

The Just shall live by Faith

Volume 2 - Study 12 **Shepherd Jesus Walks on toward his Death**

C. Ronald Johnson, Christian Wilderness Press: '**the Good Shepherd giveth his life for the** [life of the Father's] **sheep**', and is the **Victor over Death**. John 10:1 – 14:31.

These are brief studies, not
“teachings” or “doctrines.”

Volume 2, Study 12 (2-21-11)

We are going to consider several *topics* which the Apostle John (as author of this gospel) has passed on to the Church. The *topics* are within one of John's *themes*. As noted in other studies (and explained in the Note atop the list of studies) the Biblical author of a book or gospel, even while recording incidents and teachings, wrote in a manner to infer (i.e., imply or put forward) a teaching which he himself wished to emphasize (please see the Note).

In the passages of this short study, then, out of many topics that he could have written about John chose these and combined them into a Theme. There were far too many incidents, teachings, and sayings of Jesus to put them all in a book, much less in a Gospel.

Here our Theme is '**the good shepherd giveth his life for the** [life of the Father's] **sheep**', as is in John 10:10,11,17 below. Yet, in a shortened form, the Theme is **Christ the Victor over Death**. It has everything to do with “life”, “death”, and “Life”, all in “the Father and the Son”.

John's first Topic of his Theme is *the good shepherd*, which is like an introduction as he takes us on into the season of *the necessary death of Jesus as needed for victory*. Of course you understand that John was writing for *Christians of the early Church*, even as *God's Spirit given to the Church* especially inspired him.

I will be leaving out more than a few passages as we go along, which will help us to focus on the Theme. Therefore, we shall include passages only as they help expand the Theme.

Jesus: the Good Shepherd and the Door of the Sheepfold

John 10:1-6 Verily, verily, I say unto you [i.e., put forth a proverb], **He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber [i.e. plunderer]. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.**

We shall return to this proverb or '**parable**' later, but now note that Jesus begins to explain the proverb as it relates unto himself.

10:7 **Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.**

The Greek word '**again**' when used as an adverb (i.e. '**said...again**') usually means *anew*. That is, Jesus is not going to start again; instead he is going to begin *anew* with his teaching for them in a more understandable manner.

Where this proverb has a '**porter**' opening the door to the shepherd, note that Jesus introduces himself as both the '**porter**' and the '**door**'. That is, whenever the Father speaks regarding His sheep, Jesus (the '**porter**') hears the Father's voice and obeys by opening the '**door**' (which is himself).

The '**sheepfold**' represents the Father's *place of safety for His little sheep*; and by means of Jesus this is true. But also note that Jesus will lead some sheep (also within and through himself) out into the dangerous world where surely he will be with them.

10:8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep [of the Father] did not hear them.

If the Father's sheep were not hearing these kinds of shepherds, then what or who were they hearing. No one, because the Father's sheep have had no shepherd to properly care for them. Nevertheless, there had been some form of safety in that the Father had been protecting His sheep in ways not easily seen or understood by human eyes and human minds.

Ah, but the time had arrived for a Shepherd, which is why the Father had prepared and sent John the Baptist '*to prepare the way*' among His scattered sheep for the arrival of His Shepherd Son.

Also note that most of the incidents of Jesus' teachings and sayings occurred in the area of Galilee north of Judea and Jerusalem. That is, a great many of the people were of Israelite stock who had returned over many years from being scattered (as God's scattered sheep) among the nations. But also many people of other nations were there that had been transplanted long ago by conquering nations like Assyria and Babylon. Of such were the Father's sheep to whom Jesus came.

10:9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, [then] he [is the Father's sheep and] shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

Even outside the refuge where dangers are many, pasture is ensured for these sheep.

10:10,11 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they [i.e., the Father's sheep] might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the [Father's] sheep.

Note that the sheep could not even enter the sheepfold except that they belong to the Father and thus are the responsibility of the Father's Shepherd Son.

The evangelical church (to which I belong) typically considers itself to be the sheepfold; and many of them maintain that men must be part of them so as to become a sheep of God. Indeed, in varied ways, the Church works to gather men into itself.

