even asked to meet twice a week instead of just once. Please pray for commitment and further growth (Newsletter of Dale Konkol, January 21, 2005).
FIVE JEWISH FEASTS
THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: SPIRITUAL FEASTS

FIVE JEWISH FEASTS

The main body of the gospel mentions five feasts of the Jews, Passover, Sabbath, Dedication and Tabernacles. These mentions of feasts divide the main body into 5 divisions or sections. As we look at the feasts we realize the first mention and the last are Passover. The second mention of a feast at the beginning of chapter five does not tell us which feast it was, but at the beginning of chapter six there is a hint as to which it might be. The Passover was approaching so the feast just before the Passover was Dedication. Why did John not say it was Dedication? It was probably because he wanted to emphasize Sabbath, which is actually one of the feasts of the Jews. If this is true then the second mention of a feast and the fourth mention are the Feast of Dedication. The third mention of a feast is Tabernacles. Because the first and last feast mentioned is Passover, the second and fourth mention of a feast seems to be Dedication, and the third mention is Tabernacles, only mentioned once, led me to arrange these feasts and the material connected to them in a “v” shape as given in the Table of Contents.

Passover
The first and last sections about the Passover are two of the larger sections and in turn are divided into five parts. Passover commemorates the birth of the nation and it was at the death of the first born, that the nation was born. The stories in John connected with the two Passovers, about being born again and the death of Jesus, the first born, line up directly with these themes. Passover reminded them of how God brought them out of Egypt. But it would be difficult to get Egypt out of them. That generation wanted to return to Egypt and because of unbelief died in the desert. When Jesus cleansed the temple in John 2 he was getting “Egypt out of the temple.”

Dedication
The Feast of Dedication commemorated the rededication of the temple in 164 BC after Antiochus Epiphanies had defiled the temple by offering a pig on the altar and offending the Jews. In John the material in each of the sections two and four are also concerned with offenses both to the Jews and to the disciples. The second and fourth which deal with Dedication are each divided into 2 parts, and deal in the first part with an offense to the Jews and in the second an offense to Jesus’ disciples and friends. These “offences” have to do with key issues in spiritual life: the “breaking” of the Sabbath; the identity of Jesus, calling God his own Father; Jesus’ hard sayings represented by his saying about eating his flesh and drinking his blood; and why he allowed certain things to happen, such as allowing Lazarus to die when he could have healed him.

Tabernacles
THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: SPIRITUAL FEASTS

In the case of the Feast of Tabernacles, mentioned at the beginning of chapter 7, during which the people lived in booths or tents to remember their forefathers’ travels in the wilderness, we find three stories in chapters 7, 8 and 9, connected to the theme of sin, which their forefathers committed in the wilderness, and which led to their wanderings there for 40 years and their own deaths there. The third section concerning Tabernacles and the material following stands alone and is in turn divided into three parts. In these 3 stories the issue of sin and how Jesus dealt with it arise. First he said to his brothers that the world hated him because he testified that its deeds are evil. This is akin to the statement in Romans that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23) In the second story in John chapter 8 Jesus told the men who had brought the woman taken in adultery, “Let him who is without sin throw the first stone at her.” They all leave and Jesus told her that he did not condemn her either but that she was to go and sin no more. Jesus had saved her from the condemnation of the “old way of living” and set her on a new path of holiness. In the third story in chapter 9 Jesus’ disciples asked him who sinned, the man born blind or his parents. The pastor of our church in Clare, Michigan, Pastor Doug Blackwell, pointed out to me that some rabbis taught that the unborn baby could sin in the womb and be born, as a result of that sin, with some negative impact such as blindness. (A conversation in the summer of 2005) Jesus made it clear that this was not the case. Personal sin did not necessarily produce some physical or mental “challenge”. Sin from ages past has twisted and destroyed our world, but in the middle of it all God continues to do wonderful things and to reveal his glory. When we see God’s glory through the healing of the man born blind we are led to see God in a new light, in this case in the person of Jesus, and believe on him … and worship him!

THE 2 PASSOVERS

1. Passover 2:13-4:54
   (Birth of the nation)
   Six aspects of life:
   1. Man: Jesus cleansed the temple. The temple of the body and what is in man are clues to the application. Just as Jesus cleaned the temple in Jerusalem so he desires to cleanse us as people for our bodies are temples. 2:13-25
   2. Birth: Jesus taught Nicodemus that he must be born again. 3:1-21
   3. Growth: In a discussion with John the Baptist about purification, John declared that Jesus must (grow) increase and he John must decrease. 3:22-36
   4. Drink: Meeting with Samaritan woman at the well, Jesus offered her the drink of living water 4:1-26
   5. Food: In the discussion with the disciples when they brought him food, Jesus said, “My food is to do the Father's will.” 4:27-42
6. Family: The nobleman’s son was healed, and his family believed. 4:43-54

**A NOBLEMAN BELIEVES**  
Believing and seeing, or not seeing and believing: Jesus challenged the nobleman with, “Unless you see signs you will not believe!” The father believed Jesus’ word and went home without having seen his son healed. (4:50)  

**HEB 11:1** Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. NASB-u

5. Passover 11:55-20:31  
(Death of the first born)  
Six aspects of purification:

1. Acceptable: Jesus was anointed by a woman with perfume, filling the house with a sweet odor. 11:55-12:50 The Old Testament sacrifices were a pleasing aroma to God. Leviticus 1:9
2. Cleansing: Jesus washed the disciples’ feet, just the feet, for their “bodies” were already washed. 13:1-14:31
3. Discipline: The Vine and the branches, and the importance of the removal of some branches and the pruning of other branches. 15:1-16:33 Pruning clears branches of excess wood to produce more fruit. Sadly some branches are dead or false and have to be removed. Jeremiah 5:10 Go up on her vine-rows and destroy; but do not make a full end; take away her branches, for they are not Jehovah’s.
4. Mediation: Jesus’ prayer, the mediation by a priest 17:1-18:27
5. Substitution: Jesus on trial before Pilate was defiled in the praetorium and was made a substitute for Barabbas. Jesus became sin for us 18:28-19:37
6. Forgiveness: Jesus appeared to his disciples after his resurrection and he spoke of forgiveness saying, “If you forgive...” 19:38-20:31

**THOMAS BELIEVES**  
Believing and seeing, or not seeing and believing: Jesus said to Thomas, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” (20:29) Hebrews 11:27, 28 By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen. 28 By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, so that he who destroyed the firstborn would not touch them (NASB-a).
1CO 5:7, 8  7 Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. 8 Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (NASB-u).

TWO FEASTS, ONE THE DEDICATION, WITH EMPHASIS ON THE SABBATH DURING THE FIRST FEAST, WHICH IS NOT NAMED.

5:1-6:71

(This feast may have been the Dedication as Passover was near)

Two offences:

1. Accused by Jews of breaking Sabbath by healing a paralytic on Sabbath. 5:1-47

2. The feeding of the 5000. Drinking Jesus' blood and eating his flesh is a hard saying for his disciples and many turn back from following him. 6:1-71

PETER BELIEVES

Believing and knowing: Peter said that they believed and knew Jesus was the Holy One of God. (6:69) Their faith was based on eyewitness reports; based on knowledge. 1 Corinthians 15:1-11, 1CO 15:3

¶ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

1CO 15:4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

1CO 15:5 and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

1CO 15:6 After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep;

1CO 15:7 then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles;

1CO 15:8 and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also. NASB-u

We saw, we preached, you believed.

10:22-11:54

(Rededication of temple in 164BC after an offence)
THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: SPIRITUAL FEASTS

Two offenses:
1. Jesus taught in the temple. The Jews accused him of blasphemy because he called God his Father. 10:22-11:26
2. The raising of Lazarus. Martha and Mary complained that Jesus did not come before Lazarus died. 11:27-54

MARTHA BELIEVES
Believing and knowing: Martha said, “But even now I know God will give you whatever you ask.” Martha also said, “I believe you are the Christ, the Son of God who was to come into the world.” (11:27) Daniel 4:34 and 36, Nebuchadnezzar writes of “my knowledge … my reason.”

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

7:1-10:21
(40 years living in tents in the wilderness when that generation of Israel sinned and died)

Three subsections concerning sin:
1. Jesus' discussion with his unbelieving brothers. “I testify that the world does evil.” 7:1-53
2. The woman caught in adultery is saved. “Whoever is without sin throw the first stone.” 8:1-59 (Isaiah 1:21

How has the faithful city become a harlot? It was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it, but now murderers. Jeremiah 5:27 Like a cage full of birds, so their houses are full of deceit; therefore they have become great and grown rich. Jeremiah 23:10 For the land is full of adulterers. Yes, because of cursing the land mourns; the pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up, and their course is evil, and their power is not right. Matthew 6:23 But if your eye is evil, your whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! Matthew 23:25 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of extortion and excess.

3. The man born blind is healed. “Neither this man nor his parents sinned that he was born blind.” 9:1-10:21
THE MAN BORN BLIND BELIEVES
Believing and worshipping: And he said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped Him. (9:38) NASB-u
Does believing make a difference in our lives or is it just in the head, something intellectual? Do I worship the Lord? JOH 4:23 "But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. John 4:24 "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." NASB-u
BELIEVING: (NOT) SEEING, KNOWING AND WORSHIPPING
A NOBLEMAN BELIEVES
Believing and seeing, or not seeing and believing: Jesus challenged the nobleman with, “Unless you see signs you will not believe!” The father believed Jesus’ word and went home without having seen his son healed. When he got home the son was healed and when they calculated he was healed at the moment Jesus had told him the day before that he could go home his son was healed! (4:50) HEB 11:1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen (NASB-u).

