

John: Gospel of Radical Difference

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Session 1: Introduction to Radical Difference in the Gospel of John

Session 2: John's Radically Different Beginning (John 1:1-18)

Session 3: John's Love of Double Meaning (John 3:1-36)

Session 4: John's Radically Different Last Supper (John 13:1-30)

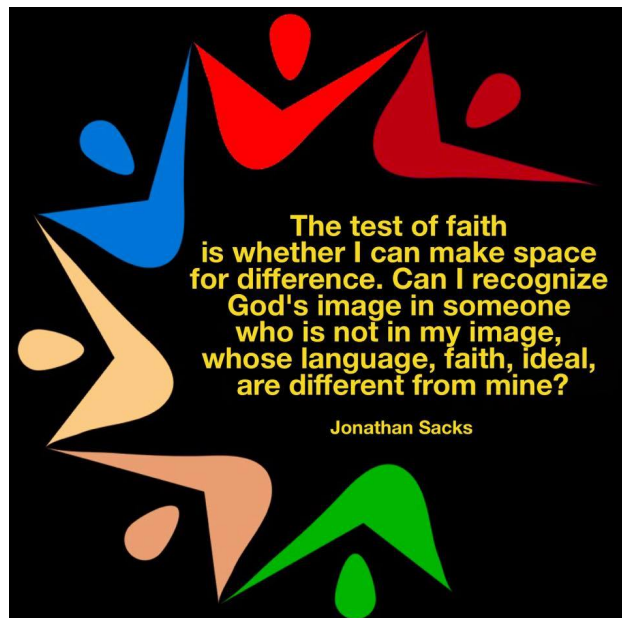
Session 5: John's Radically Different Arrest and Crucifixion (John 18:1-11; 19:17, 25-30)

Points to Ponder About Difference

Is there difference in your life? Perhaps difference within your family? At your workplace? In your community? Within your own self? So, is there difference in your life? I bet there is!

How do you handle it? Can you cope with it? Is it a blessing or a challenge to you? Do you embrace it or reject it? Or is it not so simple? Is it more ambiguous than that?

Is there difference in your religious life? Among the members of your faith community? Have you ever read the Bible, found differences there, and wrestled with what to make of them? In particular, are you aware of the remarkable differences between the gospel accounts of the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth? Have you ever recognized and wrestled with those? Have you figured out on your own that the Fourth Gospel, the Gospel of John, is radically different from the other gospels? Recognizing and wrestling with John's radical difference is what this class will encourage.



(thanks to Eric Funston for the graphic)

Examples of Difference in John's Gospel

- The **Revised Common Lectionary**, which is used in many churches, follows a three-year cycle running through the three Synoptic Gospels. Year A walks us sequentially through Matthew, Year B through Mark, and Year C through Luke. However, there are countless ways in which the content and flow of the Gospel of John differs significantly from the Synoptic Gospels, so instead of giving John its own year, many familiar, beloved passages from John are inserted into pivotal moments into one of the three lectionary cycles, and sometimes even into all three lectionary cycles (if interested, contact Fowler for a sampling of those passages).

- **The implied time span of the gospels:** In the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus goes to Jerusalem for the Passover only once, which has led scholars to infer that Jesus' ministry in the Synoptics **takes place in a year or less**. By contrast, in John Jesus goes to Jerusalem for Passover three times (John 2:13; 6:4; 11:55), which suggests that in John Jesus' ministry **takes place over three years or so**.