Ah, but to all of the Father's scattered sheep, both in Galilee and in Judea, Jesus constantly proclaimed that '*my sheep hear my voice and respond to me*' (see verse 14) and that all other sheep would not, and indeed could not, come to him or enter the sheepfold.

An excellent example of Jesus searching out and finding one of the Father's sheep (i.e., up in a tree) is in Luke 19:1-10.

10:12,13 But he that is an hireling, and not the [sent] shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the [Father's] sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

It is interesting that the wolf *catcheth the hireling*, but the wolf can only *scattereth the sheep*. A person acting as a shepherd (i.e., not sent by God) is not protected from the wolf, and thus he or she can be caught. But the sheep are protected, in that the wolf can only scatter them and not catch them.

On the other hand, what if the person acting as a shepherd is actually a sheep that has been hired or elected by a local flock of sheep as their shepherd. Will the wolf catch him or her? No, for every true sheep is protected and can only be scattered.

10:14-16 I am the good shepherd, and know my *sheep*, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd.

The note under verses 10,11 explains that many people observing Jesus' works and hearing his words were not of the scattered sheep of Israel. Indeed, ancestry of the woman at the well in Samaria (John 4) may have been other than of the scattered tribes of Israel.

We Gentile Christians think that we are the '**other sheep**' and we are, but Jesus is also the Messiah for the other tribes of Israel yet as scattered sheep among the nations, as well as for many of the people hearing him in Galilee and Samaria. Who are the '**other sheep**'? God knows.

10:17,18 Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again [in victory over death]. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

The word '**power**' here in the Greek means the *ability* or *force* or *capacity* of a person's *privilege* (i.e., the *ability* of a king or prince, etc). The word '**commandment**' in this verse means *prescription* (i.e., *according to the Plan*).

Therefore, in assigning His Son to go down to earth to '**lay down**' his life, the Father also granted him the capacity in the Plan '**to take it again**'.

In other Bible passages it is written that the Father 'raised up the Son'. Yet, it happened according to verses 17 and 18. In other words, the Father accomplished the raising of His Son ahead of time (before the fact) in giving the Son the *ability* '**to take it again**'.

Jesus went to the grave in full assurance of his *ability*. He did not go to the grave depending upon the Father to later raise him up (i.e., as Jesus raised up Lazarus, which we shall see further in this study).

It is in this sense of Jesus' *ability* to raise himself from the grave (and having fully accomplished it) that he has promised to all the Father's sheep through the ages that they also will be raised, and this is entirely within the Son's *ability* (Victory) over death.

10:19 There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings.

10:22 And it was at Jerusalem [at] the feast of the dedication, and it was winter.

The above verses were in Jerusalem at the time of this feast. However, soon (verse 40-42) Jesus and many of his disciples would be heading north again.

10:23,24 And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch. 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.

The word '**doubt**' in this verse in the Greek is composed of three separate words meaning *hold the breath in suspense*.

10:25 Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed [i.e., faithed] not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.

Of course, Jesus had not yet died and risen from the dead, but he would do that also '**in the Father's name**' (i.e., authority, the '**commandment**' in verse 18) . Even as the Father had given to Jesus to do these works, so it was given to him to victoriously raise himself from the dead.

10:26-28 But ye believe not [i.e., faith 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.

The Greek word for '**eternal**' means *perpetual – ongoing*. And '**shall never perish**' means *not at all to the ages be destroyed* (i.e., not again to be lost or scattered). This means that in Christ Jesus the Father's sheep are no more scattered. That is, Jesus is the Door and in him is the safety of the sheepfold. We Christians look at the world and think that we Christians are scattered, but in Christ Jesus we are not. In the scheme of God's Plan of the Ages, neither are the scattered sheep of Israel. By the Father, through what the Son has done and is doing, it is guaranteed.

Therefore, consider the Glory when all of the scattered sheep of Israel are awakened to their Messiah, everything accomplished '**in the Father's name**' by the Son. (See Romans 11:15-21.)

10:29,30 My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father's hand. I and *my* Father are one.

The sheep belonging to Jesus were the Father's sheep, and so it is through the ages.