THOMAS BELIEVES
Believing and seeing, or not seeing and believing: Jesus said to Thomas, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” (20:29) HEB 11:27 By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen. HEB 11:28 By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, so that he who destroyed the firstborn would not touch them (NASB-a).

For we walk by faith, not by sight! 2 Corinthians 5:7

Naaman had to go wash in the Jordan before he was cleansed of leprosy. 2 Kings 5:10-14

When last you sat in a chair did you examine it carefully before you sat down? No, not normally. It looked like something made to sit on. Others were sitting in similar objects. So you sat down in the chair “by faith”.

Y____, A Turkish Believer Who Was Badly Beaten But Is Persevering By Faith

Many of you have prayed for Y____, the Turkish believer who was so badly injured after being beaten. He recently attended church, and his physical health has improved a lot, but his family is putting pressure on him not to meet with other Christians. A place is required so that he can become independent, but because of the handicap that he struggles with following his beating, his ability to work is very limited. Please pray for his situation and continued improvement in his health (Peter Maiden’s International Update, July 5, 2005).
THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: SPIRITUAL FEASTS

BELIEVING AND KNOWING

PETER BELIEVES
Believing and Knowing: 68 Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. 69 "We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God." John 6:68, 69 NASB-u

Peter, the twelve and other disciples knew who Jesus was because of what they had seen and heard him say and do. He presented the credentials of someone claiming to be the Messiah, the Holy One of God, the Son of God. On this occasion they had witnessed him feeding 5000 and more people with a few loaves and fishes. This “knowing” has to do with the intellect because they had to see and think through what they had witnessed. They had to understand the implications of all they witnessed, implications about who Jesus was and implications about their relationship to him. Their knowledge would have to go beyond simple knowledge of the bare facts to a complete commitment to him as the Messiah, the Holy One of God who was to come into the world. What is more they knew that there was growing opposition to Jesus from the Jews. Their “knowledge” would have to be of a kind, which would carry them through the persecution which was waiting just around the corner.

MARTHA BELIEVES
Believing and Knowing: 21 Martha then said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 "Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You." John 11:21, 22 NASB-u

She said to Him, "Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, even He who comes into the world." John 11:27 NASB-u

Martha stated that she knew that God would grant whatever Jesus asked of him. As in Peter’s case she had heard and seen what Jesus could do. They had hoped he would come and heal Lazarus. Now they were challenged to think in even bigger terms. Would he raise him from the dead? What did Martha mean when she said, “Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.”

Both Peter and Martha had stated that they knew who Jesus was and that God would answer his requests, but why did Peter in his declaration mention belief before knowledge? Shouldn’t it be the other way around? You know and therefore believe? Well, yes, in one sense that is true. That kind of knowledge is simply acknowledging the facts then believing what they tell you. There is a knowledge which follows belief, and that is the deep seated, heart felt, will involved knowledge that grows out of faith because once we have believed we understand and accept the implications of that belief, of that faith.

Those implications are wonderful because the promises of God to the believer are wonderful, but those implications are also threatening because in this world there will be opposition to Jesus and those who follow him. In Matthew 2 and 3 we
meet two princes, one of the rulers of this world, King Herod, and the other the spiritual ruler of this world, Satan. Herod under the pretense of worshipping Jesus tried to kill him as a baby. That attack was physical. Satan came to tempt him in the wilderness during his time of fasting. Satan hoped to disqualify him spiritually and morally as he done to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. This second attack was spiritual in the midst of physical privation, unlike the circumstances of our forefathers Adam and Eve, who lived in an idyllic garden.

Both attacks on Jesus life had an element in them, which is very important in the next section. That element is worship. Herod under the pretense of worshipping the baby Jesus tried to ascertain from the wise men where he could be found in order to kill him. Herod wanted worship; he did not want to offer it to someone else! Satan offered Jesus the kingdoms of this world if only he would bow down and worship him. This desire in the heart of Satan, or Lucifer, goes back eons of time to when he first lifted up his heart and said, “I will be like the Most High!” (Isaiah 14:1-23; Ezekiel 28:1-19) The desire to be worshipped, to be the center of attention, is bound up in the heart of Satan and in our hearts. Our vanity and pride bring us down again and again! John Adams, one the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and later the second president of the United States, felt deeply his own failings in this area. I quote:

Vanity he saw was his chief failing. “Vanity, I am sensible, is my cardinal vice and cardinal folly,” he wrote, vowing to reform himself (John Adams, David McCullough, p. 42, Simon and Schuster, 2001).

Again in the same book on pages 169 and 170 he describes the ravages of pride in the American army:

He (Adams) was exasperated, too, by the constant squabbles of American officers. “They worry one another like mastiffs, scrambling for rank and pay like apes for nuts,” he told Abigail. “I believe there is no one principle which predominates in human nature so much in every stage of life, from the cradle to the grave, in males and females, old and young, black and white, rich and poor, high and low, as this passion for superiority” (John Adams, David McCullough, p. 42, Simon and Schuster, 2001).

Someone I know has struggled with pride all his life! As a child he would literally walk around with his chest puffed out, because the older children in the school he attended in Africa had allowed him into their circle, his “girl friend” being amongst them. Classes divided between the 5th year and the 6th. Those in the 5th or lower were termed the “little kids”, and those in the 6th and higher were “the big kids”. He was in 5th and his “girl friend” was in the 6th! So, the “big kids” invited him on special hikes and other outings. The director of the school cautioned him to play with those in his class and told him it was best not go with the older children. He was right. Two years later when those older children had all graduated from the school he was left with those in his class and they isolated and ignored him.
They were getting their revenge and he deserved it! They pretended that he did not exist. In a class of only 8 children in a school of only 175 the rejection was exceedingly painful but it was needed. He couldn’t complain to the teachers because if they reprimanded the children the persecution would simply go “underground” and be more subtle. If he told his parents and they told the teachers the same would happen. He was stuck! How else would he learn to die to his pride without much pain? It was not easy. For about four months which seemed like an eternity, and he couldn’t say for sure how long the rejection lasted, but he felt like he was going through a hell on earth. He has asked himself if pride will not separate many from the Lord in eternity, and that that final and irreversible separation from God and from mankind will be excruciatingly painful as well as eternal! But the separation will be of people’s choosing, not God’s for God calls them back to himself. Will we like the prodigal son return or not?

It is good now to turn to the story of a man who believed and worshipped Jesus.
THE MAN BORN BLIND BELIEVES
Believing and worshipping: 35 Jesus heard that they had put him out, and finding him, He said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" 36 He answered, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?" 37 Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him, and He is the one who is talking with you." 38 And he said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped Him (John 9:35-38 NASB-u).

The man born blind and healed by Jesus had just been cast out of the synagogue. The implication for a Jew was that he was now disqualified from worship. He had incurred the wrath of the religious leaders and was now an outcast of the synagogue. Jesus found the man and asked him if he believed in the Son of Man to which he replied he did not know who he was. Jesus confirmed that Jesus himself was the Son of Man. The man born blind responded by saying he did believe in Jesus, the Son of Man, and worshipped him.

The important place of worship at that moment was right there where Jesus was! Let’s remember that the synagogue was a human institution, developed during the Babylonian captivity, as a place for Jews to gather and worship. Useful though it may have been it was not sacred. Let us remember that our modern church buildings are not sacred in the sense that God told any of us to build them and he does not dwell in them as he did in the tabernacle, and later the temple in Jerusalem. Our church buildings are more akin to synagogues than to the temple. However, having said that let us remember that in certain situations our church buildings have served a purpose depending on their construction and acceptability in each culture. Many on the other hand have met in homes for worship and those who have lived in isolated situations, or have been denied permission to build, or are being hunted down for their faith, have even just gone out into the woods and fields to worship. We can believe and worship the Lord anywhere. Let’s not condemn church buildings outright as they have been used to gather larger congregations that would not fit in homes, but neither shall we treat them as though God lived in them as he did the temple. His temple today is the believer. Remember Jesus’ words in John 4. Here is what the passage says, 21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. 22 "You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 "But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. 24 "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:21-24 NASB-u).
THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: SPIRITUAL FEASTS

Of course, to accept such ideas when the synagogue was such a central part of a Jew's life was very difficult. When this man's parents were questioned about how he was healed they suggested to the Jews that they ask the man himself because they were afraid to say anything for fear of being put out of the synagogue (John 9:22).

Why did this man worship Jesus and even “stick up” for him? Jesus had shown great mercy and grace to him by healing him of blindness from birth. When others might have condemned him for the state he was in because they mistakenly thought he had committed sin in the womb or because his parents had sinned Jesus showed him mercy. When it dawns more fully upon us, who have received Jesus as our Savior, the great mercy the Lord has shown to us opening our spiritual eyes to his glory, power, wisdom, mercy and grace we are overwhelmed! The Creator has come to us to declare who the Father is, who God is, and save us from ourselves, our sin, our rebellion, our fear, death and Satan himself.

So we turn from ourselves and place our eyes on Jesus the Author and Perfecter of our faith. “…fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:2 NASB-u). He endured the cross and the shame for us! Bringing many sons to glory (Hebrews 2:10) was such a joy he was willing to go through all he suffered.