- Speaking of **Passover**, there is a sharp 24-hour discrepancy between the Synoptics and John concerning the timing of the Last Supper and Jesus' crucifixion. **In the Synoptics**, the Last Supper is definitely a Passover meal with **the memorable sharing of bread and wine**, the familiar institution of the Eucharist. In John, however, it states repeatedly that the Last Supper and Jesus' arrest and crucifixion take place on the day of preparation before Passover. There is no mention of bread and wine at the Last Supper in John. Instead, **the memorable sacramental action at the Last Supper in John's gospel is Jesus washing the feet of his disciples**. In John Jesus is executed at the same time that lambs are being slaughtered for the Passover meal that evening. Thus **in John** the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross is remembered as a **Paschal sacrifice**, whereas in **the Synoptics** the sacrifice of Jesus is remembered in **the bread and the wine of the Eucharist**. We will explore this in a future session.

- Do you love the **parables** of Jesus? None of the familiar, beloved parables of Jesus appear in John. The familiar, provocative aphorisms (i.e., one-liners) are also largely missing. Likewise, no Lord's Prayer or Sermon on the Mount to be found in John!

- According to the Synoptics, Jesus was well-known as **an exorcist**: he frequently "cast out" demons from demon possessed persons. But there are no exorcism stories in John.

- There are definitely **miracle stories** in John, but they are consistently **called "signs"** and not "miracles" or "deeds of power," and most of John's "signs" are unique to John, not shared with the Synoptics. "Signs" matter because of their significance, that is, their symbolic, metaphorical, poetic meaning.

- 1:1-18—"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." In John Jesus is the human incarnation of the divine Logos, which was the driving force of the creation of the world. Absent from John is a birth story or a distinguished genealogy (both of those are found in Matthew and Luke); also absent is Jesus being baptized by John (found in Mark first, then adapted by Matthew and Luke). We will explore John 1 in our next session.

- 3:1-21—The first of **three episodes in John featuring Nicodemus**, who only appears in John (3:1-10; 7:45-52; 19:39-42; see especially the famous "you must be born *anōthen*..." in 3:3). We will dive into *anōthen* in a future session. John loves words like this that have double meaning.

- 3:16-21; 5:24 ('realized' eschatology, not apocalyptic—i.e., 'eternity is now,' not 'coming soon')
- 14:15-17, 18-20, 25-26; 15:26-27; 16:13-15 (Paraclete passages—only John calls the Holy Spirit "Paraclete," which can be translated a variety of ways: Comforter, Advocate, Helper, etc.)
- 20:21-23 (final Paraclete passage— 'Johannine Pentecost'? also 'Great Commission'?)
- 18:1-11; 19:17, 25-30 (Jesus' arrest; carrying the cross; the crucifixion—in this gospel, Jesus is always in total control). We will explore this in a future session.
- John 20 (resurrection appearances)
- chapter 21 (an appendix added later, not originally a part of the gospel?)

The Basics of John: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?

Who?

- according to tradition, the author is **John, the son of Zebedee**, one of the 12 original followers of Jesus, and it is traditional to identify him as 'the Beloved Disciple,' the *unnamed* "disciple whom Jesus loved" (13:23; 19:26-27; 20:1-10; 21:7, 20-24; also, possibly 1:35-40; 18:15-16; 19:35). But the "disciple whom Jesus loved" may actually be an imaginary storytelling device, a literary construction, an invitation to imagine ourselves into the story (e.g., 13:23).
- or, could the author be **John the Elder**, possibly the author of 2 John and 3 John, and/or possibly an early leader in the church in Ephesus??
- or **John the Divine**, the clearly named author of the Book of Revelation? Tradition says John, the son of Zebedee, wrote five books of the NT: the Gospel of John, 1, 2, and 3 John, plus the Book of Revelation—but there are gigantic differences, on the one hand, between the Gospel of John and the three letters, and the Book of Revelation, on the other hand.
- in fact, the gospel is anonymous!

What?

- "Last of all, aware that *the physical facts about Jesus had been presented in the other gospels . . . , John wrote a spiritual gospel*" (Clement of Alexandria, circa 200 CE, quoted by Eusebius in his *History of the Church* 6.14.7).
- "Although [*the gospel writer*] *does not always tell the truth literally, he always tells the truth spiritually*" (Origen, *Commentary on John* 10.4-6; early 3rd century CE)

When?