10:31 Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered [i.e., responded to] them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?

10:40-42 And [Jesus] went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode. And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true. And many believed on him there.

This location is within the region of Galilee, either near the Sea of Galilee or the Jordan River flowing out of the sea. The words '**resorted unto**' in the Greek means *came to and alongside*. Often people came from a distance (small or large) so as to spend time with Jesus, and to listen, and to observe the miracles. Therefore, the words '**resorted unto him**' are accurate in the sense that people came prepared with food and perhaps small tents, etc. to stay a while (I.e, to resort).

Lazarus Raised to life from the dead

Some of the passages I will leave out using only the essential verses for this short study.

John 11:1-3 Now a certain *man* was sick, *named Lazarus*, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. (It was *that* Mary which [later] anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) Therefore his sisters sent [a message] unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

Most everyone knew that Jesus had returned from Judea to Galilee, for people were flocking to him there. It would take well over a day for a messenger from the area of Jerusalem to reach Jesus, and this messenger surely was in a hurry.

11:4 When Jesus heard *that*, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

The Father has been arranging events and Jesus is following the Father's lead. It so happened that John, author of this Gospel, and the others of the Twelve disciples witnessed these things; and in writing this passage, John has gathered incidents along with Jesus' words and work so as to illustrate the Wondrous Theme portrayed here in these verses. In all of these words by John we can see how much he wants his readers to also get caught up in the Wondrous Theme.

The Son, having been given the *prescription* (i.e., *authority according to the Plan*) to raise himself from the grave shall now illustrate, by raising Lazarus from the dead, that his *ability* to do so is not just for him. Indeed, the Father has set the stage for *another proof or testimony from Him that the Son has been sent as the Conqueror over Death*.

11:5-10 Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was. Then after that saith he to *his* disciples, Let us go [back] into Judaea again. [Therefore] *His* disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again? Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

Jesus always walked in the Light of his Father, so he knew that he and the disciples were in no danger of stumbling or of being stoned.

11:14-16 Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe [i.e., faith]; nevertheless let us go unto him.

Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellowdisciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

The twelve disciples have suddenly become focused upon the subject of death: 1) dear Lazarus' death, 2) Jesus' probable death in returning to the region of Jerusalem where the sisters live and where Lazarus is buried, and 3) the disciples own probable death with the Master.

The Apostle John in writing this focuses us on what the disciples were focused on.

11:17,18 Then when Jesus came, he found that he [i.e., Lazarus] had *lain* in the grave four days already. Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off:

You may read the whole story if you like, but here we shall stay focused like the disciples upon death and upon Jesus' victory over it.

11:21,22 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give *it* thee.

11:23 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

Jesus stated a fact which he knew before the fact, but Martha does not comprehend.

Jesus need not '**ask of**' the Father since he had already received the *prescribed force* over death and having realized that the Father had set this stage for victory over death, he could state to Martha '**Thy brother shall rise again**'.

The words '**shall rise again**' in the Greek actually is *shall stand*; take note of this.

11:24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again [i.e., *shall stand*] in the resurrection at the last day.

The word here translated '**resurrection**' in the Greek is '*a standing up*' again. The words '**at the last day**' are better translated '*positioned in the final period or age*'. That is, all that are living, as well as those having died, shall live anew in the period or age when Christ Jesus shall rule his kingdom (a United Israel according to the Promises).

11:25-27 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection [i.e., *the standing up* again] [, the Door], and the life: he that believeth in [i.e., faiths into] me, though [i.e., '*even if*'] he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in [i.e., faiths into] me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe [i.e., faith] that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

The last time Jesus had been in Judea (see 10:26-28 above) he had said '**But ye believe not [i.e., faith 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.**'

Jesus had left Judea and returned to Galilee; but now he has come back to the area near Jerusalem where he was being hunted for death. Yet, in knowing that Jesus was being hunted for death, the sisters had sent for him anyway.

In preparation for what is to happen, Jesus begins with Martha, '*...he that faiths into me, even if he had died, yet shall he live.*' '*And whoever is alive and faiths into me shall not at all die.*' '*Do you Martha faith this?*' Martha thinks that Jesus is preaching to her and so she states that which shall become part of the Basic Christian Creed. But why should she think that Jesus is preaching to her when they are in the midst of a very sad funeral?