While we have mentioned that this man had just been cast out of the synagogue for believing in Jesus we need to emphasize this reality in another way, by saying that this man did not worship Jesus in a vacuum or in an ideal situation. He worshipped in the midst of condemnation, rejection and the hatred of men. We are fortunate if we live and can worship in peace and our situation is idyllic. It’s wonderful but it is not the same for everyone. Our situation could change as well. Chinese believers at the beginning of the 21st century live under much pressure. Many have few material goods and one of the important pieces of furniture they have in their homes, if you can call it a piece of furniture, is their prayer mat, on which some of them have spent much time, on their knees before the Lord worshipping him and crying out for his help. For many the Lord is virtually all they have. He is precious to them. They have many needs and live under such pressure that they often cry out to him day and night for their needs.

But in our day what will lead people to worship Jesus Christ? Here is a story that I think tells us how they can get on that road to worship. It has a lot to do with Jesus himself opening their spiritual eyes!

Sermon On The Mount Astonishing To a Man in the Middle East

"Although circumstances in a particular country have made it difficult to carry out our work there at the present time, we continue to reach out to the people outside their borders, and we wait for God's time to return. An unfortunate consequence of the ongoing war has been the militant attacks against the historic Christian minority population and a
lesser-known group called the ‘Mandaeans’ who are followers of John the Baptist. Both have experienced threats, bombings and murder in recent months, driving thousands out of their ancestral homeland of the past 2,000 years and into neighboring countries, creating unease about their future. We've had the opportunity to minister to some of these hurting people.

"We're also reaching out to people of the majority religion in our midst with the love of Jesus. Some of them express frustration with their lives and are looking for something better. 'A man I had befriended was orphaned at an early age and taken in by relatives living in Britain,' explained one of our team members. 'He was forced to return when the former president, put his brother in prison, but he fled the country once the war started. He's been so impressed by Old Testament prophecies about Jesus foretelling His crucifixion, and he's found Jesus' teaching containing the Sermon on the Mount astonishing. This man's reaction mirrors many of those who listen to Jesus Himself" (OM Middle East North Africa director’s report [edited], 2004).

In Zechariah we are given a peek into the future and we see that worship is a huge element in that time and world. Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths (Zechariah 14:16 NASB-u).

Jesus accepted worship from the man born blind. He did not reject his worship. The evangelist records the event as a positive act. Unless Jesus were actually God the worship of the man born blind would be prohibited by what Jesus said to Satan in the temptation in the wilderness. Then Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only'" (Matthew 4:10).

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship (Romans 12:1 NASB-u).
THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: SPIRITUAL FEASTS

FAMILY: CARNAL AND SPIRITUAL
FAMILY

Spiritual family: John 1:11, 12
11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name ... (AV-KJV).

Carnal and spiritual family: John 2:11, 12
11 This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him. 12 ¶ After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days (AV-KJV).

The Story of Anitha (and Family)

Anitha is a 25-year-old woman who has two children and, until recently, was married. However, a year and a half ago, her husband abandoned her family. They looked for him for a long time, but could never find him. Her family decided to help her get re-married, but Anitha did not agree. She felt that somehow she should remain faithful to her marriage commitment. The Tirupur GCC pastor met Anitha one day, heard her story and prayed with her. She began coming to church and enjoyed the counseling the GCC pastor gave to her. A couple of months later, her estranged husband phoned her and asked if he could return home. Anitha was overjoyed at this answer to prayer. Today they are a happily reunited family who serve the living God.
INTRODUCTION
SIX PHASES OF SPIRITUAL HISTORY
John 1:1-2:11
THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: SPIRITUAL FEASTS

INTRODUCTION
SIX PHASES OF SPIRITUAL HISTORY
John 1:1-2:11

I.  1:1-18 Moses “Tabernacled” – God tabernacled in Moses time and Jesus tabernacled. Whoever believes on him he gives the right to become sons of God, a parallel to sons of Israel. He had come to the sons of Israel, his own, but they did not receive him. Law through Moses but grace and truth through Jesus Christ.

II. 1:19-28 Isaiah and John “Lord” – The way of the Lord in Isaiah’s time and Jesus’ way in John’s time (I am the Way) “Prophet Alley!”

III. 1:29-34 Jesus “The Lamb of God who takes away sin of world”, “Existed before me”, “Spirit remains on him”, “Baptizes in the Holy Spirit”, “the Son of God”. The word lamb refers to the sacrifices offered by the patriarchs and in the Law of Moses and down through the years in Israel.

IV. 1:35-42 Andrew tells Simon, “We have found the Messiah which is translated Christ or anointed One.” Jesus gave Simon the name Cephas or Peter meaning stone.

V. 1:43-51 Philip found Nathanael who Jesus referred to as an Israelite indeed in whom there was no guile. Nathanael called Jesus the Son of God, the King of Israel. Nathaniel would see angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man. Jacob, the Israelite full of guile, and the stone that marked the place, where he saw angels ascending and descending on the Lord who stood at the ladder reaching to heaven. He called the place the house of God and the gateway to heaven. Genesis 28.

VI. 2:1-12 Jesus attended a wedding and changed water into wine from six large stone jars that the Jews filled with water for purification. His mother had told the servants to do whatever Jesus said. He manifested his glory through this first sign and his disciples believed on him. Parallel to Marriage Supper of the Lamb. The best wine left till last!
1st DIVISION
SIX FACTS OF (SPIRITUAL) LIFE:
John 2:13-4:54
SIX FACTS OF (SPIRITUAL) LIFE: John 2:13-4:54

New Year’s eve I asked various people to share John 3:16 in their languages (On Logos 2, 2004). Thank you for taking part.

There are other well known verses in the second part of John’s Gospel between 2:13 and 4:54.

Favorite and well known verses in John 2:13 to 4:54
John’s gospel divides into large sections that are not divided by chapters but rather by visits to Jerusalem at the times of Jewish religious feasts. Each section is in turn subdivided into stories with their own themes.

Without being sacrilegious we’ll use the pizza pie to represent the structure of John’s Gospel, after all it does have to do with feasts.

Let’s talk about at least one of the principles of interpretation used here and throughout Jesus’ teachings.

These physical things are symbolic of spiritual things.
Let's have a quick overview of each story.

**Market in Jewish Temple, Jerusalem**  2:13-25  **“What’s In Man?”**
Jesus found a market in the temple in Jerusalem and he drove them all out. Many believed in him in Jerusalem but he did not trust himself to them because He knew what was in man.

**Nicodemus: A Teacher is Surprised**  3:1-21  **“Birth...Again!”**
Nicodemus came to Jesus at night and complimented him as a prophet from God. Jesus explains the new birth to him so that he might also be able to enter the kingdom of God.

**John the Baptist Answers with Joy**  3:22-36  **“Continued Growth”**
In this scene a Jew and John’s disciples argue about purification. John is asked why everyone has left him to go to Jesus? John tells them he is full of joy at this and that Jesus must increase and he, John, must decrease.

**No Bucket at Jacob’s Well, Samaria**  4:1-26  **“Deep Drink”**
At Sychar in Samaria, while his disciples look for food, he speaks with a woman at the well. He tells her he can give her water that becomes a fountain inside her; He reveals to her that he knows her life; and then tells her about true worship.

**The Disciples: Trainees are Puzzled**  4:27-42  **“Secret Food?””**
Meanwhile the disciples return with a few big Macs, fries and cokes! Jesus tells them he already has food they know nothing about. Then he challenges them about the harvest fields and the work they are to do gathering a harvest to eternal life.

**A Son Is Healed 4:43-54 “Family of Faith”**

Jesus reaches Galilee and heals the son of a nobleman, a son which he never even sees. The official and all his family believe.

So ends this slice of the pizza pie. The next division of John begins with another visit to Jerusalem at the time of a Jewish feast.

So let’s look at each story. The six stories together represent 6 facts about spiritual growth.

Is it in you? This is the strap line for the Gatorade advert. Is the drink and therefore the energy in you?

But what is in you? What is in man?

Maybe the condition of God’s temple will tell us something about that. In the temple Jesus found a market place. There were markets in Jerusalem and shops all over the city. Jesus did not crusade against those things. But He did get upset when the market started taking over the courts of God’s house where the people, Jew and Gentile were to stand worshipping Him.

Problems in God’s temple, and in the hearts of the Jews goes back to the times of Jeremiah the prophet. *Jeremiah 4:14 Wash your heart from evil, O Jerusalem, That you may be saved. How long will your wicked thoughts lodge within you? NASB-u*
Maybe we could illustrate what happened to the temple in this way. On board the ships *Doulos* and *Logos 2* we have shops of various kinds. That’s okay. There is the book fair, the ship shop, the coffee bar and the book table at the conferences. No problem, we are a floating city. Cities have shops and markets.

But what if we decided to remove all the chairs in the main meeting room and fill it with tables and stalls selling yet more things, to a degree that there was no room for us to have a place for our devotional times, study program, prayer evenings and worship meetings, Sunday meetings and conferences where we could sit or stand and worship the Lord and hear His Word? That would be going too far.

As a boy growing up in Africa I would pour over Sears catalogues drooling over the shotguns, rifles, bullets and pistols. It was a bit like filling my heart with a market place, maybe a little like the temple which the Jews had filled with a market.

What do you spend your time thinking about? Clothes, sports equipment, cars, electronic gear, music CDs, computers and model airplanes. None of these things in themselves need be wrong. But they begin to offend when they have a more important place than the Lord in your heart.

