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Introduction



The image of a small portion of Michelangelo's fresco, "Creation," found above serves as metaphor for this page's means and ends.

- ? How would you characterize God's arm in the fresco?
- ? How would you characterize Adam's arm?
- ? What is the message in Adam's limp wrist? In the fact that his arm rests on his knee?
- ? How does Adam, as painted in Michelangelo's fresco, represent all of us as we engage in scripture study and seek to understand scripture, scripture's divine author and our relationship to Him?
- ? How does Adam, as painted in Michelangelo's fresco, represent all of us as we seek God's enlivening, strengthening, and saving influence and presence in our daily lives?

Michelangelo reminds us of our desperate need for God's presence in our lives if we are to follow Him and be all that He hopes us to be. In relation to this page and its purposes, we are in need of God's help as we seek to understand and apply scripture.

The questions we posed and our brief commentary concerning the fresco represent an example of our approach to each scripture reading.

Scripture readings are accompanied by general and passage-specific questions to ponder along with brief comments. In addition to the passage-specific questions associated with each reading, the reader can apply the following **general questions** to most readings. These questions come from the purposes of scripture as identified in the introduction to our site, ponderthescriptures.com, found on the site's home page

- What does this reading reveal about the character of God?
- How and what does this reading testify of Christ?
- What wisdom and knowledge does this reading provide?
- How does this reading direct the way you think and act?
- Of what dangers does this reading warn? How does it help you avoid these dangers?
- How does this reading gladden your heart, encourage you, and give you hope?
- How does this reading expand your vision and increase your expectations of the possible?
- What does this reading discern or "read" about you?
- How will you apply this reading to your life, to how you relate with others, and to how you relate to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

It is not intended that the reader ponder every question. We introduce numerous and varied questions in hopes that readers will find a question or two that catches their imagination and interest, seems pertinent to their lives, and provides an opportunity for meaningful pondering and further spiritual insight. In addition, if the reader wishes, the many and varied ponder questions allow the reader to spend additional time to consider passages from various perspectives.

Finally, we suggest that during and after your reading and pondering experience you consider how you can incorporate your thoughts and feelings from the scripture reading into your personal prayer life. As you pray, share with Heavenly Father what you thought and felt as you studied and pondered. In your prayer, seek further insight from a God who is anxious to reveal himself, his will, and his interest in our lives. Incorporating your reading and pondering into your prayers can, we think, enliven a prayer life that can all too easily become mundane, mechanical, and rote.

John 1.¹⁻⁵

¹In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.

²The same was in the beginning with God.

³All things were made by him;
and without him was not any thing made that was made.

⁴In him was life;
and the life was the light of men.

⁵And the light shineth in darkness;
and the darkness comprehended it not.

Q

uestionary

We can think of the first eighteen verses of John 1 as a prologue, with John's "history" beginning at verse 19. Today's is the first of four readings devoted to this prologue, and the first of ten readings taken from John's first chapter.

We can structure the chapter as follows:

Prologue

Verses 1-5 On Jesus

Verses 6-8 On John

Verses 9-14 On Jesus

Verses 15-18 On John

Pre-ministry Introduction

Verses 19-36 On John

Verses 37-51 On Jesus

1. We could title today's five verses, "Genesis."
? What justification is there to such a title?
? What vocabulary and motifs do these five verses have in common with the first five verses of Genesis 1?
2. In his "translation" of the Bible, Joseph Smith made a number of changes to these verses. Whereas in the KJV, Jesus "*was* God," in the JST Jesus was "*of* God,"
? How do you feel and what do you think as you consider this change?
? How should we think of Jesus in relation to "Godhood"? Is he, or isn't he "God"?

As you contemplate these questions consider the following Book of Mormon passages.

"...And also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that JESUS is the CHRIST, the ETERNAL GOD,..." (Book of Mormon Title Page)

"Have they not said that God himself should come down among the children of men, and take upon him the form of man, and go forth in mighty power upon the face of the earth? (Mosiah 13.³⁴)

"...Wherefore I know that ye know that our flesh must waste away and die; nevertheless, in our bodies we shall see God. Yea, I know that ye know that in the body he [the antecedent to "he" is "God] shall show himself unto those at Jerusalem, from whence we came; for it is expedient that it should be among them; for it behooveth the great Creator that he suffereth himself to become subject unto man in the flesh, and die for all men, that all men might become subject unto him" (2 Nephi 9.⁴⁻⁵).

“O how great the holiness of our God! For he knoweth all things, and there is not anything save he knows it. And he [again, the antecedent is “God”] cometh into the world that he may save all men if they will hearken unto his voice; for behold, he suffereth the pains of all men, yea, the pains of every living creature, both men, women, and children, who belong to the family of Adam” (2 Nephi 9.²⁰⁻²¹).

“...God himself shall come down among the children of men, and shall redeem his people. And because he dwelleth in flesh he shall be called the Son of God” (Mosiah 15.¹⁻²).

? How do you feel and what do you think when you consider that Jesus is, indeed, “God Himself” as the KJV of John 1.¹ affirms?

3. In the KJV, Jesus is “the Word” whereas “the word” in the JST is the “gospel.”

? In what sense is Jesus “God’s Word”?

? How do the following passages illustrate that Jesus is indeed the word, almost the only word that Father in Heaven speaks?

“And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, ‘This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased’” (Matthew 3.¹⁶⁻¹⁷)

“While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, ‘This is my beloved Son: hear him’” (Luke 9.³⁴⁻³⁵).

“Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name—hearken ye him” (3 Nephi 11.⁷).

“It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound. When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—‘*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*’” (JSH 1.¹⁷).

? What is the significance to your own life that whenever Heavenly Father communicates with us, his dominate communication is: “This is my Beloved Son, hear him”?

4. John testifies that “without him [Jesus] was not any thing made that was made.”

? What has he “created” or “brought into being” in your life?

5. If asked where Jesus is from, one might answer, “Bethlehem,” since he was born there, or Nazareth, since he grew up there.”

? If asked where Jesus is from, how would John answer?

? What is the significance of John’s emphasis on Jesus being “from God” rather than being from Bethlehem or Nazareth?

John 1.⁶⁻⁸

⁶There was a man sent from God,
whose name was John.

⁷The same came for a witness,
to bear witness of the Light,
that all men through him might believe.

⁸He was not that Light,
but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

Questionary

We can think of the first eighteen verses of John 1 as a prologue, with John's "history" beginning at verse 19. Today's is the second of four readings devoted to this prologue, and the second of ten readings taken from John's first chapter.

We can structure the 1st chapter as follows:

Prologue

Verses 1-5	On Jesus
Verses 6-8	On John
Verses 9-14	On Jesus
Verses 15-18	On John

Pre-ministry Introduction

Verses 19-36	On John
Verses 37-51	On Jesus

In verses 1-5, John testified that Jesus "was God," or in the language of the Book of Mormon, "God Himself" (Mosiah 13.³⁴), and "the ETERNAL GOD" (Title Page of Book of Mormon). John also testified that Jesus was "the Word of God." This, we suggested, is indicative of the fact that, at least as far as the scriptural witness is concerned, witnessing and pointing to His Son is nearly the only "word" or action we hear or see from Heavenly Father directly.

In verses 6-8, John turns his attention momentarily to John the Baptist.

- 1 After introducing the Baptist as a witness of "the Light," the text quickly declares "he was not that Light." Later in the chapter, we twice hear the Baptist's own feelings concerning his relation to Christ: "He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me" (vs. 15 and 27). One of his first messages to the Jews of his day was, "I am not the Christ" (vs. 20). All of this suggests that the writer of the Gospel is very interested in establishing a clear and dramatic distinction and dichotomy between John the Baptist and Jesus.
 - ? Why, do you think, did the writer of John feel it was so important to establish this clear distinction and dichotomy between John the Baptist and Jesus?
 - ? Is it important today to maintain the same emphasis on the distinctiveness and dichotomy between modern prophets and Jesus? Why do you answer as you do?
2. In our first reading from John 1, the Evangelist refers to Jesus as "the light of men." In today's reading, Jesus is again referred to as "light."
 - ? What is the significance of this designation to you?
 - ? How has Jesus' presence and influence in your life been like a light to you?
 - ? Why is John and any prophets who follow him, not to be thought of as "light"?

John 1.⁹⁻¹⁴

⁹That was the true Light,
which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

¹⁰He was in the world,
and the world was made by him,
and the world knew him not.

¹¹He came unto his own,
and his own received him not.

¹²But as many as received him,
to them gave he power to become the sons of God,
even to them that believe on his name:

¹³Which were born,
not of blood,
nor of the will of the flesh,
nor of the will of man,
but of God.

¹⁴And the Word was made flesh,
and dwelt among us,
(and we beheld his glory,
the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,)
full of grace and truth.

Q

uestionary

We can think of the first eighteen verses of John 1 as a prologue, with John's "history" beginning at verse 19. Today's is the third of four readings devoted to this prologue, and the third of ten readings taken from John's first chapter.

We can structure the chapter as follows:

Prologue

Verses 1-5	On Jesus
Verses 6-8	On John
Verses 9-14	On Jesus
Verses 15-18	On John

Pre-ministry Introduction

Verses 19-36	On John
Verses 37-51	On Jesus

1. Consider the following three statements concerning Jesus.

“The darkness comprehended [him] not”

“The world knew him not”

“His own received him not”

- ? Why, do you think, did John emphasize so often and strongly at the beginning of his Gospel the tendency to not really understand or appreciate Jesus?
2. John writes that Jesus “gave... power to become the sons of God” to those who do understand, appreciate, and believe in him. We often speak of everyone being a child of God, not because they believe a single thing, but because of some cosmic genetic connection between humanity and God. But John teaches that only through an active choice of believing in Jesus is one “given power to become the sons of God.”

- ? How do you reconcile these two different perspectives?
 - ? What power do we not possess that we would need to be “given power” to be the sons of God?
3. John began his Gospel by calling Jesus “the Word of God” and declaring that he “came from God.” In today’s reading, “the Word was made flesh” and “dwelt among us.”
 - ? What thoughts and feelings do you have when you consider this “condescension” of Jesus?
 4. John says that Jesus, as the Word, “dwelt among us.” The Greek could be read that the Word “pitched his tent among us.”
 - ? What, do you think, is the significance of this way of speaking about Jesus—that he “pitched his tent.”
 - ? What relation might this have to do with Israel’s ancient tabernacle?
 - ? How is Jesus “the temple of God.”
 - ? If God dwells in the temple, or in Jesus, where must we go to find God?

John 1.¹⁴⁻¹⁸

¹⁴And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

¹⁵John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, “This was he of whom I spake, ‘He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.’” ¹⁶And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. ¹⁷For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

Questionary

Today’s reading is the 12th in a series of Advent readings that will continue throughout the month of December.

1. John teaches that Jesus is “*full* of grace and truth.”
 - ? What do you think and feel when you read “full of”?
 - ? What does it mean to be “full” of something?
2. In testifying of Jesus, John the Baptist confesses that “He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.” Earlier, the Evangelist emphasized, “He [John] was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light” (1.⁸). In the first recorder encounter between the Baptist and his audiences, the Evangelist records the Baptist clarifying, “I am not the Christ” (1.²⁰). During his early ministry, the Baptist testified of Jesus, “He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to unlose” (1.²⁷).
 - ? Why did the two Johns—the Baptist and the Evangelist—go to such lengths to make clear distinction between prophet and Messiah?
 - ? Why is it so important to refrain from forming too high opinion of other mortals—especially those deemed to hold leadership positions—thus running the risk of confusion them to some degree with God?
3. The Evangelist further testifies, “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”
 - ? What is the purpose and meaning of that “but”?
 - ? What is the difference between the prophetic ability to “give” law and the Divine ability to bestow “grace”?
 - ? Why do prophets—Moses being the archetype—lack the power to bestow “grace”?
 - ? How does this statement continue the focus on Jesus and the interest to de-emphasize John and others who serve in prophetic roles?
 - ? How is the meaning of this line altered or enhanced by reading “fidelity” or “faithfulness” in place of “truth”?
4. In describing Jesus’ ministry and asserting his superiority, John also teaches that “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” It is indeed difficult, if not impossible, to find a scriptural account in which a mortal human saw God, the Father—Jesus, as Yahweh, yes, but God, the Father, no.
 - ? How does this line continue the focus on Jesus and his superiority?
 - ? Why can Jesus “declare” or “introduce” God, the Father as no man ever could?
 - ? What comes to mind when you consider that Jesus came to “introduce” God, the Father?
 - ? What does this suggest about humankind’s knowledge of God, the Father, before Jesus’ ministry?
 - ? What made Jesus such an authoritative “introducer” of God, the Father?

- ? What is implied about the relationship Jesus has with his Father in the Evangelist's witness that Jesus was "in the bosom of the Father"?

John 1.¹⁵⁻¹⁸

¹⁵John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, “This was he of whom I spake, ‘He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.’”

¹⁶And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. ¹⁷For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

Questionary

We can think of the first eighteen verses of John 1 as a prologue, with John’s “history” beginning at verse 19. Today’s is the last of four readings devoted to this prologue, and the fourth of ten readings taken from John’s first chapter.

We can structure the chapter as follows:

Prologue

Verses 1-5	On Jesus
Verses 6-8	On John
Verses 9-14	On Jesus
Verses 15-18	On John

Pre-ministry Introduction

Verses 19-36	On John
Verses 37-51	On Jesus

1. In today’s reading, John reaffirms Jesus’ superiority, not only over himself, but over all others, including all the prophets.
? What evidences does he provide of that superiority?
2. Almost universally, Moses is considered greatest of the Hebrew prophets. John testifies that Jesus is greater than Moses.
? What do you think and feel when you contemplate John’s witness of Jesus’ “preference” above Moses?
? What is it, specifically, about Jesus that convinces him that Jesus is superior to Moses?
? How is Jesus’ “grace and truth” or “generosity and fidelity” superior to that of prophets who can only administer law?
3. Too often, our sole response to John’s statement that “no man hath seen God at any time,” is to take exception to the statement.
? How many *mortals* can you identify from scripture that saw God the Father before Jesus’ birth?

In fact, John’s assertion appears quite accurate. But there is an important point John is making that surpasses any “historical accuracy.” This assertion, along with what follows it, serves as another indication of Jesus’ preeminence.

? How does this verse further confirm Jesus’ superiority over all others?

Though we, like Jesus, had a pre-mortal existence during which we dwelt with God, Jesus’ status, even then, was superior to our own.

? What does John tell us about Jesus in the 18th verse that speaks to his superiority even in the pre-mortal existence?

4. John testifies that with his more intimate and superior relationship with Heavenly Father, Jesus “declares,” or “introduces” the Father.

- ? If Jesus was under the necessity of “introducing” the Father, what does it suggest about humanity’s understanding and knowledge of him previous to Jesus?
- ? How and why is Jesus’ introductory witness of Father superior to any other’s witness of Father?
- ? What do you personally learn about Father from Jesus’ life, ministry, suffering, and death?
- ? By his life and in his earthly ministry, Jesus hoped to “declare” or “reveal” the character of God. What do you learn about God’s character from Jesus’ life and ministry?
- ? Why can prophets, like Moses, give law and suggest appropriate behavior, but cannot provide “grace” or possess the kind of “fidelity” toward us that Jesus possesses toward us?
- ? Now that we have examined John’s entire prologue to his Gospel, what principles stand out most in your mind?
- ? As you study John, keep these principles in mind as they may serve as a sort of road map to understanding the entire Gospel.

John 1.¹⁹⁻²³

¹⁹And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who art thou?”

²⁰And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, “I am not the Christ.”

²¹And they asked him, “What then? Art thou Elias?”

And he saith, “I am not.”

“Art thou that prophet?”

And he answered, “No.”

²²Then said they unto him, “Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?”

²³He said, “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ as said the prophet Esaias.”

Questionary

We have examined John’s prologue to his Gospel as found in 1.¹⁻¹⁸. With verse 19, John begins his review of Jesus’ mortal life in earnest. He does this by introducing John the Baptist’s ministry, allowing him to reintroduce Jesus using John and John’s disciples.

Today’s is the fifth of ten readings taken from John’s first chapter.

We can structure the chapter as follows:

Prologue

Verses 1-5 On Jesus

Verses 6-8 On John

Verses 9-14 On Jesus

Verses 15-18 On John

Pre-ministry Introduction

Verses 19-36 On John

Verses 37-51 On Jesus

1. Upon hearing of John the Baptist and his ministry in the wilderness, Jewish leaders from Jerusalem sent emissaries to him with a simple question, “Who are you?” Initially, he replied, not by telling them who he *was*, but who he *was not*—“I am *not* Messiah.”

? Why, do you suppose, did John answer their question about his identity with an answer about who he was not?

In his prologue, Saint John had introduced Jesus as, among other things, “the light.” In then introducing John the Baptist, the man, he was quick to point out that “he was not that Light.” Thus, in both Saint John’s introduction of John in the prologue and in his introduction of John the Baptist in the beginning of his history, the Gospel writer seems to possess a strong desire to distinguish between John the Baptist and Jesus.

? Why do you think the Gospel of John is so concerning to make this distinction?

? Do you sense a tendency on the part of religious peoples of all faiths to become focused on messengers of God rather than upon God himself?

? How does Saint John avoid this error and assist others to avoid this error?

2. In a desire to identify John the Baptist, the emissaries sent from Jerusalem posed two additional questions to him.

- “Are you Elijah?”

- “Are you the prophet Moses predicted?” (“The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall

hearken..." Deuteronomy 18.¹⁵).

- ? What do you know about these two individuals?
- ? Why would the emissaries consider the possibility of John the Baptist being one or the other of them?

3. John has now answered each of the emissaries questions in the negative. They only know who he is not. Finally, perhaps out of some frustration and impatience, they ask, "Who are you then? What do you have to say for yourself?" With these questions John finally speaks of himself."

"I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness..."

- ? Other than the fact that John's ministry is literally taking place "in the wilderness," and that John sees his ministry as a fulfillment of Isaiah, what additional significance is found in John's voice coming "out of the wilderness"?

Saint John has told us that Jesus was "the Word from God." Now, we find that John the Baptist is "a voice from the desert."

- ? What thoughts do you have when you contemplate this dichotomy?
- ? What is the difference between "the Word" and "a voice"?
- ? What is the difference between the sound emanating "from God" as opposed to "from the desert"?
- ? How does John the Baptist's positive description of himself contribute to Saint John's apparent interest and focus in making a clear distinction between the messenger, John, and the message, Jesus?
- ? How clearly distinguished in your mind are the godly messengers that you have in your life and Jesus?
- ? Why is it so important to maintain this clear distinction?

John 1.²⁴⁻²⁸

²⁴And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. ²⁵And they asked him, and said unto him, “Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?”

²⁶John answered them, saying, “I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; ²⁷He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to unloose.”

²⁸These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

Questionary

We have examined John’s prologue to his Gospel as found in 1.¹⁻¹⁸. With verse 19, John begins his review of Jesus’ mortal life in earnest. He does this by introducing John the Baptist’s ministry, allowing him to reintroduce Jesus using John and John’s disciples.

Today’s is the sixth of ten readings taken from John’s first chapter.