- ≈ 100 CE???
- p⁵²; 2 1/2" x 3 1/2"; found in Egypt c. 1920; now in John Rylands Library at Manchester, England; contains John 18:31-33, 37-38; fragment written circa 120-30 CE—http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rylands_Library_Papyrus_P52

Where?

- Ephesus? Or???

Why?

- John 20:30–31 (NRSVue)—"Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name." [Many scholars believe that this was the original ending to the gospel and that John 21 is an appendix added later to the Gospel.]

How?

- Majority view: John is independent of the Synoptic Gospels; uses independent sources, such as the 'Signs Source'
- Minority view: John knows the Synoptics, echoes them faintly, but intentionally distances himself from them

Important Themes or Concerns of John

- **"High" Christology**—Jesus as supremely divine. This **contrasts with the "Low" Christology of Mark**, in which Jesus is presented as profoundly human.
 - Robert Kysar, *John, the Maverick Gospel*: in John, Jesus is the "functional equivalent of God"
 - **Jesus as the Logos** ["Word"] of God in the flesh; **the so-called "Incarnation"** is boldly declared in John 1:14
 - Reverberations for Jews of Hokmah/Sophia, the divine (female!) Wisdom of God in the Hebrew Bible—see Proverbs 8-9, and especially Proverbs 8:22-31
 - Echoes for Greeks of cosmic Logos ("logic, reason, rationality") in Stoic philosophy
 - **"I am" is a formula of divine self-revelation** in both Hebrew and Greek. For the classic Hebrew example, see Exodus 3:13-15; for a similar use in Greek-speaking culture, see the Isis Aretalogy of the Egyptian goddess Isis.
 - **"I am" with a symbolic predicate**: "I am the bread of life" (6:35, 48, 51); "...the light of the world" (8:12; 9:5); "...the gate for the sheep" (10:7, 9); "...the good shepherd" (10:11, 14); "...the resurrection and the life" (11:25); "...the way and the truth and the life" (14:6); "...the vine" (15:1, 5)
 - **"I AM!" (*ego eimi*) without predicate**: 4:26; 6:20; 8:24, 28, 58; 13:19; 18:5-8
- **"Signs"**—miracle stories with primarily symbolic *significance*
 - Many scholars argue that the evangelist used a 'Signs Source' consisting of seven "signs" (miracles) that he incorporated into his work: (The Wedding at Cana: 2:1-11; Jesus Heals an Official's Son: 4:46-54; Jesus Heals on the Sabbath: 5:1-15; *Feeding the Five Thousand: 6:1-15; *Jesus Walks on the Water: 6:16-21; A Man Born Blind Receives Sight: 9:1-34; The Raising of Lazarus: 11:-1-44; Summary conclusion: 20:30) [*The only two miracles stories with a clear echo in the Synoptic Gospels.]
- **Dualism**
 - there are many *dualistic pairings*, all of which mean more or less the same thing: above/below $\approx$ light/darkness $\approx$ heaven/kosmos ("the world") $\approx$ truth/lie $\approx$ spirit/flesh $\approx$ life/death

- there are many *double entendres* in John, i.e., words with two different meanings, and sometimes more than two! Notice how characters in the gospel struggle to understand what Jesus is saying. They routinely fail to understand the level on which Jesus is operating, but we in the evangelist's audience typically do understand!

- *naos*—the physical, historical temple in Jerusalem? → Or the metaphorical, symbolic temple of Jesus' body?

- *hydor zon*—literal fresh flowing water? → Or the metaphorical, symbolic water of life?

- *anōthen*—literally, to do something from above? from the top down? → Or figuratively, poetically, to do something all over again?

- *pneuma*—wind? → Or breath? → Or spirit?

- *hypsoo*—to raise, lift up, elevate literally and spatially? → Or to praise or exalt in figurative, poetic, non-literal terms?

