

**THE DISPENSATIONAL BASIS
OF JOHN'S GOSPEL**

by Glen Burch, Fredericksburg, VA USA

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

The issue over who should be regarded as members of an elect group, such as the body of Christ, is a divisive one for some today. Many Christian groups emphasize faithfulness to Biblical doctrine, while sharing a distinctive viewpoint about it. Thus those who have believed the dispensational teaching based on the Acts 28:28 boundary not only hold fast to it themselves, but are zealous to make others see "what is the dispensation of the mystery" (Eph.3:9). However, because of the disarray in which Christendom finds itself, we cannot escape Paul's command to separate ourselves from unfaithful Christian stewards:

"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal. The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from (literally, 'fall away' or 'apostatize from') iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonor. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified (that is, 'set apart'), and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work." 2 Timothy 2:19-21

In the same chapter of Scripture we find the exhortation to divide aright the word of truth (2:25), coupled with warnings to:

- 1) "...shun profane and vain babblings ..." (and the speakers of these things, as were Hymenaeus and Philetus in Paul's time) (verses 16-17)
- 2) "Flee also youthful lusts..." (verse 22)
- 3) avoid "... foolish and unlearned questions ..." (verse 23)

If a steward would be sanctified and truly serviceable to his Lord, then at times he must dissociate himself from certain teachings and teachers. In addition, he should put off the natural desires of his own heart as well as self-gratifying argumentation, which stems from spiritual immaturity. To have fellowship with incorrigible Christians who indulge themselves in these things is equally unwise. In the present religious environment, any of myriad forms of Christian teaching may be gotten wind of. If unsound doctrine, whether it be foundational or practical, cannot build up the body of Christ, then one must draw the line of fellowship somewhere. But where to draw it and how? These are questions which I do not propose to address here; but, concerning controversies among Acts 28 dispensationalists over membership in the body of Christ, the opening up of a dialogue on the subject may be of some benefit. Through such communication we may hope to arrive a little closer unto "the unity of the faith, even of the acknowledgement of the Son of God" (Eph.4:13). In this study I shall examine the proposition that the Gospel of John was intended to address a second calling of believers today, apart from the church the body of Christ. It is my conclusion that this Gospel addresses the blessings and hope of Israel.

Chapter Two

JOHN'S GOSPEL - WHEN WRITTEN?

The case for a second calling of saints today, outside of the body of Christ, has been made by C.H. Welch from arguments based on the Gospel of John. In his booklet *John and the Mystery*, Welch advocated a general applicability of John's Gospel for calling Gentiles to salvation during the present dispensation of grace. This calling, however, was thought to be independent of, and inferior to the "one hope of your calling" (Eph.4:4), which characterizes the church the body of Christ. In effect it becomes a "crumbs" calling (Mat.15:27), when compared to the church's calling in Ephesians. When Welch's rationale is studied, however, much of it is seen to proceed from two questionable assumptions:

- 1) The tradition of antiquity that John's Gospel was written in the A.D. 90's.
- 2) A misunderstanding of whom John was addressing as the "world". Coupled with this is a limited conception of Scriptural terms like "Gentiles" (*ta ethne*) and "Greeks" (*Hellenes*).

Concerning the marks of authorship of any book of Scripture, internal evidence should be sought before the confirmation of external witnesses is applied. If the tradition passed down from Irenaeus and Clement concerning John's surviving the emperor Domitian (died A.D. 96) is accepted without critical examination, then we might with equal credulity receive some of the other legends that circulated about this apostle. There is, for example, the widely held view that John was exiled to Patmos during Domitian's reign, and that he received his visions of the Revelation at that time. But this time period does not square with the internal testimony of that book, which has the imminent return of Christ in prospect (e.g., 22:20), necessitating its having been written for Jews of the Acts period.

Other accounts concerning this latter-day John depict him as "a priest that bore the sacerdotal plate".¹ The John portrayed in the writings of early Christian authors comes across more a buffoon in his behavior than an apostle of Jesus Christ. A second passage out of Eusebius² will amplify this:

"But Irenaeus, in his first book against heresies, adds certain false doctrines of the man [Cerinthus], though kept more secret, and gives a history in his third book, that deserves to be recorded, as received by tradition from Polycarp. He says that John the apostle once entered a bath to wash; but ascertaining Cerinthus was within, he leaped out of the place, and fled from the door, not enduring to enter under the same roof with him, and exhorted those with him to do the same, saying, 'Let us flee, lest the bath fall in, as long as Cerinthus that enemy of the truth is within.'"

Another anecdote on this impetuous John, too lengthy to quote, may be found in chapter XXIII of Eusebius, who wrote his *Ecclesiastical History* sometime after A.D. 324. The profile we derive from these accounts is reminiscent of John, the Son of Thunder, before his spiritual baptism. If the John of these early traditions was indeed the disciple whom Jesus loved, he appears to have backslidden into an

¹ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Ch. XXXI ² *ibid.*, Ch. XXVIII

immature, fleshly walk. Fabulous imaginations or perhaps even an apostolic impostor would better explain these myths about John.

The Lord's prophecy in John 21:22-24 does not provide a sound basis for imputing a protracted lifespan to the apostle John.

"Jesus saith unto him, 'If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou Me.' Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die; yet Jesus said not unto him, 'He shall not die'; but, 'If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?' This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true." John 21:22-24

This passage might really convey no more than what Paul expressed in 1 Thessalonians 4:15, concerning his expectation at that time (before Acts 28) to remain alive until the Lord's second coming. But this abiding until His return was contingent upon the repentance of the Nation. Because Israel did not repent and embrace the Son of God as their Saviour, many things described as imminent by the Scripture writers have been delayed to a future time. Apparently the word went out, based on the Lord's pronouncement, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?", that John would be spared the martyr's death that awaited many of the apostles. However, such a death was promised to both brothers. James and John (Mat.20:20-23, and cp. the "cup" of 26:42). Survival until the *parousia*, then, was not the meaning of the prophecy, as John took pains to dispel in his Gospel. The true meaning of the prophecy seems to be much more cryptic than this, and may not be fully understood until the day of the Lord comes. If John were to be resurrected during the end-time (now delayed) before the return of Christ, then all the details would fit. Or again, John's tarrying to the eve of the Lord's return, but dying just before that event is another possibility. This explanation may also relate somehow to the ministry of the two resurrected witnesses who will prophesy in the last days (Rev.11:3-12, cp. verse 5 with the fiery brothers of Luke 9:54). Just as John the Baptist would have been reckoned for the precursor Elijah, had Israel accepted his preaching (Mat.11:14; Luke 1:13-17; 17:10-12), so John the Evangelist might have become one of the Two Witnesses had Israel acknowledged the preaching of the Twelve. These are just conjectures and other interpretations might be possible.

In this study I propose to demonstrate that the Gospel of John is like the Synoptic Gospels, in being an Acts period Scripture that cannot be rightly understood apart from the history of the covenants of Israel. While an exact date of authorship cannot be pinpointed at this time, further dating considerations will be dealt with in the CONCLUSION.

*Chapter Three***THE UNITY OF THE JOHANNINE BOOKS**

When taken as a whole, the books of Scripture that John was inspired to write display some striking similarities. An illustration of word usage adapted from E.W. Bullinger's *Notes on John's Gospel*¹ will serve to highlight the resemblance:

	John's Gospel (879 vv.)	John's Epistles (131 vv.)	Revelation (404 vv.)
abide = <i>memo</i>	41	26	1
keep = <i>tereo</i>	18	8	11
overcome = <i>nikao</i>	1	6	17
believe = <i>pisteuo</i>	99	10	-
faith = <i>pistis</i>	-	1	4
faithful = <i>pistos</i>	1	2	8
the Father = <i>ho Pater</i>	121	16	5
glory = <i>doxa</i>	19	-	17
judge = <i>krino</i>	19	-	9
know = <i>ginosko</i>	56	26	5
know, see = <i>eideo</i>	122	19	70
behold = <i>ide</i>	14	-	-
behold = <i>idou</i>	5	-	30
light = <i>phos</i>	23	6	3
life = <i>zoe</i>	36	13	15
live = <i>zao</i>	17	1	15
love(n.) = <i>agape</i>	7	21	2
love(v.) = <i>agapao</i>	37	31	4
love(v.) = <i>phileo</i>	13	-	2
friend = <i>phi los</i>	6	2	-
sign = <i>semeion</i>	17	-	7
true = <i>alethes</i>	13	3	-
true = <i>alethinos</i>	8	4	10
truth = <i>aletheia</i>	25	20	-
witness(n.) = <i>marturia</i>	14	7	9
witness(v.) = <i>martureo</i>	33	11	3
say = <i>lego</i>	267	6	93
word = <i>logos</i>	40	8	17
speak = <i>laleo</i>	59	3	12
works = pl. of <i>ergon</i>	27	4	21
world = <i>kosmos</i>	79	24	3
world = <i>oikoumene</i>	-	-	3

¹ *Companion Bible*, p. 1511

(for a more complete comparison of John's books, see APPENDIX A)

John's use of these key words is fairly uniform throughout his books. "Life", "light" and "love" are contrasted against death, darkness and hatred by the apostle. The need for a "witness" of the "truth" is affirmed repeatedly, so that men may "believe" and grow in the "knowledge" of the truth. That witness included mighty "signs", as well as the word of God. Those who rejected the testimony of the light, choosing evil rather than good "works", will be "judged" and condemned. But those who "abide" in truth and "overcome" until the end will share a kingdom of "glory" with the King of Israel.

Doctrinally we may safely place the Revelation as an Acts period message, because of the imminence of the Lord's return and the dispensational prominence of the Jew. Throughout the book one finds an urgency to respond that was incumbent upon that generation of Israel. Likewise 1 and 2 John must have been penned during this season before "the acceptable year of the Lord" drew to a close, because of their references to "antichrist" and the spirit of deception at work in the world (1 Jn.2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 Jn.7; and cp. 2 Thes.2:1-12). Also, the *parousia* of Christ is mentioned in 1 John 2:28.

The Epistle 3 John is coupled with 2 John in being written by one calling himself "the elder", whom both tradition and internal doctrine declare to be the Apostle John. Apparently no Gentile Christian was numbered among the "brethren" yet (3 Jn.5-7), so 3 John must have been authored very early indeed. If major doctrinal parallels can be found between the Gospel and the other four Johannine books, then the commonly held view of a late date for the Gospel must be relinquished. The traditions of the post-apostolic fathers cannot outweigh the internal evidence of the books themselves.

And the Word was God.

Unique to John in the Bible are his references to Christ as "the Word". Furthermore, the Greek *Logos*, used of Christ, is found in three out of John's five books (John 1:1,14; 1 Jn.1:1; and Rev. 19:13). Because the Stoics and Philo had incorporated a "logos" principle into their philosophies, some Bible scholars have theorized that John wrote his Gospel in order to sway the Greek mind over into the Christian camp. But such an effect on Greeks could only be secondary to the Gospel's main purpose: to enlighten Israel concerning her Messiah. The relatedness between John's "*Logos*" aspect of Messiah and the post-Babylonian rabbinical teaching concerning the "*Memra*" characteristic of Jehovah has been amply demonstrated.¹ Both the Greek "*Logos*" and the Aramaic "*Memra*" are descriptive of God as being in the act of revealing Himself, which meaning is at the very heart of the name Jehovah. When God first spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, He revealed a new name for Himself:

"And God said unto Moses, '*I AM THAT I AM*', and He said, 'Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, *I AM* hath sent me unto you'. And God said moreover unto Moses, 'Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, Jehovah God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob hath sent me unto you. This is My name for the age, and this is My

¹ A. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, pp. 46-50

memorial unto all generations.'" Exodus 3:14-15

Because of the inexactness of the Hebrew imperfect tense, which is found in the highlighted portions of the text above, one is not able to translate a precise equivalent into English. In the *Companion Bible* margin¹ Bullinger has suggested an alternative to "I am that I am" in the rendering "I will be what I will be". Because the Hebrew word in question, *hayah*, has the primary sense of "become", then "I will become what I will become" may be better yet. "I was what I was" is still another possibility. The divine name Jehovah is a derivation of a similar word, *havah*, also meaning "to become". The sense of the word "Jehovah" might be given by "He Who is" or "He Who will be" or "the One ever coming into manifestation".² John's Revelation comes to our aid in elucidating to the non-Hebrew mind the meaning of the Jehovah title:

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, Which is and Which was and Which is to come, the Almighty." Revelation 1:8

This text helps us to understand Jehovah, God of the ages, whose divine purpose brought the world into existence in the beginning. During the ages He has been working out His plan to redeem the creation, make an end of sin, and bring glory to Himself in the process. In the Revelation John has dealt principally with the conclusions of the divine covenants (the Omega aspect of God's purpose for the earth), but not without statements affirming the establishment of those covenants (the Alpha aspect). John speaks plainly in his witness concerning the first of the covenants, which established a divinely ordered heaven and earth (Jer.33:19-26).

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." John 1:1-3

"And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God.'" Revelation 3:14

Later, God made a covenant of greater blessing with Abraham and his seed. This compact was certainly not neglected by John either, for he alone of the Gospel writers recorded Jesus' discourse with the Jews over their lip-service to father Abraham.

"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day; and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto Him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM." John 8:56-58

He Who revealed Himself to Abraham (once in human form), and showed him things to come, was Christ. Likewise Jehovah-Christ was the Maker of the covenant with Abraham.

The thirty-two "I AM" (*ego eimi*) statements of the Lord recorded in John's Gospel, as compared with only two in each of the other Gospels, point to a strong Mosaic tradition behind John's version. In John we find Christ pictured as the end of the covenant with Moses:

¹ p. 76 ² Brown-Driver-Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, pp. 217-218

"Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father; there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me; for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?" John 5:45-47

The progressive character of covenant revelation is attested to by Moses in these words:

"And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, 'I am Jehovah, and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob by the name of El Shaddai; but by My name Jehovah was I not known to them. And I have also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers.'" Exodus 6:2-4

The meaning of the statement, "by My name Jehovah was I not known unto them", is somewhat obscure, since Abraham did call upon "the name of Jehovah, age-abiding El" (Gen.21:33). Tracing man's worship back to the beginning of human history, it appears that Eve and even all of mankind, knew Him by this name (Gen.4:1). To know the sound of the name, without discerning either its hidden meaning (as now revealed unto Moses) or the impact of God's purpose of the ages upon the generations of man, seems to be the import of Exodus 6:3. With the "cutting"¹ of the Mosaic covenant, Jehovah enriched all the sons of Jacob with the first of His written oracles, the Torah (Acts 7:38; Rom.3:1-2). Through this Scripture by the hand of Moses He revealed Himself to Israel out of past history, through present redemption from bondage, and into future blessings as prophesied either formally or in the types and shadows of the Law. Succeeding generations received more of the covenant revelation, until in "the fulness of time ... God sent forth His Son" (Gal.4:4-5). In Christ, a perfect redemption was offered to His generation of Israel, but only a remnant received the New Covenant blessings at that time. The day when "all Israel shall be saved" (Rom.11:26) has yet to be fulfilled, and much covenant prophecy remains darkened to the eyes of men. Thus, the earth awaits the Apocalypse (literally, "unveiling") of Jesus Christ at His second coming, with all its glorious and terrible consequences. The New Covenant prophet John has dealt with that event more comprehensively than any prophet who preceded him. In John's inspired books we find the Person and purpose of Jehovah unfolded to our view, both biographically and prophetically.

Metaphoric Titles of Christ: Links to the Old Testament

Another sign of the unity of the Johannine Scriptures is seen in the use of various other names for Christ. Christ as "the Lamb" occurs in John 1:29 and 36 (where *amnos* is used for "Lamb") and 28 times in Revelation (where *arnion* is found). Elsewhere we see Christ likened to "a lamb" only in Acts 8:32 and 1 Peter 1:19. The Synoptic Gospel accounts of the Last Supper include a memorial Passover offering of bread and wine (lacking in John's Gospel). Hasty inferences of a post-Acts 28 date for John's Gospel have been drawn because of his silence on this Last Supper ritual. But John alone teaches plainly that Christ was the great Passover "Lamb of God, Which taketh away the sin of the world", in antitype of the Mosaic ordinance. Also unique to John's Gospel is a discourse of the Lord on eating His flesh and drinking His blood, whose didactic purpose parallels the memorial bread and wine of the Last Supper (John 6:48-58). This same discourse in John 6 brings into view the typology of the manna which Moses ministered to Israel for forty years:

¹ Hebrew *karath* is the formal term for covenant "making" - compare the English idiom "to cut a deal".

"I AM the Bread of life..." John 6:35

"I AM that Bread of life." John 6:48

"I AM the Living Bread which came down from heaven." John 6:51

Jehovah of old showed His glory to Israel in the wilderness by working many signs and wonders, including the sending down of manna. In due season Jehovah Himself came down as the True Bread, to be broken for the sins of His people. An even greater glory was revealed to Israel in the descent of this Living Bread (John 1:14; 12:27-28; 13:31-32; 17:1-5).

In his Gospel narrative John is less concerned with relating a detailed biography of Christ's life than with developing a theology of Israel's Redeemer, set within a framework of the law and the prophets. More of John's Old Covenant roots become discernable as we examine still more of the Lord's "I AM" declarations:

John 15:1-8

"I AM the True Vine and My Father is the Husbandman." 15:1

"I AM the Vine, ye are the branches." 15:5

John 10:1-18

"I AM the Door of the sheep." 10:7

"I AM the Door." 10:9

"I AM the Good Shepherd ... giveth His life for the sheep." 10: 11

"I AM the Good Shepherd and know My sheep, and am known of Mine." 10:14

John 15:1-8 bears comparison with Psalm 80, one of several Old Testament Scriptures depicting Israel as the branches of a vine:

"Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt; thou hast cast out the heathen (that is, the Canaanite 'nations') and planted it. Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars." Psalm 80:8-10

In this Psalm Jehovah is the planter of the vine, Israel, while in John we find Jesus Christ as the self-confessed trunk, or supporter, of the vine.