We can structure the chapter as follows:

Prologue

Verses 1-5 On Jesus

Verses 6-8 On John

Verses 9-14 On Jesus

Verses 15-18 On John

Pre-ministry Introduction

Verses 19-36 On John

Verses 37-51 On Jesus

1. Hearing John the Baptist deny that he was the Messiah or Elijah or the prophet like Moses, the emissaries ask him how it is that he goes about baptizing.
 - ? What is it about baptism that the religious leaders would consider its administration limited to such august individuals as Messiah, Elijah, or a prophet like Moses?
2. John answers the emissaries question by contrasting the baptism that he administers with the baptism Jesus will administer. He does this without specifying the nature of the baptism that Jesus will administer—he will do so later, but not here.
 - ? Keeping in mind that John the Baptist does not specifying the nature of the baptism that Jesus will administer, what is the impact of John the Baptist’s distinction between the baptism he administers and the baptism that Jesus will administer.
 - ? How does this relate to and amplify John the Baptist’s previously stated attempts to make a clear distinction between himself and Jesus, to focus his audiences mind upon Jesus rather than himself, and to proclaim Jesus’ superiority over himself?
3. Apparently, John the Baptist feels that his previously repeated attempts to focus his audience’s mind upon Jesus rather than himself, is yet insufficient. He therefore adds that Jesus is “preferred before me” and that he, John the Baptist, is “not worthy to unloose” the strap of his sandals to remove them.
 - ? What do you think of and how do you feel when you consider this latest of John’s confessions of inferiority to Jesus?
4. In speaking of himself and his own ministry, Paul will later write,
 - “So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.”
 - “Therefore let no man glory in men...”

“And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and *to* Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think *of men* above that which is written...” (1 Corinthians 3.^{7, 21} and 4.⁶).

- ? What does John the Baptist’s and the apostle Paul’s need to repeatedly draw a clear distinction between themselves and Jesus suggest about the tendency of worshipers and believers to become confused and unfocused in their devotion to God?

John 1.²⁹⁻³¹

²⁹The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. ³⁰This is he of whom I said, ‘After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.’ ³¹And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.”

Questionary

We have examined John’s prologue to his Gospel as found in 1.¹⁻¹⁸. With verse 19, John begins his review of Jesus’ mortal life in earnest. He does this by introducing John the Baptist’s ministry, allowing him to reintroduce Jesus using John and John’s disciples.

Today’s is the seventh of ten readings taken from John’s first chapter.

We can structure the chapter as follows:

Prologue

Verses 1-5	On Jesus
Verses 6-8	On John
Verses 9-14	On Jesus
Verses 15-18	On John

Pre-ministry Introduction

Verses 19-36	On John
Verses 37-51	On Jesus

1. In speaking to his disciples, John says of Jesus that he is “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” We want to explore two aspects of this testimony. First, we want to explore the significance of Jesus being a “lamb.” Second, we want to explore the idea of “sin,” and its being “taken away” from the world.

We begin with John’s testimony that Jesus is the “Lamb of God.”

- ? How would you feel and what would you think if we suggested that Jesus is called the “Lamb of God” for reasons that go beyond the use of sheep in ancient sacrifice?
 - ? It may seem like a strange question, but consider: Is it significant that sheep selected as objects of sacrifice rather than, say, lions, or tigers, or bears in the first place? God, after all, had a world of species to choose from in selecting the animal that would symbolize his son.
 - ? How would the imagery of a lion, or some such powerful and intimidating animal, being slain have been different than that of a relatively weak and docile sheep?
 - ? Would the sacrifice of some powerful animal have altered, and how would it have altered your understanding of Jesus and how he “takes away sin”?
 - ? After considering this other possibility, rejected as appropriate to the message, what message do you hear about “God’s Lamb,” Jesus Christ?
2. We now turn to the second part of John’s statement that Jesus “taketh away the sin of the world.”
 - ? Note that the “Lamb of God” takes away “sin,” not “sins.” Do you think it is significant that “sin” is in the singular rather than the plural?
 - ? What might be the significance of sin being in the singular rather than the plural?
 - ? What do you think and how do you feel when you consider that in spite of all the sin that has, and is, and will be committed on this planet—immeasurable and seemingly infinite—it will, in the end, be “taken away”?
 - ? What do you see in your mind when you imagine a world, this world, in which sin, so dominant for so long is “taken away”?
 - ? What do you think about when you think of this kind of power?

? Can you, and if so how can you, in your own small way, exert the kind of power that “takes away” sin?

John 1.³²⁻³⁶

³²And John bare record, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. ³³And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, 'Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.' ³⁴And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God."

³⁵Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; ³⁶And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, "Behold the Lamb of God!"

Questionary

We have examined John's prologue to his Gospel as found in 1.¹⁻¹⁸. With verse 19, John begins his review of Jesus' mortal life in earnest. He does this by introducing John the Baptist's ministry, allowing him to reintroduce Jesus using John and John's disciples.

Today's is the eighth of ten readings taken from John's first chapter.

We can structure the chapter as follows:

Prologue

Verses 1-5 On Jesus

Verses 6-8 On John

Verses 9-14 On Jesus

Verses 15-18 On John

Pre-ministry Introduction

Verses 19-36 On John

Verses 37-51 On Jesus

1. We refer to "John the Baptist" because he baptized with water. We might better call him "John the *Water*-Baptist." John made it clear that there was another "Baptist" coming after him. This "Baptist" was to be far greater than he. Part of second "Baptist's" superiority stemmed from his superior baptism. He baptized not with water, but with Spirit.
 - ? How is the "spirit baptism" superior to "water baptism"?
 - ? What does it mean to you that Jesus is the one who baptizes with Spirit?
 - ? What is his role in baptizing with or bestowing the Holy Spirit?
 - ? How does he do this?
 - ? What part can you identify in your own reception and continued companionship of the Holy Spirit?
2. John focused repeatedly on the fact that Jesus is not, and really never has been comprehended, known, or received (see verses 5, 10, 11, 26). In today's reading, John the Baptist twice repeats that "I knew him not."
 - ? What is it about Jesus that is so difficult to understand and accept?
 - ? How does John the Baptist's lack of knowledge relate to the earlier passages that address the difficulty of understanding Jesus?
3. John has given Jesus several titles, among them "the Word" and "the Light." Today, John offers another.
 - ? What is that title?
 - ? What comes to mind when you think of Jesus as the "lamb of God"?
 - ? Sacrifice certainly comes to mind. But what other aspects and character of a "lamb" apply to Jesus?

John 1.³⁷⁻⁴²

³⁷And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. ³⁸Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, "What seek ye?"

They said unto him, "Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?"

³⁹He saith unto them, "Come and see."

They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.

⁴⁰One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

⁴¹He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, "We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ." ⁴²And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, "Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone."

Questionary

We have examined John's prologue to his Gospel as found in 1.¹⁻¹⁸. With verse 19, John begins his review of Jesus' mortal life in earnest. He does this by introducing John the Baptist's ministry, allowing him to reintroduce Jesus using John and John's disciples.

Today's is the ninth of ten readings taken from John's first chapter.

We can structure the chapter as follows:

Prologue

Verses 1-5 On Jesus

Verses 6-8 On John

Verses 9-14 On Jesus

Verses 15-18 On John

Pre-ministry Introduction

Verses 19-36 On John

Verses 37-51 On Jesus

1. In previous readings, Jesus has been called by various titles, titles such as "the WORD," "God," "the Light, and the "Lamb of God." In today's reading, two more titles are added.

? What are those titles

? What is the significance of each title in your own life?

Master, or Respected teacher

Anointed One (Christ)

2. In John's gospel, the evangelist has Jesus speak for the first time with these words: "What seek ye?" or, "What do you want?"

? Might there be additional meaning behind this question apart from the mundane and contextual meaning of the question?

? What might that be?

? How does this question reflect the Savior's genuine desire to serve others and allow them participation in his life?

? In what circumstances has he invited intimacy with you by asking, "What do you want?"

3. The question of where Jesus is from and where he is going, is central to John's gospel.

? How does Jesus constantly extend the invitation, "Come and see?" in regard to where he is from, where he is going... or, put differently, who he is?

? What is the significance of knowing these things about Jesus in your personal life?

John 1.⁴³⁻⁵¹

⁴³The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, "Follow me." ⁴⁴Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

⁴⁶And Nathanael said unto him, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?"
Philip saith unto him, "Come and see."

⁴⁷Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!"

⁴⁸Nathanael saith unto him, "Whence knowest thou me?"

Jesus answered and said unto him, "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee."

⁴⁹Nathanael answered and saith unto him, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel."

⁵⁰Jesus answered and said unto him, "Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these." ⁵¹And he saith unto him, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

Q

uestionary

We have examined John's prologue to his Gospel as found in 1.1-18. With verse 19, John begins his review of Jesus' mortal life in earnest. He does this by introducing John the Baptist's ministry, allowing him to reintroduce Jesus using John and John's disciples.

Today's is the last of ten readings taken from John's first chapter. We can structure the chapter as follows:

Prologue

Verses 1-5 On Jesus

Verses 6-8 On John

Verses 9-14 On Jesus

Verses 15-18 On John

Pre-ministry Introduction

Verses 19-36 On John

Verses 37-51 On Jesus

1. We have already seen Jesus given a number of titles. In today's reading, he is referred to as "him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write."
? To what does this refer?

Consider the following prophecy uttered by Moses.

"The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken... I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; 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 18.15, 18-19).

? How does Jesus fulfil Moses' prophecy?

2. Jesus tells Nathaniel, "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

- ? How was this fulfilled during Jesus' ministry?
- ? What is the significance of this prediction?
- ? As you read this, does the language remind you of any other scripture passage or episode?

Consider the following passage

“And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and beheld a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and beheld the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the Lord stood above it...

And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of a heaven” (Gen 28.10-13, 16-17).

- ? What language do you find in this passage that is similar to language found in today's Gospel reading and that justifies associating the two passages?

In the Genesis passage, angles “ascend” from Beth-el, or the “house of God,” to heaven and “descend” from heaven to Beth-el, or “the temple.” In today's Gospel reading, angels similarly “ascend and descend” upon Jesus.

- ? What does this suggest about the character of Jesus?
- ? How is Jesus a “Beth-el,” or “house of God”/ “temple”?
- ? How does one find God through “going to the temple” or “going to Jesus,” God's truest and most pure temple?

John 2.¹⁻¹¹

¹And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: ²And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. ³And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, "They have no wine."

⁴Jesus saith unto her, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come."

⁵His mother saith unto the servants, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."

⁶And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. ⁷Jesus saith unto them, "Fill the waterpots with water."

And they filled them up to the brim. ⁸And he saith unto them, "Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast."

And they bare it. ⁹When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, ¹⁰And saith unto him, "Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now."

¹¹This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

Questionary

1. When the marriage party ran out of wine, Mary looked to Jesus to fix the problem.
 - ? How do you feel about Mary's expectation?
 - ? How do you feel about Jesus' initial objection?
2. We are told that there were six water jars each holding "two or three firkins."
 - ? How much liquid was that?
3. One commentator has written, "This particular miracle signifies that there is a transforming power associated with Jesus" (Leon Morris, "The Gospel According to John," *NICNT*, p. 155).
 - ? How do you feel about this observation?
 - ? What is the significance of Jesus producing as much wine as he did?
 - ? What is the significance of Jesus producing wine that was of superior quality?
 - ? What is the message of Jesus' production of such a quantity of fine wine for your life?
 - ? What does it suggest about his ability to make something of you more than you might think possible?
4. We are told that Jesus' "disciples believed on him" as a result of this miracle.
 - ? How do you feel about the disciples' response to this miracle?
 - ? Given that we are told that we should not seek signs, why would we not be skeptical about the disciples' response to this sign?
 - ? What is the appropriate role of "signs" in our lives?

John 2.¹²⁻¹⁷

¹²After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days. ¹³And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, ¹⁴And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: ¹⁵And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; ¹⁶and said unto them that sold doves, "Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise."

¹⁷And his disciples remembered that it was written, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up."

Q

uestionary

1. In today's reading, it is Passover. Many people travel 2, 3, 4 days to attend Passover. They can hardly be expected to bring their own sheep for temple sacrifices. They needed to buy a sheep once they arrived in Jerusalem in order to participate in Passover.
 - ? So, what exactly, do you think, is Jesus' issue?
 - ? Was it only that they were being sold in the temple precincts? Would he have been happier if they had been selling sacrificial animals 200 yards away? Quarter-mile?
 - ? What about the selling of sacrificial animals might have troubled him other than location?
2. John mentions "changers of money."
 - ? Who were they?
 - ? Why were they needed and how did they conduct their business?

Because Roman money—the standard money in use in Judah at the time—had pictures of Roman gods, including the emperor, Jews felt it was sacrilegious to bring such money into the temple and sacrilegious to use such money to purchase a sacrificial animal intended for Yahweh's worship. Thus, individuals traded their Roman coins for Jewish money, which depicted nothing religiously offensive, and then used the Jewish money to buy animals that would be used to worship Yahweh.

- ? What might Jesus have found objectionable about this practice?
- ? What abuses of "business" practices do you see as possible in this entire enterprise?

Individuals certainly couldn't be asked to provide such goods and services for free.

- ? But what are the dangers of mixing religion with business matters and questions surrounding compensation and profit?

3. Every once in a while, we witness someone justifying their anger or "righteous indignation by referencing Jesus' cleansing of the temple.
 - ? How strongly does today's reading justify the assertion that Jesus was angry or indignant?
 - ? What other moods can you imagine for Jesus' actions in the temple?

John 2.¹⁸⁻²⁵

¹⁸Then answered the Jews and said unto him, “What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?”

¹⁹Jesus answered and said unto them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”

²⁰Then said the Jews, “Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?”

²¹But he spake of the temple of his body. ²²When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

²³Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. ²⁴But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, ²⁵and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

Questionary

1. After Jesus cleansed the temple, religious Jews asked Jesus, “What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?”
 - ? What, exactly, is it that the Jews are asking Jesus?
 - ? What would you think and feel if we suggested that what they are really asking Jesus is “What authority do you have to dictate what happens in the temple?”
 - ? Jesus certainly wasn’t a Levite or descendant of Aaron who were given authority for the operation of the temple. So where did his authority come from? What are the implications for the whole idea of “authority”
 - ? How would Jesus’ later resurrection serve as evidence of his authority at the time of the cleansing?
2. John testifies that “Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.”
 - ? What does it mean to “commit” oneself “unto” another?
 - ? What does it mean to you that Jesus “knew what was in man”?

John 3.¹⁻³

¹There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: ²The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, “Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.”

³Jesus answered and said unto him, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

Questionary

The encounter between Jesus and Nicodemus has always captivated and intrigued readers. It is hard to say for sure where Jesus’ discussion with Nicodemus ends, but we will treat verses 1-21 as if they were all part of this discussion. This reading is the first of six that will examine this encounter and the instruction Jesus offered this “ruler of the Jews.”

1. Nicodemus speaks of Jesus as “a teacher come from God.” We consider Nicodemus to be sincere in his “confession.” But, the confession represents an example of someone stating a truth that meant something more than they understood it.
 - ? But what, do you think, did it mean to Nicodemus to “come from God”?
 - ? What did it mean to Jesus that he “came from God”?
 - ? What other examples from the Gospels come to mind when you consider individuals speaking truths about Jesus without really understanding the depth of those truths?
 - ? How likely is it that we do the same thing today; that we speak truths that, in fact, likely go well beyond our understanding of them? If so, what examples of this do you identify?
2. Jesus teaches Nicodemus that “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”
 - ? Assuming that Jesus sincerely intended to teach Nicodemus a principle that he, Nicodemus, could understand and apply even before the Christian practice of baptism, what is the principle Nicodemus might have understood?
 - ? When considering the process of physical birth, what changes for the babe from pre-birth to post-birth?
 - ? How is the babe different in utero from what it is in this world (or kingdom)?
 - ? What do you think and feel when you consider that Jesus is teaching, “Just as you changed upon birth from being what you were in utero to what you are now in life, you must change from what you are now in this life in order to enter the next existence in the kingdom of God?”
 - ? How is the physical birth from womb to life an appropriate metaphor for the spiritual transformation from what we are in this world to what we must be in the next?
 - ? What do you think and feel when you consider that “the kingdom of God” is an existence for which we need not wait to die to enter, but can enter it in the here and now, today?
 - ? What aspects of life in this world are incompatible with life in the kingdom of God?
 - ? What aspects of your life today are incompatible with life in the kingdom of God?
 - ? What can you do to change, or be born again into the kingdom of God?

John 3.⁴⁻⁸

⁴Nicodemus saith unto him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?”

⁵Jesus answered, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Marvel not that I said unto thee, ‘Ye must be born again.’ ⁸The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”

Questionary

The encounter between Jesus and Nicodemus has always captivated and intrigued readers. It is hard to say for sure where Jesus’ discussion with Nicodemus ends, but we will treat verses 1-21 as if they were all part of this discussion. This reading is the second of six that will examine this encounter and the instruction Jesus offered this “ruler of the Jews.”

In verses 1-3, Jesus suggested that the same transformation that takes place at physical birth as the baby leaves the womb and enters into this world must take place at the spiritual level in order for us to leave this world with its kingdoms and enter the kingdom of God.

1. In today’s reading, Jesus continues his use of physical birth as an analogy for spiritual rebirth. He utilizes two of the three elements that scripture associates with the two births (water and spirit—the third, blood, is not mentioned here).

- ? What role do water and spirit play in the physical birth?
- ? What role do they play in spiritual birth?

At physical birth, the individual’s spirit enters permanently into the baby, takes possession of the mortal body, and breaths life into the newborn.

- ? How is this like the entrance of the Holy Spirit into our lives?
- ? How does the Holy Spirit propel us into the kingdom of God as our eternal spirit propels us into a mortal body here on earth?
- ? What is the difference between having the Holy Spirit conferred and one’s actually having the Spirit take possession of their life?

2. Jesus encourages Nicodemus not to marvel over the need to be reborn by offering the example, “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit”

- ? What is Jesus trying to tell Nicodemus?
- ? How are the ability to understand why and how one must be born again and where the wind comes from and where it goes similar?
- ? How do you feel and what do you think when you are asked to accept things for which you have no explanation?

John 3.⁹⁻¹³

⁹Nicodemus answered and said unto him, “How can these things be?”

¹⁰Jesus answered and said unto him, “Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

¹¹Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. ¹²If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? ¹³And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

Questionary

The encounter between Jesus and Nicodemus has always captivated and intrigued readers. The encounter between Jesus and Nicodemus has always captivated and intrigued readers. It is hard to say for sure where Jesus’ discussion with Nicodemus ends, but we will treat verses 1-21 as if they were all part of this discussion. This reading is the third of six that will examine this encounter and the instruction Jesus offered this “ruler of the Jews.”

In verses 1-8, Jesus suggested that the same transformation that takes place at physical birth as the baby leaves the womb and enters into this world must take place at the spiritual level in order for us to leave this world with its kingdoms and enter the kingdom of God.

Notwithstanding Jesus’ encouragement that Nicodemus not reject the idea because it is difficult to understand, Nicodemus continues to express some exasperation.

1. In this reading Jesus speaks of testifying to what “we have seen.” He speaks of telling “of heavenly things.” And he speaks of ascending “up to heaven” and of coming “down from heaven.”
 - ? What do all of these things have to do with one another?
 - ? How does the fact that Jesus “came down from heaven” make it possible for him to tell “of heavenly things”?
 - ? What things had Jesus seen in heaven that he testified to on earth?
 - ? What do you think and how do you feel when you contemplate the things Jesus has seen in heaven and that one of his purposes in coming to earth was to reveal them to those who would listen?
 - ? How well do you listen? What have you learned from Jesus about “heavenly things”?
 - ? How does Jesus come “down from heaven” differently than others?
 - ? How is his ascension or return to heaven different that that of others?
2. Jesus asks Nicodemus, “Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?”
 - ? How well did Jesus’ own disciples, those who spend day after day with him, understand Jesus’ teachings?
 - ? How well do we understand Jesus’ teachings today? Why do you answer as you do?
 - ? How well do we demonstrate our understanding of Jesus’ teachings based upon our daily actions?

John 3.¹⁴⁻¹⁵

¹⁴“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:
¹⁵that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

Questionary

The encounter between Jesus and Nicodemus has always captivated and intrigued readers. The encounter between Jesus and Nicodemus has always captivated and intrigued readers. It is hard to say for sure where Jesus’ discussion with Nicodemus ends, but we will treat verses 1-21 as if they were all part of this discussion. This reading is the fourth of six that will examine this encounter and the instruction Jesus offered this “ruler of the Jews.”