Just as Jesus cleansed the temple so we must be cleansed inside. We must be cleansed of our sin just as 1 John 1:8 and 9 teach us. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Jesus was consumed with passion for his Father’s house. “Zeal for your house has consumed me”, was a quote from Psalm 69:9 and the disciples remembered it. Notice just how concerned Jesus was for his house, his Father’s house. This was the one place on earth where God dwelt. If it was truly God’s dwelling place, the place where he lived, then it was the most important place on earth! There was no other place more important. There was no other place more important to visit. No other place more important to keep clean and prepared for God’s worship, for fellowship between him and people. God loves people and wants them to be able to come into his presence and fellowship with him. He doesn’t people to be hindered in anyway from coming to him.

Jesus was then asked by the Jews what sign he would show them to prove his authority to do those things. He responded by claiming he would raise his own body, the real temple of God. You see God in Christ was “tabernacling” or dwelling (1:14) amongst men. The temple in Jerusalem was a shadow of who Jesus was. He was the fulfillment of the temple! Ask a Jew of that time to get his mind around that one!!! But there is something else here that we often overlook and that is
that Jesus said, “Destroy this temple…” He was referring to his death on the cross three years later when he would shed his blood for the cleansing of our sins. He would cleanse our temples, the temples of our bodies where he would take up residence by his Spirit, according to 1 Corinthians 6:19, Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? (NASB-u).

Many believed in him in Jerusalem seeing the miracles he did, but he did not trust himself to them because he knew what was in man. Later we see how they wanted to make him king because he filled their bellies with food! Jesus didn’t want superficial faith based on miracles and full tummies.

When were you born? Have you been at anyone else’s birth? A birth can be a great event! People want to know if it is a boy or girl, how heavy, who it looks like, or even how many were born. It can lead to a lot of baby talk, cooing and even sleepless nights of crying and screaming for food, etc.

BORN AGAIN: The next story is about birth, spiritual rebirth, being born again.

NOW THERE WAS A MAN: After the introductory story about the cleansing of the temple and Jesus being unwilling to commit himself to man for he knew what was in man the story of Nicodemus starts with the words…Now there was a man…

Nicodemus came to Jesus at night and complimented him as a prophet from God. Jesus cut out the small talk and told this grown man he had to be born again of water and wind, or in other words, Spirit.

He then emphasized the invisibleness of that event by referring again to the wind.

He said he could tell us about heavenly things because he came from heaven.
He also compared being born again to the event where Moses raised a snake on a pole in the wilderness so that anyone bitten by the snakes sent into the camp would live again. When the people trusted God’s word through Moses to look up at the snake they were restored to life. It was life giving and invisible.

In the same way when people believed in the Jesus who would be lifted up they would receive eternal life.

He then touched on God’s love in the giving of his son, condemnation and coming to the light so that a person’s deeds could be seen to have been done through God.

A REBIRTH IN THE WILDERNESS: Jesus refers to an OT event that helps us understand the new birth or being born again. Because the Israelites murmured again God and Moses God sent fiery serpents into the camp and the people died of the bites. Then the Lord told Moses to erect a pole with a brass serpent on it. God said whoever looked up at the serpent would live. In other words when the people raised their eyes and looked at the serpent on the pole they were given new life, or life again. They were reborn. They did not enter their mother’s womb again but had life put within them again.

BORN: Let us clarify that “born” is not “baptized”. They are 2 different words. John said Jesus would baptize in the Spirit, not in “water and Spirit”. 1:33; 4:1, 2

WATER: Just as water is life giving so is being born again, or rebirth, is life giving.

SPIRIT - WIND: Rebirth is invisible. You don’t gain physical weight when born of the Spirit. Babies when born are weighed. You might be holding your baby when he or she is born and the matron demands the baby back. You could become a little peeved at that. She takes the baby and dumps it in a container and pops it on a scale. The baby is being weighed! In spiritual rebirth no physical weight is involved. You are born again of the Spirit who is invisible and “weightless”.

LIGHT: Deeds done through God. The new birth is a real spiritual birth. This is where the deeds done through God come from later. In Matthew Jesus said we were the light of the world but let’s not fool ourselves into thinking we in our own strength have done these things. They have been done through God.

We are the light or lamp, but we are not the source of light. A lamp does not shine of itself. It needs the electric current to light up.
John was full of joy, and says so in verse 29, but why? People came asking him why his followers were disappearing and furthermore why they were all going to the man he had presented to Israel. They thought they were setting up prophet against prophet. Maybe they were used to seeing spiritual leaders envy each other? Here was a chance to create a scene, a little tension, a newsworthy piece of gossip. Did you hear that prophet John? Is he ticked off! Jesus is taking all his disciples and he is angry!

No, that was not John’s reply!

1. He said, I am not the Christ, the Messiah, the anointed One, the King of Israel. I am his herald. When a herald announces his king the herald does not expect all the people to gather to him. They gather to the king!
2. He said, “Our relationship is like the bridegroom and the friend of the groom. The bride marries the groom, not the friend of the groom!” He said, “My joy is full and complete when I hear his voice. He must increase, I must decrease, or he grow and I shrink.”
3. He said, “You get what God gives you from above.” In Romans 12 Paul tells us not to think more highly than we ought to think of ourselves, but soberly, according to the grace given us to minister in different ways and through various gifts.
4. Next, he said, “He, Jesus, is from above and speaks from above, so his revelation is higher than mine. I am from the earth. Since he comes from above, whoever accepts his word, makes God true for having come from above both he and his word are from God.”
5. Next, God is not stingy with his Spirit. The more we want from him to minister as he supplies the more he will give us. He doesn’t measure out the Spirit to us in tiny stingy doses. God is generous. If we want to grow he will be thrilled. He is saddened when we don’t want to grow and neglect His Spirit.
6. And then who more than anyone else allowed God’s Spirit to work in him without limit, Jesus. We limit God, Jesus never did.
7. Then the Father has placed everything in the Son’s hands. That is normal, that things go from Father to Son. “I”, said John, “am not the Son.” God had not placed everything in John’s hands.
8. Finally, people are to believe in the Son, not in John, for by believing in the Son they have eternal life!
So, it is incredible today to find groups who still follow the Baptist. There is one in Iraq called the Mandaeans. I quote from a newsletter of 2005:

As you probably know, the elections in Iraq have just taken place. Please, please pray. Our Middle East North Africa Director writes, "Although circumstances in Iraq have made it difficult to carry out our work there at the present time, we continue to reach out to the Iraqi people outside their borders, and we wait for God's time to return. An unfortunate consequence of the ongoing war has been the militant attacks against the historic Christian minority population and a lesser-known group called 'The Mandaeans' who are followers of John the Baptist. Both have experienced threats, bombings and murder in recent months, driving thousands out of their ancestral homeland of the past 2,000 years and into neighboring Jordan and Syria, creating unease about their future. We've had the opportunity to minister to some of these hurting people.

Sometimes the best way to reach a community is by reaching the most needy in that community. Mercedes, from Mexico, ministered in Extremadura reaching out to young girl drug addicts. This touched the mothers' hearts and the community. People came to Christ. The mayor of the town even put Mercedes on the health and social security list without she having to pay into the system. They so appreciated her work amongst their teenagers.

Jesus met one of the needy people of Sychar a town of Samaria, enemies of the Jews. Jesus did not go to their religious shrine and cleanse it. That would have started a war! He approached it differently. He came in through the “back door”.

When it comes to international drinks I have had my surprises! I first had a drink very popular in the southern cone of South America, called “mate”. I was speaking at an evangelical church in Luján, Argentina, where it's largest cathedral is located. The pastor asked the OM leader, the church leaders and me to meet before the meeting.
They brought out the mate and as I was the main guest they gave the mate pot with the straw in it to me. I sat sipping it, enjoying it and listening to the conversation. I sat there with the mate n my hand for 15 minutes or so wondering when they were going to bring out little mate pots for everyone else. Then it dawned on me that I was to return the mate upon emptying it so that others might also partake! Was I embarrassed! They all had a good laugh!

But Jesus was at a special well, Jacob’s well, not just any old well. It held historical, cultural and religious significance. Not surprisingly it led to a spiritual conversation. It was also very deep and Jesus had no bucket. But He could draw on deeper spiritual waters the woman knew nothing of.

In the conversation she asks about places of worship and specifically mentions Jerusalem and the mountain nearby in Samaria, which was important to them as Samaritans.

Jesus, though it might sound presumptuous or even bigoted, did not dodge the fact that the Jews had the right doctrine about Jerusalem and salvation. They had the truth. The Samaritans did not have the truth. But the Jews, many of them, did not have the Spirit. The father was looking for those who had both the truth and the Spirit to worship Him. So in the long run neither in Jerusalem, nor in that mountain, were the key issues, but rather the Spirit and truth.

Let us go to God for that living water because he is the living water. Let’s not make the mistake Israel made centuries ago. Jeremiah 2:13 tells us about it. "For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, The fountain of living waters, To hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water. NASB-u We find the same problem outlined in Jeremiah 17:13, O Lord, the hope of Israel, All who forsake You will be put to shame. Those who turn away on earth will be written down, Because they have forsaken the fountain of living water, even the Lord. This portion is not the only one in John where living water is mentioned. Jesus cried out at the Feast of Tabernacles, in 7:38, "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'"

Jesus made reference to the Scripture in 7:38. Two Old Testament Scriptures which refer to believers being full of living water are Isaiah 12:3, on the one hand, and that is in a short chapter which I quote in order to get the context, and the other is Isaiah 58:11.