11:28 And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee.

11:32,33 Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with [i.e., followed] her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled [i.e., agitated],

The word '**groaned**' in the Greek means *snorted*, either in *anger* or *indignation*, and Jesus was *agitated*. Whenever Jesus arrived usually there was excitement among the people expecting a miracle. Not so now. Both the sisters and these people, many who had witnessed his miracles, could not even conceive (nor could his twelve disciples) of victory over death. Yet, that is the reason for Jesus' presence... at the bidding of the Father.

11:34,35 And [he] said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept.

Jesus was *agitated* and he '**wept**'. It seems to me that Jesus was *agitated and also wept* for the condition of the people, even ones very close to him (and also for the disciples). For they were going with *what they saw in the natural* instead of *what the Father had prepared for them*. They were tuned into the natural and not into Jesus and the Father. But they had a good excuse in that the beloved Lazarus had died and this was a long funeral.

11:36-38 Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him! And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

Jesus' *indignation* continues as he is even blamed for Lazarus' death. (Interesting is it not how we Christians can praise the Great God, saying that He can do anything, and then cry to Him that He did not do this or that or the other; see again 11:21,22.). If these people would have simply allowed themselves to be drawn spiritually into the situation of *Jesus' arrival on the scene* then they could be (perhaps should be) expecting a miracle of some kind.

God was drawing all of these people and His Son together for a spiritual experience. Yet, at the time they were focused on what they could see in the natural. (In days soon to come, before his crucifixion, Jesus would often become *agitated* with his apostles.) Meanwhile in this situation, Jesus continued with his assignment by the Father.

11:39,40 Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been *dead* four days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

That is exactly what Jesus had said to Martha. She had said, '**Whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee**' and Jesus had responded, '**Thy brother shall stand up again.**' (But note that 'again' is not in the original text.) Jesus had *emphasized* '**Thy brother shall stand up**'.

When you and I stand up in our after-life, it shall not be "again"; it shall be *a new kind of standing up*. Lazarus is about to experience something *new*. This is why so many people would come to see him and touch him and question him; which is why the Jewish leaders shall want to kill him.

And Martha had responded, 'I know that he shall *stand up in the standing up* in the last day.' She meant (in my words) '*he shall stand up in the final standing up*'.

Ah, but then Jesus emphatically responded, (in my words) '*...he that faiths into me, even if he had already died, yet shall he live.*' *Moreover also, whoever is alive* [i.e., alive at the final time of that *standing up* when Jesus comes again] *and faiths into me shall not at all* [even once have to] *die.*' Everyone needs to die to live again, except for those living when Jesus arrives, for those shall never die even once.

Living beyond death always is to the Glory of God. Lazarus shall experience it, and his unique experience shall be to the Glory of God. To squelch the Glory of God (so as to maintain the Glory of the Law as taught by the religious leaders) the Jewish leaders shall seek to kill Lazarus. It is why they shall seek to kill Jesus. Their work before God was *to keep* God's Law. Yet, in their importance in their calling, they did not understand that God and His Son were, and are, above and beyond God's Law *and man's pitiful attempts at trying to keep what God has given to man.*

Therefore, in this verse, Jesus has reminder Martha of what he had earlier said to her, **'Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe [i.e. be faithng], thou shouldest see the glory of God?'** See also 2Kings 13:20,21. Please note that Martha shall **'see the glory of God'** and therefore she shall *be faithng*, even though she shall *not be understanding*.

In the things of God, I am *faithng* when so much of the time I am *not understanding*. *Faithng* is entirely different from *understanding*. *Faithng* does not need *understanding*. Too often *my desire to understand can sidetrack me out of faithng*. Is it so with you?

11:41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead [Lazarus] was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me [i.e., has given audience to me]. And I knew that thou hearest me [i.e., grantest audience to me] always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe [i.e., faith] that thou hast sent me [see verse 45].