In today’s reading, we find one of Jesus’ most famous analogies. The story of the “fiery serpents” to which Jesus refers is found in Numbers 21.⁴⁻⁹.

“And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. And the people spake against God, and against Moses, ‘Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.’

And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.

Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, ‘We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us.’

And Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said unto Moses, ‘Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.’

And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived” (vs. 6-9).

1. Jesus says that he would be “lifted up” for the same reason and for the same results as Moses’ serpent.
 - ? What caused the fiery serpents to appear and necessitate a healing serpent in Moses’ experiences?
 - ? What necessitated Jesus’ being raised up?
 - ? What was the result of looking to Moses’ serpent?
 - ? What is the result of looking to Jesus?
2. Numbers tells us that “every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.”
 - ? But, what does the account tell you about the actual response of the people?

To know the people’s response to the raised serpent, we must look elsewhere. For example, Nephi informs us that God

“did straiten them in the wilderness with his rod; for they hardened their hearts, even as ye have; and the Lord straitened them because of their iniquity. He sent fiery flying serpents among them; and after they were bitten he prepared a way that they might be healed; and the labor which they had to perform was to look; and *because of the simpleness of the way, or the easiness of it, there were many who perished*” (1 Ne. 17.⁴¹).

Alma teaches that

a type was raised up in the wilderness, that whosoever would look upon it might live.

And many did look and live. But few understood the meaning of those things, and this because of the hardness of their hearts. But there were many who were so hardened that they would not look, therefore they perished. Now the reason they would not look is because they did not believe that it would heal them” (Al. 33.¹⁹⁻²⁰).

We understand that Moses’ people did not look at the serpent because the “did not believe that it would heal them” because they felt the solution was too simple. But, in this case we ask the following questions.

- ? If they wouldn’t look up to the servant, where were their eyes focused?
- ? What do you think and feel when you imagine seeing them, their eyes focused on the threatening serpents, jumping and leaping to avoid being bitten?
- ? How do we act similarly, sometimes focusing on potential sin rather than Jesus?
- ? If they didn’t rely on the servant to heal them after they had been bitten, to what did they resort in their attempt to survive the bite?
- ? How are we similar to the Israelites in response to a solution that seems too simple?
- ? How do we look to our own efforts, our own solutions, our own remedies rather than that of Jesus as we deal with our having been bitten by the poison of sin?

john 3,¹⁶⁻¹⁸

¹⁶For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. ¹⁷For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. ¹⁸He 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.

Questionary

The encounter between Jesus and Nicodemus has always captivated and intrigued readers. The encounter *between* Jesus and Nicodemus has always captivated and intrigued readers. It is hard to say for sure where Jesus' discussion with Nicodemus ends, but we will treat verses 1-21 as if they were all part of this discussion. This reading is the fifth of six that will examine this encounter and the instruction Jesus offered this "ruler of the Jews."

There are several vocabulary items in today's reading that are repeated several times.

- ? What words do you find repeated?
- ? What is the significance of the repetition/s that you identified?

You might have identified "God," "Son," "believe," or "condemn." Consider the word "condemn."

- ? What does this word conjure up in your mind?

Consider the following verses and the repetition that is found here.

"Behold, I speak unto you, Oliver, a few words. Behold, thou art blessed, and *art under no condemnation*. But beware of pride, lest thou shouldst enter into temptation. Make known thy calling unto the church, and also before the world, and thy heart shall be opened to preach the truth from henceforth and forever. Amen.

Behold, I speak unto you, Hyrum, a few words; for *thou also art under no condemnation*, and thy heart is opened, and thy tongue loosed; and thy calling is to exhortation, and to strengthen the church continually. Wherefore thy duty is unto the church forever, and this because of thy family. Amen.

Behold, I speak a few words unto you, Samuel; for *thou also art under no condemnation*, and thy calling is to exhortation, and to strengthen the church; and thou art not as yet called to preach before the world. Amen.

Behold, I speak a few words unto you, Joseph; for *thou also art under no condemnation*, and thy calling also is to exhortation, and to strengthen the church; and this is thy duty from henceforth and forever. Amen" (DC 23.¹⁻⁵).

- ? What is the overall message and impact of this repetitive announcement concerning the absence of "condemnation"?
2. Even though Jesus himself does not condemn, individuals do experience a sense of "condemnation" due to their refusal of Jesus.
- ? What is the nature of this condemnation?
 - ? How does one's refusal of Jesus produce self-condemnation?
 - ? To what level do you feel condemned? What do you credit with the either the presence or the absence of condemnation in your life?

John 3.¹⁹⁻²¹

¹⁹And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. ²¹But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."

Questionary

The encounter between Jesus and Nicodemus has always captivated and intrigued readers. The encounter *between* Jesus and Nicodemus has always captivated and intrigued readers. It is hard to say for sure where Jesus' discussion with Nicodemus ends, but we will treat verses 1-21 as if they were all part of this discussion. This reading is the final of six that will examine this encounter and the instruction Jesus offered this "ruler of the Jews."

1. In the previous reading, we found that though Jesus does not personally or actively condemn anyone, yet individuals come under condemnation through disbelief. In today's reading, we discover the nature of the condemnation.
 - ? What is the nature of condemnation that those who reject Jesus experience?
 - ? What do you think and feel when you learn that living in darkness, both in this world and in eternity, is a choice and not something that is imposed upon the unbelieving and wicked?
 - ? According to today's reading, why does one willingly choose darkness over light?

Jesus speaks of having one's deeds "reprov'd."

- ? What does this mean to you?
 - ? What comes to mind when you consider this reproof means to "expose," or "demonstrate," or "prove"?
 - ? Why does it seem so powerfully and personally destructive to have our false ideas and wicked actions exposed as such?
 - ? To what examples would you point to in today's world in which individuals choose to continue to live in darkness rather than yield to proofs of fallibility?
2. Jesus seems to think that one's evil deeds are a reflection of personal choice while, at the same time, he seems to feel that good deeds are "wrought by God" in us?
 - ? How do you feel about this observation?
 - ? How does Jesus' observation relate to the following passages?

"For it is God which worketh in you both to will [want to do] and to do of his good pleasure" (Philippians 2.¹³).

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2.¹⁰).

John 3.²²⁻³⁰

²²After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judæa; and there he tarried with them, and baptized. ²³And John also was baptizing in ænon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. ²⁴For John was not yet cast into prison.

²⁵Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. ²⁶And they came unto John, and said unto him, "Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him."

²⁷John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. ²⁸Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.' ²⁹He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. ³⁰He must increase, but I must decrease.

Questionary

While roughly the first half of chapter 3 was taken up by Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus, the second half of the chapter is taken up with a discussion of the relationship between Jesus and John the Baptist and the latter's witness concerning the former. We divide the second half of the chapter into two readings. This is the first.

1. John says that "a man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven."
 - ? What does this mean to you?
 - ? How is what Jesus has been "given... from heaven" different than what other gospel ministers were "given... from heaven"?
 - ? How does this statement apply doubly to Jesus over that of John or any other gospel minister?
2. Just as he did earlier (John 1.¹⁹⁻³⁴), John is careful to stipulate to his audience that Jesus is superior to him, John, both personally and ministerially.
 - ? How does he do that?
 - ? What is your impression about how John personally feels about his own inferiority to Jesus?
 - ? What do you think and feel when you witness the absence of "competition" and "ego" that exists between the two men?
 - ? How well do you find present leaders—business, religious, governmental, etc.—to imitate John and Jesus in relation to ego and humble service?
 - ? How well do you do?
 - ? How closely do you and those of your society follow John in the absence of jealousy toward others and in feeling a sense of joy and satisfaction in the accomplishments, achievements, and successes of others?

John 3.³¹⁻³⁶

³¹He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all. ³²And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony. ³³He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. ³⁴For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. ³⁵The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. ³⁶He 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.

Questionary

While roughly the first half of chapter 3 was taken up by Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus, the second half of the chapter is taken up with a discussion of the relationship between Jesus and John the Baptist and the latter's witness concerning the former. This is the second of two readings covering the second half of the chapter.

1. John says that "he that is of the earth is *earthly*."
 - ? What does he mean by being "earthly"?
 - ? How and why does this apply to everyone who has ever been born except Jesus?
2. Jesus "cometh from above" as no other person can claim. Having "cometh from above," Jesus testifies "what he hath seen and heard."
 - ? What sorts of things had Jesus "seen" and "heard" that no one else had?
 - ? How did Jesus reveal these things by word? By deed?
3. John says that Jesus "speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him."
 - ? How and why can this not be said of any other individual minister?
 - ? What is the difference in one's ability to testify between having the Holy Spirit immeasurably, as in Jesus' case, and having the Spirit only measurably?
 - ? Why can others receive the Holy Spirit only to a "measured" degree?
4. John says that the Father "hath given all things into his [Jesus'] hands." In speaking of those who "magnify" priesthood (this must be seen as applying to both male and female), the DC says "he that receiveth me receiveth my Father; and he that receiveth my Father receiveth my Father's kingdom; therefore all that my Father hath shall be given unto him" (84.³⁷⁻³⁸). In speaking of those who inherit celestial glory, the DC says, among other things, "Wherefore, as it is written, they are gods, even the sons of God—Wherefore, all things are theirs, whether life or death, or things present, or things to come, all are theirs and they are Christ's, and Christ is God's. And they shall overcome all things" (76.⁵⁸⁻⁶⁰).
 - ? Notwithstanding what some might see as a kind of leveling out of Jesus with the rest of us in the Doctrine and Covenants, how is Jesus' possession of "all things" different from our being given "all"?

John the Baptist seems to have gone out of his way to maintain the superiority of Jesus. John the Evangelist seems to have gone out of his way to return to and emphasize this message. Indeed, all New Testament writers emphasize Jesus' superiority over all the rest of us and to maintain a distinction between him and us. For example, Paul wrote of Jesus,

“[He] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all

things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell..." (Colossians 1.¹⁵⁻¹⁹)

- ? Does LDS, or Mormon doctrine maintain and justify Jesus' supremacy to the rest of us, both in time and eternity?
- ? Or, is Mormonism some altered form of Christianity, some form of post-Christian faith, or not even "Christian" at all?
- ? Why do you answer as you do?
- ? Why is it important to you to either maintain Jesus' superiority over the rest of us or to level Jesus out with the rest of us?
- ? How important to you is it to be "Biblical"?

John 4.¹⁻³

¹When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, ²(Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) ³he left Judæa, and departed again into Galilee.

Questionary

1. Jesus left Judaea for Galilee when he became aware of his increasing notoriety.
 - ? Why, do you think, did this cause Jesus to leave?
 - ? Why, do you think, did Jesus work so hard to stay under the radar of the religious leaders?
 - ? Why does notoriety so often result in conflict?
 - ? What application does this have for you in your life?

2. The apostle Paul made the following observation about Jesus and its application to our lives.

“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves... Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who... made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant (Philippians 2.^{3, 5-7}).

 - ? What does it mean to you that Jesus “made himself of no reputation”?
 - ? How do you feel about Jesus perceiving and projecting himself as a man “of no reputation”?
 - ? What do you do to follow Jesus in this aspect of his life?
 - ? What benefits and disadvantages do you see in this sort of self-perception and self-projection.

John 4.⁴⁻⁶

⁴And he must needs go through Samaria. ⁵Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. ⁶Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.

Questionary

1. If you feel the need, have a look at some bible references or do a google search to determine
 - ? Where is Samaria in relation to Galilee, Judea, etc?
 - ? What time of day is the "sixth hour"?

2. John says that Jesus was "wearied with his journey."
 - ? What do you think and feel when you read this?
 - ? When you close your eyes and imagine Jesus there, at the well, "wearied," how does he look?

The Greek word used for "wearied" (*kópos*) "means a. 'beating,' 'weariness as though one had been beaten,' and b. the 'exertion' or 'trouble' which causes this state, In prose it is the proper word for physical tiredness induced by work; exertion or heat. Expressing severe labour, it is synon. With [*póvos*], which signifies the most tense or strenuous effort, e.g., of the soldier in battle, or the exertions of messengers or manual workers.... In the Septuagint, the word is used "of 'tiring,' e.g., in battle... but also of the physical and spiritual weariness of the afflicted in their groans and cries... and also in sense b. of 'exertion'" (*Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*).
 - ? Does this alter your thoughts, feelings, or the way you imagine Jesus looking at this moment? If so, how?
 - ? What do you think and feel when you call to mind that this "wearied" Jesus is God, the great Yahweh who is portrayed as so powerful in the Old Testament?

John 4.⁷⁻⁹

⁷There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, “Give me to drink.” ⁸(For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)

⁹Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, “How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.”

Questionary

After arriving at Samaritan Sychar and sending his disciples off for food, Jesus took a few minutes to rest from his weariness at the well of Jacob. Here, Jesus encounters a Samaritan woman from the village who has come out to draw water. This is the first of six readings to explore this well-known encounter.

1. Upon seeing the Samaritan woman, Jesus ask that she draw him a bit of water for a drink.
 - ? What do you know about the relationship between Samaritans and Jews?
 - ? What was the Jewish attitude toward the religious observance and spiritual cleanliness of Samaritans?
 - ? How does Jesus’ request for a drink from the Samaritan woman break Jewish customs of religious observance and cleanliness?
 - ? How would the fact that the Samaritan was a *woman* add to Jesus’ break with his religious tradition—and not only his... one might think of admonitions, which at least on U.S. vice president followed, to never be familiar or alone with any woman but one’s wife?
 - ? On what other occasions did Jesus show, at least in the opinion of others, too great familiarity with women?
 - ? Can you appropriately apply to yourself Jesus’ willingness to engage with individuals who are culturally and religiously suspect? If so how? If not, why not?
 - ? What does it tell you about Jesus that even in his weariness he found the desire and ability to engage with others in constructive ways?

John 4.¹⁰

¹⁰Jesus answered and said unto her, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, 'Give me to drink;' thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."

Questionary

After arriving at Samaritan Sychar and sending his disciples off for food, Jesus took a few minutes to rest from his weariness at the well of Jacob. Here, Jesus encounters a Samaritan woman from the village who has come out to draw water. This is the second of six readings to explore this well-known encounter.

1. Today's reading with its lone verse might seem like an insignificant reading, not only in length but in content. But, we would have the reader think again. It carries quite a wallop, actually.
? As you reconsider Jesus' response to the woman at the well, what do you hear him saying to her?
2. Jesus suggests that the woman does not understand or appreciate "the gift of God" that has come to her today at the well in the person of Jesus.
? What is that gift? —there's more than one, actually.
3. Jesus suggests that if the woman had known who he was, his request for a drink would have precipitated a request on her part for "living water" rather than a question about his reasons for requesting a drink of her. Now, our most common focus on Jesus' statement is on the nature of the "living water" that Jesus offers.
? So, we will begin with the expected question, "What does Jesus mean by living water?"
? Do you wish to taste this water? How badly do you wish to taste this water? What must you think/feel/do to taste this water? Have you already tasted this water? How would you describe it to another who has not yet tasted this water?

But, there is more to Jesus' reply to the woman than meets the eye. Jesus had more than his own thirst in mind when he asked the woman for a drink in the first place.

- ? What does Jesus' response to the woman's question suggest to you about Jesus' additional reason for making his request for water in the first place.
- ? What do you think and feel when we suggest that Jesus is here revealing, once more, that his reasons for being on earth is not to be served but to serve... "If you knew anything about me, you would have known that I asked for a drink, not to be served, but so that I could serve you"?
- ? What other statements has and will Jesus make to confirm that he did not wish to be served but to serve?
- ? How is knowledge that Jesus thought of himself as a servant rather than one to be served "living water" to us?
- ? How is our adoption of his attitude of service to others rather than being served a source of "living water" to us?
- ? Later in his conversation with the woman, Jesus will indeed speak of "everlasting life." But how is an enduring life related to becoming a servant rather than thinking of being served?
- ? Can there be "everlasting life" for those whose principle concern is for having their own needs met and themselves served? Why do you answer as you do?
- ? Can one have "everlasting life" without adopting Jesus' attitude... that meaningful and enduring existence is found only in becoming a servant of all?
- ? What other statements has and will Jesus make to confirm that truly meaningful and enduring life comes only to those who follow his example of serving others and striving to meet their needs rather than in having our own needs met and be served?

- ? What should we make, if anything, of the fact that the narrative never does report that Jesus ever got that drink of water, but that the entire narrative was devoted to his service to her through the instruction he offered?

John 4.¹¹⁻¹⁴

¹¹The woman saith unto him, “Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? ¹²Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?”

¹³Jesus answered and said unto her, “Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: ¹⁴but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

Questionary

After arriving at Samarian Sychar and sending his disciples off for food, Jesus took a few minutes to rest from his weariness at the well of Jacob. Here, Jesus encounters a Samarian woman from the village who has come out to draw water. This is the third of six readings to explore this well-known encounter.

1. John is very fond of playing off individuals’ trivial misunderstandings in order to present deeper meanings. Sometimes these plays off misunderstandings take on ironic and even almost comic aspects. We have an example in this reading. Immediately previous to this reading, Jesus had informed the woman that he had “living water” to offer her.
 - ? What is the nature of the woman’s misunderstanding of Jesus’ meaning?
 - ? What is the deeper meaning John would have us learn from the woman’s misunderstanding?
2. Consider the woman’s correct estimation that Jacob’s well “is deep.” Jacob’s well was indeed deep. In order to draw water from it, one did indeed need something with which to “draw it.”
 - ? What is the relationship between this physical reality of drawing water from a well to the spiritual reality of Jesus drawing water from “a well of water springing up into everlasting life”?
 - ? How does the woman’s question lead you to think on how much deeper Jesus’s well than Jacob’s and how superior his waters are to those of Jacob’s well? What do you think when you consider it?
 - ? The well of living water is indeed deeper than Jacob’s well-comically so. It is comical to compare the two. Due to its depth, Jesus’ well of living water is difficult to access. What is it about Jesus that allows him to access the depths of this well and offer it to others?
 - ? What do you think and feel when you contemplate that no one else has the wherewithal to gain access to such depths and so offer the benefits to others?
3. The woman follows up her question as to how Jesus intends to draw water from the well with “Art thou greater than our father Jacob?”
 - ? How does John use this misunderstanding question to teach an unspoken truth?
 - ? What unspoken truth is taught through this question?
 - ? How comical is the woman’s question when one considers just how much greater than Jacob Jesus is?
 - ? How does the woman’s question lead you to think on how much greater Jesus is than Jacob? What do you think when you consider it?
4. Jesus’ reply to the woman’s questions is, “Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst.”
 - ? How does Jesus’ response confirm that which John found implied in her questions: Jesus’ well is deeper, his waters superior, and he, himself, greater than she knows or can appreciate?
5. Finally, Jesus promises that “the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”
 - ? What does this mean to you?

- ? What do you think and feel when you consider that this water becomes something that wells up inside us instead of some external place to which we must constantly travel?
- ? What does this mean for the responsibility that we have for others and their need for “water”?

John 4.¹⁵⁻¹⁸

¹⁵The woman saith unto him, “Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.”

¹⁶Jesus saith unto her, “Go, call thy husband, and come hither.”

¹⁷The woman answered and said, “I have no husband.”

Jesus said unto her, “Thou hast well said, ‘I have no husband:’ ¹⁸For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.”

Questionary

After arriving at Samarian Sychar and sending his disciples off for food, Jesus took a few minutes to rest from his weariness at the well of Jacob. Here, Jesus encounters a Samaritan woman from the village who has come out to draw water. This is the fourth of six readings to explore this well-known encounter.