1 Then you will say on that day, "I will give thanks to You, O Lord; For although You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, And You comfort me. 2 "Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; For the Lord God is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation." 3 Therefore you will joyously draw water from the springs of salvation. 4 And in that day you will say, "Give thanks to the Lord, call on His name. Make known His deeds among the
peoples; Make them remember that His name is exalted." 5 Praise the Lord in song, for He has done excellent things; Let this be known throughout the earth. 6 Cry aloud and shout for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, For great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel (Isaiah 12 NASB-u).

Isaiah 58:9-11 says, 9 "Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry, and He will say, 'Here I am.' If you remove the yoke from your midst, The pointing of the finger and speaking wickedness, 10 And if you give yourself to the hungry And satisfy the desire of the afflicted, Then your light will rise in darkness And your gloom will become like midday. 11 "And the Lord will continually guide you, And satisfy your desire in scorched places, And give strength to your bones; And you will be like a watered garden, And like a spring of water whose waters do not fail (NASB-u).

So in our life, worship, and ministry let us keep the Spirit and the truth in balance. Let’s not neglect the Spirit in worship and let’s not neglect the truth in worship.

I never ever equated food with work! Eating to me was not work! I stopped work to eat. I enjoyed eating.

Now the real sluggard is the one, according to Proverbs who can’t even bring his hand to his mouth to eat. It’s too much work (Proverbs 26:15).

One of the most famous lunches I have ever seen on television was the episode in which Mr. Bean prepares his snack lunch on the park bench. One of the worst moments is when he cleans the lettuce to go into his sandwich by washing it in the park drinking fountain. Then he searches for a way to dry out the wet lettuce. To everyone’s horror he takes off his sock and stuffs the wet lettuce in the sock swinging the sock around and around his head to force the water out of the
lettuce with the centrifugal force, like that of an electric spinner or extractor! Anyway looking at the bright side of it all, he was willing to work for his lunch!

In any case his lunch was like any other lunch in the sense that the bread, lettuce, pickle and fish were like the ingredients of any other lunch. It was literally material, physical food. But Jesus’ reference to food is not to a literal physical food, but a figurative or symbolic food.

His food was spiritual. It was the will and work of the Father that he referred to as food. Maybe He was trying to communicate just how important to him the will and work of the Father was. Most people want and many enjoy their food. Jesus wanted and enjoyed doing the Father’s will and work!

Wow! What a different way to look at the will and work of the Father! Let’s do it. Let’s go for it!

As He came into Galilee, Jesus himself said, A prophet is not without honor except in his own land and amongst his own people. In other words it is quite tough for a prophet in his own land. Maybe some of you ministering in your own country know that experience. Earlier people had tried to get John the Baptist riled by comparing his ministry with that of Jesus. But in the long run whose honor should we be concerned about? We should honor the One who gives us life. We should believe on the One who gives eternal life! We can be thankful for the prophets, but let’s not put them above Jesus! He is the Giver of Life. He gives Eternal Life to us.

In this scene in Galilee he gives life to the son of an official. He is the Giver of life. But he challenges the official about his faith. He said unless you see miracles you won’t believe. He was challenging the man to believe without seeing the miracle right away. In fact he actually sent the man away empty handed, at least in terms of seeing a miracle! The official had to go back home seeing without seeing!
He also gave him back the life of his son from a distance. He did not go and touch the son of the official, nor lay his hand on him nor say any special words over him. John used this to emphasize that Jesus did this sign by spiritual means, not physical! Jesus did not use a magic finger to touch the boy or special magic mambo-jumbo pronounced over him. Further and to the point, would the nobleman believe Jesus without having seen his son healed as yet? He would and he did because he turned around and left for home, believing Jesus’ word, without having seen. Jesus had challenged him with the words, “Unless you see signs and wonders you won’t believe” (4:48). This man, however, did believe without seeing.

The life this boy and his family received was not just physical restoration but spiritual restoration and life. The Bible says that the official, that is the father, and all his household believed!

As John responded with joy at Jesus’ voice so this family responded with faith to what Jesus said and did. Is it in you? I hope so and hope it is more than Gatorade or Imbru!

Let us go forth as preachers full of joy at the preaching of others, as well as our own preaching, and as a family full of faith, ready to minister to each other!
DRINK
First Division, Fourth Section, 4:1-26
THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: SPIRITUAL FEASTS

DRINK OF LIVING WATER
John 4:1-26

1. Plea: Jesus petition, “Give me a drink” (v. 7). There is a basic need for water. Everyone needs water. We may know different drinks in our cultures, such as coffee, tea, Coca-Cola, Guaraná, etc., but water is common to all. We cannot last long without water.

2. Put off: The Samaritan woman’s objection, “Why does a Jew ask a Samaritan for a drink?” The things that divide people, among them religion, race and gender so that they keep such basic needs from each other. Here we have some barriers: Jew and Samaritan by race, Jew and Samaritan by religion, man and woman, prophet and immoral woman. This woman was a lost cause! Why would Jesus bother with her? Why didn’t he start with the governor of Samaria? There is mystery in all this but maybe he started with her because she was the most thirsty of all the people in the town. Maybe by starting with the least likely he could startle the people into listening. Maybe he wanted to show that he was not just another religion but the real Savior. Maybe the Samaritan elite would not have received a Jewish prophet. Our ministries to the poor of the favelas really are important. In our work in Latin America we are trying to reach the needy people both physically and spiritually.

The Roma people (Gypsies) of Granada. The poorest of the Roma!

3. Knowledge: Jesus higher spiritual knowledge which the Samaritan woman needed, knowing who it was that spoke to her and could give her living water.

4. Limitations: Persisting in a lower physical knowledge … the well is deep … you have no bucket … where is the water from … are you greater than Jacob?

5. Contrast: Jesus contrasts the physical water from the well, which does not permanently assuage physical thirst and the spiritual water he gives which does … because the well of spiritual water is put inside the person and springs up to eternal life.

6. Stuck in the mud: Still thinking physical … she says give me this water so I don’t come here to draw it …

7. New approach: Jesus new approach … go call your husband.
8. Complement: The woman says she has no husband. Jesus commends her for telling the truth and pursues this line of thought...telling her she has had five husbands and the one she has now is not her husband!

9. Complement: You are a prophet!

10. Tough question: So if a prophet answer me this! Where do we worship here or there?


12. Statement of faith: I know Messiah is coming and will declare all things to us.

13. Declaration: I am the Messiah.

Let us revisit what Jesus said about the water that he would give the woman. 13 Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life." (John 4:13-14 NASB-u). Jesus tells her that the water he will give will become a well inside her. Jesus puts the source of water, the well, inside of the person. Later he told his disciples that the Spirit of truth was with them and would be in them. …. that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you (John 14:17 NASB-u).

We could illustrate this in this way. In many societies today people must still go to a well some where in or outside their village to draw water. In the Darfurs, a region of Sudan where there is fighting and there are refugee camps, the people in the camps often have to wait in long lines to draw water from one well serving thousands of people. Many of us however, can just simply turn on the tap or faucet in our homes and we have running water!

In the prophet Jeremiah God had a complaint against his people. "Has a nation changed gods when they were not gods? But my people have changed their glory For that which does not profit. 12 "Be appalled, O heavens, at this, and shudder, be very desolate," declares the Lord. 13 "For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, The fountain of living waters, To hew for themselves cisterns, Broken cisterns That can hold no water (Jeremiah 2:11-13 NASB-u). Again later in chapter 13 Jeremiah writes. O Lord, the hope of Israel, All who forsake You will be put to shame. Those who turn away on earth will be written down, because they have forsaken the fountain of living water, even the Lord (Jeremiah
17:13 NASB-u). The fountain of living water is God himself. The well that Jesus puts inside us when we drink the water he gives is the Lord himself. That is why it is a well. That is why the source is renewable. John the Baptist said that God does not give his Spirit by measure. He gives again and again and more and more. He is not stingy. He will give as much as we are willing to receive. So let us receive. Let us be filled with the Spirit, just as we are exhorted by Paul in Ephesians 5:18, where he writes, “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit …”. Many commentators tell us the verb in Greek implies that we are to keep on being filled or filled again and again. We need to keep drawing water from the well God has placed in us.

But Jeremiah complains that the people have hewn out other broken cisterns and forsaken the Lord. What are these broken cisterns? They were other gods and idols.

I met two young men preaching what they called “Another Gospel of Jesus Christ” one day in my street. They said that their book of Mormon told them that in the time of Jeremiah there was a prophet who escaped from Jerusalem before the final destruction by Nebuchadnezzar and his name was Lehi. He prophesied and his son Nephi also prophesied.
THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: SPIRITUAL FEASTS

FOOD
First Division, Fifth Section, 4:27-42
JESUS’ FOOD: GOD’S WILL AND GODS’ WORK IN THE HARVEST FIELDS
John 4:27-42 (31-38)

While Jesus spoke with the woman at the well the disciples went into Sychar to look for food. They returned and urged him to eat. He put them off by saying he had food. They wondered if someone had brought him some food.

12 facts about Jesus' food!