11:43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth [i.e., outside, out of doors]. And he that was dead came forth [i.e., outside], bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

The word **'bound'** fully means *bound*. The word **'graveclothes'** means *a swathe, a winding sheet*. When awakened by God, Lazarus could not have possibly come out on his own because he was completely bound. Nor could he have seen to come out, because his face was bound over with a cloth. God levitated Lazarus, still in a prone position, and floated him out from the small grave (a hole dug out of a rock wall) and set him on his feet, bound. So **'Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.'**

11:45 Then many of the Jews which came to Mary [i.e., who were crying in sympathy with her (verse 33)], and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed [i.e., faithed] on him.

11:46-48 But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done. 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 [i.e., faith] on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.

11:49 And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the 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.

11:51 And this spake he not of himself [i.e. not of his own thinking]: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation;

As a priest, and acting as the high priest for that year, Caiaphas recognized that the Spirit of God was inspiring him with foreknowledge and he prophesied to Israel's leaders.

11:52 And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

It is the Apostle John who now informs us that, unknown to Caiaphas, the prophesy included all the tribes of Israel scattered among the nations, of whom a remnant of each tribe shall be gathered into their native land and to Jerusalem, as Promised. (Caiaphas and the Jewish leaders thought that God meant it just for them and for Judea and Jerusalem.)

11:53 Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.

John continues with the Theme of Life and Death. He is taking us toward the season of Jesus' death by introducing you and me to death in showing us how much the Father and the Son are in charge of death. The grave could not hold Lazarus. In Christ Jesus even Death shall be destroyed.

11:54 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.

In Jesus' day, the city of Ephraim was just north of Judea. Thus, it was in the extreme south of the region known as Samaria. Therefore, Jesus left going north toward Galilee.

Jesus at Jerusalem for his Last Passover

John 12:1-8 Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.

John, in writing this Gospel, was focused by the Holy Spirit upon a Theme of Death and Life for God's People, which is entirely wrapped up in Jesus.

In John 10 we had begun considering the Theme and it continues. It is interesting that Jesus in teaching and John in writing want us to focus now on the fact that Jesus is approaching the season of his Death and the resultant Resurrection. All present continue to miss it.

Moreover, Judas Iscariot is concerned about (and I am sure others present also wondered about it) the expense of such a gesture. Judas' service for God was in carrying the ministry's moneybag. Many segments of the Church through the ages majored on a concern for the poor and thus had set themselves up as collectors and keepers of money for the poor. Nothing new in this. Through the ages governments also did it (so much concern for the poor). Such *concern* originated with God. Such *collecting and keeping* originated with men.

To my mind, we should not condemn Judas here, nor criticize the Church for their emphasis through the ages, nor criticize governments. Such a concern, and fulfilling the concern, is of God and is entirely needful. Ah, but those close to Jesus (or wishing to be close to Jesus as in this passage) are being reminded by John (as he quotes Jesus) that even the commandment to care for the poor at any given moment is superseded by the actions of the Father and the Son. It is a matter of values: God's commandments or God's instant workings. True faith abides around the former until the latter comes into play.

But at the moment of the passage, all present seemed to have missed the latter. Not yet did anyone have even a murky understanding that Jesus would soon die, even though he had been telling them. They just could not grasp that the Son of God could or would die.

Nonetheless, because of what the Father was doing for His Son, a Solemn Spirit permeated the scene as Mary began anointing Jesus' feet. Something very Spiritually Significant was in the Works.

12:9 Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.

The fact of a Raised Lazarus seated among them was more than a "clue" to this very Spiritually Significant Season. Lazarus' dead body had been anointed not long ago by Mary, Martha, and other women, all of whom were now in attendance. Now Jesus' feet were being anointed.

Even after Jesus had commented as to the reason, I suspect that no one really "got it". John, as he was writing this passage, probably smiled at how spiritually unconscious he

had been at the time.

What did a dead person look like after being raised alive from the dead? People wanted to know and, of the visitors, how many were more interested in hearing what Lazarus had to say about such things?

12:10 But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed [i.e., faithed unto new-life] on Jesus.

12:12 On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.