Psalm 80, in its introductory verse, provides us a pathway in thought back to Jacob's prophecy in Genesis 49:

"Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, Thou that ledest Joseph like a flock..." Psalm 80:1

Now Jacob had prophesied thus of Joseph:

"Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall. The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him. But his bow abode in

strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob (from thence is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel)..." Genesis 49:22-24

Here the seed of Joseph are pictured as the branches of a vine, to whom Jehovah would provide the Good Shepherd of Israel, all paralleling the Lord Jesus' statements in John's Gospel. In the Revelation, on the other hand, a different agricultural metaphor is used. There the Lamb of God is referred to as both "the Root and the Offspring of David" (Rev.5:5-6; 22:16), because Jehovah had planted King David's house forever by an inviolable covenant. This same covenant held the promise of earth's ultimate King, "the Son of David". Additionally we find the Davidic title, "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" (Rev.5:5), used of Christ. Old Jacob's prophecy for his son Judah explains this title of Christ:

"Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise. Thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp. From the prey, my son, thou art gone up. He stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be. Binding His foal unto the vine, and His ass's colt unto the choice vine, He washed His garments in wine, and His clothes in the blood of grapes. His eyes shall be red with wine, and His teeth white with milk." Genesis 49:8-12

David was of the tribe of Judah, and the kingdom that was wrested from Israel's first king, Saul, was made covenant-permanent with David's house, so that David's Lord might one day receive his throne. The book of Revelation comes to our aid again in showing the final end of many of these prophetic types of Christ, when Shiloh comes to put the necks of His enemies under His feet:

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written that no man knew, but He Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; and His name is called the Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations. And He shall rule (literally, 'shepherd') them with a rod (or 'scepter') of iron; and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." Revelation 19:11-16

The Son of David's vesture dipped in blood has a double significance. The New Covenant blood of Christ, commemorated by the Last Supper wine, was shed in a unique form of baptism (Luke 12:50). At His second coming the blood of His enemies will be shed instead (the treaded winepress). The Shepherd-King of Israel will also shepherd the remnant of the nations, having first judged them in wrath. The scepter of this King will be unique, as the tribe of Judah will have given rise to the King of kings of all the earth.

John in Relation to the Synoptists

The attempts over the centuries to harmonize the four Gospels have been many. But more important than reconciling the collective details of the books is the endeavor to discover how the

Holy Spirit intended the four accounts to supplement each other in bringing to light the Person of Christ. For those who believe the Scriptures to be God-breathed, all modern theories concerning which Evangelist borrowed from what other account, or oral tradition must be seen as vain attempts to supplant God's wisdom with man's. The fact that Matthew, Mark and Luke were inspired to cover much the same biographical ground, especially when compared to John, gives rise to the term "Synoptic Gospels". However, this commonality of subject matter should not blind us to the distinct purpose of each Gospel in presenting a different face, as it were, of the Lord Jesus Christ. Bullinger associated seven Old Testament texts with the Gospels, in order to draw out the emphasis of each book.¹

Matthew "Behold THY KING" (Zechariah 9:9)
 "Behold I will raise unto David a Righteous BRANCH, and a KING shall reign
 and prosper" (Jeremiah 23:5-6; 33:15)

Mark "Behold MY SERVANT" (Isaiah 42:1)
 "Behold, I will bring forth My Servant THE BRANCH" (Zechariah 3:8)

Luke "Behold THE MAN Whose name is THE BRANCH" (Zechariah 6:12)

John "Behold YOUR GOD" (Isaiah 40:9)
 "In that day shall Jehovah's BRANCH be beautiful and glorious" (Isaiah 4:2)

These four primary roles of Messiah are readily segregated into two classes:

- a) King, Servant and Man (all belonging to the human sphere)
- b) God

Thus it would be strange, indeed, if John's selection of material were not radically different in showing forth Christ as God. We do well to note that all four Gospels have deep roots in the Old Testament Scriptures of Israel's covenants. This includes the fourth Gospel with its emphasis on Messiah-God.

The differences between John and the Synoptists are in some ways comparable to the differences between Chronicles and Samuel/Kings. Even as Chronicles omits much material that is included in Samuel and Kings, so John passes by much that is shared by the Synoptists. The Books of Chronicles occasionally provide the hidden reason behind actions and events which are reported less methodically in Samuel and Kings. Similarly, John relates his biography not merely to sketch the life of Christ, but purposefully to lead his reader to acknowledge the light of Christ at each turn of the narrative. The extent of this didactic purpose will become clearer if we note John's heavy usage of certain connective words:

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
in order that (<i>hina</i>)	39	62	47	145
therefore (<i>oun</i>)	55	11	45	202
therefore (<i>dia touto</i>)	11	3	4	15
because (<i>hoti</i>)	147	198	176	267

The following passages, with material peculiar to John, will serve to illustrate the deliberateness with which his account is presented:

- 1:1-18 Where Matthew begins with a genealogy of Christ dating from Abraham, Luke provides an account of His conception, nativity and childhood with a genealogy from Adam. But John reaches back even further, to the very beginning of the world, prefacing His narrative with unminced words on Christ's heavenly origin and His role as the Creator.
- 1:28-34 John does not actually describe Jesus' baptism by John, as do the Synoptists, but instead lays hold of the Baptist's testimony to the Son of God and the significance of this baptism in manifesting to Israel their Christ.
- 6:6, 15 In the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000 John reveals a purpose and an effect hidden from the other Gospel reports. According to John, the reason Jesus asked Philip how they could feed such a crowd was in order to test him. Also, John alone informs us of the effect of this "sign", that the people were on the verge of taking Him by force to make Him their King.
- 6:27-71 Although John omits the offering of bread and wine at the Last Supper, he produces a discourse of the Lord's on the spiritual need that was symbolically satisfied by eating the bread and wine. This sermon on the heavenly bread also clarifies the sign of the 5,000 who were satisfied with the five loaves, as well as giving Christological significance to Moses' sign of providing manna to Israel. The New Covenant manna was Christ, Who came down from heaven to offer His life for the sake of His people. John's detail that these were barley loaves feeding the multitude is not without significance also, for a sheaf of barley from the early harvest was offered during Passover week as part of the Firstfruits offering. All was typical of Christ, Who became the Greater Firstfruits sacrificed for Israel (1 Cor.15:20-23; pierced in five places, even as five loaves were broken). A third giving of bread from heaven awaits a future wilderness wandering, as John informs us in another book (Rev.2:17; 12:6,13-14).
- 7:37-39 The primary goal in God's sending His Holy Spirit to endow believers with the "living water" was to give glory to the glorified Christ. This thought is reiterated later in 16:12-14.
- 10:17-18; 12:24-27 John is very emphatic on the determinate counsel of God that His Son be offered up, the Sinless One given for the sins of men. Of the two passages cited here the former points out that no one was able to take His life from Him, but that it behooved Him to lay it down of His own will, when the foreordained hour came. The latter text demonstrates that His death would not be a mere consequence of Israel's rejection, but that it was the great goal set for the Son's first advent by an all-wise and omniscient Father. John also has preserved for us Jesus' last words before death, "It is finished" (19:30), showing that the "stumblingblock" of the cross was the great milestone in God's plan of redemption.

- 11:47-53 In Matthew 26:3 a brief comment is made concerning a council of Jews who conspired to do away with Christ. On the other hand John's account of a similar meeting, held four days earlier, makes clearer the evil motives of the religious leaders. At that gathering the cynical high priest, Caiaphas, unwittingly prophesied of Jesus "that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not". The extreme hardheartedness of the chief men of Israel becomes apparent, for the Lord had just raised Lazarus and it was generally acknowledged that "this man doeth many signs".
- 12:3-6 John's observation about Judas' being a thief reveals the flaw in his character that Satan capitalized upon to get Jesus quietly into the hands of the Jewish leaders.
- chs.14-16 By explaining the Holy Spirit's role toward believers in such detail, John provides the smoothest transition into the marvelous deeds of the book of Acts. The need to be born of the Spirit, and other heavenly matters, are passed over by the Synoptists (John 3:3-8).
- 15:13-15 In Luke 12:4 Jesus calls His disciples friends, but John goes on to explain the conditions of such an extraordinary friendship.
- 19:7-22 John's account of Jesus' trial before Pilate goes far in explaining how that event unfolded. Not only did Pilate believe Jesus to be innocent, but after the Jews told how "He made Himself the Son of God" a growing fear (of recognition) began to drive him to seek His release. It was only after being chided by the Jews that no friend of Caesar would release one who claimed an unrecognized kingship, that Pilate reverted back to the role of his political office. It is ironic that such words as "Behold the Man!" and "Behold your King" are now found on the lips of a Roman procurator. Perhaps these were spoken as a taunt to the Jews, where their King was concerned. If the Holy Spirit did mean John's Gospel to be for Gentiles, it was so that they, like Pilate, might acknowledge Christ as the King of Israel. Such a confession, of course, is inappropriate for Gentiles in the present dispensation.
- 19:35;
20:30-31 Alone of the four, John states the purpose of his book: to incite belief in Jesus as the Christ. From the heavy emphasis on signs, belief, and testimony throughout this Scripture, we might consider labeling it as "the proselytizing Gospel". With some restrictions on how we use its dispensational portions, John's Gospel may serve an evangelistic purpose today in bringing Gentiles to recognition of their Saviour.

The Typology of the Cherubim in the Gospels

From the earliest Christian times the fourfold aspect of Christ, as seen in the Gospels, has been associated with the four faces of the cherubim (Eze.1:10). Thus Matthew, in emphasizing Christ as King of Israel, has taken up the face of the lion, Who is the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Mark's Servant is depicted with the face of the ox, a beast of burden. The perfect Man of Luke's account is envisioned having a human face. For John, Christ was primarily the God of Israel, the Great I AM, and as such He is represented with the face of a heavenly creature, the eagle. This typology resident in the visage

of the cherub attains a deeper significance when we consider the role of the cherubim in the outworking of earth's redemption. Welch has set out some typical and antitypical teaching on the cherubim in the following structure: ¹

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| A) The Anointed. His pride and fall. | (Ezekiel 28) |
| B) Paradise lost. Pledge of restoration. | (Genesis 3) |
| C) Tabernacle and Wilderness. | (Exodus 25) |
| Temple and Land. | (1 Kings 6) |
| Glory and Temple. | (Ezekiel 10,41) |
| A) The Anointed. His humility and triumph. | (Four Gospels) |
| B) Paradise restored. | (Revelation 4) |

While this outline does not exhaust all the references to the cherubim in Scripture, it does summarize well their part in the plan of God. Satan, the anointed cherub who fell, was a precursor of that Anointed One, Who for a season was made a little lower than the angels in order to raise up other sons to glory (Heb.2:5-10).

The contest of the ages being waged between these protagonists is a drama that, as far as we can know for the present, has been acted out upon the earth. Ezekiel 28 depicts Satan in the garden of God (v.13) before corruption began to be found in him (middle of v.15). Afterward, this "anointed cherub" succeeded in corrupting Adam too, and God set other cherubim, wielding "the flaming sword ... to keep the way of the tree of life" (Gen.3:24). Together with this preservation of earthly blessings, temporarily lost, went God's promise to put conflict between Satan and the woman he had deceived (Gen.3:15). Additionally He would raise up one of her Seed, the Branch Who was to vanquish fully that opponent of all God's purposes. This merciful adjustment to the seminal covenant between God and Adam (Gen.2:15-17) was called out by necessity, else mankind would be doomed forever. By himself man would be unable to contend with "the angel of light", to save himself from the law of sin and death. In the history of all the covenants to follow, imperfection was found due to the weakness of the flesh in fulfilling man's part of the bargain. In the final analysis of Israel's participation in the divine covenants, there was very nearly "no remedy" for the covenant-breaking which had become natural to man since Adam's fall (2 Ch. 36:16).

Without the prospect of the Seed of the woman, both man and the earth he was meant to rule over would be altogether without hope. Only the curse of sin and death would remain. The "woman" of Genesis 3:15 referred immediately to Eve, so that all her children (that is, all nations) might have a hope. But in the unfolding of God's covenant purpose we find a very special place given to the woman Israel (Rev. 12:1-5), through whom Christ came in the flesh in order to establish a new and better covenant with the earth. Along the way to Christ, tremendous promises were given to Abram for all the families of the earth (Gen.12:3), but more particularly for him and his seed. His descendants through Isaac were to become a great nation, receiving the land of Canaan for an inheritance (Gen.12:1-2,7). The Mosaic covenant of law expanded upon this promise in assuring Israel that the Land would one day become the center of the earth, because God would dwell there with His earthly people and make Jerusalem His capital. Israel were to become a royal priesthood, as typified by the Levitical covenant, to do a holy service unto the Lord that Satan was long unwilling to perform (Eze.28:13-14 shows some of the elements of his priesthood - the bejeweled breastplate and sacred music and access to "the holy mountain of God").

¹ *The Four Gospels*, p. 7

Cherubic images figured prominently in the earthly places of worship under the covenants, whether the Tabernacle in the wilderness with its "mercy-seat" upon the Ark of the Covenant, or the many ornaments of Solomon's Temple, or Ezekiel's vision of the Millennial Temple (Exo.25:17-22; 2 Ch.3:7-14; Eze.41:18-25). Jehovah's glory is associated with these "living creatures" in transporting the pillar of fire, the divine presence dwelling down on earth with men (*shekinah* - 1 Ch.13:6; Eze.10:3-4,18-20). The fact that fiery wheels were mentioned by Ezekiel (10:2,6-7) as the cherub's means of transport, coincides with the temple pattern that David passed on to Solomon, for one of the images of that Temple was the chariot of cherubs (1 Ch.28:8). Even as the cherub is coupled with the wind (2 Sa.22:11; Psa.18:10), and perhaps their four faces answer to the four winds, so the fiery chariot of Israel that took away Elijah was associated with a whirlwind (2 Ki.2:11-12). Elijah's chariot may have been an apparition of the Lord's glory astride the cherubim. The depiction of both Moses and Elijah in the vision of the Lord's transfiguration glory anticipate their being blessed together in the *shekinah* of New Jerusalem (Rev.22:5). So, too, does the typical glory which each of them was privileged to witness under the old covenant (Exo.33:18-34:18 for Moses).

The fiery chariot was present also with the angelic host that rescued Elisha from the king of Syria (2 Ki.6:15-18). The flaming sword and the fiery chariot, implements of war dedicated to Jehovah's glory, are hallmarks of the cherubim. But during the present "dispensation of the grace of God" His fierce judgments are in abeyance; the angelic armies are quiet. There is no warfare today apart from the purely spiritual contest between the church and satanic principalities (Eph.6:11-12). The connection in Scripture between the cherubim and Jehovah's *shekinah* is very much tied to His covenants with the earth and the chief stewardship of Israel. If the Gospel of John is thought to address two such diverse dispensations of grace and covenants, would not this make God the Author of confusion?

The four "beasts" of Revelation appear to be Ezekiel's cherub again, but separated into four persons. Their first office, according to Revelation, is to worship the Lord God (4:6-9). This is followed by their heralding the coming of the four horsemen, who represent another group of angels ushering in "the great day of His wrath" (ch.6). When the affiliation of the Four Gospels with the role of the cherubim is taken into account, each Gospel will be found to concern itself pre-eminently with Israel. If the "world" whom John addresses includes any Gentiles, then the basis must be the promise to Abram in Gen.12:3. This promise allowed for, but was not exhausted by, the Gentile-into-Israel graft of the Acts period. Even the promise going out to all the sons of Adam, concerning the restored Paradise with access to its Tree of Life, will be dispensed to the nations only through the headship of Israel (Rev.2:7; 22:1-5). The dilemma for dispensationalist expositors who incline toward a two calling doctrine is to adduce a strong Scriptural proof for a two concurrent church system. This proof must distinguish a Gentile church apart from both the body of Christ and from Israel, upon whom the Gentiles were dependent for salvation prior to the current "Lo-ammi" period. In the present study I will not pursue the full range of inquiry into these subjects but have restricted it to an overview of the Johannine books.

Chapter Four

JOHN'S GOSPEL IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE DISPERSIONS OF ISRAEL

The history of Israel, beginning with Abraham, was punctuated with repeated occasions of divine selection. First Abraham himself was selected out of a household of idolaters (Gen.12:1). Then Isaac, the seed promised of the freewoman Sarah, was chosen over Ishmael (Gen.21:9-12); and later the younger twin Jacob was preferred over Esau (Gen.25:23). All twelve of Jacob's sons were elected, but not for equal stewardships. God chose Joseph to save the whole house of Jacob in a time of famine. But Judah received the greatest blessing from Jacob, and eventually his tribe was to provide the shepherds of Israel. Later, when the covenant of Law was given, a special covenant was made with the tribe of Levi to provide service in the things of sacrifice and worship. Out of Judah eventually came David, and God established a permanent dynasty of kings through him to occupy His city Jerusalem. And out of David's seed, according to the flesh, came the Only-begotten Son of God.

This same history was characterized by division and dispersion, even from the very outset. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob dwelled as nomads in the land of promise, and owned only a burying-place there. For a time Abraham sojourned in Egypt and Gerar, Isaac in Gerar, and Jacob in Syria and Egypt. Jacob and his sons went down into Egypt and became a nation in bondage. When planted at last in the land of Canaan, the nation Israel broke covenant with Jehovah often. As a result, the Lord periodically let Syrians, Moabites, Philistines, Canaanites, Midianites, and Ammonites subdue and rule over Israel. At times there were internal disputes among the tribes, like the one that nearly exterminated the tribe of Benjamin (Jud.20:46 - 21:6).