1. First, the woman herself, then, later, Jesus’ disciples were surprised at Jesus’ willingness to engage with the woman at the well.
 - ? What was the cause of their surprise?
2. Now, in addition to being a Samaritan and a woman—both reasons for Jesus to avoid the woman at the well—we discover there is another reason for Jesus to be cautious about his interaction with the woman.
 - ? What is this new reason?
 - ? What are your thoughts about the woman as you discover that she was “shacking” up with some guy when she met Jesus?
 - ? What are your thoughts about and feelings for Jesus as you consider the ease and comfort with which he seems to engage the woman?
 - ? What are others likely to think if and when they learn that he has engaged so casually with her?
3. In response to the woman’s request for the living water that Jesus says he possesses, Jesus suggested that she go get her husband and then come back to the well with him.
 - ? Why, do you suppose, did Jesus respond as he did?
 - ? How forthcoming was the woman about her marital history and present living arrangements?
 - ? What thoughts and feelings do you have about her lack of candor?
 - ? Does her lack of candor impact Jesus and the way he relates to her? Why do you answer as you do?

John 4.¹⁹⁻²⁴

¹⁹The woman saith unto him, “Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. ²⁰Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.”

²¹Jesus saith unto her, “Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. ²²Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. ²³But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. ²⁴God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

Questionary

After arriving at Samarian Sychar and sending his disciples off for food, Jesus took a few minutes to rest from his weariness at the well of Jacob. Here, Jesus encounters a Samaritan woman from the village who has come out to draw water. This is the fifth of six readings to explore this well-known encounter.

1. The woman at the well says, “I perceive that thou art a prophet.”
 - ? In what sense is she right?
 - ? In what sense is she wrong?
 - ? How is Jesus more than a prophet?
2. Believing Jesus to be a prophet, the woman asked him where the proper place is to find, worship, and commune with God—the temple in Jerusalem or the temple on Mount Gerizim?
 - ? What is Jesus’ answer?
 - ? What does it mean to worship God “*in spirit and truth*,” rather than *in* a temple, wherever it may be located?
 - ? In your mind, what is the point Jesus is making?
3. Jesus tells (reminds?) the woman that “God is a Spirit.” In addressing this statement, we spend so much of our time—maybe all of it—in establishing what it *doesn’t* mean that we spend little or no time establishing what it *does* mean.
 - ? What truth about God is taught when he is spoken of as a “Spirit” especially in light of the fact that we are to worship “in spirit”?

John 4.²⁵⁻³⁰

²⁵The woman saith unto him, “I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.”

²⁶Jesus saith unto her, “I that speak unto thee am he.”

²⁷And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, “What seekest thou?” or, “Why talkest thou with her?”

²⁸The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, ²⁹“Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?”

³⁰Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

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After arriving at Samaritan Sychar and sending his disciples off for food, Jesus took a few minutes to rest from his weariness at the well of Jacob. Here, Jesus encounters a Samaritan woman from the village who has come out to draw water. This is the last of six readings to explore this well-known encounter.

1. Having heard Jesus’ response to her question about the proper place of worship, the woman bears a kind of testimony, “I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.”
 - ? What was it about Jesus’ earlier response that precipitated this confession of belief?
 - ? How do you feel when you hear her testimony?
 - ? How do you think Jesus felt? Why do you answer as you do?
 - ? How would you respond to the suggestion that perhaps this testimony suggests that it has dawned on the woman that Jesus is, in fact, something more than a prophet: rather, he is Messiah?
2. Jesus responds to the woman with, “I that speak unto thee am he (the Messiah).”
 - ? Jesus is rarely, if ever so direct as this. Why, do you think, was he so direct with the woman?
 - ? What does this suggest about her earlier confession of belief?
3. For all of the reasons we have already discussed in previous readings from this chapter, and as we could have predicted, the disciples “marvelled that he talked with the woman”? Yet, none dared question him about it.
 - ? Why, do you think, were they reticent to question Jesus’ reasons for talking with the woman?
 - ? Jesus was more than the woman knew. To what extent, do you think, were the disciples aware that Jesus was more than they knew? Why do you answer as you do?
4. The text records that “the woman then left her waterpot” and went into the city.
 - ? What might be the symbolic meaning behind the woman’s dismissal of her original purpose in coming to the well and leaving her waterpot behind?
 - ? What “waterpots” do you need to leave behind in order to truly have Jesus as first priority in your life?
5. Jesus had made the woman comfortable and bold enough to bear her testimony to him. Now, she goes into the village and boldly bears testimony of Jesus.
 - ? What does this suggest to you about the character of the woman—before and after she met Jesus?

She had a testimony of Messiah. Yet that testimony had not influenced her life as it perhaps should have—as evidence by her shacking up with some guy. It seems that now, though, having actually encountered Messiah, she finds a more righteous direction to her life.

? Is there a difference—and if so, what is that difference—between “having a testimony” of

Jesus and actually encountering him, knowing him, and having a relationship with him?
? At what stage are you? Why do you answer as you do?

John 4.³¹⁻³⁴

³¹In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, “Master, eat.”

³²But he said unto them, “I have meat to eat that ye know not of.”

³³Therefore said the disciples one to another, “Hath any man brought him ought to eat?”

³⁴Jesus saith unto them, “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.”

Questionary

1. Jesus informs his disciples that he as “food to eat that he now not of.” Earlier, in his encounter with the woman Jesus had, essentially, informed the woman that he had “water” that she knew not of.
 - ? What might be the significance of this observation?
 - ? How does this narrative demonstrate that there was really not much room between the woman and the disciples; that they knew little more about Jesus than she did?
2. While the disciples had been away obtaining nourishment for themselves and Jesus, Jesus had been eating all along.
 - ? Where had he been finding nourishment? What was the nature of that nourishment?
 - ? How had Jesus done “the will of him that sent [him]” in his encounter with the woman at the well?
3. Jesus says that he was send to “finish his [God’s] work.”
 - ? What does this mean to you?
 - ? If Jesus is to “finish” a work, then this seems to imply that God had started a work that is not yet finished.
 - ? What had God started that is left unfinished?
 - ? How does Jesus serve to finish the unfinished project?
 - ? What do you think and how do you feel knowing that Jesus is finishing something that God started but had not finished?

John 4.³⁵⁻³⁸

³⁵Say 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. ³⁶And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. ³⁷And herein is that saying true, ‘One soweth, and another reapeth.’ ³⁸I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.”

Questionary

1. In the verse immediately before today’s reading, Jesus had been slow to eat the food that his disciples had brought from the local village for his nourishment. He explained his disinterest in the food by informing them that he had other nourishment: doing and finishing the work that his Father had sent him to do. The text does not specifically record his disciples’ response to this. Perhaps they said nothing. Perhaps Jesus read their thoughts and answered their thoughts before they could vocalize them. But, whether vocalized or only thought, the question Jesus asks seems to be a response to their attitude toward Jesus’ refusal to eat in that moment.

“Say not ye, ‘There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest’?”

- ? What, do you think, would the disciple mean by saying/thinking that harvest time was still a while off—perhaps even thinking/quoting a proverb to that effect?
- ? What do you think when we suggest that this saying, “There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest,” either spoken or thought, is likely a way of the disciples saying something like, “Jesus, you have plenty of time. You need to eat now to maintain your strength”?
2. Jesus then says, “Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.”
 - ? What is Jesus telling them about what is to him their rather lackadaisical attitude toward the work that needs to be done?
 - ? What do you think and feel when you consider Jesus’ response that the work is so important and so urgent that one can never rest or take their eyes off the constant and critical needs of others?
3. Jesus then says, “And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.”
 - ? How does this statement fit into the tenor of his teachings in this moment?
 - ? What do you think and feel about the suggestion that when we combine this statement with what has gone before, we hear something like the following in this statement?

“A time of rest will come. But now is not the time to relax (and eat). How can we rest while others still labor? Real rest can only come when we have brought others to rest with us.”
4. Jesus says that others had been working in the field for a long time past but did not live to see and enjoy harvest time. But the disciples get to reap the benefits of those laborer’s efforts and see and enjoy the harvest.
 - ? Who is Jesus speaking of when he speaks of those who previously “sowed”?
 - ? How is the work of Jesus’ disciples different from the work of those who came before? How is it similar?

John 4.³⁹⁻⁴²

³⁹And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, "He told me all that ever I did."

⁴⁰So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. ⁴¹And many more believed because of his own word; ⁴²and said unto the woman, "Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

Questionary

1. Upon returning home, the woman at the well shared with her fellow villagers the experience and feelings she had with Jesus.
 - ? What do you see in your mind when you imagine her sharing her experience with her fellow villagers?
 - ? Who have been important individuals in your life who have shared with you their testimony/experiences with Jesus?
 - ? Is there someone with whom you might share your experiences with Jesus?
2. After other villages had also seen and heard Jesus for themselves, they "believed because of his own word; and said unto the woman, 'Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves.'"
 - ? To what degree have you progressed from having a testimony based upon other's testimony of Jesus to having your own testimony, based upon your own encounter with him?
3. In this series of readings from John 4, we have witnessed the encounter between Jesus and the woman at the well and seen the impact that Jesus had on other villages as they encountered him as well.
 - ? What do you expect "encounters" between Jesus and others; between Jesus and you to look like today?
 - ? What "encounters" have you had, what was their nature, and how have they impacted/changed/ improved you?

John 4.⁴³⁻⁴⁵

⁴³Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee. ⁴⁴For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country. ⁴⁵Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galilæans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast.

Questionary

1. Being rejected by those who knew him best, Jesus claimed that “a prophet is not respected in his own hometown.”
 - ? Why is this the case?
 - ? How is this observation true, not only for “prophets” but for anyone who achieves some form of notoriety due to personal achievement?
 - ? What role does 1) individuals’ intimate knowledge of the achieving one play?
 - ? What role does 2) individual envy of the abilities and honor of the achieving one play?
 - ? Have you seen examples of people being disrespected among those who knew them while being lauded by others who do not know them?
 - ? What role did you play in this disrespect—were you among the disrespectful or did you come to their defense?
 - ? How can you avoid being one who disrespects and rejects those who are known for some achievement?

John 4.⁴⁶⁻⁵⁴

⁴⁶So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum. ⁴⁷When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judæa into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death. ⁴⁸Then said Jesus unto him, “Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.”

⁴⁹The nobleman saith unto him, “Sir, come down ere my child die.”

⁵⁰Jesus saith unto him, “Go thy way; thy son liveth.”

And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way. ⁵¹And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, “Thy son liveth.”

⁵²Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, “Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.”

⁵³So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, “Thy son liveth:” and himself believed, and his whole house. ⁵⁴This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judæa into Galilee.

Questionary

1. After the nobleman had asked him to heal his son, Jesus responded with, “Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.”

? What do you think and feel when you consider Jesus’ response?

This response might be read in two ways,

- a. As a statement about the unhealthy dependence upon “signs and wonders.”
- b. As a statement about the tendency to believe or be drawn to people and things only when we think there’s something in it for us.

? Which of these two seem the more common human problem?

? How do we avoid falling prey to both?

2. The nobleman seems to have quickly accepted Jesus’ refusal to travel to the nobleman’s home and faithfully trusted Jesus’ promise of healing toward his son.

? What do you think and feel when you consider the nobleman’s response to Jesus’ refusal/promise?

3. After the healing of his son, the nobleman “himself believed, and his whole house.”

? Given the relative little knowledge the nobleman and his household had of Jesus, the gospel, etc., what, do you think, did the belief of this man and his household look like and how was it manifested?

? In your mind, what is the take-home message of this story?

? How might you apply this message to yourself?

john 5.¹⁹⁻²⁰

¹⁹Then answered Jesus and said unto them, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. ²⁰For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

Questionary

- ? What do the life and actions of Jesus during his earthly ministry teach us about the character of God the Father?

John 10.^{1-5, 11-15, 27-30}— **Atonement**

¹Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. ²But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. ⁴And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. ⁵And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

¹¹I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. ¹²But he that is an hireling, and not the 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 sheep. ¹³The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

¹⁴I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. ¹⁵As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

²⁷My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: ²⁸and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. ²⁹My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. ³⁰I and my Father are a one.

Questionary

Today's reading represents a reading from our atonement series entitled, "Atonement: the Savior's Unity and Connectedness with us." It also represents one in our series of Advent readings.

One of my central understandings of Jesus Christ and his ministry is that he and it represented a witness of God's feelings of connectedness, attachment, linkage, participation, and unity with humankind. Rather than understanding the basic meaning of at-one-ment to be something like "expiation," or "propitiation" or "sacrifice," etc., I understand its basic meaning as "connectedness," "attachment," "unity," "oneness," etc.

- ? How does this reading witness Jesus', and thus his Father's feelings of attachment and connectedness to humankind in general and of those who rely on and trust in him.
1. Jesus speaks of himself as "the good shepherd."
 - ? When you think of Jesus as "the good shepherd" what comes to your mind? What images come to your mind?

A shepherd can simply be a herder of sheep. But in the parable, Jesus is more than a "shepherd" or herder. He is the owner.

 - ? What difference does this make?
 - ? Who is going to feel a greater sense of care for the sheep, a hired sheep herder, however conscientious, or the owner?
 2. In his parable of the shepherd and his sheep, Jesus says that the shepherd "calleth his own sheep by name" and that he "knows his sheep."
 - ? What does this signify to you?
 - ? What do you think and how do you feel when you contemplate Jesus' "knowing" you well and intimately?
 - ? Given your daily life and conduct, do you find this comforting or intimidating? Why do you answer as you do?
 - ? What, do you imagine, are his thoughts when he considers you?
 3. In the parable, Jesus says that the shepherd "goeth before" the sheep.

- ? What does this signify to you?
 - ? How significant are the accounts of Jesus' earthly ministry and the example he set during it in shaping how you think, feel, and act, especially as you relate to those with whom you come in contact either casually or intimately?
4. In the parable, the sheep not only "know" the shepherd's voice but "know not the voice of strangers" and so "fleeth" them.
 - ? To what examples would you point of "strangers" whose voice is not to be heeded and whose sincere interest in you (and others) is not to be trusted?
 5. Jesus says that "as the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father." Then in the same sentence—thus signifying a relatedness—he says "and I lay down my life for the sheep."
 - ? What is the relationship between these two halves of the sentence?
 - ? What do the two halves of the sentence suggest about what the Father, Himself, is willing to do in order to serve and save His children?
 6. Jesus testifies that "no man is able to pluck" his sheep either "out of my hand" or "out of my Father's hand."
 - ? Do you believe this in general and especially in relation to yourself?
 - ? What thoughts do you have when you consider that you cannot be "plucked" from Jesus' or Father's hand?
 - ? How does this impact the way you live your daily life?
 - ? What does it mean to be in their hands?
- * The following ten titles are part of our atonement series:
- "Fall: Our Need of Atonement"
 - "Grace: The Savior's Generous and Earnest Invitation"
 - "At-one-ment: The Savior's unity and connectedness with us"
 - "Sacrifice: What Jesus Suffered for Us"
 - "Glorification: The Savior's Resurrection, Ascension, and Enthronement"
 - "Justification: How We Repent and Change"
 - "Renewal: The Hope, Joy, Peace, and Power of Atonement"
 - "Sanctification: Imitating and living Jesus' life of Atonement"
 - "Thanksgiving: In Praise of Atonement"
 - "The Song of the Righteous: A Song unto Me"

John 12.¹²⁻¹⁹

¹²On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, ¹³took 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.”

¹⁴And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, ¹⁵“Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass’s colt.”

¹⁶These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.

¹⁷The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record. ¹⁸For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle. ¹⁹The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, “Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold, the world is gone after him.”

Questionary

This is our 36th reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus’ final hours on earth. This year, our readings largely focus on the Gospel of John. With today’s reading, we backtrack a bit in time to remember Jesus’ Triumphal Entry which is celebrated on Palm Sunday.

1. Upon entering Jerusalem in preparation for the feast of Passover, Jesus was greeted by an adoring multitude who shouted out, “Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.”
 - ? What, do you think, did this mean to them?
 - ? What does it mean to you?
2. Upon hearing these sentiments, Jesus then immediately mounted “a young ass.”
 - ? What role did the multitude’s words play in Jesus’ choice of a donkey on which to enter Jerusalem?
 - ? How does Jesus’ choice of a donkey as his means of conveyance into Jerusalem serve to address the multitude’s thoughts about Jesus being “the King of Israel”?
 - ? What is Jesus trying to tell them about his kingship with his choice of a donkey as a means of conveyance?

Throughout his early ministry, Jesus has attempted to undo his disciples’ false, world-based view of the nature of greatness and power—dominance, intimidation, demand for servitude, etc. At the same time, he attempted to help them understand through his words and actions the nature of true greatness and power as it is exercised in heaven and as it ought to be exercised among humans—humility, meekness, service, self-sacrifice, etc.

- ? How would most generals, kings, rulers, Caesars, etc. enter a city in “triumphal procession”?
- ? How does Jesus’ choice of a donkey as a means of conveyance into Jerusalem contrast with such entries?
- ? How does Jesus’ choice of a donkey as a means of conveyance into Jerusalem relate to and confirm his message of what it means to be truly great and powerful?
- ? How can you conduct yourself so as to display greatness and power in a godly manner?

Matthew quotes Zechariah differently, “Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass.”

- ? What is the opposite of “meekness”?
- ? What does the fact that Jesus is a “meek ruler” suggest about the manner in which Jesus will rule or operate in your life?

- ? How does this relate to the following invitation that Jesus extends to all?

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls” (Matthew 11.²⁸⁻²⁹).
- ? Remembering that Jesus and Father are one, when you attempt to commune with God in prayer, do you pray to a “meek” Being, or Someone closer to the opposite of “meek” and more like earthly rulers and powers?
- 3. Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem was accompanied by large crowds of very happy and excited people.
 - ? What was the reason for their happiness and excitement?
 - ? Close your eyes once more. Imagine the scene. What do the crowds look like. What sounds do you hear?
 - ? During this year’s Holy Week, what can you do to invite Jesus’ glad entrance into and deeper presence in your life?
- 4. John reports the religious leaders’ response to witnessing the multitude’s enthusiasm for and expectations of Jesus: “Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold, the world is gone after him.”
 - ? What do you think and feel when you read this response?
 - ? What was the main concern of the religious leaders?
 - ? What examples have you witnessed in which leaders—both secular and religious—have been concerned about all other things with maintaining their influence and power?
 - ? What do you do to witness against and resist such wickedly evil single-minded focus on the acquisition and maintenance of influence and power?

John 12.²³⁻²⁶

²³And Jesus answered them, saying, “The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.

²⁴Verily, 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. ²⁵He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. ²⁶If 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.

Questionary

1. In today’s reading, Jesus refers to his upcoming ordeal that, today, we associate with Gethsemane and Golgotha.
 - ? What do you sense Jesus is feeling and thinking about his upcoming ordeal?
2. Jesus uses the following metaphor from agriculture to point to the purpose behind his ordeal: “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”
 - ? Why is this metaphor so appropriate to what Jesus’ life and death means?
 - ? What do you think Jesus felt and thought when he contemplated “abiding alone”?
3. While the context is that of finding a marriage partner, Yahweh’s statement in Genesis that “it is not good that the man should be alone” might have broader meaning.
 - ? In light of Jesus implied aversion to “abiding alone,” what might that broader meaning be?
 - ? What do you learn, and how does it impact your relationship with others to witness Jesus’ desire to not abide alone, but to “bring” and thus abide with many others?
 - ? How do you apply such words and sentiments in your life?
4. In Jesus’ statement, “He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal,” Jesus draws a lesson from his agricultural metaphor.
 - ? What do you hear in Jesus’ somewhat challenging assertion about how one “survives” in the eternities?
 - ? How can you apply this principle without literally giving up your life?
 - ? Take a few minutes to consider how Jesus lived this truth during his earthly ministry—examples in addition to those associated with the final trials of Gethsemane and Golgotha?

John 13.¹⁻⁵

¹Now 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. ²And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; ³Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; ⁴he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. ⁵After 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.

Questionary

This is our first reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we will examine the events of Jesus' final night on earth. This year, our readings will largely focus on the Gospel of John.