1. Ignorance – Jesus told his disciples he had food they knew nothing about. V. 32, 33.
   a. We think we know food but we don’t know this food.
   b. I love food and have had food from many different countries. They include “Pollo al ajillo” (chicken baked in garlic), Churrasco, Chinese, big steaks, salmon, lobster and steak, even crocodile. When people ask me what exotic foods I have tried I mention the crocodile!
   c. I have yet to try caviar. As a child in Africa I tried flying ants!
   d. Many are quick to go to MacDonald’s, Burger King, Wendy’s and lots of other fast and slower food places. They are all over the place. It seems there are even fast, by the weight Churrasco restaurants.
   e. (Use in USA only. After a campaign in Mexico the Americans would hit the border town and go straight to MacDonald’s. They enjoyed the Mexican food but they missed their fast food places.)
   f. We may each have our favorite meal. At the retirement center where my father lives and now shares a dining room and lounge with others who need extra care, on each person’s birthday that person can choose what he or she would like for the group meal.
   g. Jesus’ food, the food he referred to on this occasion, was very different.

2. Ownership – Jesus told the disciples that the food he had was his food, in his words, “My food” (v. 34)
   a. If Jesus had not taken ownership of this food he is referring to where would we be today? Am I willing to make God's will and work my own as Jesus did?
   b. Uncle Warren who reaches men in prison like the young Hispanic who is in for murder, who read the New Testament through in 3 months, or the Jewish guy, an American football player, who committed his life to the Lord.
   c. My uncle Jim Fleming introduced me to his friend Lucky, a Jewish man, who is called Lucky because he survived such a bad auto accident. We had breakfast together. He is witnessing to him and has given him a New Jewish Bible and lately a NT.

3. Action – To do the will ... (v. 34)
THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: SPIRITUAL FEASTS

a. He has submitted himself to do the will of him who sent me.
b. He is willing to do. He is willing for work, for action.
c. As a youngster I remember going around the neighborhood in the winter shoveling people’s walkways of snow in order to make a little money. I was especially challenged by our pastor’s plan to give extra to missions that year by faith. It was called the Faith Promise Pledge. It meant taking action. Doing something and I had a simple plan …

4. Sent – “…of him who sent me” (v. 34)
   a. In 20:21 Jesus said, “As the Father has sent me so send I you.” We have come fully around and now the disciples will be following Jesus’ example.
   b. John Adams, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence of the USA, and later the second president, was sent to France and later Holland to get support for the new country in the battle with Britain, but he found it very rough going. The sea voyages with terrible storms and leaking ships, and threat of capture by British ships, were dangerous. A trip through north Spain almost killed him and a Mr. Dana who accompanied them. The French foreign minister did not like him and the Dutch were reluctant until they saw America winning key battles.
   c. Moses was sent by God to rescue his people from Egypt and things got worse before they got better. His own people complained against him.

5. Completion or closure – “…and to finish his work” (v. 34).
   a. Jesus had a job to do and to complete.
   b. I like projects because they have an end in site. They are measurable. A big project: writing a book on Mark. A short project: mowing the lawn or repairing a window.
   c. I have helped Gerry Scott a couple of times in his industrial cleaning business and on certain days he schedules certain offices to be cleaned. At the end of the evening those offices are finished.
   d. When the remnant returned to Jerusalem from the Babylonian captivity and built the wall, their enemies taunted them with phrases like, “Can they finish in a day?” “1 Now it came about that when Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became furious and very angry and mocked the Jews. 2 He spoke in the presence of his brothers and the wealthy men of Samaria and said, ‘What are these feeble Jews doing? Are they going to restore it for themselves? Can they offer sacrifices? Can they finish in a day? Can they revive the stones from the dusty rubble even the burned ones’” (Nehemiah 4:1-2 NASB-u)?
   e. In John 19:30 Jesus cried out while on the cross, just before he died, “It is finished!” He had done what he came to do. Through terrible opposition, pain and now death he had revealed who God was to the people in a way they had never witnessed before; he had taught unceasingly God’s person and ways; and he had gone to the cross, as a lamb to slaughter, to take way the sins of the world.
f. Philippians 1:6 is a famous verse and one that speaks of completion. The Message puts it this way, “There has never been the slightest doubt in my mind that the God who started this great work in you would keep at it and bring it to a flourishing finish on the very day Christ Jesus appears.”

6. Timing – Still or already (v. 35)?
   a. Jesus launches into a talk on harvest fields.
   b. You say there are still 4 months. They had just left Jerusalem and a Passover, which occurs in early spring. Harvest is some months off. The normal response when looking at the fields of grain would be to say there are still 4 months before we cut it down and bring it in.
   c. But Jesus has another harvest in mind, the spiritual harvest, which is always now. Samaritans all around them were approaching Jesus and believing (v. 39-42)!

7. Observation – Look (v. 35)!
   a. Look at what is going on around you.
   b. Recently we had a free family fun carnival and over 2000 people came. We have addresses of these people but will we follow up on them? There is work to be done!

8. Location – the fields (v. 35).
   a. George Verwer, after serving in the USA began to consider Mexico, then Spain, the Soviet Union, Turkey and India.
   b. Today we also want to care about countries but peoples within countries, often referred to as people groups or ethnic groups.
   c. In John 11:46-54 we see the high priest prophesying that Jesus would die for the nation, the Jews, and John goes on to say, not for the nation only but would gather together in one all the children of God scattered abroad (11:52).
   d. The fields are here, where we are, and it was so good to see so many of our church in Clare, Michigan, on July 4, 2005, at the outreach of the Free Family Fun Carnival giving out New Testaments with the Gideons, helping with the various activities and inviting children to Daily Vacation Bible School.
   e. There are differences in both culture and religion in the “fields”. Are we learning anything at all about other religions? What do they believe? What are their practices?
   f. What about languages? Could we learn a few phrases in Spanish, Farsi or another language just to relate a little to others? A greeting in Iran is, “Qorbone shoma,” which means, “I am your sacrifice.”
THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: SPIRITUAL FEASTS

9. Differences, good differences – Two jobs, sowing and reaping (v. 36).
   a. Sowing – Dad and mom sowed in Andarai and surrounding area and saw little response amongst the population.
   b. Reaping – Today in Andarai a church gathers about once a month, some from other areas, but a few from that area as well.
   c. More people of various religious backgrounds are coming to faith in the Lord Jesus than ever before. There is reaping. In the world the response is great. Even in China many hundreds of thousands, and even millions, are trusting in Jesus.

   a. We must work with each other even when we do not do exactly the same thing.
   b. No one person can do everything. In a Billy Graham or Luis Palau outreach the evangelist or speaker does not do everything. Many thousands are involved.
   c. No one person can do all of God’s will, not even Jesus, or at least he did not choose to do it all. He would have to be 2000 years old to still be doing all of God’s will in our world! One person just could not do it!
   d. When Jesus finished his work he left plenty for all of us to do, both the sowers and the reapers.
   e. I have been so impressed with how of late the Southern Baptist foreign missions have been so cooperative with other missions.

11. Appreciation – entering into the labor, or hard work, of others (v. 37)
   a. Others have worked hard! We take up where others have left off. Let’s be thankful for them and not take all the credit! The Lord may put you in a place where you must work hard, very hard! I think some pastors often work hard and extra hours. Recently I heard Dr. Charles Stanley, pastor of a large church in Atlanta, USA, exhorting ministers to study hard, pray hard and give it their best shot even if they only have 25 in the congregation. When he was a young preacher only 25 came to his church but he sensed he should give it his best and work hard.
   b. Mercedes worked in Coria, in southwest Spain, for 7 years and had quite a few contacts, among them many girls who had messed up lives from drugs, and their mothers who appreciated Mercedes’ help with their daughters. The mayor of the town recognized her good work and put her on the social security list without her having to pay into the system. But not until after she left and the Molinos came as pastors did they finally make a decision to follow the Lord and be baptized. Recently in 2005 the church had its first wedding! We cannot escape the fact that Mercedes had a great impact in that town! Mercedes sowed and others including the Molinos reaped.
   c. Is there someone on your team or church who you envy or are jealous of, or angry with, for whom you should be thankful? Are you jealous of their gifting and allowing this jealousy to destroy you and your ministry and gifting? When you meet the Lord in heaven and he asks you what you did with the gifts he gave you what will you say?
THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: SPIRITUAL FEASTS

Lord, I was so jealous of what this other person had I could not even think about what you gave me, so I’m sorry but I did not do anything with the gifts you gave me! How foolish!

12. Training – hands on (v. 31).
   a. Jesus took people with him and they learned as they went.
   b. They observed what he did. They heard what he said.
   c. They should now begin to see God’s will and work as food!
2nd DIVISION
TWO OFFENSES
John 5:1-6:71
Once again John introduces a new division of his gospel by mentioning a feast of the Jews and Jesus’ return to Jerusalem, but this time he does not mention the name of the feast. But the first story, that of the healing of the invalid of 38 years, keys off the fact that while at the feast Jesus healed the man on a Sabbath day. By doing this Jesus aroused the ire of the Jews and it increased when he called God his own father, making him equal with God.

In the second story in chapter 6 John mentions that the Passover was near and the feeding of the 5000 in the desert does remind us of the bread God gave Israel in the form of manna after the Passover and once they found themselves in the desert of the Sinai. Here another offense took place when Jesus said in the synagogue in Capernaum that they must eat his flesh and drink his blood. At that point many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.

How do Jesus and John as the writer of the gospel deal with these two offenses? Did Jesus actually offend them or did the two groups offended simply misunderstand him. Did the Jews have a mistaken view of what it meant to break the Sabbath? Was their offence taken at his reference to God as his own Father mistaken? In the 6th chapter did Jesus actually mean they should become cannibals, and not just flesh but blood drinking cannibals, or was there another way to take Jesus’ words?

Do we as believers, churches or missionary teams have written or unwritten rules which if broken or apparently broken offend us?