With the institution of the kingdom in Israel, even greater calamities befell the nation. When the shepherds were evil they led the whole flock astray. The sins of the great King Solomon were so grievous to the Lord that He eventually broke off ten tribes from his dominion and made a second kingdom of them (1 Ki.11:9-13, 26-40). This second separation of "Joseph" from his brethren to rule over ten tribes (Judah and Benjamin remained under the Davidic kings) seems to be the fulfillment of the rest of Jacob's prophecy to Joseph:

"The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills; they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren." Genesis 49:26

Jeroboam's flight into Egypt for a haven from Solomon was the beginning of a traditional league between Egypt and the Northern Kingdom of "Ephraim" or "Israel", whose capital was later to become the city of Samaria. After Solomon's death, Jeroboam was welcomed by the ten tribes to become their king, leading the revolt against Rehoboam and the Southern Kingdom of "Judah", with its capital at Jerusalem. In order to consolidate the allegiance of his tribes, Jeroboam instituted places of sacrifice at Dan and Bethel (1 Ki.12:26-33). But Jeroboam had brought Egyptian ways back from his exile and the new worship included idolatries. Although this great schism was along tribal and territorial lines, all the tribes had members in the land of Judah after a time (1 Ch.9:3; 1 Ki.12:17). When Jeroboam began to impose his religious unorthodoxy upon the Northern Kingdom, many who wished to remain faithful

¹ J.H.Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p.546

to Jehovah fled to the south and joined Judah (1 Ch.11:5-17). A remnant of the tribes was preserved around Judah's scepter, while the remainder of Israel for the most part (all but seven thousand in Elijah's day) went after idols. The faithful ones of the Southern Kingdom eventually came to be called "Jews" (literally, "Judahites" - Heb. *Yehudiy*, Gk. *Ioudaios*), and they were a vessel of preservation for the true faith of Israel.

Centuries later, God raised up Assyria for a scourge against both kingdoms, for Jerusalem had also yielded to idolatry like her sister Samaria (Jer.3:6-11). When the Northern Kingdom had been reduced to a tributary nation by Assyria, she became involved in a conspiracy with Egypt to revolt against her vassalage. The recompense for this was to have her kingdom further diminished to a backwoods province of Assyria. Captives were taken out (2 Ki.17:1-6), and foreigners were brought in to weaken any stirrings of nationalism (2 Ki.17:23-24). The idolatrous foreigners intermarried with the remaining Israelites, and were taught to fear Jehovah as well as their own gods (2 Ki.17:25-33). The 27,000 Samaritans taken captive were resettled in cities throughout Mesopotamia and Media. This first major dispersion of the nation was probably assimilated into the local cultures of their captivities, even as the Samaritans had readily adapted to Canaanite ways; and they have passed out of history without further word. Their identity in subsequent generations is known to God alone, and we have no basis for believing that any of them migrated as far as the proponents of British Israelism would have us think.

Judah, also, was not without guilt in playing the harlot with idols, but her captivity in Babylon about a century later did not blot out her national identity. The Jews were encouraged to build houses and plant gardens (Jer.29:4-7). Here began the institution of the synagogue, that hub of Jewish community life and the hallmark of all the dispersions of the Jews to the present day. Some Jews, like Daniel, rose to positions of great honor under Babylonian and, later, Median kings. Their lot was so good generally that many Jews stayed behind in Babylon after the captivity was turned. When Palestine had become repopulated by the Jews, the eastern dispersion in Babylon tended to look upon themselves as being of purer stock. According to Josephus the Jews in Babylon were very numerous in his day (some modern estimates run as high as a million), and they prospered there many centuries more. The rabbis of this second great dispersion produced the Babylonian Talmud in the fifth or sixth century A.D.

When Alexander the Great conquered the Medo-Persian empire (333-323 B.C.) and began the process of Hellenizing the "habitable world", he showed deference to the Jews. Alexander's Syrian successors, the Seleucid dynasty, continued his policies and at times found it expedient to transplant Jewish settlers into less stable areas of the empire, such as Asia Minor. Not only did the Jews follow a superior moral code, but their loyalty could usually be relied upon by a benign emperor. Tax relief was used as an incentive to induce these voluntary redistributions of Jews. The roots of the Syrian dispersion had actually begun about seven hundred years earlier, for the sphere of influence of both David's and Solomon's kingdoms had extended northward to the Euphrates. Alexander's Egyptian successors, the Ptolemies, often warred with the Seleucids, with Palestine becoming the buffer zone between the two factions. Thus, the life of a dispersion Jew was often safer than that of a Palestinian Jew.

The beginnings of an affinity toward Egypt we have already traced back to Abraham's generation. We can find no record of Moses' leaving any behind in Egypt, although the desire to return there often accompanied the murmurings of the people. Subsequent to the Exodus there was the Egyptian conquest of Judah in Rehoboam's day (2 Ch.12:1-9), which may have included a captivity. Much later, a terrified remnant of Jews whom Nebuchadnezzar had left in Judah fled to Egypt, but most of these were destroyed or carried off to Babylon afterward (Jer.43-44). On the basis of archeological evidence, a

¹ J.H.Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 546

Jewish colony at Elephantine (near Aswan) is known to have flourished about 500 years before Christ. The Elephantine Jews had their own temple for sacrifice, but this appears to have been a schismatic and unorthodox community. Even later, in 160 B.C., the Jews of Heliopolis rallied around Onias, the high priest in exile from Jerusalem, and established a rival temple, citing Isaiah 19:19 to legitimize the new center of worship. By the first century A.D. Jewry in Egypt had become a strong minority, numbering about one million. The Jews enjoyed great privileges in the "Greek" city of Alexandria. From that city went forth the first Greek translation of the O.T., the Septuagint (third century B.C.). According to Josephus, King Ptolemy Philadelphus was an ardent admirer of the law of Moses, and he commissioned a translation of the law and the prophets for the great library at Alexandria. The Septuagint version made it possible for Jews dispersed in the Greek world to have the Scriptures in their adopted language. There was then no need for an interpreter of the Hebrew to expound for them the law and the prophets. Even the bulk of Aramaic-speaking, Palestinian Jews continued to require interpreters (Neh.8:4-8) until the Targums appeared and received the sanction of the religious leadership. The existence of the Septuagint was, doubtless, an aid to the Jews' proselytizing activity. Indeed, some have found it difficult to account for the estimated eight million Jews of the first century A.D. apart from very successful proselytizing throughout the various regions of their dispersion (cp. Mat.23:15). The many references to proselytes in the book of Acts (sometimes euphemistically called "those who fear God" - *hoi sebomenoi ton Theon* or *hoi phoboumenoi ton Theon*) bear testimony to the appeal that a spiritual law could have for the minds of truth-seekers of other nations.

When Rome overcame the decaying remnants of Alexander's empire, it furthered the dispersion of Jews westward to Rome, and perhaps even to Spain (Rom.15:23-29). On the whole, the attitude of Rome toward the Jews was a benevolent one. The religion and Temple of the Jews had the sanction of legality, while Rome had outlawed many religions within its empire. Access to the Temple at Jerusalem was forbidden to foreigners, and even an uncircumcised Roman found within its precincts was to be put to death. Except for groups engaged in crimes of sedition or open rebellion, the Jews as a whole fared rather well under Roman rule.

The extant works of several Roman writers exhibit a strain of anti-Semitism, and this prejudice probably existed in other areas of the dispersion at all times. The enmity of their heathen neighbors is a tribute to the Jews' tenacity in remaining faithful to the ancient traditions of Moses. The apostle James also attested to their fidelity:

"For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day." Acts 15:21

While many held fast to the faith of their fathers, even travelling to Jerusalem at the appointed times to keep the feasts (Acts 2:1-11), others succumbed to Hellenizing influences to varying degrees. It is understandably difficult to be a nonconformist, and in the midst of an idolatrous world the Jew was certainly an anomaly (hence the warning to Jewish believers to flee from idolatry in 1 Co.10:14). Furthermore, the covenant promises of a renewed kingdom with its capital city, Jerusalem, made the orthodox Jew a stranger and sojourner anywhere outside the borders of Israel. The Temple at Jerusalem, as the acceptable place of sacrifice, also gave an unparalleled religious significance to the Land. Thus, being a faithful Jew of the Diaspora required a very strong commitment.

Some Gentiles, despite being attracted by the superiority of Mosaic law, found themselves unable to become full converts to Judaism (known as "proselytes of righteousness"¹). A full conversion

¹ J.H.Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 546

included the obligation to keep the whole law. Those God-fearers who fell short of full acceptance (called "proselytes of the gate") included people like the Roman Cornelius (Acts 10:22), whose military profession conflicted with the commandment for the Jews to keep the sabbath. Rabbinic tradition permitted the proselyte of the gate to be exempted from circumcision but required observance of the so-called "seven precepts of Noah" against: idolatry, blasphemy against God, murder, sexual immorality, theft, insurrection, and eating bloody meat. This list of prohibitions is similar to the four "dogmas" coming out of the Jerusalem conference, which was convened to decide whether Paul's Gentile converts needed to embrace Judaism. The Acts period abstentions were: "from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood" (Acts 15:19-20). The Holy Spirit's solution to the controversy over Gentile converts (Acts 15:28-29) was neither to tie the burden of the law around their necks nor to give them complete independence from the covenant statutes of Israel. Covenant privileges were still for the Jewish Christian first, and the Gentile Christian assumed a subordinate role, equivalent to that of a proselyte of the gate. This was only an outward form for administering New Covenant blessings, and it was based on the priority of "the Jew first". Looking upon the individual heart, of course, God is no respecter of persons.

Whether for reasons of conflict or convenience, there were also weak-willed Jews who apostatized under the social pressures of the Greek world. This was likely the case with Timothy's father (or perhaps it began with his paternal grandfather), who is described as a "Greek" in Acts 16:1. Timothy's mother and grandmother had seen to his upbringing in the Scriptures (2 Tim.1:5; 3:15), but the punctilious observance of all the precepts of the law had been left undone (Acts 16:3). One can hardly imagine Paul, having just secured from the apostles of the circumcision a ruling on the irrelevancy of circumcising believers of other nations (Acts 15:1-2, 24; 16:4), circumcising Timothy as he did, unless he were an Israelite by ancestry. Timothy's genealogy would have been reckoned paternally, and so his Israelite father had probably yielded to the Greek manner of life to become a "Greek". A "Jew" was one who clung to the scepter of Judah, keeping faith with Moses and the prophets. The terms "Jew" and "Greek" in their N.T. contexts often carry no genealogical significance; one born an Israelite might qualify as a Greek by his lifestyle.

We should also be careful in our interpretation of the Greek word *ethnos*, usually translated "Gentiles", because apostate Israelites cut off from the Nation may also be numbered among them. Indeed, the word *ethnos* in the singular is used frequently of the "nation" Israel. John's Gospel, for example, employs *ethnos* exclusively of Israel (11:48,50,51,52; 18:35), and this fact rather negates the thought that John wrote for the non-Israelite, "Gentile" nations.

To some degree the Greek world did leave its mark on the Jewish Hellenic Dispersion, because Greek became their first language. To the extent that dispersed Jewry chose not to make the rough journey up to Jerusalem three times a year to keep the feasts, their knowledge of the feasts, of local customs and landmarks in Palestine, and of the Aramaic language would begin to wane. Even within Palestine certain Hellenizing factions could be found, such as the Sadducees and the Herodians. But over against these, the religious parties of the Pharisees, Zealots and Essenes sought to resist all foreign influences in their manner of life.

The Other Sheep

In view of Israel's history of dispersion, we should find special significance in the description of the Nation as lost and scattered sheep, having need of the Good Shepherd (Mat.9:36; 10:6). Christ Himself

was Heir to the throne of the shepherd king, David. The initial preaching of the gospel of the kingdom, first by John the Baptist and his disciples, then by Jesus and His disciples, excluded the Samaritans and the Jews and proselytes of the Dispersion (Mat.10:5-6; John 12:20-23). But after Pentecost, salvation was offered to all Israel, including those who were cut off either by breach of law or by residence outside the Land. These scattered ones were the "other sheep" of John 10:16, and not the post-Acts 28 Gentiles or the end-time Jews, yet to be gathered. That John's Gospel mentions the "Jews" about four times more frequently than the other three Gospels together, and often disparagingly, should be read in light of the fact that "His own" who would not receive the Lord, as recorded by John, were primarily Judean Jews from Jerusalem (John 1:11,19). This was the very capital of the Jewish "world" (John 7:4). Although the bulk of Jesus' ministry took place outside of Judea, John seems to emphasize those formal occasions of feast attendance at Jerusalem and His long discourses at them. No other Gospel mentions the feasts of the Dedication and of Tabernacles (see p.40). The Judean Jews shunned the neighboring Samaritans as schismatic (John 4:9; 8:48) and also distanced themselves from the more Hellenized Jews of the outlying provinces, such as "Galilee of the Gentiles" (Mat.4:15-16). John's portrait of Christ, ministering initially in the capital city, is to be contrasted with the ever-outward concern of the Saviour for "all Israel" that was to be manifested later (Rom.11:26). The following texts illuminate whom John's Gospel was meant to reach: Israel in all her branches.

"He came unto His own , and His own (orthodox Jewry who, presumably, looked for the Son of David to reign) received Him not."

1 :11

"And of His fulness have we all (all Israel) received..." 1:16

"Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye (pl., meaning 'you Jews') say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.' Jesus saith unto her, 'Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh when ye (Samaritans) shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye (Samaritans.) worship ye know not what; we (Jews) know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.'" 4:20-22

"Then said the Jews among themselves, 'Whither will He go that we shall not find Him? Will He go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?'" 7:35

{This is a good example of the often inappropriate translation "Gentile", because "the dispersed" were Jews, albeit some were proselytes from other nations. The original here is *Hellenes*, "Greeks", and not *ethne*, "nations".}

"Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, 'What do we? For this man doeth many miracles. If we let Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.' And one of them, named Caiaphas, being high priest that same year, said unto them, 'Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.' And this spake he not of himself; but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation; and not for the nation only, but that also He should gather together (*sunago*: as it were, 'convene the synagogue') the children of God that were scattered abroad (the Diaspora) into one [nation]. Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put Him to death.

Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with His disciples." 11:47-54 {The retreat to Ephraim furnishes us a prophetic type of the other 'nation' to be gathered, for it was another name of the ancient Northern Kingdom of which the province of Samaria was now heir. Note how the scattered ones of the Dispersion at that time were considered separate from "the nation", Israel proper. However, these cut off ones were the very nation receiving the kingdom of God instead of the sons of the kingdom, many of whom rejected it (Mat.8:11-12; 21:43).}

"The people therefore that was with Him when He called Lazarus out of the grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record. For this cause the people also met Him, for that they heard that He had done this miracle. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, 'Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold, the world is gone after Him.' (The Pharisees meant the 'world' of Judaism, but note who fills the context immediately following. Together Jews and Greeks form the 'world' (Gk. *kosmos*, 79 occs. in John) for whom John wrote. See also 18:20). And there were certain Greeks (that is, Greek proselytes) among them that came up to worship at the feast. The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee (note that Philip bore a Greek name) and desired him, saying, 'Sir, we would see Jesus.' Philip cometh and telleth Andrew; and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. And Jesus answered them, saying, 'The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified.'" 12:17-23

{The Lord's response to the request of these worshipping Greeks is extremely parabolic and would be inscrutable apart from an understanding that they were dispensationally excluded from His personal ministry. Note His severity with the Canaanite woman in Matthew 15:22-24. But there was hope on the way for Greeks. Only after the death of "the corn of wheat" would the hour come that Jesus had mentioned to the Samaritan woman, when Greeks and Samaritans would no longer need to come to Jerusalem to worship the true God.}

"Jesus says to him, 'Because you have seen Me, Thomas, you have believed. Blessed are those not seeing and believing.'" 20:29

{Jesus was both seen and heard throughout Judea and Galilee. John's Gospel, on the other hand, would take the message of salvation where He had not ministered: Samaria and the Diaspora (Mat.10:5).}

John concludes his Gospel with the Lord bestowing a pastoral commission on two disciples. To Peter was committed the shepherding of all the lost sheep of the house of Israel (John 21:15-19; and cp. 1 Peter 5:1-4). John does not speak directly of his commissioning in chapter 20, but from the passages quoted above we may infer that to him in particular were committed the "other sheep" of the Western, or Greek Dispersion (John 20:20-21; 10:16). The Eastern, or Hebrew Dispersion had closer ties with Palestine than the West, and Peter was to become active there (1 Peter 5:13). Peter and John figure prominently together in the events of John's Gospel (13:21-24; 20:1-10; 21:4-7; 21:15-22), and their being paired up in the narrative may have served to bring them to this conclusion together ("Lord, and what shall this man do?"), thus shedding light on John's mission and message relative to Peter's. The first miracle of the apostles after Pentecost highlights Peter and John together in Jerusalem (Acts 3-4), and later the two were sent together to minister to Samaria (Acts 8:14-17). These were the two great cities in "all Israel".

The Reconciliation Preceding the Restoration

In addition to what has been brought forward so far from Psalm 80 and Genesis 49 on the shepherding of the two flocks of Israel, there is further testimony from the prophets on the reconciling of the divided nation. Although the brunt of Hosea's prophecy bears upon the Northern Kingdom of Israel, the Southern Kingdom of Judah also shares in the burden of this book (for example, in 1:1; 4:15; 6:4; 12:1-2). The first chapter relates a promise of blessing in connection with the reconciliation of the two houses:

"Then said God, 'Call his name Lo-ammi, for ye are not My people, and I will not be your God. Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not My people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God. Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land (that is, the land of their dispersion). For great shall be the day of Jezreel.'" Hosea 1:9-11

For all their backslidings, and in spite of intermarriage among the nations of their dispersion, God has promised to gather them back to the covenant Land. Such was His love for their father Abraham. The widespread intermarriage with foreigners that came to characterize the Samaritans (and probably also the 27,000 "lost" in the Assyrian-led forced emigration to Mesopotamia) should not be viewed as an absolute impediment to covenant blessing. Intermarriage was forbidden by the law of Moses for a practical reason: to prevent the corruption of the nation from an influx of foreign idolatries. However, in Jesus' own genealogy at least three foreign women have figured. These are Rahab the Canaanite, Ruth the Moabite, and Naamah the Ammonite.

The theme of the two kingdoms in reconciliation is a recurring one in O.T. prophecy. The added blessing of a kingdom restored to the splendor of David's and Solomon's reigns also finds prominence in prophecy. In some of these Scriptures the metaphor of the sheepfold is found again.