- *krisis*—a critical moment? → Or a judgment made by oneself → or a judgment made about oneself by someone else? → Or a crucial decision? → Or a crucial *moment of decision*?

- **'Realized Eschatology'**—God's salvation has been revealed and made available here and now

- Robert Kysar: in the Gospel of John, "eternity is now"; e.g., 3:16-21, 36; 5:24; 11:25; etc.

- contrast this with the expectation that salvation is not yet here but is coming soon, in the near future; see the 'Apocalyptic Eschatology' of Paul (1 Thess 4), Mark 13, and the Book of Revelation

- **De-emphasis on the Sacraments**

- in this gospel, Jesus is not baptized and does not baptize; absent is the familiar wine and bread at Last Supper, and therefore there are no words of institution of the Eucharist. However, John does introduce bread and wine language into his Bread of Life Discourse in John 6. No other gospel writer does this.

- **The Paraclete** (translated as "comforter, advocate, counselor, helper, intercessor"—aka the Holy Spirit)

- 14:15-17, 18-20, 25-26; 15:26-27; 16:13-15

- 20:21-23—Jesus gives the Holy Spirit to the disciples, and thus we might say that this is John's version of Pentecost!—but it's also a kind of 'Second Coming' of Jesus, and definitely John's version of the 'Great Commission'

- **"The Jews"**—Jesus and his disciples are "Jews," but so are the religious authorities who push for his death—there are 'good Jews' and there are 'bad Jews'

- John's ambiguous but often disturbingly negative portrayal of Jews reflects the historical excommunication of John's *Jewish* Christian community from the *Jewish* synagogues at the end of the first century CE; see John 9; 12:42; 16:2. 'Good guys' and 'bad guys' alike are *Jewish*. 'Christian versus Jew' language has not yet developed.

Samples of Difference in John¹

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John 1:1 In the beginning was the **Logos**, and the **Logos** was with God, and the **Logos** was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being 4 in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

[6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. 8 He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. 9 The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.]

10 He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him. 11 He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. 12 But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

14 And the **Logos** became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. 15 **(John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'")** 16 From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. 17 The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God. It is the only Son, himself God, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

Paul says that Jesus was "declared to be" son of God in and through his resurrection (Romans 1:4). Mark implies that Jesus was declared to be son of God, by adoption, in his baptism (echoing Psalm 2:7). Matthew and Luke suggest that Jesus' Son of God or Messiah status could already be seen in his illustrious genealogy and/or in his virgin conception and birth. But John's Gospel has no baptism, no marvelous conception, no remarkable genealogy. Rather, the Word/Wisdom of God (for Wisdom of God, see Proverbs 8:22-31) was with God from the very beginning, and this Word/Wisdom became incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth. No 'delivery system' for the appearance of Word/Wisdom is described in John. As biblical scholar Robert Kysar has said, in John, Jesus is the "functional equivalent of God."

John 3:1 Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. 2 He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with that person." 3 Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from **another**." 4 Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" 5 Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and **pneuma**. 6 What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the **pneuma** is **pneuma**. 7 Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born **another**.' 8 The **pneuma** blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone

¹ The NRSVue translation of the Bible is used throughout, with a few editorial wrinkles thrown in, usually in bold red type.

who is born of the **pneuma**." 9 Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" 10 Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?"

11 "Very truly, I tell you, **we** speak of what **we** know and testify to what **we** have seen, yet **you all** do not receive **our** testimony. 12 If I have told **you all** about earthly things and you do not believe, how can **you all** believe if I tell you about heavenly things? 13 No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. 14 And just as Moses **hupsosen** up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man **hupsothenai**, 15 that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

17 "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to **krine** the world but in order that the world might be saved through him. 18 Those who believe in him are not **krinetai**, but those who do not believe are **kekritai** already because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. 19 And this is the **krisis**, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. 20 For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. 21 But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God."