1. As the writer looks back at Jesus' ministry and anticipates Jesus' final hours on earth, he summarizes it all with "he loved... unto the end."
? What thoughts and feelings do you have as you consider this summary?
2. The author speaks of those whom he loved unto the end as "his own which were in the world."
? What does it mean to be "Jesus' own"?
? Do you think of yourself as one of "Jesus' own"? Why do you answer as you do?
? What is the significance of the addition "which were in the world"? What does it mean to be "in the world"?
3. The writer mentions that at this late stage of his ministry, Jesus knew three things.
? What are those three things?
? What, do you think, did it mean to Jesus to know that he "was come from God, and went to God"?
? What is the significance of this in our daily life?
? What does it mean to you in your daily life that Jesus has all things given into his hands?
4. The text reports that after supper Jesus "set aside his robe and, taking up a towel, wrapped it around himself."
? What do you see when you picture this?

We don't think of wrapping a "towel" around ourselves in a public setting. But the word translated "towel," indicates a loin cloth commonly used by servants in a household.

- ? How does this alter the picture you have in your mind?
? The reader likely knows what follows, but what does it say about Jesus that he willingly put on the uniform of a household slave.
? Today, what would be an analogous demonstration of humility and service?
5. Jesus then "began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded."
? What do you see as you imagine the disciples' feet?
? How comfortable would you be with washing other people's feet... say, people at your place of work or in your congregation, neighborhood, etc.?
? How do you feel about Jesus humbling himself in this manner?
? What are the implication of this for the Savior's willingness and method of ministering to you in your life?

John 13.^{4-5, 12-17}

⁴He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. ⁵After 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...

¹²So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, "Know ye what I have done to you? ¹³Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

¹⁴If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

¹⁵For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. ¹⁶Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. ¹⁷If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

Questionary

The Savior's actions, words, and teaching that are found in today's reading all occurred on the final night of the Savior's earthly ministry.

- ? What do you see when you imagine the disciples' feet?
- ? How would you feel if the Savior appeared and asked to wash your feet?
- ? What is the symbolism behind the Savior's washing of feet?
- ? How do you feel about the Savior's willingness to lower and even humiliate himself in order to serve?
- ? What does the Savior's willingness to lower and even humiliate himself in order to serve teach you about the Savior's expectations of you as you serve?
- ? Do you believe that one can truly be happy as they serve in what is sometimes humiliating ways? Why do you answer as you do?

John 13.⁶⁻¹¹

⁶Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, "Lord, dost thou wash my feet?"

⁷Jesus answered and said unto him, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter."

⁸Peter saith unto him, "Thou shalt never wash my feet."

Jesus answered him, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me."

⁹Simon Peter saith unto him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head."

¹⁰Jesus 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." ¹¹For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, "Ye are not all clean."

Questionary

This is our second reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus' final night on earth. This year, our readings will largely focus on the Gospel of John.

1. When Jesus went to wash Peter's feet, Peter asked, "Lord, dost thou wash my feet?"
 - ? To you, what is the tone of this question?
 - ? How would you feel about hearing a tone of objection... "Lord, Are *YOU* going to wash *MY* feet?" as if Peter recognizes that he should be the one washing Jesus' feet?
2. Jesus replies that though Peter does not presently understand the reason and meaning of Jesus' action, he will understand hereafter."
 - ? How long does Peter have to wait before Jesus explains the reason and meaning of his actions?
3. Peter's objection to having Jesus wash his feet is made explicit when he firmly responded, "Thou shalt never wash my feet."
 - ? Why did Peter object to having Jesus wash his feet?
 - ? Could Peter have felt embarrassed about his feet? Could he have felt embarrassed for Jesus' willing humiliation of himself?
 - ? How do we put Jesus off from cleansing us because of our shame of spiritual uncleanness?
4. When Peter has objected a second time, Jesus states that, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me."
 - ? Why, do you think, would objection to Jesus' washing of his feet exclude Peter so that he could have no "part with [him]"?
 - ? Does this have more to do with an unwillingness to engage in a ritual or with an unwillingness to see Christian service extending into uncomfortable and even humiliating avenues? Why do you answer as you do?
 - ? Do you believe that one can truly be "part with him" without ministering as he ministered, sometimes even in humiliating ways? Why do you answer as you do?
 - ? What does the Savior's willingness to lower and even humiliate himself in order to serve teach you about the Savior's expectations of you as you serve?
 - ? What can you do to serve as Jesus served?

John 13.¹²⁻¹⁷

¹²So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, “Know ye what I have done to you? ¹³Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. ¹⁴If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. ¹⁵For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. ¹⁶Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. ¹⁷If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

Questionary

This is our third reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus’ final night on earth. This year, our readings will largely focus on the Gospel of John.

1. As we saw in an earlier reading (13.⁶⁻¹¹), when Peter objected to Jesus washing his feet Jesus responded, “What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.”
? How does today’s reading fulfill the expectation that Peter will have the meaning of Jesus’ washing of feet explained to him?
2. When Peter had objected a second time, Jesus responded, “If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.”
? How does today’s reading explain how and why Peter could have “no part with” Jesus if he did not engage in the washing of feet?
? How and why does our unwillingness to engage in service, sometimes uncomfortable and even potentially humiliating service, disallow our ability to claim that we have part with Jesus?
3. Jesus ends his object lesson with the promise that “If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.”
? According to Jesus, what is one of the main keys to happiness?
? What can you do for others that is as Jesus has done for you?
4. We must always keep in mind, especially when reading in John’s gospel, that Jesus came to introduce his Father. Jesus himself confessed, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise” (Jn. 5.¹⁹).
? What do you think and feel when you consider that in washing others’ feet, or engaging in self-deprecating service to others, Jesus was doing what his Father would be doing were He present?
? How do you feel about the fact that not only Jesus but his Father is the kind of servant to others that puts their needs above His own comfort, reputation, etc. even if it might be seen as being below Him?

John 13.¹⁸⁻³⁰

¹⁸“I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, ‘He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.’ ¹⁹Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he. ²⁰Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.”

²¹When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.”

²²Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. ²³Now there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. ²⁴Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. ²⁵He then lying on Jesus’ breast saith unto him, “Lord, who is it?”

²⁶Jesus answered, “He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it.”

And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. ²⁷And after the sop Satan entered into him, Then said Jesus unto him, “That thou doest, do quickly.”

²⁸Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. ²⁹For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, “Buy those things that we have need of against the feast;” or, that he should give something to the poor. ³⁰He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.

Q

uestionary

This is our fourth reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus’ final night on earth. This year, our readings will largely focus on the Gospel of John.

1. Today’s reading follows immediately upon the heels of Jesus’ washing the disciples’ feet, informing them that they have no part with him if they do not participate, and inviting them to serve as he serves—without regard to its impact on their comfort, reputation, etc., even if it be potentially humiliating.
 - ? Is there any relationship between Jesus’ type of self-deprecating service and his expectations that disciples follow him in this regard, and Judas’ betrayal of Jesus? Why do you answer as you do?
 - ? What do you think and feel when you contemplate that it is the entering of Satan that leads us to betray and deny Jesus, especially betrayal and denial in refusing to follow his example of selfless service to others even at our own expense?
 - ? From what you know of the manner in which Judas betrayed Jesus, what does it tell you about Judas’ level of concern about himself or his selfishness?

John 13.³¹⁻³⁵

³¹Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. ³²If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him.

³³“Little children, 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 say to you. ³⁴A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. ³⁵By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

Questionary

This is our fifth reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus’ final night on earth. This year, our readings will largely focus on the Gospel of John.

1. Jesus speaks five times of glorification (*doxazō*).
 - ? What do you think of when you think of the glorification of Jesus and his Father?
 - ? What does it mean to you that “God is glorified in” Jesus?
 - ? One meaning of *doxazō* is “to be [well] thought of,” “become weighty in another’s thoughts and opinions.” How does Jesus make us think better of the Father than we might otherwise do?
2. Jesus says, “Little children, 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.”
 - ? Before reading on, consider how the disciples felt about this announcement?
3. In asking that his disciples love others as Jesus loves them, Jesus says he is giving a “new commandment.”
 - ? In what sense is this a “new” commandment?
 - ? What role does his stipulation that they love others “as I have love you” play in it becoming a “new” commandment?
 - ? How had Jesus loved them during his ministry and how would he demonstrate his love for them over the next 24 hours?
 - ? What role does Jesus’ washing of the disciples’ feet and the lesson they were to take from it play in helping them understand how they were to love?
4. In telling his disciples that they must love as he loves, he also tells them that “by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples.”
 - ? How does whether and how one loves serve to give evidence of discipleship above anything else—for example what one believes and the doctrines they espouse?
 - ? How does Christianity forget this teaching, often judging discipleship more by what one believes than how one loves?

John 13.³⁴⁻³⁵— Atonement

³⁴A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. ³⁵By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

Questionary

This reading is one in a series of readings on Atonement that we entitle, “Sanctification: Imitating and living Jesus’ life of Atonement.” *

1. Jesus’ life, ministry, suffering, and death was meant to reveal the connectedness, the unity, the at-one-ment that he and his Father feel with us. It was also meant to set an example for the rest of us to follow.
 - ? How does today’s reading relate to this hope that we will live a life of at-one-ment in imitation of Jesus’?
2. Jesus did not admonish that we “love one another,” and leave it at that. He added, “as I have loved you.”
 - ? How did Jesus love his disciples?
 - ? How has Jesus demonstrated his love for you?
 - ? How do you demonstrate your love of others? How far must you go, if necessary?
 - ? How well are those who are able to be vaccinated, yet, do not get vaccinated following Jesus’ example and loving as Jesus loved?
 - ? Why is it so tempting to act in a way that is un-Christlike and to follow doctrines, ideologies that diametrically oppose the teaching found in today’s reading?
 - ? How do you protect ourselves from falling prey to such falsehoods?
3. “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”
 - ? How do you feel about this standard by which we are apparently to judge discipleship?
 - ? What attitudes and behaviors can others observe in you that would indicate that you are a true disciple of Jesus?

* The following ten titles are part of our atonement series:

“Fall: Our Need of Atonement”

“Grace: The Savior’s Generous and Earnest Invitation”

“At-one-ment: The Savior’s unity and connectedness with us”

“Sacrifice: What Jesus Suffered for Us”

“Glorification: The Savior’s Resurrection, Ascension, and Enthronement”

“Justification: How We Repent and Change”

“Renewal: The Hope, Joy, Peace, and Power of Atonement”

“Sanctification: Imitating and living Jesus’ life of Atonement”

“Thanksgiving: In Praise of Atonement”

“The Song of the Righteous: A Song unto Me”

John 13.³⁶⁻³⁸

³⁶Simon 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.”

³⁷Peter said unto him, “Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.”

³⁸Jesus 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.”

Questionary

This is our sixth reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus’ final night on earth. This year, our readings will largely focus on the Gospel of John.

1. In our previous reading, we asked how you thought the disciple’s felt upon Jesus’ announcement, “Little children, 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 say to you.”
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your sense of how the disciples felt about Jesus’ announcement?
 - ? What do you think and feel when we compare Peter’s desire to remain with Jesus with that of the Nephites as found in 3 Nephi 17.⁵ or Jews in Luke 4.⁴²?

“Therefore, go ye unto your homes, and ponder upon the things which I have said, and ask of the Father, in my name, that ye may understand, and prepare your minds for the morrow, and I come unto you again. But now I go unto the Father, and also to show myself unto the lost tribes of Israel, for they are not lost unto the Father, for he knoweth whither he hath taken them. *When Jesus had thus spoken, he cast his eyes round about again on the multitude, and beheld *they were in tears, and did look steadfastly upon him as if they would ask him to tarry a little longer with them*” (3 Ne. 17.³⁻⁵).

“And when it was day, he departed and went into a desert place: and *the people sought him, and came unto him, and stayed him, that he should not depart from them.*”
 - ? In your own experience, have you found Jesus as compelling as these individuals?
 - ? What is it about Jesus that so many—including you?—find him so compelling and desirable?
2. Upon hearing Jesus’ unwelcome news of departure, Peter asks, “Lord, why cannot I follow thee now?” and then declares, “I will lay down my life for thy sake.” Jesus response by revealing that “the cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me” not once, not twice, but “thrice.”
 - ? To what degree do you feel that Peter’s question and false confession represents those of all the disciples sitting in the room at the time?
 - ? What do you think and feel when you contemplate the depth of Peter’s lack of self-awareness—he would not only not “lay down his life for Jesus, but deny Jesus, not once or twice, but three times?
 - ? How do you feel about Jesus’ revealing Peter’s deep lack self-awareness?
 - ? How does Jesus serve to reveal everyone’s deep-seated lack of self-awareness?
 - ? How has Jesus revealed your deed-seated lack of self-awareness? How have you felt about this revelation and how has it helped to make you a better person and better disciple of Jesus?
 - ? How do all of us deny Jesus in ways big and small?

John 14.¹⁻³— Atonement

¹Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. ²In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³And 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.

Questionary

1. Jesus' invitation here is "Let not your heart be troubled." This is partly in response to the troubled hearts of the disciples at the moment.
 - ? As you look at the previous chapter, what is troubling the disciples?
 - ? What comfort does Jesus offer his disciples in today's reading?
 - ? What comfort do you find in today's reading?
2. Jesus promises that "in my Father's house are many mansions."
 - ? What do you hear in this by way of comfort?
 - ? What do you think and feel when we suggest that rather than considering the doctrine of "degrees of glory," you might want to consider that Jesus' promise is "there is lots and lots of room for you in my Father's mansion?"
 - ? Which is most meaningful in your daily life?
3. Jesus promises that he is leaving "to prepare a place" for his disciples.
 - ? What does Jesus do to "prepare a place" for his disciples?
 - ? What is Jesus currently doing to "prepare a place" for you?
4. Jesus promises his disciples that he "will come again, and receive you unto myself."
 - ? How, do you think, did the disciples feel when they heard this promise?
 - ? How applicable to you is this promise?
 - ? What do you imagine in your mind when you envision Jesus coming to "receive you unto" himself?
 - ? What would it mean to you to be "where [he is]"?
- * The following ten titles are part of our atonement series:
 - "Fall: Our Need of Atonement"
 - "Grace: The Savior's Generous and Earnest Invitation"
 - "At-one-ment: The Savior's unity and connectedness with us"
 - "Sacrifice: What Jesus Suffered for Us"
 - "Glorification: The Savior's Resurrection, Ascension, and Enthronement"
 - "Justification: How We Repent and Change"
 - "Renewal: The Hope, Joy, Peace, and Power of Atonement"
 - "Sanctification: Imitating and living Jesus' life of Atonement"
 - "Thanksgiving: In Praise of Atonement"
 - "The Song of the Righteous: A Song unto Me"

John 14.¹⁻⁴

¹“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. ²In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³And 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. ⁴And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.”

Questionary

This is our seventh reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus’ final night on earth. This year, our readings will largely focus on the Gospel of John.

1. While scripture verse and chapter divisions can be useful, they can have drawbacks. One drawback is that we tend to start and stop a lot as we read. We think we are moving from one idea to another as we pass from one verse or chapter to another. Chapter headings, particularly, can cause us to lose sight of continuity within the text. The move from chapter 13 to 14 is a case in point.
 - ? What do you think and feel when we contemplate first four verses of chapter 14 as an attempt on Jesus’ part to comfort his disciples in relation to what immediately proceeded:
 - Jesus informed his disciples that he was leaving and that they would be separated from him for an indeterminate period of time.
 - ? How might these opening verses of chapter 14 serve to comfort the disciples in regard to his eminent and indeterminate departure? _
 - Jesus revealed the depth of self-awareness found even among his closest disciples.
 - ? How do these opening verses of chapter 14 serve to comfort the disciples in regard to their profound lack of self-awareness?
 - Jesus revealed the disciples’ frequent denial of Jesus—while Jesus’ statement concerning Peter’s thrice repeated denial of Jesus is specific to Peter, all of the disciples abandoned Jesus, Peter only hanging in a bit longer than the others.
 - ? How might these opening verses of chapter 14 serve to comfort the disciples in regard to their frequent denial of Jesus?
2. We often read chapters 14-17 as a great theological dissertation. However, it can also be read from the perspective of Jesus trying to comfort his disciples in a moment that must have been very trying for the reasons already given.
 - ? As you continue to read John 14-17, consider how each word, each sentence, each verse serves to comfort in a trying moment as much as it serves to teach.
 - ? What comfort is found in the following statements?
 - “Let not your heart be troubled.”
 - “In my Father's house are many mansions.”
 - ? “Many” seems like more than three—as in the three degrees of glory. How would you feel about the suggestion that the traditional LDS “three degrees of glory” represents a simplified version of something far more diverse and complicated? Why do you answer as you do?
 - “I go to 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.”

John 14.⁵⁻¹¹

⁵Thomas saith unto him, “Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?”

⁶Jesus saith unto him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. ⁷If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.”

⁸Philip saith unto him, “Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.”

⁹Jesus saith unto him, “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? ¹⁰Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. ¹¹Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works’ sake.

Questionary

This is our eighth reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus’ final night on earth. This year, our readings will largely focus on the Gospel of John.

1. After unsettling his disciples with his announcement of eminent departure (Jn. 13.^{33, 36}), his suggestion of their lack of self-understanding, and his warning of their denial, Jesus, as we have suggested previously, sought as much to comfort his disciples as a concerned friend might do as he sought to instruct them in doctrine as a theologian might do.
 - ? How does today’s reading serve to comfort his disciples about his departure and their weakness?
2. Jesus teaches his disciples that “no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”
 - ? What does Jesus mean by this?
 - ? Why is this so?
 - ? Jesus informs us that he feels, speaks, and acts exactly as he Father does and would if he were present. How does this reality of Jesus’ character help us understand and approach the Father?
3. Jesus tells his disciples that they “have seen” the Father and that “he that hath seen me hath seen the Father.”
 - ? What do you understand and how do you feel when you contemplate that what the disciples saw in Jesus and what you read of Jesus in the Gospels is the same as if they had seen and you had read of the Father?
4. It is easy to imagine that like many today, the disciples found Jesus personable and intimate but continued to think of “God” or the “Father” as less personable and intimate and more distant—especially in light of their lack of self-understanding and their denial of Jesus.
 - ? How does today’s passage address this false notion of God the Father and thus draw the disciples and us to the Father?

John 14.¹²⁻¹⁵

¹²“Verily, verily, 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. ¹³And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

¹⁵If ye love me, keep my commandments.”

Questionary

This is our ninth reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus’ final night on earth. This year, our readings will largely focus on the Gospel of John.

1. After unsettling his disciples with his announcement of eminent departure (Jn. 13.^{33, 36}), his suggestion of their lack of self-awareness, and his warning of their denial of him, Jesus, as we have suggested previously, sought as much to comfort his disciples as a concerned friend might do as he sought to instruct them in doctrine as a theologian might do.
 - ? How does today’s reading serve to comfort his disciples about his departure and their weakness?
2. Jesus says that those who believe on him will do the same works as Jesus and even greater “because I go unto my Father.”
 - ? What role does Jesus’ ascension and enthronement with God play in our being able to do such great works?
 - ? How do you feel about being able to work as powerfully as Jesus?
 - ? Have there been instances of this in your own life? What was the nature of the work?
 - ? How does Jesus’ positive response to our prayerful requests to work as he works bring glory to the Father?
3. Jesus declares, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.”
 - ? What commandments” had Jesus given his disciples to this point?
 - ? What “commandments” had Jesus given his disciples earlier on this very evening?
 - ? What “commandments” would he later give his disciples?
 - ? What comes to your mind when you consider the “commandments” that he has given you? How would you characterize them?
 - ? In your mind, what is the nature of “keeping” them?

John 14.¹⁶⁻²¹

¹⁶And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; ¹⁷Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

¹⁸I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. ¹⁹Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. ²⁰At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. ²¹He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

Questionary

This is our tenth reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus' final night on earth. This year, our readings will largely focus on the Gospel of John.

1. After unsettling his disciples with his announcement of eminent departure (Jn. 13.^{33, 36}), his suggestion of their lack of self-awareness, and his warning of their denial of him, Jesus, as we have suggested previously, sought as much to comfort his disciples as a concerned friend might do as he sought to instruct them in doctrine as a theologian might do.