"In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping. They shall go and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, 'Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten.' My people hath been lost sheep. Their shepherds have caused them to go astray; they have turned them away on the mountains. They have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their restingplace.'" Jeremiah 50:4-6

"Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, 'Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause Mine anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger forever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed My voice saith the Lord, for I am married unto you. And I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion. And I will give you pastors (literally, *shepherds*) according to Mine heart, which shall feed (or, *pasture*) you with knowledge and understanding. And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the Lord, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the Lord, neither shall it come to mind, neither shall they remember it, neither shall they visit it, neither shall that be done any more. At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all nations

shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem. Neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart. In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers." Jeremiah 3:12-18

"The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying, 'Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions. Then take another stick and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions. And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand. And when the children of thy People shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou show us what thou meanest by these? Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and I will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land. And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all. And they shall be no more two nations; neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all. Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will save them out of all their dwelling-places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them. So shall they be My people and I will be their God. And David My servant shall be king over them; and they shall have one shepherd. They shall also walk in My judgments, and observe My statutes, to do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob My servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt. And they shall dwell therein, even they and their children and their children's children forever.'" Ezekiel 37:15-25

This last passage needs to be read in context with chapter 34, the great prophecy on shepherdship in Israel. The prophetic goal is the same in both chapters: Israel restored to the Land with the tribes reconciled under one king.

"And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed (or, 'pasture') them, even My servant David. He shall feed them and he shall be their shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them. I the Lord have spoken it."

Ezekiel 34:23-24

These prophecies from Jeremiah and Ezekiel are Millennial in scope, fulfilling the types and shadows of the Feast of Tabernacles. Israel will then be one nation with one king, tabernacling safely in the Land. Their king will be the resurrected David, who himself serves the "King of kings and Lord of lords" as Master. Note, too, the prophetic emphasis on Zion and Jerusalem as places to serve the Lord. John's Gospel differs here in that the centers of worship for the two nations, Mt. Moriah in Jerusalem and Mt. Gerizim in Samaria, are de-emphasized. "The true worshippers", according to John, were dispersed all over the world (hence John's emphasis on the "world"). A striking feature of the fourth Gospel is that its only occurrences of "harvest" and "reap", words connected with the gospel of the kingdom in the Synoptic Gospels, are found in the record of Jesus' brief sojourn in Samaria, where "many believed on Him" (John 4:31-42). Again the evidence points to Samaria as an important part of John's mission field.

Although not yet gathered out of the nations into the Land, a first-fruits harvest of Israelites during the Acts period did become "one fold" in spirit under "the Good Shepherd". These first-fruits out of Israel were the antitype of the feast of Pentecost, which included the second first-fruits wave offering

(Lev.23:15-17). The offering was waved toward the four quarters of the earth, signifying a world-dispersed blessing for Pentecostal Israel. The unity of the fold finds further expression in John's Gospel:

"As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world ... Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word. That they all may be one; as Thou Father art in Me, and I in Thee, that they may be one in Us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." John 17:18-21

The Great Pentecost which ran its course from Acts 2 to 28 was the harbinger of an even fuller harvest to come. Later will come the great harvest when all Israel is saved (Rom.11:26), with the kingdom restored according to all that the prophets have spoken.

Two Sisters

A final O.T. reference to the two kingdoms will shed light on another Johannine parallel:

"The Lord said unto me in the days of Josiah the king, 'Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? She has gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot. And I said after she had done all these things, Turn thou unto Me. But she returned not. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a bill of divorce. Yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also. And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with stocks. And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not returned unto Me with her whole heart, but feignedly,' saith the Lord. And the Lord said unto me, 'The backsliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah.'" Jeremiah 3:6-11

The condemnation of the two adulterous sisters was to be followed by their reconciliation to the Lord and to each other (vv.12-18 cited earlier). Ezekiel chapters 16 and 23 are also full of the imagery of the adulterous sisters:

"Behold, every one that useth proverbs shall use this proverb against thee (Jerusalem), saying, 'As is the mother, so is her daughter.' Thou art thy mother's daughter, that lotheth her husband and her children; and thou art the sister of thy sisters, which lothed their husbands and their children; your mother was an Hittite, and your father an Amorite. And thine elder sister is Samaria, she and her daughters that dwell at thy left hand; and thy younger sister, that dwelleth at thy right hand, is Sodom and her daughters." Ezekiel 16:44-46

"The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying, 'Son of man, there were two women, the daughters of one mother; and they committed whoredoms in Egypt; they committed whoredoms in their youth. There were their breasts pressed, and there they bruised the teats of their virginity. The names of them were Aholah the elder, and Aholibah her sister. And they were Mine, and they bare sons and daughters. Thus were their names; Samaria is Aholah, and Jerusalem Aholibah.'" Ezekiel 23:1-4

The tone of condemnation in these prophecies is shared by all four Gospels, with John at the forefront in warning unbelieving Jews of their impending judgment (see key word usage on p.39).

In Ezekiel neither Jerusalem nor Samaria compares very favorably with Sodom and Egypt, and we learn from another of John's books that Jerusalem was spiritually as Sodom and Egypt (Rev.11:8). Israel's refusal to hear the Son of God will ever be associated with that city where the nation's leaders had Him crucified. Unwillingness to hear the gospel would render any city worthy of more condemnation than Sodom earned (Mat.10:14-15). The divine principle of greater light requiring greater accountability certainly applied in this case. In view of the O.T. symbolism of the two sisters, could it be that John's references to "the elect lady" (2 John 1) and her "elect sister" (2 John 13) have churches in Jerusalem and Samaria in view? A "remnant according to the election of grace" was found in these two great capitals of Israel, which otherwise were worthy of divine wrath. Besides emphasizing Jesus' visits to and rejection by Jerusalem, John's Gospel mentions Samaria and Samaritans about twice as often as the other three Gospels combined.

Chapter Five

NEW COVENANT BLESSINGS AND CURSES

We have already noted those passages in 1 John referring to antichrists (2:18, 22; 4:1-3) and to the imminent return of Christ (2:28). Similarly John's Gospel alludes to the coming of The Antichrist (5:43) and speaks clearly of the return of Christ (14:2-3, 18, 27-28; 21:22-23), and a mood of urgency is evident there also (16:16-23; 5:25-29). So the prophetic underpinnings of both the Epistle and the Gospel appear to coincide.

The spiritual trappings of the Pentecost season, as chronicled in the book of Acts, are also quite apparent in John's first Epistle. When 1 John was written the authority to work signs and judgments had passed into the hands of men, with the spiritual anointing of Acts chapter 2.

"But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." 1 John .2:20

"But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you. But as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him." 1 John .2:27

This was the fulfillment of the Lord's promise to send another Comforter, which promise John alone records for us:

"If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of His belly shall flow rivers of living water.' (But this spake He of the Spirit Which they that believe on Him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)" John 7:37-39

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all [the] truth; for He shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak. And He will show you things to come."

John 16:12-13

Of the four Gospel writers, John deals the most comprehensively with the role of the Holy Spirit after the Lord's ascension (see also 3:3-8; 14:16-17, 25-26; 15:26; 16:7-11, 14-15). The keys of the Pentecostal "kingdom of heaven" were given to the Apostles so that they might administer this kingdom on earth. The administration of the kingdom was accompanied by visible blessings called forth by the servants of the King:

"Verily, verily (see Appendix C), I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it." John 14:12-14

"If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." John 15:7

"Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it you." John 15:16

"Remember the word that I said unto you. The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also." John 15:20

{This passage indicates the line of authority from the Master to His stewards.}

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you. Hitherto ye have asked nothing in My name. Ask and ye shall receive that your joy may be full. These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs. But the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father. At that day ye shall ask in My name; and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you. For the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God." John 16:23-27

"And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." 1 John 3:22

The last passage is broader in scope, applying to all the saints of that dispensation and not just the Apostles.

The testing of spirits was one of the spiritual gifts operating at that season (1 Jn.4:1; 1 Co.12:10). Also, the authority to pass judgment upon unrepentant Jews and backsliding saints formed part of the spiritual legacy of the Pentecostal church.

"And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.'" John 20:22-23

"And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us. And if we know that He hear us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him. If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and He shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death; I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin; and there is a sin not unto death."

1 John 5:14-17

These passages form part of the framework of Pentecost, with their references to the apostolic authority to bless and to curse. It was characteristic of the New Covenant that every man's sin would be visited upon his own head (Jer.31:29-34), and fearful would be the judgment upon any believer who knowingly and habitually sinned (Heb.10:26-31). Thus the New Covenant Scriptures are fraught with conditions of performance and the possibility of harsh judgments for failure:

- 1) Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit, and were struck down dead by the Lord (Acts 5:1-5).
- 2) Some Corinthian saints, who came behind in no spiritual gift (1 Co.1:7), found destruction rather than prosperity on account of their carnality (1 Co.5:1-5; 11:26-31).

- 3) The Epistle to the Hebrews warned those who had partaken of the powers of the world to come not to sin wilfully, lest they receive a worse punishment than was meted out to those who rebelled against Moses (Heb.6:4-8; 10:26-31).
- 4) James told believers of the Diaspora (Jam.1:1) that to turn a brother from the path of sin was to save his life (5:19-20).

The gospel of the kingdom was certainly not for the faint-hearted, because even the elect would scarcely be preserved through the day of the Lord (Mat. 24:21-24). In this respect both the Old and New Covenant days of redemption, and their associated periods of testing, are such fearful times as to shake the faith of the weak (Exo.14:30-31; 20:18-20; Heb.3:7 - 4:1).

Among the house-rules of the New Covenant "kingdom of heaven" was a forgiveness of sins conditioned by acts of forgiveness on the part of the believer.

"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for Thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever. Amen. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Matthew 6:12-15

"For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, 'Be thou removed, and be cast into the sea', and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any; that your Father also Which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father Which is in heaven forgive your trespasses." Mark 11:23-26

"Then came Peter to Him, and said, 'Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?' Jesus saith unto him, 'I say not unto thee, until seven times; but until seventy times seven. Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. ... The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, 'lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all'. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. ... Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, 'O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all thy debt, because thou desiredst me. Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?' And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall My heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." Matthew 18:21-35

To overlook the exacting judgments of God in our scrutiny of the Gospels, dwelling exclusively on God's gracious love toward man, may lead one to receive ear-tickling half-truths. For all his emphasis on love, both human and divine, John makes clear on several occasions that His love was conditional:

"He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him." ... "If a man love Me, he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him. He that loveth Me not keepeth not My sayings..." John 14:21, 23-24

"As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you; continue ye in My love. If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love. These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is My commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." John 15:9-14

"For the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God." John 16:27

While our hearts may thrill to know that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son for it, we should not lose sight of the loving, forgiving walk that was commanded of His people.

The judgments that befell individual wrongdoers during Acts were but a foretaste of the fierce wrath of the day of the Lord. The time of "Jacob's trouble" was the immediate expectation of that generation of faithful Israel. At that time the chaff will be winnowed out so that only the righteous remain to receive the Millennial kingdom (Malachi 4; Mat.3:11-12). Even the righteous were told to expect persecution (John 15:18-21; 16:1-4,33), and John occasionally used the O.T. imagery of the pains of childbirth to describe the impending tribulation of Israel (cp. John 16:20-22 and Rev.12:1-2 with Isa. 54:1; Jer.6:24; Mic.4:8-10). These "last days" were to see outpourings of both spiritual gifts and divine judgments.

"And it shall come to pass in the last days', saith God, 'I will pour out of My spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. And on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'" Acts 2:17-21

In his Gospel, John makes several references to "the last day" in connection with the resurrection hope of Israel (John 6:39-40, 44-45, 53-58; 11:23-26; 12:47-48). Some may be inclined to read the Great White Throne judgment into these passages in John, but the hope of the covenant church was dependent upon a prior resurrection (Rev.20:4-6). John's "last day" and his "day of the Lord" (Rev.1:10) are one and the same.

"Jesus saith unto her, 'Thy brother shall rise again.' Martha saith unto Him, 'I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.' Jesus said unto her, 'I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.'" John 11:23-26

The prospect of never dying invites comparison with the hope of a "Rapture", which members of that church eagerly looked for (Mat.16:25-28; 2 Co.5:1-4). A chapter later John reinforced this doctrine of Israel's translation, quoting an oft-used saying of the Lord's (for example in Matthew 16:25):

"He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." John 12:25

Keeping alive in the flesh until, in the twinkling of an eye, eternal life overtakes him is the hope of the end-time Jew.

If John wrote his Gospel with post-covenant Gentiles in mind, then why has he adorned his report with so many Pentecostal embellishments? It goes without saying that John has recorded absolutely reliable, historical facts. Yet his Gospel is also very selective of the words and works of Jesus, and the Spirit's didactic purpose was to include an emphasis on Pentecost. If John wrote after Pentecost drew to a close, then where is his warning to rightly divide his teaching? No, that instruction was reserved for Paul, because he alone was entrusted with a gospel message for the world after Acts 28.

Chapter Six

JUSTIFICATION BY WORKS

Another area of emphasis in John is the place of "works" in the lives of believers (see table in *Chapter Seven* for word usage). In the Gospel of John a tremendous contrast exists between Jesus' works, including the signs and wonders by which He was manifested to Israel as their Messiah (10:25-38; 14:10-12), and the wicked works of those Israelites who refused to believe in Him (8:39-47). John teaches that the refusal to hear the gospel was the evil work at the root of Israel's failure; conversely belief in Messiah was reckoned equivalent to a good work:

"He that **believeth** on Him is not condemned. But he that **believeth not** is condemned already, because he **hath not believed** in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their **deeds** were evil. For everyone that **doeth** evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his **deeds** should be reprov'd. But he that **doeth** truth cometh to the light, that his **deeds** may be made manifest, that they are **wrought** in God." John 3:18-21

"Then said they unto Him, 'What **shall we do** that we **might work the works** of God?' Jesus answered and said unto them, 'This is **the work** of God, that ye **believe** on Him Whom He hath sent.'" John 6:28-29

"And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we **keep His commandments**, and **do** those things that are pleasing in His sight. And this is **His commandment**, that we **should believe** on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment."

1 John 3:22-23

These passages put John's teaching directly in the Mosaic tradition of works and commandments. Those whom John was addressing were Israelites, already an elect church after the fashion of "the church in the wilderness" of Sinai (Acts 7:37-39). Sadly, many in both these covenant churches disobeyed God's commandments, rendering themselves enemies of God through their unbelief, refusing to go on into God's full purposes for them (Rom.11:28). The murmurings of the Jews at Jesus' teaching should be read in the light of Israel's 40 years of murmurings in the Sinai desert (John 6:41, 43, 61; 7:12, 32; and cp. 1 Co.10:1-11). The Jews in New Testament times already believed what God had revealed previously through the Old Testament Scriptures, and even had a great zeal for the things of their covenants (Rom.10:1-4). But tragically many stumbled over the Cornerstone, Who was Himself "the end of the law" (law's Capstone, as well as salvation's Cornerstone). James wrote his Epistle in this same tradition, concluding from the example of Abraham:

"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." James 2:24

John demonstrates this emphasis on works, too, in giving the Lord Jesus' assessment concerning Abraham's true children: "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would **do the works** of Abraham" (John 8:39-40). The works which Abraham wrought unto justification came many years after God had begun revealing Himself to him. By these works was "faith made perfect" (that is, 'mature' - James 2:22).

The issue, therefore, for covenanters with God was not some initial acknowledgement of God's word, but whether or not their faith would withstand and grow, when put to the test. To read ignorant idolaters of the nations into John's original readership, because of his frequent references to the "world", runs counter to his emphasis on works. On account of this, we should be as circumspect in applying John's Gospel to our present dispensation as we are in our application of the other three Gospels.

The importance of faith in the lives of believers in every dispensation and the place of works relative to faith often get confused. Moreover, the faith versus works issue needs to be rightly divided according to the particular group of faithful ones being addressed by God's word. What formed God's ancient grace to Israel, to whom the law was given (John 1:16-17), constituted a fall from grace to the Gentile graft of the Acts period, who had no such legacy of law (Gal.5:1-7). This Gentile group included apostate Israelites, cut off from the law, to whom "the gospel of the grace of God" was sent through the ministry of Paul (Acts 20:24). Concurrent with the Gentile believers not bound by the law, myriads of Christian Jews continued "zealous of the law" right to the end of Acts (21:18-26). However, when Christ offered Himself as the completely efficacious sacrifice, the letter of Mosaic law was superseded by the law of the spirit of life (Rom. 8:1-5; 2 Co.3; Heb.7:14-19; 8:13). And yet the New Covenant Jew retained some advantages from the law, although many clung to it from weakness and not knowledge (Rom.3:1-3; 9:4-5; 14:1 - 15:2).

A still higher plateau of grace relates to the Gentile church today during "the dispensation of the grace of God" (Eph.3:1-2). All is of grace here; no covenant condition applies. The outward Mosaic traditions, including the special ordinances laid upon Gentile believers at the Jerusalem council (Acts 21:25), were swept aside with Israel's privilege at Acts 28:28 (Eph.2:14-15; Col.2:13 - 3:2). Clearly, members of the church the body of Christ are saved on a faith basis through divine workmanship in the creation of the new man within us. We are saved by His grace through faith, but saved for good works (Eph.2:8-10). The commandments which apply to the church deal with the manner of life consistent with putting on this new man (Col.3:10, with larger context in vv.5-25), and without exception any attempt to practice the Mosaic rituals today can only lead to a loss of reward (Col.2:14 - 3:4; Phi.3:14-20).

Life Through His Name

The fact that John has presented to his reader the fundamental issue of life for the believer and death for the unbeliever has made his Gospel particularly amenable to teaching novices the great truth of justification by faith. However, we have observed in the previous section that John also leans toward a legalistic justification by works. By John's account, an act of belief can be reckoned equivalent to a good work, and through such a work life is attained. Consequently, the giving of that life must be a matter of reward and not a free gift of grace. So we need to ask ourselves if all references to "life" in Scripture have the same meaning. A careful examination of the Book yields a twofold result. The reader of Scripture should be judicious in rightly dividing between texts whose basis is his standing in Christ (where salvation is all of grace) and texts concerning the state of his walk (whereby he works out his salvation). Salvation is a free gift that can neither be earned nor lost by man, but a reward of inheritance may be striven for by good works. Because these two principles are integrated together into the believer's life, we find divergences like "a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ" (Gal.2:16) and "ye see then how that by works a man is

justified, and not by faith only" (Jam.2:24). These statements are complementary, not contradictory. First comes the foundation, then the building (1 Co. 3:10-12).