22 After this Jesus and his disciples went into the region of Judea, and he spent some time there with them and baptized. 23 John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim because water was abundant there, and people kept coming and were being baptized. 24 (John, of course, had not yet been thrown into prison.)

25 Now a discussion about purification arose between John's disciples and a Jew. 26 They came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, the one who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you testified, here he is baptizing, and all are going to him." 27 John answered, "No one can receive anything except what has been given from heaven. 28 You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, 'I am not the Messiah, but I have been sent ahead of him.' 29 He who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom who stands and hears him rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. For this reason my joy has been fulfilled. 30 He must increase, but I must decrease."

31 The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks about earthly things. The one who comes from heaven is above all. 32 He testifies to what he has seen and heard, yet no one accepts his testimony. 33 Whoever has accepted his testimony has certified this, that God is true. 34 He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure. 35 The Father loves the Son and has placed all things in his hands. **36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever disobeys the Son will not see life but must endure God's wrath.**

I like this extended passage in John 3 because it has all of these double entendres, that is, "double meaning expressions." (See my listing of those elsewhere.) Everything in John's Gospel seems to play out simultaneously on two levels of reality. On one level we encounter heaven/spirit/truth/light etc., while on the other level we see most of the characters in the story stuck in the world/flesh/falsehood/darkness etc. Jesus brings 'light' to the world, but many people prefer 'darkness.' Nicodemus begins this extended passage in darkness, but by the end of the gospel he has 'seen the light,' so to speak, and helps Joseph Arimathea bury the body of Jesus. (See John 7:50-52; 19:39)

John 5:24 **Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and does not come under judgment but has passed from death to life.**

John 11:23-26 **Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." 24 Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." 25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" 27 She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."**

As many scholars have observed, the "eschatology" of John's Gospel is "realized eschatology." That is, all of those hopes and dreams that so many Jews had for the future (think of John the Baptist's apocalyptic proclamation of the coming judgment of God, or Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4, or the Book of Revelation) are "realized," here and now. Judgment Day? Here and now. The possibility of living resurrection life? Here and now. Eternal life? Here and now.

John 13:1 **Now before the festival of the Passover**, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. 2 The devil had already decided that Judas son of Simon Iscariot would betray Jesus. And during supper 3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands and that he had come from God and was going to God, 4 got up from supper, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. 5 Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. 6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" 7 Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." 8 Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." 9 Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" 10 Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." 11 For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean."

12 After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had **reclined** again, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? 13 You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for that is what I am. 14 So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. 16 Very truly, I tell you, slaves are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. 17 If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. 18 I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But it is to fulfill the scripture, 'The one who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.' 19 I tell you this now, before it occurs, so that when it does occur you may believe that **I AM**. 20 Very truly, I tell you, whoever receives one whom I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me."

21 After saying this Jesus was troubled in spirit and declared, "Very truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me." 22 The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he was speaking. 23 **One of his disciples—the one whom Jesus loved—was reclining close to his heart; 24 Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking.** 25 So while reclining next to Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?" 26 Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." So when he had dipped the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas son of Simon Iscariot. 27 After he received the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "Do quickly what you are going to

do.” 28 Now no one knew why he said this to him. 29 Some thought that, because Judas had the common purse, Jesus was telling him, “Buy what we need for the festival,” or that he should give something to the poor. 30 So, after receiving the piece of bread, he immediately went out. **And it was night.**

John 14:15 “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16 **And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever.** 17 This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

John 14:18 **“I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. 19 In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me;** because I live, you also will live. 20 On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.

John 14:25 “I have said these things to you while I am still with you. 26 **But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name,** will teach you everything and remind you of all that I have said to you.

John 15:26 **“When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf.** 27 You also are to testify, because you have been with me from the beginning.

John 16:7 Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, **for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you, but if I go, I will send him to you.** 8 And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: 9 about sin, because they do not believe in me; 10 about righteousness, because **I am going to the Father, and you will see me no longer;** 11 about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been condemned.