? How does today's reading serve to comfort his disciples about his departure and their weakness?

2. Jesus promises his disciples that he will ask the Father to send "another comforter."

? What, do you think, does Jesus mean by a "comforter"?

? What would a "comforter" do?

The Greek word can have the meaning of "comforter." It can also mean instructor, advisor, aid, assistant." It can also have the meaning of "defender." In this final usage, common to Greek, the noun can mean "defense attorney."

? How do these definitions alter or enhance your understanding of "comforter" and what it was that Jesus was promising his disciples?

? Have you felt Jesus and/ or "the Spirit" defending you?

? From what have you need and do you need defended?

? What do you think and feel when we suggest that one of the comforter's or defender's principal efforts is to defend against the accusation and accompanying humiliation of sin—an accusation that often comes from ourselves and can be indicative of harkening to Satan, who is called, "the accuser of his brethren" (see Rev. 12.¹⁰)?

3. Since the "Comforter" that Jesus will have the Father send to them is "another" comforter, the disciples must have already previously been the beneficiaries of a "first comforter."

? Who has acted as "comforter" to the disciples during their previous three years spent following Jesus?

? How has Jesus comforted—instructed, assisted, and defended—them.

? Consider examples from Jesus' ministry in which he comforted, taught, assisted, and defended not only his disciples but many others. What examples came to mind?

? How do these examples increase your desire for his comfort in your life?

? In what kinds of matters do you need "comforted"? "Aided"? "Instructed"? "Defended"?

4. As part of his effort to allay his disciples dismay, Jesus went on to promise, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."

? How, do you suppose, did the disciples feel at this assurance?

? Is this promise applicable to yourself? Why do you answer as you do?

5. After promising that he “will come to you,” Jesus added, “At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.”

? What, do you think, is the significance of this addition?

From the very beginning, one of Jesus’ principal interests has been to reveal to his disciples the Father and his nature. Indeed, this was a principal aim directed at the whole world. Through Jesus we come to know and experience God more fully.

? So, what will the disciples learn about Heavenly Father from Jesus’ commitment to comfort them through the Holy Spirit and through his own presence?

? What do you think and how do you feel when you contemplate that Heavenly Father is equally anxious to comfort and is the same comforting presence as Jesus?

John 14.^{16-21, 23} — lent

¹⁶“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; ¹⁷Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

¹⁸I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. ¹⁹Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. ²⁰At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

²¹He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him....

²³If 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.”

Questionary

Today’s reading is our 36th for Lent 2024.

1. After informing his disciples of his eminent departure, Jesus began to comfort them in their sadness and anxiety over no longer being able to be with him. As part of his effort to comfort them, Jesus promised that he “will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter” to aid them in his absence.

? What, do you think, does Jesus mean by a “comforter”?

? What would a “comforter” do?

? What would the disciples need a comforter for? About what would they need comforted?

The word can have the meaning of “to comfort.” It can also mean to “instruct, aid, assist.” It can also have the meaning of “defend.” In this final usage, common to Greek, it can mean “defense attorney.”

? How do these definitions alter or enhance your understanding of “comforter” and what it was that Jesus was promising his disciples?

2. Since the “Comforter” that Jesus will have the Father send to them is “another” comforter, the disciples must have already previously been the beneficiaries of a “first comforter.”

? Who has acted as “comforter” to the disciples during the previous three years spent following Jesus?

? How has Jesus comforted—instructed, assisted, and defended—them.

? Consider examples from Jesus’ ministry in which he comforted, taught, assisted, and defended not only his disciples but many others. What example came to mind?

? How do these examples increase your desire for “another comforter” in your life?

? In what kinds of matters do you need “comforted”? “Aided”? “Instructed”? “Defended”?

? How has the comforter comforted you? Instructed you? Defended you?

3. As part of his effort to allay his disciples dismay over his departure, Jesus went on to promise, “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.”

? How, do you suppose, did the disciples feel at this assurance?

After promising that he “will come to you,” Jesus added, “At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.”

? What, do you think, is the significance of this addition?

4. From the very beginning, Jesus’ principle interests has been to reveal the Father and his nature to his disciples, indeed to the whole world.

? So, what will the disciples learn about Heavenly Father from Jesus’ commitment to comfort them through the Holy Spirit and through his own presence?

- ? What do you think and how do you feel when you contemplate that Heavenly Father is equally anxious to comfort and is the same comforting presence as Jesus?
5. Finally, speaking to his disciples, who loved Jesus and wished to follow his example (though their “execution” of that love and those wishes has been seriously flawed), Jesus added, “my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”
- ? What is the significance of Jesus saying that he and his Father would “make our abode with him” rather than something like, “will be with” or “visit”?
 - ? Dare you apply such a promise to yourself? Why do you answer as you do?
 - ? What does it mean to you to “keep” his commandments?
 - ? What level of “accomplishment” in “keeping his commandments” is necessary to being the beneficiary of the Savior’s comfort? His presence? Having Father and Son take up “abode” in you?

John 14.²²⁻²⁵

²²Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, "Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?"

²³Jesus answered and said unto 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. ²⁴He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. ²⁵These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.

Questionary

This is our eleventh reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus' final night on earth. This year, our readings will largely focus on the Gospel of John.

1. After unsettling his disciples with his announcement of eminent departure (Jn. 13.^{33, 36}), his suggestion of their lack of self-awareness, and his warning of their denial of him, Jesus, as we have suggested previously, sought as much to comfort his disciples as a concerned friend might do as he sought to instruct them in doctrine as a theologian might do.
 - ? How does today's reading serve to comfort his disciples about his departure and their weakness?
2. Jesus speaks of "keeping my words." "Keeping" words might mean "observing" them. It can also mean "remembering," "preserving"/ "propagating" them.
 - ? How do each of these meanings apply?
 - ? What do you do to "observe," "remember," and "preserve/propagate" Jesus' words?
 - ? How does each meaning of the word "keep" enhance the likelihood of one feeling the presence of Father and Son?
 - ? What level of "accomplishment" in "keeping his commandments" is necessary to being the beneficiary of the Savior's comfort? His presence? Having Father and Son take up "abode" in you?
3. Speaking to his disciples who loved Jesus and wished to follow his example (though their "execution" of that love and those wishes has been and would be seriously flawed), Jesus added, "my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."
 - ? What is the significance of Jesus saying that he and his Father would "make our abode with him" rather than something like, "will be with" or "visit"?
 - ? Dare you apply such a promise to yourself? Why do you answer as you do?

John 14.²⁶⁻²⁷

²⁶But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. ²⁷Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Questionary

This is our twelfth reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus' final night on earth. This year, our readings will largely focus on the Gospel of John.

1. After unsettling his disciples with his announcement of eminent departure (Jn. 13.^{33, 36}), his suggestion of their lack of self-awareness, and his warning of their denial of him, Jesus, as we have suggested previously, sought as much to comfort his disciples as a concerned friend might do as he sought to instruct them in doctrine as a theologian might do.
 - ? How does today's reading serve to comfort his disciples about his departure and their weakness?
2. Jesus said that the Father sends the Holy Spirit "in my name," or in the name of Christ.
 - ? What is the significance of the Holy Spirit being send "in the name of Christ"?
 - ? Why does it work this way?
3. Jesus promises that the Holy Spirit "shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."
 - ? How might this have served to comfort the disciples about Jesus' eminent departure?
 - ? Why is it important that the disciples and each of us be taught the meaning of Jesus' words and that we have them consistently brought back into our memories?
4. Jesus promises, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you."
 - ? What is the relationship between this promise and the earlier promise of the Holy Spirit in its role as "comforter"?
 - ? In what ways does the Holy Spirit bring peace into our lives?

Jesus says that his peace is not a peace like that that "the world giveth."

 - ? What sort of "peace" does the world offer?
 - ? How important is this "peace" to you?
 - ? What sort of "peace" does Jesus offer?
 - ? How important is this "peace" to you?
 - ? How do you seek the peace that Jesus offers?
 - ? How consistent do you seek the peace that Jesus offers?

John 14.²⁸⁻³¹

²⁸“Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I. ²⁹And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. ³⁰Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. ³¹But 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.”

Questionary

This is our thirteenth reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus’ final night on earth. This year, our readings will largely focus on the Gospel of John.

1. After unsettling his disciples with his announcement of eminent departure (Jn. 13.^{33, 36}), his suggestion of their lack of self-awareness, and his warning of their denial of him, Jesus, as we have suggested previously, sought as much to comfort his disciples as a concerned friend might do as he sought to instruct them in doctrine as a theologian might do.
 - ? How does today’s reading serve to comfort his disciples about his departure and their weakness?
2. Concerning his eminent departure, Jesus suggested that “If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.”
 - ? Why, exactly, would the disciples rejoice in and for Jesus’ return to his Father? What would it bring Jesus? What would it bring them?
 - ? What, do you sense, is Jesus’ own feelings as he contemplates returning to his Father?
3. Jesus warns that the coming hours will be challenging for him and for his disciples: “I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.”
 - ? What do you think when you consider that this warning comes on the heels of a happy moment in which Jesus contemplated returning to his Father?
 - ? Who is “the prince of this world”?
 - ? Why is Satan called “the prince of this world”?
 - ? What does this tell you about “this world” and its relation with Satan?
 - ? How do you feel about Satan’s dominance in this world?
 - ? To what evidences would you point that Satan has dominance in “this world”?
 - ? What does Jesus mean when he says that Satan “hath nothing in me”?
 - ? What do you think and feel when you consider how utterly “otherworldly” Jesus was and is?
 - ? What does Satan possess in you?
 - ? To what extent can we become “otherworldly” and how is it achieved?
 - ? What do you think and feel when you consider that from the time Jesus leaves the upper room until his death, he will be under intense assault, trial, and testing by “the prince of this world”?
 - ? What do you think and feel when you consider that after all that assault, trial, and testing by “the prince of this world”—so powerful among everyone else—Jesus was conqueror, proving that he was not of this world or subject to its values or its powers?

John 15.¹⁻⁸

¹“I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. ²Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

³Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. ⁴Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. ⁵I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. ⁶If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. ⁸Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.”

Questionary

This is our fourteenth reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus’ final night on earth. This year, our readings will largely focus on the Gospel of John.

1. After unsettling his disciples with his announcement of eminent departure (Jn. 13.^{33, 36}), his suggestion of their lack of self-awareness, and his warning of their denial of him, Jesus, as we have suggested previously, sought as much to comfort his disciples as a concerned friend might do as he sought to instruct them in doctrine as a theologian might do.
 - ? How does today’s reading serve to comfort his disciples about his departure and their weakness?
2. Jesus says that his Father is his “husbandman.”
 - ? What does Jesus mean by this?
 - ? What does this acknowledgement say about Jesus’ feelings for his Father?
3. Jesus teaches that “as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.” Leaving the metaphor behind, Jesus warns that “without me ye can do nothing.”
 - ? How is our reliance upon Jesus related to Jesus’ acknowledged reliance upon his Father?
 - ? How do you feel about such dependence upon Jesus?
 - ? Do you acknowledge your dependence upon Jesus as willingly as Jesus acknowledges his dependence upon his Father?
 - ? How do you feel about being able to do “*nothing*” without Jesus?
 - ? How does the following quote from Moroni relate to Jesus’ saying here?

“And behold, there were divers ways that he did manifest things unto the children of men, which were good; and all things which are good cometh of Christ; otherwise men were fallen, and there could no good thing come unto them” (7.²⁴).
 - ? How does the following quote from Lorenzo Snow relate to today’s passage?

“The character of the religion that we have espoused demands a certain course of conduct that no other religion that we know of requires of its adherents; and the nature of those demands upon us are such that no person can comply with them unless by assistance from the Almighty... the sacrifices that are required of us are of that nature that no man nor woman could make them, unless aided by a supernatural power; and the Lord, in proposing these conditions, never intended that his people should ever be required to comply with them unless by supernatural aid... He has promised this aid.”¹

¹ *JD*. Vol. 20, p. 362

- ? What do you think and feel when you consider that you have a religion that is impossible to comply with without “supernatural aid”?
 - ? What is the real point of such a religion?
 - ? What does it seek to teach us about ourselves and our relationship with the world and the cosmos around us?
4. Jesus speaks of “bearing fruit” and “bringing forth much fruit.”
- ? What does it mean to “bear” or “bring forth” fruit?
 - ? What fruit is Jesus after?
 - ? What is the difference between working in the garden, orchard, vineyard, etc. and actually producing a good crop or harvest?
 - ? Can one “work” without actually producing a harvest? Why do you answer as you do?
 - ? What fruit have you and are you producing?
5. Jesus warns that “every branch in me that beareth not fruit” is “taken away,” “cast forth,” and “cast into the fire,” and “burned.”
- ? How do you feel about this warning, the high expectations for fruit, and dramatic and negative consequences of not bearing fruit?

John 15.¹⁻⁸— Atonement

¹“I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. ²Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

³Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. ⁴Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. ⁵I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. ⁶If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. ⁸Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.”

Questionary

One of my central understandings of Jesus Christ and his ministry is that he and it represented a witness of God’s feelings of connectedness, attachment, linkage, participation, and unity with humankind. Rather than understanding the basic meaning of at-one-ment to be something like “expatiation,” or “propitiation” or “sacrifice,” etc., I understand its basic meaning as “connectedness,” “attachment,” “unity,” “oneness,” etc.

? In light of this, how does this reading reflect Jesus’ connectedness to us?

1. Jesus says that his Father is his “husbandman.”

? What does Jesus mean by this?

? What does this acknowledgement say about Jesus’ feelings for his Father?

2. Jesus teaches that “as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.” Leaving the metaphor behind, Jesus warns that “without me ye can do nothing.”

? How is our reliance upon Jesus related to Jesus’ acknowledged reliance upon his Father?

? How do you feel about such dependence upon Jesus?

? Do you acknowledge your dependence upon Jesus as willingly as Jesus acknowledges his dependence upon his Father?

? How do you feel about being able to do “*nothing*” without Jesus?

? How does the following quote from Lorenzo Snow relate to today’s passage?

“The character of the religion that we have espoused demands a certain course of conduct that no other religion that we know of requires of its adherents; and the nature of those demands upon us are such that no person can comply with them unless by assistance from the Almighty... the sacrifices that are required of us are of that nature that no man nor woman could make them, unless aided by a supernatural power; and the Lord, in proposing these conditions, never intended that his people should ever be required to comply with them unless by supernatural aid... He has promised this aid.”²

? What do you think and feel when you consider that you have a religion that is impossible to comply with without “supernatural aid”?

? What is the real point of such a religion?

? What does it seek to teach us about ourselves and our relationship with the world and the cosmos around us?

² *JD*. Vol. 20, p. 362

3. Jesus speaks of “bearing fruit” and “bringing forth much fruit.”
 - ? What does it mean to “bear” or “bring forth” fruit?
 - ? What fruit is Jesus after?
 - ? What is the difference between working in the garden, orchard, vineyard, etc. and actually producing a good crop or harvest?
 - ? Can one “work” without actually producing a harvest? Why do you answer as you do?
 - ? What fruit have you and are you producing?
4. Jesus warns that “every branch in me that beareth not fruit” is “taken away,” “cast forth,” and “cast into the fire,” and “burned.”
 - ? How do you feel about this warning, the high expectations for fruit, and dramatic and negative consequences of not bearing fruit?
- * The following ten titles are part of our atonement series:
 - “Fall: Our Need of Atonement”
 - “Grace: The Savior’s Generous and Earnest Invitation”
 - “At-one-ment: The Savior’s unity and connectedness with us”
 - “Sacrifice: What Jesus Suffered for Us”
 - “Glorification: The Savior’s Resurrection, Ascension, and Enthronement”
 - “Justification: How We Repent and Change”
 - “Renewal: The Hope, Joy, Peace, and Power of Atonement”
 - “Sanctification: Imitating and living Jesus’ life of Atonement”
 - “Thanksgiving: In Praise of Atonement”
 - “The Song of the Righteous: A Song unto Me”

John 15.⁹⁻¹²

⁹“As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. ¹⁰If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love. ¹¹These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. ¹²This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

Questionary

This is our fifteenth reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus’ final night on earth. This year, our readings will largely focus on the Gospel of John.

1. After unsettling his disciples with his announcement of eminent departure (Jn. 13.^{33, 36}), his suggestion of their lack of self-awareness, and his warning of their denial of him, Jesus, as we have suggested previously, sought as much to comfort his disciples as a concerned friend might do as he sought to instruct them in doctrine as a theologian might do.
 - ? How does today’s reading serve to comfort his disciples about his departure and their weakness?
2. Jesus makes this extraordinarily comforting statement: “As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you.”
 - ? What do you sense about the love the Father has for Jesus and how that love is expressed?
 - ? What do you think and feel when you consider that Jesus loves us in the same way and with similar expressions of that love that the Father has for him?
3. If Jesus promise that “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.”
 - ? To what extent did Jesus “keep” his Father’s commandments?
 - ? To what extent can and do we “keep” Jesus’ commandments?
 - ? What do you do with the chasm that exists between Jesus’ “keeping” of commandments and our own, and the implications of that chasm for our access to his abiding love?
 - ? What, do you think, were Jesus’ reasonable expectations of us?
4. After Jesus has promised his abiding love to those who “keep my commandments,” Jesus reminds his disciples that “This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.”
 - ? Does this shape Jesus’ earlier statement about “keeping” commandments for you? If so, how?
 - ? How does loving one another as Jesus loved and loves encompass all commandments?
 - ? Are there “commandments that you find it difficult to place under the umbrella of loving others? Why do you answer as you do?
 - ? What are we to do with and make of “commandments” that we find difficult to place under the umbrella of loving others or that become divorced from this fundamental aspect of love of others?
 - ? How closely can and do you love others as Jesus loved and loves?
 - ? What, do you think, were Jesus’ reasonable expectations of us?
5. Concerning Jesus’ statements about “keeping” commandments and our dependence upon him to do so, Jesus states that “These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.”
 - ? When you consider admonitions to “keep” commandments is it normal for “your joy [to] be full”? Why do you answer as you do?
 - ? How does Jesus’ intent that his “joy might remain in you,” and “your joy might be full” relate to our suggestion that in all his conversation with the disciples in the upper room Jesus seeks to comfort and strengthen his disciples?

John 15.¹³⁻¹⁷

¹³Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. ¹⁵Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. ¹⁶Ye 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. ¹⁷These things I command you, that ye love one another.”

Questionary

This is our 16th reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus’ final night on earth. This year, our readings will largely focus on the Gospel of John.

1. After unsettling his disciples with his announcement of eminent departure (Jn. 13.^{33, 36}), his suggestion of their lack of self-awareness, and his warning of their denial of him, Jesus, as we have suggested previously, sought as much to comfort his disciples as a concerned friend might do as he sought to instruct them in doctrine as a theologian might do.
 - ? How does today’s reading serve to comfort his disciples about his departure and their weakness?
2. We often go looking for evidences of God’s love and commitment to us—seeing evidence of his love and commitment in his helping us in sickness, financial difficulties, worries over school, work, family, emotional challenges, etc.
 - ? What does Jesus’ statement that “Greater love hath no man than this, than a man lay down his life for his friends” suggest about looking in such places for evidences of divine love and commitment to us?
 - ? What do you think and feel when you consider that in suffering and dying, Jesus has already provided the greatest evidence of his love and commitment to us?
3. Scripture gives Jesus a plethora of titles— “Son of God,” “Lamb of God,” “Light of the world,” “Savior,” “Redeemer,” “Christ,” “Lord,” “King,” “Comforter,” “Advocate,” “Good Shepherd,” “Alpha and Omega,” and on and on it goes.
 - ? What do you think and feel when you contemplate another of his titles suggested in today’s reading—“Friend”?
 - ? What do you think of when you think of friends?
 - ? To you, how does Jesus’ title of “Friend” emotionally and spiritually rate with the other titles?
4. In the previous reading (vss. 9-12), Jesus promised to abide in love with his disciples “if ye keep my commandments.” He then immediately reiterated, “This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.” In today’s reading, Jesus promises, “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you,” immediately following this up with, “These things I command you, that ye love one another.”
 - ? Why, do you think, is the repeated clarification about what it means to “keep the commandments”—loving others—so important?
 - ? We ask again, as we did in the previous reading, “What, do you think, were Jesus’ reasonable expectations of us when it comes to the presence and manner of love we extend to others?
5. Jesus informs his disciples that “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.”
 - ? What should they understand from this about themselves and their relationship to Jesus?
 - ? Does this apply to all of us who follow Jesus? If so, how? Why do you answer as you do?
 - ? What is the significance of “choice” being assigned to Jesus rather than the individual

disciple?