As for the meaning in Scripture of the expression "eternal life", we find the same duality. Some texts make grace the basis of eternal life, but others works. Take, for example, a certain young man's question of the Lord Jesus:

"Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Mat.19:16

To which He replied:

"...if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." v.17

When the rich young man stated that he had always kept these, but wondered what he lacked yet, the Lord answered:

"If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven. And come and follow Me." v.21

By perfection He meant a fully worked out salvation. Having "treasure in heaven" looked forward to the heavenly city, New Jerusalem, which will come down from heaven for Israel's overcomers (Rev.3:12; 21:2). When the sorrowful young man walked away, the Master observed:

"Verily, I say unto you that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven..."
vv.23-24

It becomes clear upon comparing verses 17 and 23 that "life" in this context means renewed spiritual life in "the kingdom of heaven". This is to be followed by resurrection life in the Millennial kingdom and in the City of inheritance. On discovering that the kingdom would be attained only with great difficulty, the amazed disciples asked, "Who then can be saved?" Being saved in this sense meant saved for the kingdom of heaven, and preserved through its tribulations for a place of honor in the Millennium. This was the hope offered to all covenant believers at that time. The Lord's answer to the disciples' question provides more insight into the gospel of the kingdom:

"Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration (that is, the restoration of the Davidic kingdom in the Millennium) when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. But many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first." vv.28-30

This is obviously not the message of salvation by grace through faith, but concerns the reward of the inheritance. Some workers would walk diligently and attain first place in the kingdom; others who sowed sparingly would reap a small reward. And finally there will be the "unprofitable servants", who are cast into "the outer darkness" outside of the kingdom (cp. the parable of the talents in Mat.25:14-30). The "outer darkness" of the parables does not necessarily signify death, but rather disenfranchisement and dispersion for faithless Israelites, the original "sons of the kingdom" (Mat.8:11-12).

The Book of Life

Those losing out on the kingdom might still retain an expectation of eternal life, but apart from any reward. They would be "saved ... as by fire" (1 Co.3:15), and will appear at the "Great White Throne" after the Millennium and the "little season" (Rev.20:3).

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Rev.20:12

The "book of life" is the book of rewards based on good service, not the divine roll of all who are saved by grace through faith. After the final judgment, New Jerusalem will descend to the earth for the overcomers of every covenant dispensation to inherit (Rev.21:1-3). As for the rest of the dead who merit no reward, they will be cast into the lake of fire, where their worthless works will be detected (Rev. 20:15; 1 Co.3:11-15). Afterward, these will go on to receive the New Earth as a restored Paradise (Rev.22:1-3), having access to the Tree of Life, which Adam lost for the whole race of man. Those pictured as not tasting death before being cast alive into the lake, like the Beast and Satan, will be irrevocably consumed in death after much searching judgment (see Satan's end in Rev.20:10 and Eze.28:18-19).

A perusal of the usage of "life" in the Scriptures of John will yield results similar to those above. In John 3:36 the issue is between life and fierce judgment:

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life. And he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

The wrath of God is dispensationally limited to the covenants God made with the earth and with Israel. As with the judgment of the murmurers who fell in the Sinai wilderness, so will be the wrath of God upon Israel in "the time of Jacob's trouble". If, out of the million or so Israelites of the Exodus, only two could be found worthy of life in the land of promise, then we might also exclaim with the disciples, "Who then can be saved?" Are we to believe that all those who perished in the desert on account of their disobedience, including Moses and Aaron, died without any hope whatsoever? This is almost inconceivable, especially when one considers the high honor afforded Moses after his death by his depiction in the Transfiguration vision. Rather, the Sinai epic has been provided to us typically and didactically, to demonstrate the perfect obedience that God desires of His people. Joshua and Caleb exemplified that faithfulness splendidly. Like them, the Israelite who endures all trials unto the end shall be saved, and receive an inheritance in the community of God (Mat. 24:13).

The reward aspect of eternal life may be found again in John 4:35-36:

"Say not ye, 'There are yet four months and then cometh harvest?' Behold, I say unto you, 'Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal; that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.'"

The outworking of the apostleship of the Twelve is in the forefront here, and from Matthew 19:28-30 above we have already seen what their prospective reward would be.

Further on, John 5:29 gives testimony to the two resurrections of Revelation 20:

"And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment (that is, the Great White Throne and lake of fire)."

In this text, all is of works and faith is not even mentioned. However, just a few lines away, verse 24 practically repeats verse 29, but there all is of faith. One must take into account that the devout Jew was already a believer; and if he would obey the O.T. Scriptures, then he should have been seeking a Saviour. Therefore it was only reasonable for the Jew to believe further in Jesus Christ unto life, for the law and the prophets were "they which testify" of Him (v.39). Those who already "believed in God" would then "believe also in Him" (John 14:1). The doctrinal basis of faith, according to John's Gospel, is one of good works leading to a perfected faith.

A passage from John 6 will provide yet another example of eternal life as it relates to reward:

"**Labor** not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth **unto everlasting life**, which the Son of man will give unto you. For Him hath God the Father sealed.' Then said they unto Him, 'What shall **we do**, that **we might work the works of God**?' Jesus answered and said unto them, 'This is **the work of God**, that **ye believe on Him** Whom He hath sent.'" John 6:27-29

But one labors for a reward, and the faith that Jesus sought from His hearers was tantamount to a work of obedience for the Jew. When many disciples walked no more with Him, the Lord Jesus asked the Twelve, "Will ye also go away?" Answering for the rest, Peter replied, "Lord to whom shall we go. Thou hast the words of eternal life." (John 6:67-68). In a previous passage Jesus had already likened His words to the testimony of another prophet:

"Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me; for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?" John 5:45-47

Here the law of Moses and the words of Jesus are put on an equal footing, with Moses portrayed as legal predecessor to the Saviour of Israel. Although he also dealt with issues of life and death, Moses' immediate concern was for earthly rewards in the Land, as promised by the covenant of law:

"See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply. And the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shall be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live, that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey His voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto Him. For He is thy life, and the length of thy days, that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord sware unto the Fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them." Deuteronomy 30:15-20

Truly Moses was a prophet who served as a pattern, after which God raised up the ultimate Prophet,

Whom He also anointed to be King of Israel. Perhaps it is no exaggeration to say that John's portrayal of Christ, much more so than the Synoptists', follows most closely this Mosaic pattern.

"I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee (Moses), and will put My words in His mouth (these are 'the words of eternal life'); and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto My words which He shall speak in My name, I will require it of him." Deuteronomy 18:18-19

Time after time Israel contested with Moses over his right to be "a prince and a judge" of the people (Exo.2:14). Even so the Jews strove continually with Christ over the authority of His words and works. John concentrates on this aspect of Messiah's mission more than the other Evangelists.

The following example sets forth once more "life" as the reward for a faithful walk. But note how His words of life were rejected:

"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, 'I am the light of the world. He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.' The Pharisees therefore said unto Him, 'Thou bearest record of Thyself; Thy record is not true.' Jesus answered and said unto them, 'Though I bear record of Myself, yet My record is true. For I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. And yet if I judge, My judgment is true. For I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent Me. It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of Myself, and the Father that sent Me beareth witness of Me.'" John 8:12-18

The first verse above seems not far different from the Master's words to the rich young man - following Christ yields eternal life. When John wrote, the "light of life" was immediately attainable through baptism. Later, through resurrection, those overcomers who forsook all things to "follow Him" would inherit the city of light (Rev.21:22-25). When the Jews opposed His doctrine, the Lord was not slow to judge them out of their own covenant of law, reminding them that their revered Moses had received it for them.

The Father's witness to Jesus' Messiahship was manifested in the marvelous signs that He worked. This furnishes us another parallel with the ministries of Moses and Aaron. God confirmed their authority against the murmurings of Israel with many signs: the ten plagues on Egypt (Exo.5:20 - 6:1 and after), the parting of the Red Sea (Exo.14:10-16, 31), the healing of the waters of Marah (Exo.15:22-25), the giving of the manna and the quails (Exo.16:2-15), providing the water from the rock and the victory over Amalek (Exo.17:1-14), the second giving of the quails and the plague following (Num.11:4-34), Miriam's leprosy (Num.12), the additional 38 years of exile in Sinai (Num. 13:30 - 14:45), the destruction of Korah (Num.16:1-40), the budding of Aaron's rod (Num.16:41 - 17:13), the sending of fiery serpents and the raising of the serpent of brass (Num.21:4-9).

The witness of the signs (or "works") of Christ stands forward in another "eternal life" passage of John's Gospel:

"Then came the Jews round about Him, and said unto Him, 'How long dost Thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.' Jesus answered them, 'I told you, and you believed not. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me. But ye believe not,

because ye are not of My sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." John 10:24-28

The meaning of the signs He performed spoke plainly of His Messiahship. And the true sheep of the Good Shepherd would always be found to "follow Him", acknowledging all His works and words. While the overcomers hoped to gain eternal life in the coming kingdom, those who balked in unbelief at His word would be purged away in the great tribulation, potentially about to come at that time:

"And He said to them all, 'If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and **follow Me**. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose **his life** for My sake, the same **shall save it**. For what is a man profited, having gained the whole world, but having destroyed or suffered the loss of himself? For whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He shall come in His own glory, and in His Father's and the holy angels.' But I tell you truly, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death till [perhaps] they see the kingdom of God.'" Luke 9:23-27

At this point in their history, Israel stood on the threshold of great events; and a crossroads of decision awaited each one of them individually. That generation, of all the generations of Israel, were given the opportunity to see, hear, touch and follow Messiah. Also the possibility was put forward that they might go on to experience the day of the Lord, with all its trials and subsequent blessings. Just as Moses had exhorted his generation of Israel to choose obedience and life, so a choice of life or death faced the generation of Jesus' day. There was no middle ground, and the making of a choice was absolutely necessary. Those who decided to follow Christ could expect not merely to survive great tribulation to see the Millennial kingdom, but to receive in that kingdom a position of honor as the nation of priests, which is their destiny to fulfill in the world. Although some would lose their lives for His sake, the Lord will raise these before His return (1 Th.4:14-17; Rev.11:7-12). Those choosing the world's rewards instead could expect either to perish or otherwise to be cast out of the kingdom into "the outer darkness". The best that these non-overcomers could hope for would be a less honorable resurrection at the Great White Throne.

John's record of "His words" does touch upon the immediate life-or-death dilemma confronting that generation, but these discourses are not given as straightforwardly as in the Synoptic accounts. Perhaps we should say that John's record of the words of Jesus in this matter is even more parabolic than the Synoptists':

"Jesus saith unto her, 'Thy brother shall rise again.' Martha saith unto Him, 'I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.' Jesus saith unto her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.'" John 11:23-26

We must beware spiritualizing away this teaching on life and death, for the direct meaning of the words will suffice for our understanding. Notably in Paul's pre-Acts 28 teaching, all that the Lord intended in these words is brought to light (see 1 Co.15:50-58; 1 Th.4:9-18). Those believers living through the day of the Lord would pass instantly from physical life into eternal life; while those who had endured in faith in previous generations (or unto martyrdom in that generation) would be raised from the dead to be united with them.

The question of "losing" or "saving" one's life in the day of the Lord, which we encountered above in Luke 9, finds a parallel in John:

"He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto **eternal life**. If any man **serve Me**, let him **follow Me**; and where I am, there shall also My servant be. If any man **serve Me**, him will My Father honor."

John 12:25-26

The accent is on good service, following the Lord's example. But note that while all is of works in verses 25-26, verse 24 demonstrates that the foundation work belongs to Christ. He died as "a corn of wheat" in order to bring forth much fruit for the kingdom of God (cp. John 3:3). Again we must discriminate between the work of the Saviour in enabling believers to follow Him, and the deeds of men in working out their salvation.

Another passage on "life" in John's Gospel does not lend itself to an easy distinction between the believer's standing in Christ and the state of his walk:

"In My Father's house are many mansions ('abodes'): if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.' Thomas saith unto Him, 'Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; and how can we know the way?' Jesus saith unto him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.'" John 14:2-6

Certainly the Lord's assertion that He was "the way and the truth and the life" addresses His foundational work on the believer's behalf. But the context of the passage seems to take us beyond this, in relating the way of the cross to the sphere of reward in the "Father's house", which is for those who take up Jesus' cross and follow Him. How are we to understand where this "house" is and what the "abodes" refer to? A Pauline Epistle comes to our aid in clarifying these words :

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven. If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened. Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life."

2 Corinthians 5:1-4

The correspondence between John's "abodes" and Paul's "tabernacle" is tied to the problem of "mortality" and "life". At that time Paul was longing for the resurrection body instantly to replace his fleshly body in the day of the Lord (1 Co.15:51-53), lest he be found at any time "naked" (that is, dead and bodiless). Both writers also speak of a house in heaven. Now a house (*oikas*) as a dwelling for servants calls up thoughts of a stewardship (*oikonomia*) for the participants, who abide in the master's house. Whether John's "abodes" have the restored kingdom (Millennium) in view, when Christ will return to receive His stewards unto Himself, or rather the ultimate blessing of the heavenly Jerusalem (post-Millennial), is difficult to ascertain. But man, who is a finite being, must abide somewhere; and his abiding takes two forms - a body and an environment. Those with earthly bodies may remain on earth for a season, while those with heavenly bodies may occupy the eternal, heavenly city

(1 Co.15:38-40). Even the leading teachers of the day were unprepared for these "heavenly things" which our Lord only hinted at before the cross (John 3:12).

The "way" into the kingdom of God is by resurrection into an appropriate body, not made "of the flesh" (John 1:12-13; 3:3; 1 Co. 15:50). This way has been provided by the completed work of Christ, Who is "the way - yes, the true and living way" (thus render the figure *Hendiatrix* in John 14:6). But, as mentioned earlier, "the way" is built of more than the perfect foundation work of Christ. His life and death also provided an enduring example for those who desired to become perfected, endeavoring to take up their crosses and follow Him. This was a narrow way, demanding complete obedience and spiritual self-discipline:

"Enter ye in at the straight gate (Gk. *pule*, the doorway to a house or the gate to a city, cp. Rev.21:10-13). For wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction (or, 'loss'), and many there be that go in thereat. Because straight is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Matthew 7:13-14

Such a way was impossible for man to follow, but God made it possible through a baptism of spiritual regeneration (Mat.19:26). Also, special enablements or "gifts" of the Holy Spirit would empower the apostles to perform the same "works" as Christ, and even greater than His (John 14:12-14).

This brings our survey of "life" in John's Gospel to a conclusion. To God are due all our praises and thanksgivings for the free gift of life provided by His Son's work, a gift open to all men regardless of dispensation. But John puts forth a special testimony concerning eternal life in its reward aspect. About half the passages with teaching on "life" and "eternal life" in his Gospel emphasize the believer's walk, and the reward for service "well done". Spiritual guidance may be found today in the words "life through His name" to lead ignorant men to faith in Christ, but we should be careful with maturing believers by rightly dividing the Scriptures of John. The distinctive character of our walk in the present dispensation, as well as the nature of the inheritance offered to the church the body of Christ, can be found only in the Epistles of Paul's prison ministry. These include Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon.

Chapter Seven

WORD USAGE AND INTERPRETIVE COMMENTS IN THE GOSPELS

John's Gospel is considered by some to be the most Jewish of the four Gospels. Linguistically, N. Turner has described it as "more Semitic than the other gospels without being a translation."¹ The strong Old Testament Jewish tradition in which John presented his Gospel is elucidated for us by his use of certain words and names, as compared to Matthew, Mark and Luke. In the following table under the name of each Gospel is found paired columns of figures. The first number counts all the occurrences found in that book. Another meaningful gauge of word usage is the periodicity of use, measured in the number of lines of text on average in which the word is found once. Word periodicities are listed parenthetically, with the total number of lines of Greek text in each Gospel indicated under its column heading.²

	Matthew (2209 li.)	Mark (1369 li.)	Luke (2350 li.)	John (1801 li.)
Abraham (<i>Abraam</i>)	7 (316)	1 (1369)	15 (157)	11 (80)
circumcision (<i>peritome</i>)	-	-	-	2 (440)
circumcise (<i>peritemno</i>)	-	-	2 (1175)	1 (879)
Moses (<i>Moses, Moseus</i>)	7 (316)	8 (171)	10 (235)	13 (139)
law (<i>nomos</i>)	8 (276)	-	9 (261)	15 (120)
Commandment (<i>entole</i>)	7 (316)	8 (171)	4 (588)	10 (180)
work, n. (<i>ergon</i>)	5 (442)	2 (685)	2 (1175)	27 (67)
work, v. (<i>ergazomai</i>)	4 (552)	1 (1369)	1 (2350)	8 (225)
witness, n. (<i>marturia</i>)	-	3 (456)	1 (2350)	14 (129)
witness, v. (<i>martureo</i>)	1 (2209)	-	2 (1175)	33 (55)
sign (<i>semeion</i>)	13 (170)	7 (196)	11 (214)	17 (106)
signify (<i>semaino</i>)	-	-	-	3 (600)
manna (fm. Heb. <i>man</i>)	-	-	-	3 (600)
bread (<i>artos</i>)	21 (105)	22 (62)	16 (147)	24 (75)
glory (<i>doxa</i>)	8 (276)	3 (456)	13 (181)	19 (95)
glorify (<i>doxazo</i>)	4 (552)	1 (1369)	9 (261)	23 (78)
light (<i>phos</i>)	7 (316)	1 (1369)	6 (392)	23 (78)
not believe (<i>ou pisteo</i>)	4 (552)	4 (342)	3 (783)	26 (69)
disbelieve (<i>apisteo</i>)	-	2 (685)	2 (1175)	-
unbelief (<i>apistia</i>)	2 (1105)	3 (456)	-	-
unbelieving (<i>apistos</i>)	1 (2209)	1 (1369)	2 (1175)	1 (1801)
disobey (<i>apeitheo</i>)	-	-	-	1 (1801)
judge (<i>krino</i>)	6 (368)	-	6 (392)	19 (95)
judgment (<i>krisis</i>)	12 (184)	2 (685)	4 (588)	11 (164)
murmuring (<i>gongusmos</i>)	-	-	-	1 (1801)