We’ve always done it this way here in this church!

No playing baseball on Sunday.

Men (especially preachers) must wear a tie and blazer to church.

You cannot wear jeans to church.

You cannot play cards.
THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: SPIRITUAL FEASTS

Women must wear stockings and skirts to church, not trousers.

You cannot go to the cinema.

You cannot drink wine.

Maybe we should have said:

Needs rewording: If you go to the cinema I may or may not recommend it but it is not necessarily sin, unless for the sake of violence or sexual lust, etc., and I will not judge someone if they do, especially if I have ever gone myself.

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3RD DIVISION
THREE STORIES ABOUT SIN
THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: SPIRITUAL FEASTS

THREE ASPECTS OF SIN – JOHN 7:1-10:21

This section or division begins with the discussion between Jesus and his brothers about going to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles. This division in turn is divided into three parts each beginning with a story. The first is the discussion in Galilee between Jesus and his brothers about going to the Feast of Tabernacles at the beginning of chapter seven. It ends with the discussion at the end of chapter seven about Jesus being from Galilee and therefore not eligible to be the Messiah. The second section begins in chapter 8 verse one, with the story about the woman taken in adultery who is about to be stoned. The section ends at the end of chapter eight with the Jews taking up stones to stone Jesus for what they considered blasphemy, because he said, “Before Abraham was I am.” The third section begins in chapter nine and verse one with Jesus healing a blind man, blind from birth. It ends in chapter ten and verse twenty one where again the miracle of healing the blind man is mentioned.

Each of these three sections deals with the subject of evil and sin. In the first story about the discussion in Galilee Jesus tells his brothers, “The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that what it does is evil” (7:7 NIV). In the second story Jesus said, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her" (8:7 NIV). In the third story in chapters 9 and 10 the disciples ask Jesus, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind" (9:2 NIV)? While Jesus testified that the world does evil he was not condemnatory towards the individual as illustrated by the story about the woman taken in adultery when he said to her, “…neither do I condemn you” (NIV). He also made it clear in the third story of the man born blind that he was not blind because he had sinned and it was not because his parents had sinned. Blindness happened to him so that God’s work would be demonstrated in his life.

So while we can say that the world does evil and commits sin, just as Romans 3:23 teaches, “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God”, and we can declare this because people need to know this reality, we must be careful not to be judgmental, but follow Jesus example in dealing mercifully with the woman caught in adultery. Not by saying she did not sin but letting those judging her know that they also sinned but that he was willing to be merciful to her, and to them; and then exhort them to not continue in sin. In the third story he made it clear that because people may suffer certain sickness or other difficulties in life that it is not because they have sinned. God allows certain things to happen to us so that his work might be demonstrated through those who suffer.

These three stories dealing with sin and evil are connected with a feast in Jerusalem called the Feast of Tabernacles, booths or tents, when the Jews would build booths or tents for themselves and live in them. This was to remind them of the period of time after the exodus from Egypt when their forefathers lived in tents in the desert for 40 years. There is a “spiritual” connection here because it was during that period of Israelite history when generation that left Egypt sinned so
often and so greatly against the Lord that he made that whole generation die in the desert, without entering the Promised Land.

When the Lord told the woman caught in adultery that he did not condemn her he also told her to go and stop sinning. Am I, after receiving God’s mercy in Jesus, making an effort to stop sinning? Have I given myself to him and availed myself of his mercy? Jesus forced the teachers of the law and the Pharisees, who condemned her, to accept that they were also sinners. Did they leave accepting his mercy and then make the commitment not to sin anymore? Maybe, maybe not. We are all in the position of both the woman caught in adultery and her accusers, because God sees all we do. God knows all our secrets. Romans 2:16 says, This will take place on the day when God will judge men’s secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares (NIV).

Many have asked what Jesus was writing in the sand while the people who accused the woman talked. Was he writing in the sand the law concerning adultery? That would be Leviticus 20:10, If a man commits adultery with another man’s wife— with the wife of his neighbor—both the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death. NIV Adultery takes two. As they say, “It takes two hands to clap.” Where was the man if this woman was caught in adultery in the very act? Did he escape? If he did why not wait until they caught him? Why prey on the weaker person physically, not that some women couldn’t get away? Or did they have an unwritten rule that when a woman did it, it was adultery and when a man did it, it was just a “man or macho thing” to do! If a man committed adultery it was excusable and if a woman did it, it was unacceptable! If these religious people were really concerned about this case of adultery why not just take care of it according to the law and do it quietly? Was the woman forced? Many questions remain! Why bring it to Jesus, especially since the Jews had not accepted him as a legitimate spiritual authority? It is as the gospel says, they wanted to trap him to have a basis for accusing him (8:6).

### THREE ASPECTS OF SIN – JOHN 7:1-10:21

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### The Gospel of John: Spiritual Feasts

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<th>This mob who does not know the law is cursed. v. 49</th>
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*Table adapted from [001_John_SPIRITUAL_FEASTS_table_contents_with_notes.docx](#)*

What am I doing? Not what do I know.

So Jesus said to them, "My time is not yet here, but your time is always opportune. "The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil (… what it does is evil NIV) (John 7:6-7 NASB-u).

"No one of the rulers or Pharisees has believed in Him, has he? "But this crowd which does not know the Law is accursed" (John 7:48-49 NASB-u).

Jesus is concerned about what the world does! The rulers in Jerusalem were concerned about what the people (the mob) knew, what they knew about the law. Here is a contrast. God will judge us by our deeds, our works, what we do! “…who will render to each person according to his deeds… (Romans 2:6 NASB-u). The rulers thought that their better knowledge of God’s law would give them an advantage spiritually over the mob who had not studied. Lack of knowledge is not a virtue, but there is a danger lurking here; the more you know of the law, the more responsible you become. If you increase in knowledge of the law but don’t obey it you condemn yourself. Maybe this is why James warns us to not be many teachers because they will receive the greater condemnation! Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment (James 3:1 NASB-u). I tremble every time I think of this passage because I am involved in teaching. May the Lord give me an ever deepening desire to love and obey him!

It seems then that it were better not to know the law, not to study God’s Word. Well, no, because the knowledge of God’s Word and the obeying of it go hand in hand. They are 2 sides to the same coin. Somehow James 3:1 mentioned above must be kept in balance with Hebrews 5:12, which says, “For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food” (NASB-u). In the right spirit we should all desire to be in a position to humbly teach others, and this may not always be on a public speaking platform, but often one on one in discipleship. My prayer is that the Lord will have mercy on me who have not always shown a humble spirit when teaching.

But let’s get back to John chapter 7.

*And there was a great deal of discussion about him among the crowds. Some were saying, "He is a good man," while others were saying, "No, he is deceiving the crowd" (John 7:12 ISV)!*
It is interesting to notice that some said he was a good man but others accused him of deceiving the people, exactly what Satan did to our forefathers, Adam and Eve. It was the source of the world doing evil as Jesus said in verse 7. But there is more on the subject as we move through chapter 7.

15 The Jews were astonished and remarked, "How can this man be so educated when he has never gone to school?" 16 Jesus replied to them, "My teaching is not mine but comes from the one who sent me. 17 If anyone wants to do his will, he will know whether this teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own (John 7:15-17 ISV).

Some believers over the years had made a point of saying we do not need an education. We just need to go out and minister and learn as we go. God has used some people with virtually no learning in very powerful ways. We are thrilled to hear those testimonies. But let us not make this a blanket rule. While Jesus did not study with any of the professors in Jerusalem, the Apostle Paul did, and God used him very powerfully. Someone might add, "But Paul considered all that but dung!" Yes, he did but his background continued to be a part of him and prepared him to preach and teach in ways Peter and others could not.

Jesus made a point now about his teaching. People would know for certain if it were from God, as they desired to do it, as they desired to obey it. “The proof of the pudding was in the eating.” Jesus emphasized the importance of the “doing”. He went beyond the study of his teaching, the knowledge of his teaching, the admiring of his teaching, the attraction of his teaching to the desire to obey his teaching, the desire to do it!

19 Moses gave you the law, didn’t he? Yet none of you is keeping the law. Why are you trying to kill me?” 20 The crowd answered, "You have a demon! Who is trying to kill you" (John 7:19, 20 ISA)?

Jesus made an important point with the crowd. He referred back to Moses. He reminded them that Moses gave them the law. Forget keeping Jesus’ teaching, they don’t even keep the Law of Moses! It is obvious they can’t keep any law! This did not sit well with his hearers especially when he added by his question that they were trying to kill him. At this point they said something, which they never should have said. They accused him of having a demon. I have seen something unfortunate in Christian work. When people are persecuted, if it gets bad enough, they can come to the point of saying the persecutor is demon possessed. We should avoid this accusation. We may feel, and be right, about the person persecuting us but let’s not go around saying they are demon possessed. That is a very strong accusation. That may very well be going too far!
John 8 begins with the story of a woman caught in adultery and brought to Jesus.

_They said to Him, “Teacher, this woman has been caught in adultery, in the very act (John 8:4 NASB-u)._

Her accusers said she was caught in the act and according to the law of Moses she should be stoned to death. True, but where is the man who committed the act with her? It takes two to tango! Listen to how it is worded in the book of Leviticus, part of the Law of Moses, 20:10 “If there is a man who commits adultery with another man’s wife, one who commits adultery with his friend’s wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death” (Leviticus 20:10). So, did he get away or are they hiding him? In any case Jesus did not ask about him. If he had inquired after the man involved he would have implicated just the couple. The answer he gave would implicate every man as a sinner. Her life literally hung in the balance, but all of our lives hang in the balance, as we shall see as the story progresses.