A great many people were streaming in toward Jerusalem for the Passover and the Week of Unleavened Bread. Many had already secured lodging and many would be seeking lodging. The Season began in five days.

That week had two components:

But first we need to understand that each Jewish day began at evening (sundown) and extended unto evening (sundown) of the next day, twenty-four hours which included nighttime hours and daylight hours.

Therefore, at the time of this passage, the next Thursday evening at sundown was the beginning of Friday. This particular Friday was a holy day, *the Day of Preparation* for the Passover. Friday itself was considered *a sabbath or a day in which no work could be done except the holy preparation*.

The Passover itself was contained within the meal, which was a solemn ceremony of remembrance, and it lasted from sundown to midnight. For our way of thinking, it would begin at sundown on Friday and end at midnight. But to the Jew it was the very first holy thing to happen on this Holy Sabbath; and this Holy Day was the beginning of eight days of the Week of Unleavened Bread.

Whereas the Passover (the ceremonial meal) was a remembrance of *the Passing Over of the Death Angel*, this entire Week (sabbath to and including the next sabbath) was a remembrance *to celebrate the duration of travel long ago in going from Goshen to a place in Egypt's wilderness where Israel would celebrate a feast of worship to Israel's God*. Moses and Pharaoh had agreed upon it, and by the agreement the Israelites were to return home to Goshen. It had so happened that the journey to the place of worship had taken seven days of travel (i.e. distance was measured in time traveled) and the next day was the day of the worshipful feast.

Moreover, it happened that God had commanded that the first Passover supper be with bread made from dough without any leaven. Thus, it happened that the people began their journey to the feast with unleavened dough. In the seven days of march they traveled night and day, led by God, and stopped only from time to time to make flatbread with that unleavened dough. They would catch a catnap and then would be led onward by God's Cloud by day and Fire by night.

As we know, those days turned out to be the beginning of the Exodus out of Egypt, in that Pharaoh with his **'hardened heart'** and with his army attacked the Israelites, which forced them out of Egypt through the Red Sea (Gulf of Suez), which at the appropriate time God opened for them.

(You can read of it in the Book of Exodus. But also you can read of it in my book *God's Rock*, which you can download free from this web site.)

Now back to the time of our passage:

For this week, all leaven had to have been removed from every house and the people ate only bread with no leaven (i.e. flatbread). Then on the eighth day, the next sabbath, a

feast in remembrance was celebrated for the long ago feast in Egypt's wilderness. Thus, this second Holy Sabbath was the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

The Yearling Lamb slain for the first Passover meal, and the covering of its blood on the doorposts, had saved the inhabitants of each Israelite household in Goshen. In the following ages from that first Passover and Week, the Passover and Week of Unleavened Bread became *a singular time of remembrance* in the celebrations mentioned above. The *theme* of it had (and has) to do with *impending Death and Salvation*, where the **First Death** had been *impending upon the first born male of every family (and animals) in Egypt*. Yet, the Death Angel had been kept back from Israel by the blood of the lamb, which was *Salvation*. Ah, but note that very quickly a **Second Death** was impending upon every the Israelite when Pharaoh and his army came to attack them. God kept back this impending *Second Death* and He kept them unto Himself by opening the Red Sea which allowed them to *passover* from Death unto Life away from Egypt and the world.

12:14 -16 And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Zion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt. These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified [i.e., resurrected and returned to heaven], then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.

As stated above, later the apostles wrote, witnessed, testified, taught, etc. about these things (as led by the Spirit). Different apostles wrote, witnessed, testified, taught, etc. differently (as the Spirit led each differently).

12:17,18 The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, [they] bare record [continually of that event]. [It was] For this cause [therefore that a great many of] the people also [came out and] met him, for that they [i.e., the people coming to Jerusalem from afar for Passover Week] heard that he had done this miracle.

12:19-21 The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold, [even] the [whole] world is gone after him. And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee [i.e. identifying which Philip], and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.