¹ J.H.Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. IV, p. 64 ² based on United Bible Societies, *The Greek New Testament*, 1975

	Matthew (2209 li.)	Mark (1369 li.)	Luke (2350 li.)	John (1801 li.)
murmur (<i>gonguzo</i>)	1 (2209)	-	1 (2350)	4 (450)
division (<i>schisma</i>) used of the Jews	-	-	-	3 (600)
contend (<i>machomai</i>)	-	-	-	1 (1801)
fear, n. (<i>phobos</i>) "of the Jews"	-	-	-	3 (600)
fear, v. (<i>phobeomai</i>) "the Jews"	-	-	-	1 (1801)
put out of synagogue (<i>aposunagogos</i>)	-	-	-	3 (600)
baptize (<i>baptizo</i>)	11 (201)	12 (114)	10 (235)	13 (139)
water (<i>hudor</i>)	7 (316)	5 (274)	6 (392)	24 (75)
waterpot (<i>hudria</i>)	-	-	-	3 (600)
pool (<i>columbethra</i>)	-	-	-	5 (360)
bathe (<i>louo</i>)	-	-	-	1 (1801)
wash (<i>nipto</i>)	2 (1105)	1 (1369)	-	13 (139)
basin (<i>nipter</i>)	-	-	-	1 (1801)
well (<i>pege</i>)	-	1 (1369)	-	3 (600)
well (<i>phrear</i>)	-	-	1 (2350)	2 (901)
flow (<i>rheo</i>)	-	-	-	1 (1801)
feast (<i>heorte</i>)	2 (1105)	2 (685)	4 (588)	17 (106)
dedication (<i>enkainia</i>)	-	-	-	1 (1801)
Passover preparation (<i>paraskeue</i>)	1 (2209)	1 (1369)	1 (2350)	3 (600)
Passover (<i>pascha</i>)	4 (552)	5 (274)	7 (336)	10 (180)
Lamb (<i>Amnos</i>)	-	-	-	2 (901)
hyssop (<i>hussopos</i>)	-	-	-	1 (1801)
barley (<i>krithinos</i>) - offered at Firstfruits	-	-	-	2 (901)
Tabernacles (<i>skenopegia</i>)	-	-	-	1 (1801)
Messiah (<i>Messias</i>)	-	-	-	2 (901)
Christ (<i>Christos</i>)	17 (130)	7 (200)	13 (181)	21 (86)
Jesus (<i>Iesous</i>)	172 (13)	93 (15)	98 (24)	254 (7)
Vine (<i>Ampelos</i>) - used of Christ	-	-	-	3 (600)
vine (<i>ampelos</i>) - other usages	1 (2209)	1 (1369)	1 (2350)	-
branch (<i>klema</i>)	-	-	-	4 (450)
Shepherd, n. (<i>Poimen</i>) - used of Christ	2 (1105)	1 (1369)	-	6 (300)
shepherd, n. (<i>poimen</i>) - other usages	1 (2209)	1 (1369)	4 (588)	-
flock (<i>poimne</i>) - used of Israel	1 (2209)	-	-	1 (1801)
flock (<i>poimne</i>) - other usages	-	-	1 (2350)	-
lamb (<i>arnion</i>) - used of Israel	-	-	-	1 (1801)
sheep (<i>probaton</i>) - used of Israel	6 (368)	2 (685)	-	19 (95)
sheep (<i>probaton</i>) - other usages	5 (442)	-	2 (1175)	2 (901)
shepherd, v. (<i>poimaino</i>) - used of Israel	1 (2209)	-	-	1 (1801)
shepherd, v. (<i>poimaino</i>) - other usages	-	-	1 (2350)	-
pasture (<i>nome</i>)	-	-	-	1 (1801)

	Matthew (2209 li.)	Mark (1369 li.)	Luke (2350 li.)	John (1801 li.)
world (<i>kosmos</i>)	9 (245)	3 (456)	3 (783)	79 (23)
world (<i>oikoumene</i>)	1 (2209)	-	3 (783)	-
Jew (<i>Iudaios</i>)	5 (442)	7 (196)	5 (470)	71 (25)
teacher (<i>rabbi, rabboni, rabbouni</i>)	5 (442)	5 (274)	-	9 (200)
Israelite (<i>Israelites</i>)	-	-	-	1 (1801)
Israel (<i>Israel</i>)	12 (184)	2 (685)	12 (196)	4 (450)
bride (<i>numphe</i>) - used of Israel	-	-	-	1 (1801)
Jerusalem (<i>Ierosoluma</i>) - Hellenic sp.	11 (201)	9 (152)	5 (470)	12 (150)
Jerusalem (<i>Ierosusalem</i>) - Hebraic sp.	2 (1105)	1 (1369)	28 (84)	-
Jerusalemite (<i>Ierosolumitai</i>)	-	1 (1360)	-	1 (1801)
Samaria (<i>Samareia</i>)	-	-	1 (2350)	3 (600)
Samaritan (<i>Samareites</i>)	1 (2209)	-	3 (783)	4 (450)
Ephraim (<i>Ephraim</i>)	-	-	-	1 (1801)
Galilee (<i>Galilaia</i>)	16 (138)	12 (114)	15 (157)	17 (106)
Galilean (<i>Galilaios</i>)	1 (2209)	1 (1369)	5 (470)	1 (1801)
Hebrew (<i>Hebraisti</i>)	-	-	-	4 (450)
Hebrew (<i>Hebraikos</i>)	-	-	1 (2350)	-
interpret (<i>hermeneuo</i>)	-	-	-	3 (600)
interpret (<i>methermeneuo</i>)	1 (2209)	3 (456)	-	1 (1801)
Dispersion (<i>diaspora</i>)	-	-	-	1 (1801)
Greek (<i>Hellen</i>) - used of a man	-	-	-	3 (600)
Greek (<i>Hellenisti</i>) - the language	-	-	-	1 (1801)
Greek, adj. (<i>Hellenikos</i>)	-	-	1 (2350)	-
Greek (<i>Hellenis</i>) - used of a woman	-	1 (1369)	-	-
Roman (<i>Romaaios</i>)	-	-	-	1 (1801)
Latin (<i>Romaisti</i>)	-	-	-	1 (1801)
Latin (<i>Romaikos</i>)	-	-	1 (2350)	-
scripture (<i>graphe</i>)	4 (552)	4 (342)	4 (588)	12 (150)
write (<i>grapho</i>)	10 (221)	10 (137)	22 (107)	23 (78)
word (<i>logos</i>)	32 (69)	24 (57)	33 (71)	40 (45)
say (<i>lego</i>)	293 (7.5)	207 (6.6)	227 (10.4)	267 (6.7)
word (<i>rhema</i>)	6 (368)	9 (152)	19 (124)	12 (150)
speak (<i>reo</i>)	20 (110)	1 (1369)	-	-
speech (<i>lalia</i>)	1 (2209)	1 (1369)	-	2 (901)
speak (<i>laleo</i>)	26 (85)	19 (72)	30 (78)	59 (31)
amen (lit. Heb.) - faithfully, assuredly	32 (69)	15 (91)	8 (294)	51 (35)

This table can provide only a rough measure of the scope the John's Gospel, and a contextual study of the key words involved should not be neglected. In most cases the study of words in their contexts will yield much more illumination than mere word counts. For example, the use of the word "king" does not seem very significant in John when we compared with the other Gospels:

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
king (basileus)	23 (96)	12 (114)	11 (210)	16 (113)

However, when we restrict our investigation to only those occurrences where "king" refers to Christ, we stand to gain much insight.

Christ as "King" in the Gospels

Matthew (11 occs .)

- 2: 2 King of the Jews - the Magi, confessing
- 5: 35 the great King - Christ: a parabolic reference to Himself
- 18: 23 a certain king - (same as above)
- 21: 5 your King - fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9
- 22: 2 a certain king - Christ: a parabolic reference to His Father
- 25: 34 the King - Christ: a prophetic reference to Himself
- 25: 40 the King - (same as above)
- 27: 11 the King of the Jews - Pilate, questioning Him
- 27: 29 King of the Jews - Roman soldiers, mocking
- 27: 37 the King of the Jews - Pilate: the official accusation
- 27: 42 *the King of Israel* - chief priests and scribes, mocking

Mark (6 occs.)

- 15: 2 the King of the Jews - Pilate, questioning Him
- 15: 9 the King of the Jews - Pilate, taunting the chief priests
- 15: 12 the King of the Jews - (same as above)
- 15: 18 King of the Jews - Roman soldiers, mocking
- 15: 26 the King of the Jews - Pilate: the official accusation
- 15: 32 *the King of Israel* - chief priests and scribes, mocking

Luke (5 occs .)

- 19: 38 the King That cometh in - His disciples, confessing Him in the name of the Lord - an embellishment of Psalm 118:26
- 23: 2 Christ a King - chief priests and scribes, accusing Him
- 23: 3 the King of the Jews - Pilate, questioning Him
- 23: 37 the King of the Jews - soldiers, mocking
- 23: 38 the King of the Jews - Pilate: the official accusation

John (15 occs.)

- 1: 49 *the King of Israel* - Nathanael, confessing
- 6: 15 a king - the crowd, desiring to make Him king
- 12: 13 *the King of Israel* - many people, confessing Him in fulfillment of Psa. 118:26
- 12: 15 your King - fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9
- 18: 33 the King of the Jews - Pilate, questioning Him
- 18: 37 a king - Pilate, questioning Him

- 18: 37 a king - Christ, admitting the accusation
 18: 39 the King of the Jews - Pilate, taunting the chief priests
 19: 3 King of the Jews - Roman soldiers, mocking
 19: 12 a king - the Jews, accusing Christ of usurpation
 19: 14 your King - Pilate, taunting the Jews, perhaps now with an
 element of confession
 19: 15 your King - (same as above)
 19: 19 the King of the Jews - Pilate: the official accusation
 19: 21 the King of the Jews - chief priests, disputing Pilate's
 (twice) wording of the superscripted accusation

In the table preceding, note that John's Gospel exhibits more affirmations of Christ's kingship than the Synoptic Gospels. It is remarkable that almost every occurrence of "king" in John is a reference to Christ. Also, the expression "the King of Israel" is somewhat preferred in John's account, and this finding rather vindicates Bullinger's synopsis of the book in the form of an introversion emphasizing Christ the King.¹ On the other hand Welch's structural analysis of John, built around the eight signs which the Lord wrought,² is also valid. The two structures are not contradictory but bring out, as it were, two different facets of this Bible gem called the Gospel of John.

One more example, taken from a pair of entries in the first table (p.40). may suffice to demonstrate the subtlety that word searches require. Not only is the name "Christ" used more frequently in John, but its Hebrew equivalent "Messias" is found only in John. Even more striking is the fact that the rare word "Messias" is found only on the lips of a Galilean (1:41) and a Samaritan (4:25), again pointing to salvation for those cut off from the mainstream of Judaism.

The Jews and the World

For his Greek readers John felt the need to interpret some of his much used Hebrew and Aramaic words, such as "rabbi" (1:38; 20:16), "Messiah" (1:41; 4:25), "Cephas" (1:42), "Siloam" (9:7), "Thomas" (11:16; 20:24; 21:2), "Gabbatha" (19:13) and "Golgotha" (19:17). This device is not peculiar to John, for the rest of the New Testament does likewise with the following: "Emmanuel" (Mat. 1:23), "Boanerges" (Mark 3:17), "Talitha cumi" (Mark 5:41), "Ephphatha" (Mark 7:34), "Bartimaeus" (Mark 10:46), "Abba" (Mark 14:36; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6), "Golgotha" (Mat. 27:33; Mark 15:22), "Eli, Eli. lama sabachthani?" (Mat. 27:46; Mark 15:34), "Aceldama" (Acts 1:19), "Barnabas" (Acts 4:36), "Tabitha" (Acts 9:36), "Elymas" (Acts 13:8), "Melchisedec" and "Salem" (Heb. 7:1-2) and "Abaddon" (Rev. 9:11). It is certainly interesting to note that the so-called Epistle to the Hebrews interprets two Hebrew names for its readers. It seems more likely that the author was addressing Hellenistic Jewish believers of the dispersion. The Greek dispersion Jew was probably the principal reader intended by Matthew, Mark, John, James, Peter, Jude and Paul (in his Acts period Epistles, and especially in Hebrews). The immediate purpose of written accounts such as the Gospels and the Epistles was to reach the remote portions of the flock with inspired, authoritative teaching. Secondarily, they became the Holy Spirit's endowment during post-apostolic times for a church zealous for the God-breathed word of truth.

John's references to "the feasts of the Jews" (3 occs.) have been interpreted by some expositors as indicating a post-70 A.D. authorship of the book. But this phrasing may best be understood as

¹ J.H. Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. IV, p. 76

evidence that John's first objective in writing his Gospel was to minister to Samaria. Samaria was schismatic and kept none of the feasts of the Jews at Jerusalem. In addition to this, Jewish tradition had added to the sanctioned feasts of Mosaic Law. There was, for example, the feast of the dedication of the new temple (John 10:22), which gave the official stamp of approval to a building which was corrupted with merchandising (John 2:13-21). Rabbinism, too, had bound many unnecessary statutory burdens upon the backs of men (Mat. 23:4), so that even "the feasts of the Lord" (Lev. 23:4) had degenerated into "the feasts of the Jews".

If John seems to distance himself from the Jews in his Gospel (and cp. his attitude in Rev. 1:7; 2:9; 3:9), so, on occasion, do Matthew (28:15), Mark (1:5; 7:3), Luke (23:51) and Peter (note his remark in Acts 12:11). The majority of the Jews resisted the preaching of the Apostles concerning Israel's Messiah. These "sons of disobedience" were, therefore, "concerning the gospel ... enemies" (Rom. 11:28). For Christian Jews, like John, who endured persecution and dispersion at the hands of their own nation (see Acts 8:1. for example), it is understandable how the expression "the Jews" could be used negatively. But this is not the only sense in which John uses the term in his Gospel. John's short vocabulary¹ may be viewed as one reason for his high usage of certain words, and one must be careful with his most frequently used words to heed the nuances. Examination of the 71 occurrences of "Jew" in this Gospel will show that about 75 percent of them bear religious or geographical overtones which restrict our understanding of the word. In religion, it was the alienation of sectarian leaders and Rabbinical customs from God's truth that was at issue. Those who proclaimed most loudly their discipleship in Moses were the very ones who rejected the testimonies of both Moses and Christ (John 5:45-46; 9:28-29). Geographically John's condemnation of the Jews centered on the seat of Jewish orthodoxy. In Jerusalem of Judea the seed of hatred for Messiah was planted and flourished, bearing the evil fruit of the crucifixion of their King. The following texts will show that John did not intend "the Jews" to signify all the Jews in every instance, but often meant the nation's leaders and those who followed their bidding:

"And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?'" 1:19

"And the Jews' Passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. . ." 2:13

"There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews." 3:1

"After these things came Jesus and His disciples into the Judealand; and there He tarried with them and baptized." 3:22 (only Mat. 2:6 approaches this unique expression of place)

"Then there arose a question between John's disciples and the Jews about purification." 3:25

"After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem." 5:1

" The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, 'It is the sabbath day; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed.'" 5:10

"After these things Jesus walked in Galilee, for He would not walk in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him." 7:1

¹ J.H. Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. IV. p. 76

"Now the Jews' feast of Tabernacles was at hand. His brethren therefore said unto Him, 'Depart hence, and go into Judea that Your disciples also may see the works that You do. For no one does anything in secret, and He Himself seeks to be in the open. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world.'" 7:2-4

"Then the Jews sought Him at the feast, and said, 'Where is He?' And there was much murmuring among the crowds concerning Him; for some said, 'He is a good man.' Others said, 'No, but He deceives the crowd.' However, no one spoke openly concerning Him for fear of the Jews.'" 7:11-13

"Then said the Jews among themselves, 'Where is He about to go that we shall not find Him? Is He about to go unto the dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks?'" 7:35

"These things said his parents because they feared the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed together that if anyone should confess Him as Christ he should be expelled from synagogue." 9:22

"And it was Caiaphas who gave counsel to the Jews, that it is profitable for one man to perish for the people." 18:14

"Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, 'Write not, The King of the Jews, but that He said, I am King of the Jews.'" 19:21

In other passages it is not so clear whether the blind leaders who claimed to see were meant, or their blind followers. Jesus' lengthy discourses, as recounted by John, often show the Jews beginning in belief, but ending in unbelief when His words began to unmask their self-righteousness. John accentuates murmurings, divisions and fear of the religious authorities to a greater extent than the Synoptists (see word table on pp. 39-40). Therefore, his account, like the book of Acts, lays bare the failure of orthodox Israel as the reason for the spread of the gospel into "the world". The Judean Jews' disdain of Samaritans, Galileans and Dispersion Jewry is evident in 8:48; 7:52 and 7:35, respectively. Perhaps out of deference for his Samaritan readers, John recorded the Lord's denial of demon-possession but left the accusation of being a Samaritan unanswered (8:48). It was through these "foolish" ones of the world, as the Jewish religious establishment viewed them, that God chose to put to shame the wise (1 Co. 1:18-21).