John 15.¹⁸⁻²⁰

¹⁸“If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. ¹⁹If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. ²⁰Remember 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.

Questionary

This is our 17th reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus’ final night on earth. This year, our readings will largely focus on the Gospel of John.

1. After unsettling his disciples with his announcement of eminent departure (Jn. 13.^{33, 36}), his suggestion of their lack of self-awareness, and his warning of their denial of him, Jesus, as we have suggested previously, sought as much to comfort his disciples as a concerned friend might do as he sought to instruct them in doctrine as a theologian might do.
 - ? How does today’s reading serve to comfort his disciples about his departure and their weakness?
2. Jesus says that the world hates him and those who follow him.
 - ? To what, exactly, do you think he is referring when he speaks of “the world”?
 - ? How is the “hate” manifest?
3. Jesus speaks of being “of the world” and “not of the world.”
 - ? What does it mean to be “of the world”?
 - ? What are the values and goals “of the world”?
 - ? What is your attitude toward and relationship with “the world”?
4. In the Book of Mormon, Nephi interprets the “great and spacious building” as “the pride” and “wisdom” of the world, or that in which the world takes pride and that in which it possesses skill. He later describes those things in which the world takes pride and the things in which the world has skill.

“And I also saw gold, and silver, and silks, and scarlets, and fine-twined linen, and all manner of precious clothing; and I saw many harlots. And the angel spake unto me, saying: Behold the gold, and the silver, and the silks, and the scarlets, and the fine-twined linen, and the precious clothing, and the harlots, are the desires of this great and abominable church. And also for the praise of the world do they destroy the saints of God, and bring them down into captivity” (1 Ne. 13.⁷⁻⁹).

 - ? How does this passage shape your understanding of what Jesus means by “the world,” its values and its goals?

John 15.²¹⁻²⁷

²¹But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me. ²²If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. ²³He that hateth me hateth my Father also. ²⁴If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. ²⁵But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, 'They hated me without a cause.

²⁶“But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: ²⁷And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

Questionary

This is our 18th reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus' final night on earth. This year, our readings will largely focus on the Gospel of John.

1. After unsettling his disciples with his announcement of eminent departure (Jn. 13.^{33, 36}), his suggestion of their lack of self-awareness, and his warning of their denial of him, Jesus, as we have suggested previously, sought as much to comfort his disciples as a concerned friend might do as he sought to instruct them in doctrine as a theologian might do.
? How does today's reading serve to comfort his disciples about his departure and their weakness?
2. Jesus says that the world's hate and persecution of his disciples is directed at them because of Jesus and its lack of understanding and knowledge of him.
? How does a misunderstanding of Jesus lead to hate and persecution of others, especially those who worship Jesus?
3. Jesus says that all the hate that the world feels for him, for his disciples, and for his Father is the consequence of its not knowing "him that sent me," i.e., the Father.
? How does the world's pride in wealthy, power, and prestige and its skill in acquiring them fail and get in the way of "the world" knowing the Son and Father?
4. Verse 26 informs us concerning the source of knowledge about the Father and the Son.
? What is that source of knowledge?

John 16.¹⁻⁴

¹“These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. ²They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

³And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. ⁴But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.

Questionary

This is our 19th reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus’ final night on earth. This year, our readings will largely focus on the Gospel of John.

1. After unsettling his disciples with his announcement of eminent departure (Jn. 13.^{33, 36}), his suggestion of their lack of self-awareness, and his warning of their denial of him, Jesus, as we have suggested previously, sought as much to comfort his disciples as a concerned friend might do as he sought to instruct them in doctrine as a theologian might do.
 - ? How does today’s reading serve to comfort his disciples about his departure and their weakness?
2. Jesus warns his disciples of their future persecution and even martyrdom. Jesus hopes that in forewarning them they will not be “offended” by what they undergo but fortified.
 - ? Does being forewarned of unexpected set-backs, difficulties, trials, and persecution make the actual experiences less troublesome and apt to cause offense and doubt about one’s course of actions? If so, how? Why do you answer as you do?
 - ? Have you experienced disappointments and/ or trials after being forewarned about them?
 - ? How did the forewarning impact your response to the disappointment and/or trial?
3. Jesus says that “whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.”
 - ? What do you think and feel when you consider the use of religion and God as justifications for taking the life of another?

John 16.⁵⁻¹¹

⁵But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, ‘Whither goest thou?’ ⁶But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.” ⁷“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. ⁸And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ⁹Of sin, because they believe not on me; ¹⁰Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; ¹¹Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

Questionary

This is our 20th reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus’ final night on earth. This year, our readings will largely focus on the Gospel of John.

1. After unsettling his disciples with his announcement of eminent departure (Jn. 13.^{33, 36}), his suggestion of their lack of self-awareness, and his warning of their denial of him, Jesus, as we have suggested previously, sought as much to comfort his disciples as a concerned friend might do as he sought to instruct them in doctrine as a theologian might do.
 - ? How does today’s reading serve to comfort his disciples about his departure and their weakness?
2. John, the (water) Baptist, had informed those who came to him that he was “come baptizing with water” so that Christ “should be made manifest to Israel.” John was informed that “upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending., and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost” (See John 1.³¹⁻³³). Among his many titles, then, Jesus could be called the (Spirit) Baptist.
 - ? How does today’s reading relate to and verify John, the water-Baptist’s, understanding of Jesus: that he was the one who baptizes with the Spirit.
 - ? What role does Jesus play in your reception of and endurance in the Holy Spirit?
 - ? How do you feel about Jesus’ role and interest in your having the Spirit?
3. Jesus says that when it arrives, the Spirit will “educate the world about sin, about righteousness, and about judgement—about sin because they will not trust me, about righteousness because I go to the Father and you can no longer observe me, and about judgement because the ruler of this world is judged” (author’s translation).
 - ? How does distrust of and unwillingness to rely upon Jesus serve to educate an individual about and expose to them the nature and depth of their own sin?
 - ? How does the Holy Spirit replace the actual presence of Jesus in revealing what is right and good and how to perform that which is right and good?
 - ? What role does the Holy Spirit play in revealing the pervasiveness of sin in this world so that it and the one who inspires it— the ruler or prince of this world, Satan—is finally rejected and loses his influence?

John 16.¹²⁻¹⁵

¹²“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. ¹³Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. ¹⁴He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. ¹⁵All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”

Questionary

This is our 21th reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus’ final night on earth. This year, our readings will largely focus on the Gospel of John.

1. After unsettling his disciples with his announcement of eminent departure (Jn. 13.^{33, 36}), his suggestion of their lack of self-awareness, and his warning of their denial of him, Jesus, as we have suggested previously, sought as much to comfort his disciples as a concerned friend might do as he sought to instruct them in doctrine as a theologian might do.
? How does today’s reading serve to comfort his disciples about his departure and their weakness?
2. Jesus had repeatedly informed others that he came from the Father and that everything they say him do or heard him say or sensed that he felt was a reflection of his Father and what he had personally witnessed of the Father’s actions, words, and feelings. In today’s reading, we learn that the exact same thing can be said of the Holy Spirit.

Take a moment to imagine where the Holy Spirit lives. What kinds of things the Holy Spirit sees and hears from his privileged position in the presence of God the Father and the Son.

- ? Where does the Holy Spirit “reside”?
- ? What kinds of things do you suppose the Holy Spirit hears, sees—witnesses—from his nearness, his intimate proximity to the Father and Son?
- ? Based on his near proximity to the Father and Son, what sorts of things might he “show” you?
- ? How do you feel and what do you think when you contemplate that you can potentially associate with and enjoy the presence of a Being who will pass along to you what he actually and intimately sees, hears, and feels when in the presence of God the Father and God the Son?
- ? Certainly, the Holy Spirit can instruct us concerning our mortal life, and how to conduct ourselves here so as to have joy and peace in our own lives and be a joyful and peaceful influence in the life of others. But what more, greater revelation is to be had?
- ? What might the Holy Spirit have to reveal to us concerning eternity, about what he hears and sees in the presence of God?
- ? Do you have any interest in seeing and hearing about such things?
- ? Would such revelation have any “benefit” to you in the here and now?
- ? Do you believe such revelations are intended for and available to you?
- ? What do you do, or what might you need to do to experience seeing and hearing such glorious sights and sounds?
- ? Is it possible that we become so consumed in the necessary here and now, that we miss out on the more glorious revelations of eternity that God is willing to give through his Holy Spirit?

Consider the following passage.

“For thus saith the Lord—I, the Lord, am merciful and gracious unto those who fear me,

and delight to honor those who serve me in righteousness and in truth unto the end.
Great shall be their reward and eternal shall be their glory.
And to them will I reveal all mysteries,
yea, all the hidden mysteries of my kingdom from days of old,
and for ages to come, will I make known unto them the good pleasure of my will
concerning all things pertaining to my kingdom.
Yea, even the wonders of eternity shall they know,
and things to come will I show them,
even the things of many generations.
And their wisdom shall be great,
and their understanding reach to heaven;
and before them the wisdom of the wise shall perish,
and the understanding of the prudent shall come to naught.
For by my Spirit will I enlighten them,
and by my power will I make known unto them the secrets of my will—
yea, even those things which eye has not seen,
nor ear heard, nor yet entered into the heart of man” (DC 76.⁵⁻¹⁰).

- ? How does the following passage relate to and amplify the potential education that the Holy Spirit can provide us?
 - ? How does this expand your understanding of what you can understand and feel as a result of the Holy Spirit’s ministration in your life?
 - ? What do you think and feel when you consider the Holy Spirit’s ability and mission to not only show you things of this world, but of another, far greater world?
3. Speaking of the Holy Spirit, Jesus teaches, that “he shall take of *mine*, and shall shew it unto you.”
- ? In speaking of “mine,” what sorts of things are included in what “belongs” to Jesus?
 - ? How do you feel about being offered things that “belong” to Jesus?

John 16.¹⁶⁻²²

¹⁶“A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.”

¹⁷Then said some of his disciples among themselves, “What is this that he saith unto us, ‘A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father?’” ¹⁸They said therefore, “What is this that he saith, ‘A little while?’ we cannot tell what he saith.”

¹⁹Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, “Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said, ‘A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me?’” ²⁰Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. ²¹A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. ²²And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.”

Questionary

This is our 22nd reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus’ final night on earth. This year, our readings will largely focus on the Gospel of John.

1. After unsettling his disciples with his announcement of eminent departure (Jn. 13.^{33,36}), his suggestion of their lack of self-awareness, and his warning of their denial of him, Jesus, as we have suggested previously, sought as much to comfort his disciples as a concerned friend might do as he sought to instruct them in doctrine as a theologian might do.
 - ? How does today’s reading serve to comfort his disciples about his departure and their weakness?
2. From this reading, we can glean that thanks to Jesus’ comforting words/ instruction the disciples had come to terms with Jesus’ departure. Still, they were left with one over-riding question.
 - ? What was that question?
 - ? How did Jesus address the disciples’ concern about what Jesus meant by “a little while” or “how long will we be separated from him”?
3. Jesus reveals that “ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice.”
 - ? What do you think and feel when you read this?
 - ? How do you feel about a world, about people, that rejoice when they witness the sorrows, misfortunes, and tribulations of others?
 - ? In what ways does the world show its pleasure at the sorrows, misfortunes, and tribulations experienced by so many the world over?
 - ? How does the following passage relate to Jesus’ revelation about the ways of the world when it comes to the sorrows, misfortunes, and tribulations of so many?

“And it came to pass that he said unto them: Behold, here are the waters of Mormon (for thus were they called) and now, as ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people, and are willing to bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light; yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in, even until death, that ye may be redeemed of God, and be numbered with those of the first resurrection, that ye may have eternal life...” (Mosiah 18.⁸⁻⁹).

- ? In which camp—the world's or God's witness—do you most often find yourself when you see and consider the sorrows, misfortunes, and tribulations of so many of God's children? Why do you answer as you do?

John 16.²³⁻²⁸

²³“And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. ²⁴Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. ²⁵These 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 shew you plainly of the Father. ²⁶At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: ²⁷For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. ²⁸I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.”

Questionary

This is our 23rd reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus’ final night on earth. This year, our readings will largely focus on the Gospel of John.

1. After unsettling his disciples with his announcement of eminent departure (Jn. 13.^{33, 36}), his suggestion of their lack of self-awareness, and his warning of their denial of him, Jesus, as we have suggested previously, sought as much to comfort his disciples as a concerned friend might do as he sought to instruct them in doctrine as a theologian might do.
 - ? How does today’s reading serve to comfort his disciples about his departure and their weakness?
2. Jesus tells his disciples that “Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.”
 - ? Are there caveats to this promise? If so, what are they?
3. Jesus reminds his disciples that during his mortal ministry he has “spoken unto you in proverbs.” However, “the time cometh,” he says, “when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father.”
 - ? How has Jesus shown his disciples the Father “in proverbs”?
 - ? How has Jesus’ entire life been a “proverb” as he has sought to reveal his Father?
4. Jesus says that in the future the disciples will “ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father himself loveth you...”
 - ? What is the point, or the promise that Jesus is making here?
 - ? How does Jesus make it possible for us to enter into a more intimate and personable relationship to the Father?
 - ? What is the relationship between this saying and something that Jesus had said earlier in the evening: “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”?

John 16.²⁹⁻³³

²⁹His disciples said unto him, “Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. ³⁰Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.”

³¹Jesus answered them, “Do ye now believe? ³²Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. ³³These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

Questionary

This is our 24th reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus’ final night on earth. This year, our readings will largely focus on the Gospel of John.

1. After unsettling his disciples with his announcement of eminent departure (Jn. 13.^{33, 36}), his suggestion of their lack of self-awareness, and his warning of their denial of him, Jesus, as we have suggested previously, sought as much to comfort his disciples as a concerned friend might do as he sought to instruct them in doctrine as a theologian might do.
? How does today’s reading serve to comfort his disciples about his departure and their weakness?
2. Impressed by all that Jesus has said to them during the evening, the disciples exclaim the Jesus “needest not that any man should ask thee.”
? What, do you think, did the disciples mean by this?
3. After reaffirming their commitment to Jesus, much like Peter had done earlier in the evening (and then was informed that he would deny Jesus), Jesus responds with another warning of betrayal: “ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone...”
? How do you feel when you read this forewarning?

Jesus immediately follows this warning up with, “and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.”
? What do you think and feel when you consider that Jesus knew that no mortal could in anyway be thought dependable and faithful as the Father was dependable and faithful?
? Is there a message in this for you? If so, what is that message?

John 17.¹⁻⁵ (part 1)

¹These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said,

“Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: ²as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. ³And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. ⁴I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. ⁵And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

Questionary

This is our 25th reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus’ final night on earth. This year, our readings will largely focus on the Gospel of John.

1. After unsettling his disciples with his announcement of eminent departure (Jn. 13.^{33, 36}), his suggestion of their lack of self-awareness, and his warning of their denial of him, Jesus, as we have suggested previously, sought as much to comfort his disciples as a concerned friend might do as he sought to instruct them in doctrine as a theologian might do.
? How does today’s reading serve to comfort his disciples about his departure and their weakness?
2. Today’s reading is also the first of eight focused on John 17, known as Jesus’ “High Priestly Prayer” or “Intercessory Prayer.” We will divide the prayer into three parts: Jesus prays for his glorification (verses 1-5); Jesus prays for his disciples (verses 6-19); Jesus prays for all believers (verses 20-26). We can appropriately apply all three to ourselves and hear the Lord praying in our ears.
? What is implied in the title “intercessory Prayer?”
? What does it mean to “intercede?”
? How do you think the disciples felt as they listened to Jesus pray for them?
3. Consider 3 Nephi 17.¹⁵⁻¹⁸ and D&C 45.³⁻⁵ in relation to Jesus praying for his disciples, including us.

“And when he had said these words, he himself also knelt upon the earth; and behold he prayed unto the Father, and the things which he prayed cannot be written, and the multitude did bear record who heard him. And after this manner do they bear record:

‘The eye hath never seen, neither hath the ear heard, before, so great and marvelous things as we saw and heard Jesus speak unto the Father; and no tongue can speak, neither can there be written by any man, neither can the hearts of men conceive so great and marvelous things as we both saw and heard Jesus speak; and no one can conceive of the joy which filled our souls at the time we heard him pray for us unto the Father.

When Jesus had made an end of praying unto the Father, he arose; but so great was the joy of the multitude that they were overcome” (3 Nephi 17.¹⁵⁻¹⁸).

“Listen to him who is the advocate with the Father, who is pleading your cause before him—saying:

“Father, behold the sufferings and death of him who did no sin, in whom thou wast well pleased; behold the blood of thy Son which was shed, the blood of him whom thou gavest that thyself might be glorified; wherefore, Father, spare these my brethren that believe on my name, that they may come unto me and have everlasting life” (DC 45.³⁻⁵).

- ? How do these passages alter and/or enhance your understanding and appreciation for the Savior’s intercessory prayer found in John 17?

- ? Does Jesus pray for us today?
- ? *Can you* be aware of him praying for you?
- ? *Have you* been aware of his praying for you?
- ? *Are you* aware of his praying for you?
- ? If you have or do sense his praying for you, how do you feel about it?
- ? What is the impact of this knowledge and awareness on your life?

John 17.¹⁻⁵ (part 2)

¹These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said,

“Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: ²as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. ³And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. ⁴I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. ⁵And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

Questionary

This is our 26th reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus’ final night on earth. This year, our readings will largely focus on the Gospel of John.

Today’s reading is also the 2nd of eight focused on John 17, known as Jesus’ “High Priestly Prayer” or “Intercessory Prayer.” We divide the prayer into three parts: Jesus prays for his glorification (verses 1-5); Jesus prays for his disciples (verses 6-19); Jesus prays for all believers (verses 20-26).

In our first reading in the Intercessory Prayer, we considered how the disciples might have felt about seeing and hearing Jesus pray for them. We considered the reality that he continues to pray for all of us from his privileged place at the right hand of God. We would have you continue to contemplate and listen for the prayers Jesus might offer for you, and how the words of each reading might apply to you.

1. After unsettling his disciples with his announcement of eminent departure (Jn. 13.^{33, 36}), his suggestion of their lack of self-awareness, and his warning of their denial of him, Jesus, as we have suggested previously, sought as much to comfort his disciples as a concerned friend might do as he sought to instruct them in doctrine as a theologian might do.
? How does today’s reading serve to comfort his disciples about his departure and their weakness?
2. In the course of his prayer, Jesus will make several requests of his Father.
? What request does Jesus make, twice, in today’s reading?
? What, do you think, did Jesus mean by “glory”?

The Greek word used for glory here is *doxa*. “Even a cursory survey of the position in the NT reveals a totally different picture [than that in standard Greek]. The old meaning a., ‘opinion,’ has disappeared completely. There is not a single example in ... the NT.... The meaning b., ‘repute’ or ‘honour,’ is still found.... There has been added the meaning c., ‘radiance,’ ‘glory,’ which is not found in secular Greek....

“In the NT, however, the word is used for the most part in a sense for which there is no Greek analogy.... That is to say, it denotes ‘divine and heavenly radiance,’ the ‘loftiness and majesty’ of God, and even the ‘being of God’” (*TDOT*, Vol. II, p. 237).