_John 8:7 But when they persisted in asking Him, He straightened up, and said to them, “He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.”_

Jesus’ answer forced all of the woman’s accusers to think about themselves. He switched God’s search light on their hearts. He did not have to give them a list of sins. They knew they had lied, or coveted, or blasphemed, or done any number of other things which were wrong. As verse 8 tells us they had to exit the “stage”, they had created, without another word.

_John 8:10 Straightening up, Jesus said to her, “Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?”

John 8:11 She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on sin no more.”_

The woman’s accusers, who condemned her, disappeared. There was no one there to condemn her. Jesus told he did not condemn her either. What might escape us at first, because we may be caught up with what will happen to the woman, is that the person this group of men really wanted to condemn was Jesus! In fact, the woman may have been of little interest to them. Once they had trapped or embarrassed Jesus they might have let her go with a beating, who knows! However, Jesus saw the big picture of mankind’s spiritual and moral condition, trapped in sin. If anything the trap of sin is the real trap! As that group of men we all find ourselves in the trap.
THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: SPIRITUAL FEASTS

It is no wonder that Jesus talks to the crowds about the fact that he is the light of the world. (8:12) He has just shed light on everyone’s condition. No one can escape the fact that we have all sinned. Isaiah put it this way, “6 For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. 7 There is no one who calls on Your name, Who arouses himself to take hold of You; For You have hidden Your face from us And have delivered us into the power of our iniquities” (Isaiah 64:6, 7).

He then tells them he does not judge by the flesh as they do but truly, because he and his Father testify together.

JOHN 8:21 Then He said again to them, "I go away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come."

Jesus tells those listening that they are from the earth but he is from above and that he is going away and they cannot follow. On their own they have no way of getting to heaven. They might keep on seeking their Messiah but will die in their sin.

JOHN 8:24 'Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."

Again he tells them they will die in their sin if they do not believe in him. If they believe in him they will be able to go above, to heaven, with him.

JOHN 8:34 ¶ Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.

Jesus tells the Jews who believed on him to continue in his word and in that way they would be his disciples truly and the truth would set them free. (8:31) They took exception to the implication that they were slaves. Jesus then made it very clear that committing sin makes us slaves of sin. In the encounter with the men who brought the woman caught in adultery Jesus had forced all of them to realize and admit in silence that they had all broken the law. But having sinned once, or twice, or even a few times, was not quite in their minds like being a slave of sin! (8:39)

JOHN 8:41 They said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God."
They did not get the point. One group of Jews had just walked out self-condemned of sin. Jesus tells them whoever sins is a slave to sin and they persist in their pride to say their only father was God! Against all the evidence they were basically claiming the holy, sinless God as Father, implying that they themselves were “okay”.

But what a struggle we all have with sin! I get the impression that some of us have given up the struggle with sin entirely and walked away. We say finally that it is not worth the struggle and give up. Sometimes we have pitched battles in our lives and souls. Sometimes we lose that battle and must ask God for forgiveness because we have sinned. It is a long, hard, bitter struggle for some if not all with various sins in our lives. If it is not pride, it is envy, if not envy then lust, if not lust then bitterness, if not bitterness then backbiting, if not backbiting, anger and if not anger, jealousy, and so the list goes on and on!

JOHN 8:44 "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Jesus, in the conversation in the temple with this crowd, made it very clear that their spiritual lineage had to do with the devil. He called the devil their father. The devil was a murderer and a liar, for he speaks from his nature. Jesus went further, he called the devil the father of lies. When the serpent came to Eve in the Garden of Eden he told her lies. She believed the lie and her husband went along with her. Their natures became like the devil’s, not like God’s. They changed from being God’s children into being the devil’s children. The Jews thought Abraham was their father and that was true, but it was easy for them to forget that Abraham’s forefathers went back to Adam. That is why Jesus chided them for not acting like Abraham if he was their father.

JOHN 8:46 "Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?"

After making it clear that they were sinners Jesus then challenged them to convict him of sin, to prove that he was a sinner. You see if it were a case of two or more sinners arguing over who was wrong, or who had sinned, everyone would be implicated. However, if the person doing the accusing is sinless, then we must listen to him. He speaks with authority!

JOHN 8:48 ¶ The Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?"
JOHN 8:49 Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me."
The Jews now launch a found less and terrible accusation against him. They are really scraping the bottom of the barrel of accusations. This conversation is definitely deteriorating! I have heard people who have been hounded by others to exasperation say that the people tormenting them are demons. Great care must be taken when saying someone else is a demon! Don’t do it. In this world of many hurts, pain, ill will and terrible treatment of one another it is easy to say the other person is a demon. We know we are sinners but they are worse and maybe this is the way we express that thought, that even if I’m a sinner, the other person is worse, and that makes him a demon. In response to this, Jesus did not blaspheme or threaten them but simply said that he did not have a demon, and went on to say, that he honored his father and they dishonored him.

JOHN 8:52 The Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets also; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste of death.'"

The group reiterated their accusation that he had a demon.

JOHN 8:55 and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His word.

Jesus was referring to his Father in heaven and said clearly that he knew him. If he said he did not know the Father he would be a liar, and added that in that case he would be like them.

Sins that have followed me: anger, such as when my flight was late and they did not offer us any free drinks and food, or someone stole my blazer as they left the flight; lust watching a TV show; envy that another seems to preach better than I do; covetousness at the much newer and nicer car someone else has; lazy enough not to really prepare a study or sermon well; or a lack of care for the poor or Christian workers who need support; and on it goes. How can we guard ourselves from sin? Admit that there is such a thing as sin. Admit that we sin. Pray, asking God, “Lead us not into temptation”. Study the Bible on the subject. A concordance will help you look up “sin”. Avoid situations, which lead to temptation. Plan to give of your money and possessions to God’s work and the needy. Before you criticize think through the issues. Find other things to do, such as Bible study, reading, helping others, exercising at a gym, sports, etc. Allow time for your maturity to develop as you learn to love others, not curse them.

Learn to care, care about God, care about others, care about yourself. The band Green Day put out a song called, “Jesus of Suburbia”, and there is a line they repeat, crying out, “I don’t care! I don’t care!” We must care. We must care. We must care about sin. Jesus cared about sin and he cared for sinners, you and me!
Parallels Between The First And The Last Passover
## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: SPIRITUAL FEASTS

### Parallels Between the First and the Last Passovers in Jesus’ 3 Years of Ministry

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<td><strong>11:55-12:50 Jesus Was Anointed</strong></td>
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<td>14 And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. 15 And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables; 16 and to those who were selling the doves He said, “Take these things away; stop making My Father’s house a place of business” (John 2:16).</td>
<td>3 Mary then took a pound of very costly perfume of pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. 4 But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, who was intending to betray Him, said, 5 &quot;Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and given to poor people?” 6 Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it (John 12:3-6 NASB-u).</td>
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<td><strong>13:1-14:31 Jesus Washed The Disciples’ Feet</strong></td>
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<td>6 &quot;That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 &quot;Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' 8 &quot;The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit&quot; (John 3:8 NASB-u).</td>
<td>16 &quot;I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; 17 that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. 18 ¶ &quot;I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. 19 &quot;After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me; because I live, you will live also. 20 &quot;In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you (John 14:16-20 NASB-u).</td>
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<td>30 &quot;He must increase, but I must decrease. 31 ¶ &quot;He who</td>
<td>2 &quot;Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes</td>
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comes from above is above all, he who is of the earth is from the earth and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. 32 "What He has seen and heard, of that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. 33 "He who has received His testimony has set his seal to this, that God is true. 34 "For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God; for He gives the Spirit without measure. 35 "The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand. 36 "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" (John 3:30-36 NASB-u).

### 4:1-30 Jesus Talked With The Samaritan Woman

20 "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." 21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. 22 "You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 "But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. 24 "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:20-24 NASB-u).

### 17:1-18:27 Jesus Prayed and Was Arrested By The Chief Priests

17 "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. 18 "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. 19 "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth (John 17:17-19 NASB-u).

### 4:31-42 Jesus Talked About His Food

31 ¶ Meanwhile the disciples were urging Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." 32 But He said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." 33 So the disciples were saying to one another, "No one brought Him anything to away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. 3 "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. 5 "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. 6 "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. 7 "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you (John 15:2-7 NASB-u).

### 18:28-19:37 Jesus Tried By Pilate

28 ¶ Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas into the Praetorium, and it was early; and they themselves did not enter into the Praetorium so that they would not be defiled, but might eat the Passover.
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48 So Jesus said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you simply will not believe."
50 Jesus said to him, "Go; your son lives." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started off.
53 So the father knew that it was at that hour in which Jesus said to him, "Your son lives"; and he himself believed and his whole household (John 4:48, 50, 53 NASB-u).

| 18:38-20:31 | Jesus Was Buried and Resurrected |

1 Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone already taken away from the tomb.
5 and stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings lying there; but he did not go in.
8 So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb then also entered, and he saw and believed.
18 Mary Magdalene came, announcing to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord," and that He had said these things to her.
20 And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples then rejoiced when they saw the Lord.
25 So the other disciples were saying to him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." 26 ¶ After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you." 27 Then He said to Thomas, "Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing." 28 Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Jesus said to him, "Because you have
seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed" (John 20:1 and various verses to 29 NASB-u).