John's use of "world" is similar to his use of "Jew", in that he works the word very hard (79 occs.) but not always with the same meaning. In the following passage we may read our modern sense of "world" into *kosmos*:

"Father, I will that they also whom You have given Me be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world." 17:24

Other passages must be taken differently, however. Could the world at large be offered the benefit of the great antitypical Passover "Lamb of God" (John 1:29), when no uncircumcised foreigner was ever allowed to partake of the typical Passover (Exo.12:43-49)? And could the world which received that Prophet foretold by Moses (John 6:14) be any wider than the Nation which the Lord had set apart from

other nations to serve Him in truth (Deu.18:14-19)? If Christ came to minister only "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mat.10:5-6: 15:24; Rom,15:8), then "the world" to which Christ spoke (John 8:26; 17:13; 18:19-20) and manifested Himself (7:1-4; 14:30-31), into which He came (3:17; 6:14, 32-33; 9:39; 10:35-36; 11:27; 12:46-47; 16:28; 17:12, 18; 18:36-37) and from which He departed (13:1; 14:19; 16:28; 17:11) must be understood to be Israel in the main. At that time it could only have been Jews who went after Him (12:18-19) or hated Him (3:19; 7:6-7; 15:17-19; 17:14), but for the most part they knew neither Him nor His Father (1:10; 17:25). After the Great Pentecost of Acts 2 they would be equally ignorant of the other Comforter, the Holy Spirit, Whose witness the world could not receive (14:16-17; 16:8-11). In His last discourse with the Twelve before the cross (in John's account), the Lord spoke often of the "world" in contrast to His disciples (14:22, 27; 17:6, 9, 14, 18). By this He differentiated between the wheat and the chaff of Israel (Mat.3:11-12). The meaning "far and wide" (e.g., in Col.1:6)¹ is often attached to the use of "world" in the Bible, and this sense is certainly present in many of John's passages.

The great commission for the Twelve coming out of the Lord's prayer of John 17 is also world-ward:

"As You sent Me into the world, I also sent them into the world; and for them I sanctify Myself, that also they may be sanctified in truth. And I do not make request for these only, but also for those who will believe on Me through their word; that all may be one, as You Father are in Me, and I in You, that also they may be one in us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And I have given them the glory which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are One; I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected unto one, and that the world may know that You sent Me and loved them even as You loved Me." 17:18-23

A careful reading of Acts and the Epistles of James, Peter, John and Jude will show that the Twelve and the Lord's brothers understood their mission field to be the Jews of the world. Their "apostleship of the circumcision" broadcasted the gospel almost exclusively to Jews (Gal.2:7-8). The Roman Cornelius was a notable exception, and he was probably a Jew in spirit if not in flesh. Only after the "conversion" of Israel can God's promise to Abram for the rest of the nations come to fruition. Paul's "gospel of the uncircumcision" to a world of both Jews and Greeks, including apostate Israelites and non-Israelites, was given as a gracious instrument to provoke Israel to emulation (Rom.11:11-15). The proposition that God is presently calling some Gentiles into a church whose blessings derive from Israel's earthly hope, but apart from any place at all for the Nation today, runs counter to the principle of right division. This is what the doctrine of two parallel callings in the dispensation of grace really says: there are two legitimate churches today, one to inherit heavenly places and the other to share the tree of life in the New Earth, headed by Israel.

An engaging argument, used to prove the existence of two callings today, draws on an analogy with the dispensation of covenants. The two callings thought to be in effect under the covenants are often referred to as the "Wife" and the "Bride". But those who propose two hopes and two callings for Israel fail to mark the progressive nature of covenant revelation in their analyses. Israel as Jehovah's wife is the Nation in the flesh under the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants. God's promises to Israel under these covenants are bountiful, concerning a fulness of the good things in this life in the Promised Land. But covenant believers who measure up to the moral standards of the New Covenant, even if

¹ J.H. Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 357

they lived before Calvary, will partake of a "better hope" based on "better promises" in resurrection life (Heb.7:19; 8:6; 12:22; Rev.20:6). As partakers of the "better resurrection" they will become remarried in covenant renewal with Jehovah at the great marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev.19:7-9). Through their "royal priesthood", blessings will be dispensed to all the nations of the earth. Finally "the bride, the Lamb's wife" (note the apposition!) will receive her sanctuary of "the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God" (Rev.21:9-12). While Israel is at the center of this picture, grafted-in Gentiles from every covenant age will also participate. Even the great exemplars of faith listed in Hebrews 11 include Gentiles, and so the Israel of God are reckoned a spiritual seed of Abraham (Gal.3:6-9). If we impute to the "wife" and the "bride" separate resurrection hopes, each with blessings peculiar to its own calling, we give them an equivalency bordering on equality. But those in the bride group are also **part of** the wife: that part who "go on unto perfection" to "receive the promise of eternal inheritance". For the rest of the wife group there is the prospect of inhabiting (not inheriting) the New Earth, a restored Paradise for unworthy servants whose deeds were meager, like the repentant thief on the cross (Luke 23:43; Rev.22:2). This less desirable option of falling short of the goal, to receive eternal life without honor or inheritance, is a foundational truth that applies to every dispensation. The elective principle of many called but few chosen is both sound and Scriptural (Mat.20:16; 22:13-14). While it seems incorrect to say that any has been "called" to the Great White Throne at the latter resurrection, it is certainly revealed that many will be found there. The callings, whether earthly or heavenly, represent the pinnacles that God wants his people to strive for.

If a second calling of believers is taking place now, what Scriptures were given to reveal to these other saints their calling and hope? Some have put forward the Gospel of John as part of the message to this other church. It has been my object to refute this view as the tenuous product of Scriptural eisegesis, rather than sound exegesis. And what other Scriptures are there to strengthen this viewpoint, that will not do equal violence to the oracles and the hope of Israel?

Some expositors are of the opinion that John's Gospel depicts Israel as totally beyond reclamation at the time of authorship. Such texts as 1:11 seem to lead to this conclusion.

"He came to His own (neut. pl. - David's inheritance, the kingship of Israel), and His own (masc. pl. - Israel's people, the Judahites or Jews) received Him not..."

I have before suggested that "His own" (masc. pl.) were the Jewish orthodoxy of that time, headquartered in Jerusalem. Adding verse 10 to the context, moreover, we discern that neither "the world" knew Him nor did "His own" receive Him. Because the past tense "knew" is used, this "world" must have had opportunity to know Him in the flesh. Logically this, too, must be the world of the Jews. The "all men", "every man" and "as many as" (vv. 7,9,12) that John makes mention of must be understood within the context of the whole book; their application is no more universal than the "all men" who have salvation in 1 Timothy 4:10. Likewise the "all men" whom the Pharisees feared would believe in Jesus after His raising of Lazarus is a qualified statement, that must not be excerpted from its context (John 11:47-48; 12:17-19).

John goes on to say in 1:12 that, as many as did receive Him were given "authority" to become "children of God", so it appears that a remnant both of "the world" and of "His own" did believe in Him. Much has been made by some dispensationalists over John's preference for "child of God" over "son of God", when referring to believers. Note that these children in John 1:12 have authority, and so

cannot be viewed as disenfranchised orphans. John's literary style is equally selective in his Epistles (see Appendix A), where he has reserved the expression "son of God" for Christ. These Epistles are unquestionably Pentecostal, with Israel's privilege central to God's dealings with men. One should note that saints in the body of Christ are also referred to as children (*tekna*) - see Ephesians 5:1, Philippians 2:15 and Ephesians 5:8 (cp. with "sons of light" in John 12:36). Is it not conceivable that the Holy Spirit might have directed John to concentrate on the sonship of Christ, while assigning other writers to promulgate God's adoption of His people?

John has not completely neglected the doctrine of adoption, however. For example, John 17:6-26 implies the sonship of men to God, by virtue of the close association portrayed there between the Son of God and His disciples. That Paul in Galatians 4:4-7 plainly teaches the doctrine of adoption hardly needs mentioning, but his addressing the Galatian saints in verse 19 as "little children" (*teknion*) is no contradiction and seems to have been overlooked by those who distinguish a sonship from a childship calling.

Jewish Customs Explained or Implied in the New Testament

We have examined already the instances where John interprets certain non-Greek words, and to this we should add his helpful asides on Jewish customs and geographical points, like the following:

"And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews." 2:6

"Then says the woman of Samaria unto Him, 'How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink of me, being a Samaritan woman?' (for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans)." 4:9

"Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool (which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches)." 5:2

"After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias." 6:1

"And the feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem; and it was winter." 10:22

"And the Jew's Passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves." 11:55

"Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas into the praetorium. and it was early. And they entered not into the praetorium, that they might not be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover." 18:28

"But you have a custom, that I should release someone unto you at the Passover. Do you wish me therefore to release unto you the King of the Jews?" 18:39

"And Nicodemus came also, who came to Jesus by night at first, bearing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. Then they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen wraps with the aromatics, even as the custom is among the Jews to prepare for burial." 19:39-40
 {With this text we need to compare the earlier episode in which Mary the sister of Lazarus

anointed the feet of Jesus, in a type of preparation for burial (12:3-7). That passage provides no explanatory remarks concerning Jewish customs, and neither do the accounts in the Synoptic Gospels concerning the unidentified woman who anointed the head of Jesus (Mat.26:12; Mark 14:8). We might conclude that some of John's readers required the explanation about Jewish burial rites (Greeks and Romans preferred cremation over burial), while others did not. }

John's Gospel does not stand alone in clarifying matters of Jewish custom, as the following passages will demonstrate:

"And at the feast the governor was accustomed to release to the crowd one prisoner, whom they wished." Matthew 27:15 (parallels John 18:39 above, as well as Mark 15:6)

"And a leper came to Him, beseeching Him and kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, 'If You wish, You are able to purify me.' And Jesus being moved with compassion, having stretched out His hand, touched him and said to him, 'I will; be purified.' And He having spoken, the leprosy departed from him immediately, and he was purified. And having strictly charged him, He sent him away immediately and said to him, 'But go; show yourself to the priest and offer for your purification what Moses ordered, for a testimony to them.'" Mark 1:40-44 (parallels Luke 5:12-14)

"And were gathered unto Him the Pharisees and some of the scribes, having come from Jerusalem, And having seen some of His disciples eating bread with defiled hands (that is, unwashed), they found fault; for the Pharisees and all the Jews, unless they wash their hands vigorously, do not eat, holding the tradition of the elders. And on coming from the market, unless they wash themselves (literally, 'baptize themselves'), they do not eat; and there are many other things which they received, holding fast to washings (or 'baptisms') of cups and vessels and brass utensils and couches." Mark 7:1-4

{ These few verses give more background to John's baptizing in Jordan than any other passage in the Gospels. The Matthew 15:1-2 parallel gives no word of explanation at all. In John 3:25 we find mention of some controversy between John's disciples and the Jews over purification - possibly an issue involving his baptizing ministry and its prophetic purpose (see 1:19-28)? John's Gospel omits the fact that Jesus was baptized of John, which the other three Gospels record, but it adds that Jesus' early ministry included a baptism which eclipsed the popularity of John's baptism (3:22 - 4:2). John also adds that this baptizing activity took place "beyond Jordan", again moving the focus of attention away from Jerusalem as a place where the gospel might bear fruit (1:28; 3:26; 10:40). }

"And it came to pass in fulfilling his priestly office before God, in the order of his course according to the custom of the priestly service, it fell to him by lot to burn the incense, having entered into the temple of the Lord. And all the multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense." Luke 1:8-10

"And when eight days were fulfilled for the circumcising of the child, His name was called Jesus, which He was called by the angel before He was conceived in the womb. And when the days of their purification were fulfilled according to the law of Moses, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present unto the Lord (even as it has been written in the law of the Lord. 'Every male opening the

womb will be called holy to the Lord'), and to offer sacrifice according to that which has been said in the law of the Lord, 'A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.' ... And he came by the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus that they might do for Him according to what had become customary by the law. ... And when they had completed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own city Nazareth." Luke 2:21-24, 27, 39

"And women also, who were come with Him out of Galilee, having followed after, saw the tomb and how His body was laid. And having returned, they prepared aromatics and ointments, and on the sabbath, indeed, they rested according to the commandment."

Luke 23:55-56

On the basis of these passages only Matthew, of the four Gospel writers, appears to have had an exclusively Jewish readership in mind. The other three to varying degrees have made provision for some of their readers, who were unschooled in the Mosaic traditions. Although John's Gospel has been put forward by some as an evangel aimed at the wide world of Gentiles, no one appears to be doing the same for Mark and Luke.

While John is found to turn aside often to clarify the actions of his characters, he does leave some matters of language and tradition unexplained. The following passages are revealing for what they leave unsaid:

1:17 "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

This statement is so matter of fact as to imply that the reader should be familiar with Moses' exploits in the book of Exodus.

1:19 "And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem..."

John presupposes here some knowledge of who the Levites were, and similarly for the Pharisees in v.24.

1:25 "Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not the Christ, nor Elias, neither the Prophet?"

How could an ignorant Gentile make any sense of this question? The reader would require at least an inkling of Ezekiel, Daniel, Malachi and Deuteronomy to get the picture.

4:5-6 "Then cometh He to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there."

No attempt is made in this casual reference to Jacob and Joseph to explain the prominence of these two figures in the founding and preserving of the Nation. Although some particulars of geography are given, John seems to take for granted that his reader is acquainted with the patriarchs.

4:35 "Say ye not, 'There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest?' Behold I say unto you, 'Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest.'"

The Lord's meaning here turns upon the typology of the former and the latter harvest feasts (Exo.34:22). Trumpets, Atonement and Tabernacles, usually reckoned as one feast, fell in the seventh month, immediately following the great harvest at the end-time of summer. Exodus 23:16 calls it "the feast of ingathering" and the LXX renders "ingathering" by *sunteleia*, q.v. in N.T. usage. But the Lord took exception with the harvest proverb,

explaining that the fields were ready four months early. This constitutes a veiled reference to the wheat harvest of the third month, which was associated with the springtime feast of Pentecost. Fifty days before Pentecost, at the feast of Passover during the barley harvest of the first month, a firstfruits meal offering without leaven was sacrificed (1 Co. 15:20). The leaven-less offering signified Christ as the perfect, sinless One in sacrifice for the sins of His people. The antitypical significance of Pentecost, however, was the acceptability of a second firstfruits offering, which the meal offering with leaven typified (Lev.23:9-21). Believers in Christ, following the historic Pentecost of Acts 2, also became an acceptable offering despite the leaven of sin still residing in the old man. Samaria figured largely in this harvest which the Lord declared was ready to be gathered at that time. This was the "meat" that His apostles knew nothing of, as yet (4:32). It becomes clear that Jesus' remarks to them on that occasion were parabolic in the extreme.

7:22-23 "Therefore Moses has given you circumcision, not that it is of Moses but of the fathers, and you circumcise a man on the sabbath. If a man receives circumcision on the sabbath, that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made a man entirely healthy on the sabbath?"

The Spirit's purpose in supplying this discourse here seems to be to convince Jewish readers of some of the irrationalities of Rabbinism, rather than to elucidate the tradition of circumcision for uninformed Greeks.

8:4-11 The episode in which the adulteress was brought before the Lord leaves much of the controversy unexplained. In order to understand His actions fully we require a detailed knowledge of the law. The accused woman could not have been caught "in the very act", as alleged, because where was her partner (Lev. 20:10)? Apparently she was only suspected of adultery, and "the law of jealousies" applied in her case (Num.5:11-31). The Lord affirmed this precept of the law by writing in the dust of the temple ground, which dust was used to concoct the "bitter water" for detecting a hidden adulteress. When the woman's accusers had departed in shame, the Lord Jesus displayed His full knowledge of her sin.

8:31-36 The manumitting power of the truth was rejected by the Jews. In their hardness of heart they claimed emphatically never to have been in bondage. But Israel had often been subject to foreign powers, whether to Egypt at the Nation's birth or to Rome as in that day. What, was hidden from their ears in this exchange was that the Lord was proclaiming the Great Jubilee, as foreshadowed by the Law in Leviticus 25:10-11.

8:58 "Jesus said unto them. 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM.'"

This passage and the self-revelation of Jehovah to Moses as the Great I AM has been dealt with earlier (pp. 5-8). In the passage above John makes no attempt to explain why the Jews would have attempted to stone the Lord Jesus over these words. The initial readers of this Gospel must have had sufficient knowledge of the books of Moses to grasp the implication of His words.

9:2 "And His disciples asked Him, saying, 'Rabbi, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?'"

John does not explain the validity of their question, which was based on such O.T. passages as Exodus 34:5-7 and Jeremiah 31:28-30. Jesus had previously endorsed the doctrine of the

covenant curse in warning the paralytic He had just cured, "... sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." (John 5:14).

12:13 "Hosanna. Blessed is the King of Israel That cometh in the name of the Lord."

This quote from Psalm 118:26 transliterates the Hebrew *hoshiana* ("Save now"), rather than translate it into the Greek *soson de*, as the Septuagint does. John provides no explanation of what the term "hosanna" might mean, and he appears in this instance to be more Hebrew than the LXX translators. However, the LXX does coincide with John's Hebraizing by transliterating the Hebrew *haleluyah* into the Greek *allelouia*. The form *allelouia* is found repeatedly in the Psalms of the LXX, as well as four times in Revelation 19.

With O.T. connections such as these, it should be clear that John's witness was above all for Israel, the people of the witness (Deu.6:1-9: Psa.78:4-7).

Chapter Eight

CONCLUSION

Based on the evidence of the preceding chapters, it seems probable that John's intended readership were a mixed group as regards their familiarity with the language, customs and geography of the Land (Judea in particular). The world of Hellenistic dispersion Jewry, with their varying degrees of orthodoxy and allegiance to Jerusalem, together with their Gentile proselytes and the outcast nation of Samaria, admirably fills the requirements. The doctrinal bonds with Mosaic tradition and O.T. prophecies, the imminence of the "anointing" of the Acts period, and the expectation of the Lord's second advent all make a strong case for an earlier dating of this Gospel than tradition has allowed. Where global blessings come into view in John's Gospel, the basis would have to be Jehovah's promise to Abram to bless all the families of the earth through him.

In view of the fact that the book of Revelation contains messages for seven Asian churches and speaks of John's being on Patmos, in the Aegean Sea, when the vision came, it appears that Asia formed a special part of his missionary field. Apart from these references in the Revelation, however, no reliable evidence has come forward attesting a direct ministerial relationship between John and the Roman province of Asia. In fact, a possible reading of Revelation 1:9-10 yields an altogether different picture of John's apocalyptic vision than is commonly held:

- v.9 "I, John, your brother and fellow-partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and endurance of Jesus came to be (*egenomen*) in the island which is called Patmos, on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.
- v.10 I came to be (*egenomen*) in the spirit on the Lord's day (that is, 'the day of the Lord')..."