Even as earlier Nicodemus had wanted to spend some quality time with Jesus, so did these men from Greece. Ah, but time was running out, and only the essentials would be shared with them by the disciples -

12:22-25 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. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

The word '**hateth**' in the Greek means *to count something of so little value as to 'detest' it*; that is, *to count it value-less so as to consider other things much more valuable*. Each person's life is primarily lived out focused on what he or she considers highly valued; for instance children, jobs, professions, church, retirement, etc.

Of course Jesus meant that we should *count 'life eternal' greatly more valuable than earthy life*. For Christians this is our choice, and most of us are convinced that we are choosing the higher life. Yet, when each of us stands before Christ and the Father then will be the time of finding out what they think about our lives.

12:26 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 honour.

Christ is not just in heaven, for his Spirit is busy around the world involved in his continuing work for the Father. (See Acts 16:6,7.)

May I suggest this, '**Following Jesus**' seldom means "working for Jesus". The person of the latter honors the Father. But the person of the former is honored by the Father.

12:32,33 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die.

12:42,43 Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

Here again is the Christian dilemma: Living the faithful church-life is both noteworthy and praiseworthy, and we are convinced that when we work that Jesus is there, and by this we fulfill verse 26. Dear reader, I have no argument with that; but most of the characters in scripture demonstrate something more.

Many '**among the chief rulers also believed** [i.e. faithed] **on him**'. However, being '**put out of their church**' was too high a price to pay, because there they had been serving God all of their lives.

To Jesus' disciples, '**Following Jesus**' was *walking into the unfamiliar and scary unknown*. Following the Crucifixion when the Spirit of Christ was working openly and strongly many of these men and their families did leave where they were; because to '**follow Jesus**' meant that they had to leave one good place to enter the better and higher place... even into places of persecutions and death.

Ah, but a great many of us in "the free world" are greatly blessed. It must be that we are doing something right! Right?

12:47,48 And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. [And] He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

12:49,50 For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

Jesus Washes the Feet of the Twelve

John 13:1 Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

This verse describes Jesus' attitude toward the disciples in the week leading up to the Passover meal. That is, he was loving all of his disciples and especially the Twelve.

In the next verse the Gospel writer advances to the scene in the supper after Satan had done his deed in the heart of Judas Iscariot, but Judas had not yet left.

13:2-5 And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

Jesus is loving the apostles (now in friendship), but now he takes on the manner of a lowly servant to imply another characteristic of the Messiah. Jesus came in service of His Father to serve humanity. He had been doing it according to the Father's will; yet, the disciples, so close to Jesus, were too in awe of the Master to realize the Father's *service to the world*. Therefore, this physical form of servant and the lowly position of foot washer became the shock that the Twelve needed to focus on Jesus' message.

The old saying, "I finally saw it when I was hit in the head with it," is so true.

Also note that even as Satan had touched Judas Iscariot's heart, Jesus now shall wash Judas' feet. Therefore, I wonder what Judas Iscariot was thinking. Perhaps, "How could a Messiah, a Son of God, demean himself to wash the dirt off of our feet?!"

13:6-10 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.



13:33 Little children [i.e. 'babes' the disciples / apostles], yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I [it] say to you. [Moreover] A new commandment I give unto you, That ye [my disciples] love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this [then] shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

Here the Greek word for 'love' is *agape*.

Christian brethren agaping one another does not make them Jesus' disciples; but true disciples must agape one another; and in so doing they shall become known as *true disciples honored by the Father*. In fact, it is *the Father and the Son honoring them* that shall distinguish them from among all other brethren.

Following Judas' departure, note that everything is wonderfully loving and highly spiritual among the Eleven, until this happened -

13:36-38 Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards. Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake. Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.

Even in their "high spirituality" the Eleven were but made of clay; clay in the Master's hand; yet, clay nonetheless. How much more made of clay are we, you and I?



John 14:29,30 And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.

To die, Jesus shall hang upon a cross. In the Law, to hang a person upon a tree (or a wooden pike) in judgment was to say to all observers that this person had committed the most heinous crime. Therefore, seeing Jesus hanging upon a wooden cross gave great pleasure to the Jewish leaders because they were convinced that Jesus had sinned the most heinous sin.

Knowing his destiny, one of the last things Jesus said to the Eleven was '**the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing [of himself] in me.**'

14:31 But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.