John 16:13 **When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth,** for he will not speak on his own but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. 14 **He will glorify me because he will take what is mine and declare it to you.** 15 All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you. 16 **“A little while, and you will no longer see me, and again a little while, and you will see me.”**

John 16:28 **“I came from the Father and have come into the world; again, I am leaving the world and am going to the Father.”**

John 20:19 When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors were locked where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” 20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” 22 When he had said this, **he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.** 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

I love all of these Paraclete (=Holy Spirit) passages. One might think, especially if you are a church-going Christian, that God, Jesus, and Holy Spirit are pretty clearly NOT all the same. Right? God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit? The Holy Trinity, right? FYI, we don't technically and properly have the doctrine of the Holy Trinity until it is articulated definitively at the Council of Nicea in 325 CE. And here in John, even though we get lots of talk about God, Jesus, and Paraclete/Holy Spirit, the difference between them often gets muddy. E.g., in the passages above, the Father will send the Spirit in the name of Jesus, but then it says that Jesus will send the Spirit from the Father. Jesus is not the Spirit, and the Spirit is not Jesus, but when the Spirit comes after Easter, it appears that it will amount to the presence of Jesus post-Easter with his followers. So the Spirit IS Jesus after all, in a certain sense. This isn't logical, rational talk. It's symbolic, metaphorical, poetic talk.

John 18:1 After Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. 2 Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples. 3 So Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with police from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. 4 **Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, "Whom are you looking for?"** 5 They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus replied, "I AM." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. 6 When Jesus said to them, "I AM," they stepped back and fell to the ground. 7 Again he asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." 8 Jesus answered, "I told you that I AM. So if you are looking for me, let these men go." 9 This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken, "I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me." 10 Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus. 11 Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?"

John 19:17 **and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha.**

John 19:25 **Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." 27 Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.**

28 **After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), "I am thirsty." 29 A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. 30 When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.**

Unlike the Jesus of the other gospels, who in many ways is the silent, passive lamb led to the slaughter in the crucifixion, in the Gospel of John Jesus remains totally in control of the action. E.g., in the garden he does not fall to the ground and pray to God in anguish to be spared the cup from which he is about to drink. When the arresting party approaches him, he approaches them, and they fall to the ground. He is arrested only because he allows himself

to be arrested. On the way to crucifixion, no one is drafted to carry the cross for him—he carries it himself. The execution squad does not kill him. Rather, when the right time comes, he gives up his life of his own volition.

John 20:30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. 31 But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

This is probably the original ending of the gospel. It would work perfectly as the ending. However, someone at a later point (second century?) added chapter 21. Chap 21 is quite interesting, since it seems to presuppose that Jesus' Galilean fisherman disciples have gone back to their old careers as fisherman, as if Easter Sunday in Jerusalem had never happened, and they had given up hope in the Kingdom of God business that Jesus had called them to. Jesus had called them to become "fishers of people," but here they have gone back to fishing for fish, as if they were resuming their old lives, before following Jesus.

Here, as well as elsewhere in the gospels, there are many versions of storytelling about how, when, where, etc., that the followers of Jesus mustered the courage to have 'Easter faith' in the aftermath of the crucifixion. Easter did not simply happen one Sunday only, long ago and far away! Easter happens whenever and wherever someone musters the courage to live by confident trust in the possibilities of resurrection life in the here and now.

John 21:1 After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and he showed himself in this way. 2 Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. 3 Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

4 Just after daybreak, **Jesus stood on the beach, but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.** 5 Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?" They answered him, "No." 6 He said to them, "Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. 7 **That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!"** When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he had taken it off, and jumped into the sea. 8 But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off.

9 When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. 10 Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." 11 So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred fifty-three of them, and though there were so many, the net was not torn. 12 Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." **Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord.** 13 Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them and did the same with the fish. 14 This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.