The close pairing of the two statements "I came to be in the island which is called Patmos" and "I came to be in the spirit on the day of the Lord" does suggest a similarity of experience. Whether John was bodily at Patmos or bodily at the day of the Lord is not exactly clear, as even Paul suggested in his reference to John's vision:

"To boast indeed is not profitable to me, for I will come unto visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ fourteen years ago (whether in the body I know not, or out of the body I know not: God knows), such a one caught away to the third heaven (see Rev.21:1). And I know such a man (whether in the body or out of the body I know not; God knows) that, he was caught away to Paradise (see Rev..22:2), and heard unutterable sayings, what things it is not permitted to man to speak (cp. Rev.10:3-4)." 2 Corinthians 12:1-4

Even John was unsure what had happened to him physically, and Paul repeated this fact for emphasis.

By backdating the "fourteen years" from a fair estimate for the date of Paul's writing 2 Corinthians (A.D. 57)¹, we arrive at an approximate date of A.D. 43 for John's vision. When Paul began his first sojourn at Ephesus, reaching the city about A.D. 55-56, no believers were found

¹ *Companion Bible*, Appendix 180, p. 203

there yet. But this city was where one of "the seven churches" of Revelation was said to be located. Paul's most receptive hearers at Ephesus were disciples, not of John the Apostle, but of John the Baptist (Acts 19:1-3). It is debatable, then, whether John even physically journeyed to Asia or Patmos. A similar case can be made for a purely visionary transportation of Ezekiel to the river Chebar and of Daniel to the river Ulai, where each reported to have received his prophetic oracles (Eze.3:10-15; Dan.8:1-3). Why the seven Asian churches are singled out in this book of prophecy is not clear. The geographical significance of both Asia Minor and the Aegean Sea to the events of the day of the Lord must await a future season for their full illumination.

The futuristic scope of the greater part of Revelation is not shared by other portions of the book. For example, the prologue in places seems to mix events from different times:

"I am the First and the Last, and the Living One and I became (*egenomen*) dead, and behold I am alive unto the ages of the ages and have the keys of death and Hades. Write, therefore, **what things you saw**, and **what things are**, and **what things are about to take place** after these things (*meta tauta*)."
Revelation 3:18-19

John was given a threefold testimony to record, consisting of past ("what things you saw"), present ("what things are") and future events ("what things are about to take place"). Properly divided, the book consists of revelations seen so far (1:9 to 1:20), the prophetic word about to be given presently to the seven churches (2:1 to 3:22) and the heavenly vision of future events (4:1 to 22:16), which he saw "after these things" (*meta tauta* - 4:1). This explanation seems to agree with verse 11 of chapter 1, which reports the first command to John to write the book:

"... saying, 'What you see (present tense) write in a book and send to the seven churches ...'"

The scope of the book belongs largely to the future, and John takes up for his present frame of reference the season when the Asian churches are about to undergo great trials. Whether the chronology of the vision matches an unbroken course of future events is a matter requiring a separate study.

After the entire vision was complete, John added the prologue (1:1 to 1:9) and the epilogue (22:17 to 22:21), and in these he speaks only of what he "saw" (past tense) before writing the account of it.

"...to His servant John, who **testified** the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, whatsoever things he **saw**."
1:1-2

The business of arriving at dates of authorship is prone to speculation when there are no fixed points of chronology to work from. Each investigator tends to give it his best estimate based upon a complex understanding of both the book in question and its relationship to the Bible as a whole. While most scholars in the past have agreed in dating the Gospel of John very late (A.D. 90 to 105), some present day scholars, such as F.L. Cribbs, argue in favor of an earlier dating (late 50's or early 60's).¹

That John mentioned certain geographical features in Jerusalem using the present tense would seem to indicate a pre-70 A.D. date of authorship, for the city must still have been standing then.

"Now there is (present tense) in Jerusalem at the shep gate a pool which [is] being called (present tense) in Hebrew Bethesda, having (present tense) five porches."
John 5:2

¹ *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Eerdmans 1982, vol. II, p. 1104

Some have argued that this is a use of the historic present. John does use the historic present frequently (194 occs.), but mainly with verbs of speaking, coming and other action verbs. On the fifteen occasions that John uses the verb "to be" (*eimi*) in the historic present, that state of being is qualified by another verb in the past tense, which often relates to acts of speech or perception (see Appendix B). As Turner has conceded to Thackery, the historic present may show a tendency to introduce "a new scene in dramatic narrative, especially a new character or change of locality or a turning point".² Thus the narrative turning points in 5:1 and 5:5 might favor the use of the historic present in these verses rather than in 5:2. A style as rich in the historic present as John's makes for rather vivid storytelling. The transition from narrative to dialogue is smoothed over considerably, and the action flows as before one's very eyes. But the assertion that the sheepgate pool reference uses an historic present burdens the text unnecessarily. The literal meaning of the present tense is sufficient to expound the intent of the writer. Whatever the true date of authorship may be, it has been my hope in this study of the Johannine Scriptures to make two theological points: 1) the essential unity of all John's writings, and 2) their Israelitish, covenant cast. As dispensationally wide as we may apply certain fundamental truths from his Gospel, we need to recognize that John's immediate readership was much narrower. Foremost were the Jews, who both then and now are scattered throughout most of the civilized world. But also included were those cut off from Israel, like the Samaritans, whom God had not permanently forgotten. These He engraced with the gospel of reconciliation to turn them again to Jehovah and to heal the divided Nation, before restoring it under Israel's ultimate King, the Son of David.

² J.H.Houlton. *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. III, pp. 61-62

APPENDIX A
DOCTRINAL PARALLELS IN THE JOHANNINE SCRIPTURES

<i>Item</i>	<i>Gospel</i>	<i>Epistles</i>	<i>Revelation</i>
1) Christ the Word	1:1 (3 occs.), 14	1Jn.1:1	19:13
2) references to a beginning	1:1-2	1Jn.1:1; 2:7,13,24; 2Jn.5-6	3:14
3) Word made flesh	1:14	1Jn.4:2-3; 2Jn.7	
4) only-begotten Son	1:14,18; 3:16,18	1Jn.4:9	
5) Lamb of God	1:29,36		29 occs.
6) blood and water	19:34	1Jn.5:6-8	
7) Saviour of world	4:42	1Jn.4:14	
8) lay down one's life	10:11-18; 15:13	1Jn.3:16	12:11
9) take away sins of the world	1:29	1Jn.2:2; 3:5; 4:9-10	
10) Son with Father	1:1	1Jn.1:2; 2:1	
11) light vs. darkness	1:4-9; 3:19-21; 8:12; 12:35-36	1Jn.1:5-7; 2:8-11	16:10; 21:23-25
12) truth vs. the lie	8:31-55	1Jn.1:6-10; 2:4; 5:10-11	22:15
13) born of God	1:13; 3:3-8	1Jn.2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:4,18	
14) children of God	1:12; 11:52	1Jn.3:1-2,10; 5:2	
15) "Little children,"	13:33; 21:5	1Jn.2:1,12,13,18,28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21; 3Jn.4	
16) having the Son = having life	3:36; 6:47	1Jn.5:12	
17) passed from death to life	5:24	1Jn.3:14	
18) belief is a work	3:18-21; 6:28-29	1Jn.3:22-23	
19) keep commandments	14:15,21-24; 15:9-17	1Jn.2:3-11; 3:22-24; 4:21 - 5:3; 2Jn.4-6	12:17; 14:12; 22:14
20) His word abides in believer	5:37-39	1Jn.2:14,24	
21) fellowship w/ Father & Son	14:20; 17:21-23	1Jn.1:3	
22) the role of Comforter	14:16,26; 15:26; 16:7	1Jn.2:1	
23) the Spirit of truth	14:17; 15:26; 16:13-15	1Jn.5:6	
24) didactic unction	14:26; 16:12-15	1Jn.2:20-21,27	
25) understanding from above	3:3; 6:44	1Jn.5:18-20	
26) prophetic spirit		1Jn.4:1-3	19:10
27) ask and receive	15:7,16; 16:23	1Jn.3:22; 5:14-15	
28) testimony of Jesus	5:31-44; 19:34-35	1Jn.5:6-10	1:2,9; 12:17; 19:10; 20:4
29) true witness	8:14		3:14
30) writer's testimony is true	19:35; 21:24	3Jn.12	1:1-3; 22:6-8
31) things not written	20:30; 21:25	2Jn.12; 3Jn.13-14	10:3-4
32) purpose in writing: belief	19:35; 20:31	1Jn.5:13	
33) imminence of Millennium	5:24-29; 14:2-3; 16:16-23	1Jn.2:18,28	1:3; 22:10-12, 20
34) tribulation	16:20-22,33		1:9; 7:13-14
35) Israel as woman in childbirth	16:21		12:1-6
36) manna given	6:31,49,58		2:17

<i>Item</i>	<i>Gospel</i>	<i>Epistles</i>	<i>Revelation</i>
37) Israel the Bride	3:29		21:2,9; 22:17
38) world rejoices at Israel's woe	16:20		11:9-10
39) world overcome	16:33	1Jn.5:4-5	21:7
40) wicked one overcome		1Jn.2:13-14; 4:3-5	12:10-11
41) the world's hatred	7:7; 15:18-19; 17:14	1Jn.3:13	
42) love of the world	12:25	1Jn.2:15-17	
43) antichrists	5:42-43	1Jn.2:18,22; 4:3; 2Jn.7	chs.13, 17
44) devil sinned from beginning	8:44	1Jn.3:8	12:9
45) devil's children	8:44	1Jn.3:8,10,12	
46) "after these things" (<i>meta tauta</i>)	8 occs.		10 occs.

APPENDIX B
THE USE OF *EIMI* IN THE HISTORIC PRESENT IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

- 1:19 "And this is (present tense) the witness of John when the Jews sent (aorist tense) priests and Levites from Jerusalem that they might ask Him, "Who are You?"
- 2:9 "And as the master of the feast tasted the water that had become wine, and knew (pluperfect tense) not whence it is (present tense) (but. the servants knew . . .) ... calls ... and says ..."
- 5:13 "And he who had been healed knew (pluperfect tense) not Who it is (present tense), for Jesus had moved away ... "
- 5:15 "The man went away and told (aorist tense) the Jews that it is (present tense) Jesus Who made him well."
- 6:24 "When therefore the crowd saw (aorist tense) that Jesus is (present tense) not there, nor His disciples, they also entered ships and came to Capernaum ..."
- 6:64 "For Jesus knew (pluperfect tense) from the beginning who they are (present tense) who believe not, and who it is (present tense) who shall deliver Him up." (2 occs.)
- 10:8 "All whoever came (aorist tense) before Me are (present tense) thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear (aorist tense) them."
- 11:57 "And both the chief priests and Pharisees had given command (pluperfect tense), that if anyone should know (aorist tense) where He is (present tense), he should show it, that they might take Him."
- 12:9 "A great crowd of the Jews, therefore, knew (aorist tense) that He is (present tense); and they came ... "
- 20:14 "Having said these things she turned (aorist tense) backwards, and beholds (present tense) Jesus standing (perfect tense), and knew (pluperfect tense) not that it is (present tense) Jesus."
- 20:15 "Jesus says to her ... She, thinking it is (present tense) the gardener, says ..."
- 21:4 "And morning already having come, Jesus stood on the shore; the disciples, however, knew (pluperfect tense) not that it is (present tense) Jesus."
- 21:7 "Says, therefore, to Peter that disciple whom Jesus loved, 'It is the Lord.' Simon Peter, therefore, having heard (aorist tense) that it is (present tense) the Lord, put on his coat ..."
- 21:12 "But none of the disciples ventured (imperfect tense) to ask (aorist tense) Him. 'Who are You?', having known (perfect tense) that it is (present tense) the Lord."

In all the instances above, note how the verb "to be" in the present tense is dependent upon the speech or perceptions, usually in some form of past tense (imperfect, perfect, pluperfect or aorist), of an observer other than John. These important features are lacking from John's sheepgate statement (5:2), an alleged example of the historic present.

APPENDIX C

THE USE OF "VERILY, VERILY ... " IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

The double "verily" (or "truly") is found twenty-five times in John, but not elsewhere in the N.T. The expression has its roots in the Mosaic Covenant (see Num.5:22; Neh.8:6; Psa.41:13: 72:19; 89:52) and so is not peculiar to John at all. This example of the figure of speech *Epizeuxis* was used as a mild oath, analogous to the double "yea" and double "nay" expletives beyond which it was sinful to express oneself (Mat.5:37). The purpose of the expression "verily, verily" was somewhat similar to the phrase "he that hath an ear, let him hear" (Rev.3:22) in drawing the hearer's attention to a matter of keen interest. But where "he that hath an ear..." seems to call for thoughtful reflection of what has just been said, lest some part of the message fail to be heeded, "verily, verily" is forward looking, about to introduce a new point of view. As we peruse the usages of this expression in John, we find two different applications: 1) it may provide a remarkable aspect of truth hitherto unimagined by the hearers, or 2) it may herald a truth in sharp contrast with their false opinions. Of the examples following, eight will be seen to bear directly upon past, present or future signs. Just as the Lord's signs were meant to stimulate faith in Israel, so the discussions introduced by this phrase of affirmation were intended to provoke belief.

- 1:47-51 The Lord's omniscience, which so amazed Nathanael and evoked his confession of faith, was only a small sample of the great signs that He was about to perform (application 1).
- 3:1-3 Nicodemus' acknowledgement of Jesus as "a teacher come from God", as proven by the signs He gave, did not even begin to touch upon his spiritual need to be begotten from above by the Saviour (application 1).
- 3:4-8 At Nicodemus' perplexity over the doctrine of regeneration, the Lord elaborated that without the spiritual rebirth a man could not participate in God's kingdom (application 1).
- 3:9-12 As Nicodemus continued to stumble over the Lord's teaching, He contrasted the ignorance of this teacher of Israel with the gospel that He and His disciples preached (application 2).
- 5:17-20 Because the Lord performed signs on the sabbath, the Jews persecuted Him. When He answered that He worked alongside His Father, they sought to kill Him for blasphemy. Jesus explained that He could do nothing independently of the Father, and that the Father would give Him even greater, more astonishing works than what they had already seen (application 1).
- 5:22-24 The Son was appointed Judge, that all might honor Him. Amplifying this teaching, Jesus remarked that believers already had eternal life and need fear no condemnation (application 1).
- 5:25-29 He added that the hour of resurrection and judgment was fast approaching (application 1).
- 6:24-27 When some of the 5,000 who had feasted on the 5 loaves queried Jesus as to how He crossed the lake without a boat, He upbraided them for seeking Him amiss. Even having witnessed such a great sign, their concern was for the things of this world rather than God's kingdom (application 2).

- 6:30-33 Citing Moses and the manna for a precedent, the Jews asked for yet another sign from Jesus as proof of His authority. The Lord corrected them on two points. First, it was the Father and not Moses Who supplied the manna in the wilderness, and by inference it was the Father Who fed the 5,000. Second, the true (or antitypical) bread from heaven was the Son of God Himself, Whom the Father gave for the life of the world (applications 1 and 2).
- 6:47-51 Furthermore this Living Bread came down from heaven to give eternal life to those who partake of Him through faith (application 1).
- 6:52-58 When the Jews argued over how anyone could eat His flesh, the Lord added that His blood would have to be drunk too. This confrontation illustrates the process by which blindness came upon Israel. A little truth was first offered and they hardened their own hearts. Then greater truth was immediately added, so that as they stumbled further even the little faith they had was taken away (cp. Mat.13:9-18) (application 2).
- 8:32-36 To the Jews' objection that they need not be freed from bondage, Jesus pointed out that they were slaves to sin (application 2).
- 8:50-51 In contrast with the Jews' dishonoring of the Judge of all the earth, the Lord called attention to the fact that believers would emphatically not stay dead forever. They will be honored with Him in resurrection glory (application 2).
- 8:56-58 The disclosure that Abraham foresaw the Saviour's advent was ridiculed by the Jews, who noted that Jesus was too young to be personally acquainted with Abraham. The Lord shot back with a tremendous statement, asserting that His existence as the Great "I AM" predated Abraham's day (application 2).
- 9:39 - 10:1 Reinforcing His assertion that, those who were able to see would be made blind, the Lord introduced the proverb of the door of the sheepfold. Israel's blind guides were likened to thieves and robbers (application 2).
- 10:6-10 When the Jews could make no sense of the proverb of the sheepfold, Christ explained that He alone was the Door. All others who laid claim to the sheep were robbers (application 1).
- 12:21-24 After Philip and Andrew approached Jesus about the Greek proselytes who wished to see Him, His answer to their request was not a simple 'yes' or 'no'. He spoke parabolically of the corn of wheat dying in order to bring forth much fruit. Thus, after Calvary those outside the Law and the Land would receive opportunity to bear the fruit of faith (application 1) .
- 13:14-16 In order to drive home a lesson of service by the example of foot washing, the Lord declared that the servant is not greater than his master. Neither was the one sent greater than the sender (application 1).
- 13:20 Amplifying 13:16, to receive one whom Christ sent was to receive Him (application 1).

- 13:18,21 The Lord expounded the prophecy of Psalm 41:9 to the Twelve, explaining that one of them would betray Him (application 1).
- 13:37-38 Against Peter's assertion that he would die for Him, Jesus prophesied instead that Peter would deny Him thrice (application 2) .
- 14:11-14 Jesus asked the Eleven to believe in Him, if only on account of His works. He went on to assert that, believers in Him would do even greater works (application 1).
- 16:16-22 At the incomprehension of the Eleven over the two "little whites", the Lord Jesus added a parabolic statement about their time of tribulation during the second "little while". He compared it to the travail of a woman giving birth (application 1).
- 16:23-24 During the second "little while" they would no longer ask their petitions of Christ, but would ask the Father themselves. So far no one had yet prayed to the Father, except the Son (application 1) .
- 21:17-19 Against the background of Peter's grief at being reminded of his denials of the Lord, the risen Christ now prophesied that he would sacrifice himself in service at the end (application 1).

By far the majority of the examples above (16 occs. application 1) are explicative in nature, with only half as many (8 occs. application 2) adopting a corrective or confrontational approach. The purpose behind this Gospel was obviously a didactic one.

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