It can have the meaning of ‘power,’ or ‘splendour.’ “in reality, the term always speaks of one thing. God’s power is an expression of the ‘divine nature,’ and the honour ascribed to God by man is finally no other than an affirmation of this nature. The *doxa theou* is the ‘divine glory’ which reveals the nature of God in creation and in His acts” (*TDOT*, Vol. II, p. 244).

The Hebrew word is *kabod*. It is that which is ‘weighty,’ ‘impressive.’ It describes something or someone that “demands recognition,” and possesses ‘*gravitas*.’

- ? Why is it important to Jesus that he be “glorified”?
- ? How does his glorification impact each of us?
- ? How does Jesus’ glorification glorify his Father?
- ? Have you had an experience or feeling “his glory”? If so, take a moment to reflect upon it.

If you have not recorded it in the past, take some time to do so today.

3. Jesus says, “This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent.” Consider the following statements by the prophet Joseph Smith.

“I want to ask this congregation, every man, woman and child, to answer the question in their own heart, what kind of a being God is? Ask yourselves; turn your thoughts into your hearts, and say if any of you have seen, heard, or communed with him. This is a question that may occupy your attention for a long time. I again repeat the question-What kind of a being is God? Does any man or woman know? Have any of you seen him, heard him, or communed with him? Here is the question that will, peradventure, from this time henceforth occupy your attention.... If any man does not know God...he will realize that he has not eternal life; for there can be eternal life on no other principle” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 343-44).

“I am going to inquire after God.... It is the first principle of the Gospel to know for a certainty the Character of God, and to know that we may converse with him as one man converses with another” (*TPJS*, p. 345).

“The things of God are of deep import; and time, and experience, and careful and ponderous and solemn thoughts can only find them out. Thy mind, O man! If thou wilt lead a soul unto salvation, must stretch as high as the utmost heavens, and search into and contemplate the darkest abyss, and the broad expanse of eternity—thou must commune with God” (*TPJS*, p. 137).

- ? How do these statements contribute, enhance, or alter your understanding and appreciation of Jesus’s statement?
- ? What have you done, and what are you doing to act upon the prophet’s counsel?
- ? What more could you do to deepen your knowledge and relationship with the Father and the Son?

John 17.⁶⁻⁸

⁶I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. ⁷Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. ⁸For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

Questionary

This is our 27th reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus' final night on earth. This year, our readings will largely focus on the Gospel of John.

Today's reading is also the 3rd of eight focused on John 17, known as Jesus' "High Priestly Prayer" or "Intercessory Prayer." We divide the prayer into three parts: Jesus prays for his glorification (verses 1-5); Jesus prays for his disciples (verses 6-19); Jesus prays for all believers (verses 20-26).

In our first two readings on the Intercessory Prayer (1-5), we considered how the disciples might have felt about seeing and hearing Jesus pray for them. We considered the reality that he continues to pray for all of us from his privileged place at the right hand of God. We would have you continue to contemplate and listen for the prayers Jesus might offer for you, and how the words of each reading might apply to you.

1. After unsettling his disciples with his announcement of eminent departure (Jn. 13.^{33, 36}), his suggestion of their lack of self-awareness, and his warning of their denial of him, Jesus, as we have suggested previously, sought as much to comfort his disciples as a concerned friend might do as he sought to instruct them in doctrine as a theologian might do.
 - ? How does today's reading serve to comfort his disciples about his departure and their weakness?
2. Praying to his Father, Jesus states that "I came out from thee." This is one of Jesus' most consistent messages.
 - ? Scan through the Gospel of John to identify other instances when Jesus testified that he came from the Father.
 - ? Why was this message so important to Jesus?
 - ? What is its significance to you in your real, every day life?
3. Jesus speaks of those whom the Father has "given" him. He spoke in this fashion earlier in his ministry.

"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. 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" (John 10.²⁷⁻³⁰).

 - ? What does it mean to you that the Father "gave" some to Jesus?
 - ? Can you legitimately consider yourself to be one whom the Father has "given" to the Savior, and thus one who is preserved in and through your relationship to him?
 - ? How would you know?

John 17:⁹⁻¹²

⁹I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

¹⁰And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. ¹¹And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. ¹²While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

Questionary

This is our 28th reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus' final night on earth. This year, our readings will largely focus on the Gospel of John.

Today's reading is also the 4th of eight focused on John 17, known as Jesus' "High Priestly Prayer" or "Intercessory Prayer." We divide the prayer into three parts: Jesus prays for his glorification (verses 1-5); Jesus prays for his disciples (verses 6-19); Jesus prays for all believers (verses 20-26).

In our first two readings (1-5), we considered how the disciples might have felt about seeing and hearing Jesus pray for them. We considered the reality that he continues to pray for all of us from his privileged place at the right hand of God. We would have you continue to contemplate and listen for the prayers Jesus might offer for you, and how the words of each reading might apply to you. In our third reading (6-8), Jesus spoke of his disciples, who had been "given" him. He bore witness to the disciples belief in Jesus and his having come from God.

1. After unsettling his disciples with his announcement of eminent departure (Jn. 13.^{33, 36}), his suggestion of their lack of self-awareness, and his warning of their denial of him, Jesus, as we have suggested previously, sought as much to comfort his disciples as a concerned friend might do as he sought to instruct them in doctrine as a theologian might do.

? How does today's reading serve to comfort his disciples about his departure and their weakness?

2. We have mentioned that in the course of his intercessory prayer Jesus would make several requests of his Father in behalf of his disciples and those who would believe his disciples' witness concerning him.

? What requests does Jesus make in today's reading?

3. Jesus makes this request of his Father: "Keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me.

? What do you think the Savior meant when he asked Father to "keep" us?

The Greek word translated here as "keep," has the following meanings. First, it means to "keep in view," or "to take note."

? How do you feel about God doing this in relation to yourself?

The word has the added meanings of "to watch over," "to protect," "to preserve," to guard protectively," "to look out for."

? How do you feel about God doing this in relation to yourself?

Finally, the word can mean "to rule."

? How do you feel about God doing this in relation to yourself? What does this mean to you?

4. It seems that Jesus' plea that Father "keep" his disciples left an impression on the Apostle Peter, at least. He felt its reality in his own life and felt that it could be applied more broadly in the church than just among the first disciples.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven *for you, who are kept by the power of God* through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Peter 1.³⁻⁵).

- ? Note the passive voice in this request. Do we have this need to *be* “kept” in our lives?
- ? How is Father’s “keeping” us manifest?
- ? If we were to say that the Father’s “keeping” us is based principally upon qualities and abilities that *He Himself possesses*, rather than those we possess, how would you feel about this?
- ? Would you agree?

How might the following passages relate to God’s keeping of us?

“Except the LORD build the house,
they labour in vain that build it:
except the LORD keep the city,
the watchman waketh but in vain” (Ps. 127.¹).

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing” (John 15.⁴⁻⁵).

“The character of the religion that we have espoused demands a certain course of conduct that no other religion that we know of requires of its adherents; and the nature of those demands upon us are such that no person can comply with them, unless by assistance from the Almighty... the sacrifices that are required of us are of that nature that no man nor woman could make them, unless aided by a supernatural power; and the Lord, in proposing these conditions, never intended that his people should ever be required to comply with them unless by supernatural aid... He has promised this aid. The demands upon us are of a peculiar nature, and, as I before said, no man or woman could comply with them, unless enlightened and sustained by the power of the Almighty” (Lorenzo Snow, *JD*. Vol. 20, p. 362).

- ? What is the relation between our own efforts and His efforts?
 - ? What is an appropriate balance in this regard?
 - ? How would we determine that balance?
 - ? How would we live within that balance—using our own agency, yet not relying on our own arm of flesh?
5. Jesus asked Father to “keep” us “*through thine own name.*”
 - ? What does this mean to you?
 - ? What is meant by his “name”?
 - ? How does his “name” keep and preserve?
 6. Jesus speaks of being glorified through his disciples.
 - ? In what ways does one glorify him?
 - ? How *do* you glorify him?

John 17.¹³⁻¹⁹

¹³And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. ¹⁴I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. ¹⁵I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. ¹⁶They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. ¹⁷Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. ¹⁸As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. ¹⁹And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

Questionary

This is our 29th reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus' final night on earth. This year, our readings will largely focus on the Gospel of John.

Today's reading is also the 5th of eight focused on John 17, known as Jesus' "High Priestly Prayer" or "Intercessory Prayer." We divide the prayer into three parts: Jesus prays for his glorification (verses 1-5); Jesus prays for his disciples (verses 6-19); Jesus prays for all believers (verses 20-26).

In our first two readings (1-5), we considered how the disciples might have felt about seeing and hearing Jesus pray for them. We considered the reality that he continues to pray for all of us from his privileged place at the right hand of God. We would have you continue to contemplate and listen for the prayers Jesus might offer for you, and how the words of each reading might apply to you. In our third reading (6-8), Jesus spoke of his disciples, who had been "given" him. He bore witness to the disciples belief in Jesus and his having come from God. In our fourth reading (9-12), Jesus requested that the Father "keep" his disciples.

1. After unsettling his disciples with his announcement of eminent departure (Jn. 13.^{33, 36}), his suggestion of their lack of self-awareness, and his warning of their denial of him, Jesus, as we have suggested previously, sought as much to comfort his disciples as a concerned friend might do as he sought to instruct them in doctrine as a theologian might do.
 - ? How does today's reading serve to comfort his disciples about his departure and their weakness?
2. During our examination of Jesus' "Intercessory Prayer" we are identifying requests that Jesus makes of his Father.
 - ? What requests does Jesus make in today's reading?
3. In our previous reading, John 17.⁹⁻¹², Jesus spoke of being "in the world." In today's reading, he speaks of being "of the world."
 - ? What is meant by "the world"?
 - ? Are you "in the world" or "out of the world"?
 - ? Are you "of the world"?
 - ? If you are not "of the world," of what world are you?
 - ? What attitudes and actions identify you to not be "of the world"?
4. Another of the Savior's pleas is that Father "keep them from the evil [of the world]."
 - ? What does this mean to you?
 - ? How does God go about "keeping" us "from the evil [of the world]?"
5. Jesus also asked his Father to "sanctify" his disciples.
 - ? What does it mean to you to be sanctified?
 - ? How does "truth" sanctify?
 - ? What is the relationship between the request that we be sanctified and that we be "kept from the evil [of the world]?"

6. Finally, Jesus speaks of his having sent his disciples into the world as God had sent him.
 - ? What were his disciples to do?
 - ? How are you doing at doing as Jesus did in his ministry to the world?

John 17.²⁰⁻²³

²⁰“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;
²¹That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. ²²And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: ²³I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

Questionary

This is our 30th reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus’ final night on earth. This year, our readings will largely focus on the Gospel of John.

Today’s reading is also the 6th of eight focused on John 17, known as Jesus’ “High Priestly Prayer” or “Intercessory Prayer.” We divide the prayer into three parts: Jesus prays for his glorification (verses 1-5); Jesus prays for his disciples (verses 6-19); Jesus prays for all believers (verses 20-26).

In our first two readings (1-5), we considered how the disciples might have felt about seeing and hearing Jesus pray for them. We considered the reality that he continues to pray for all of us from his privileged place at the right hand of God. We would have you continue to contemplate and listen for the prayers Jesus might offer for you, and how the words of each reading might apply to you. In our third reading (6-8), Jesus spoke of his disciples, who had been “given” him. He bore witness to the disciples belief in Jesus and his having come from God. In our fourth reading (9-12), Jesus requested that the Father “keep” his disciples. In the fifth reading (13-19), Jesus asked his father that his disciples be sanctified and kept from the evils of this world.

1. After unsettling his disciples with his announcement of eminent departure (Jn. 13.^{33, 36}), his suggestion of their lack of self-awareness, and his warning of their denial of him, Jesus, as we have suggested previously, sought as much to comfort his disciples as a concerned friend might do as he sought to instruct them in doctrine as a theologian might do.
 - ? How does today’s reading serve to comfort his disciples about his departure and their weakness?
2. In today’s reading, Jesus turns his attention to those who believe his disciples’ message about him, making several requests in their behalf.
 - ? What requests does Jesus make of the Father in behalf of all believers?
3. Jesus ask that all disciples be one as he and his Father had been and are one?
 - ? How were and are the Father and the Son, one?
 - ? What do you do to try and live the oneness that Jesus so hoped for you?
4. Jesus ask that his disciples and those who believe their witness “may be made perfect in one.”
 - ? What does this mean to you?
 - ? How is “perfection” a matter of “community” rather than of “individualism”?
 - ? Why is it, do you think, that you cannot be “perfect” as a lone individual, but only with the assistance of and in relationships with others?
 - ? What does this suggest about Jesus’ own “perfection”?
5. Jesus desires that it be known that God “hast loved them [Jesus’ followers],” as God loved Jesus. Jesus finishes his prayer with this request: “that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them...”
 - ? How would you characterize the Father’s love of Jesus?
 - ? To what extent have you realized this hope of Jesus? Why do you answer as you do?

John 17.²⁴⁻²⁶

²⁴Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. ²⁵O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. ²⁶And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

Questionary

This is our 31st reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus’ final night on earth. This year, our readings will largely focus on the Gospel of John.

Today’s reading is also the 7th of eight focused on John 17, known as Jesus’ “High Priestly Prayer” or “Intercessory Prayer.” We divide the prayer into three parts: Jesus prays for his glorification (verses 1-5); Jesus prays for his disciples (verses 6-19); Jesus prays for all believers (verses 20-26).

In our first two readings (1-5), we considered how the disciples might have felt about seeing and hearing Jesus pray for them. We considered the reality that he continues to pray for all of us from his privileged place at the right hand of God. We would have you continue to contemplate and listen for the prayers Jesus might offer for you, and how the words of each reading might apply to you. In our third reading (6-8), Jesus spoke of his disciples, who had been “given” him. He bore witness to the disciples belief in Jesus and his having come from God. In our fourth reading (9-12), Jesus requested that the Father “keep” his disciples. In the fifth reading (13-19), Jesus asked his father that his disciples be sanctified and kept from the evils of this world. In the sixth reading (20-23), Jesus turned his attention from his disciples to those who would believe his disciples message of Jesus. In doing so, Jesus made several requests of the Father in these believers’ behalf.

1. After unsettling his disciples with his announcement of eminent departure (Jn. 13.^{33,36}), his suggestion of their lack of self-awareness, and his warning of their denial of him, Jesus, as we have suggested previously, sought as much to comfort his disciples as a concerned friend might do as he sought to instruct them in doctrine as a theologian might do.
? How does today’s reading serve to comfort his disciples about his departure and their weakness?
2. In today’s reading, Jesus makes additional requests of his Father in our behalf.
? What are those pleas?
3. Jesus asks, “That they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou has given me.” We are reminded of another promise that Jesus had made earlier that evening.

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: 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” (John 14.¹⁻³).

In Alma 5, Alma the younger asked his audience to *imagine* a number of propositions concerning the day of judgment and their state and standing before God (See particularly verses 15-18). Today, we suggest that you do the same in regard to Jesus’ plea in today’s reading... imagine it.

- ? Can you imagine and hear Jesus making a request of Father that you “be with me where I am”?
- ? If so, how do you feel about it?
- ? How does this make you feel about the Savior?

- ? Do you believe that Jesus possesses genuine feelings and hopes that you will be with him in eternity?
- ? What does being with him in eternity mean to you?

John 17.¹⁻²⁶

“Keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.”
(vs. 11)

“Keep them from the evil [of the world].” (vs. 15)

“Sanctify them through thy truth.” (vs. 17)

“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, are in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou has sent me.” (vs. 21)

“That they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou has given me” (vs. 24).

Questionary

This is our 32nd reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus’ final night on earth. This year, our readings will largely focus on the Gospel of John.

Today’s reading is also the final of eight focused on John 17, known as Jesus’ “High Priestly Prayer” or “Intercessory Prayer.” We divide the prayer into three parts: Jesus prays for his glorification (verses 1-5); Jesus prays for his disciples (verses 6-19); Jesus prays for all believers (verses 20-26).

In our first two readings (1-5), we considered how the disciples might have felt about seeing and hearing Jesus pray for them. We considered the reality that he continues to pray for all of us from his privileged place at the right hand of God. We would have you continue to contemplate and listen for the prayers Jesus might offer for you, and how the words of each reading might apply to you. In our third reading (6-8), Jesus spoke of his disciples, who had been “given” him. He bore witness to the disciples belief in Jesus and his having come from God. In our fourth reading (9-12), Jesus requested that the Father “keep” his disciples. In the fifth reading (13-19), Jesus asked his father that his disciples be sanctified and kept from the evils of this world. In the sixth reading (20-23), Jesus turned his attention from his disciples to those who would believe his disciples message of Jesus. In doing so, Jesus made several requests of the Father in these believers’ behalf. In the seventh reading, Jesus indicated his interest in having all his disciples “with me where I am.”

1. After unsettling his disciples with his announcement of eminent departure (Jn. 13.^{33, 36}), his suggestion of their lack of self-awareness, and his warning of their denial of him, Jesus, as we have suggested previously, sought as much to comfort his disciples as a concerned friend might do as he sought to instruct them in doctrine as a theologian might do.
 - ? How does today’s reading serve to comfort his disciples about his departure and their weakness?
2. We mentioned at the outset that this prayer has been known as both “High Priestly Prayer” and “Intercessory Prayer.” After studying the entire pray, consider the following questions once more.
 - ? Why would it be known as a “High Priestly Prayer”?
 - ? What did you find in the prayer that makes “Intercessory Prayer” so appropriate a title?
3. It has been written that
 - “No attempt to describe the prayer can give a just idea of its sublimity, its pathos, its touching yet exalted character, its tone at once of tenderness and triumphant expectation” (See “The Gospel According to John,” *New International Commentary on the New Testament*, Leon Morris, p. 634).
 - ? What have you discovered or rediscovered in this prayer that would justify such a high opinion of the prayer?

4. We suggested in our first reading that you keep a list of the requests that Jesus makes of the Father in your behalf. Today's reading represents my list... don't worry if your list is different than mine. This isn't science!
 - ? How do you feel about these requests?
 - ? How do they shape your feelings about Jesus? His fidelity and commitment to you?
 - ? Do you think, if you were to hear Jesus praying for you today, that he might be praying for the same kinds of things in your behalf?
 - ? To what degree have you experienced each of these hopes Jesus has for you?
 - ? To what do you credit either your having experienced them or not having experienced them?

John 18.¹⁻¹¹

¹When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples. ²And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples. ³Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. ⁴Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, “Whom seek ye?”

⁵They answered him, “Jesus of Nazareth.”

Jesus saith unto them, “I am he.”

And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. ⁶As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground. ⁷Then asked he them again, “Whom seek ye?”

And they said, “Jesus of Nazareth.”

⁸Jesus answered, “I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way:” ⁹that the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, ‘Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.’

¹⁰Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest’s servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant’s name was Malchus. ¹¹Then said Jesus unto Peter, “Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?”

Q

uestionary

This is our 33rd reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus’ final hours on earth. This year, our readings will largely focus on the Gospel of John.

Jesus has left the home, where he had spent the evening commemorating the Passover with his disciples, and entered the Garden of Gethsemane.

1. The events of Gethsemane have been made famous by all four Gospel writers. However, the synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) report Jesus’ excruciating suffering while John makes no mention of it.
? Why, do you think, did John make no mention of it?
2. All three synoptic Gospels report Jesus praying something to the effect of, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matt. 26.³⁹). We know what Jesus meant by “cup.” We understand something like, “mission, destiny;” perhaps even “suffering” or “violent death.”
? Why, do you think, did Jesus resort to the use of metaphor—a cup—rather than saying directly what he meant?

Consider the following passages with their use of “cup.”

Mosiah 3.²⁵⁻²⁷

Isaiah 51.^{17& 22}

Ezekiel 23.³²⁻³⁴

Revelation 17.⁴⁻⁶

DC 43.²⁶

Psalms 11.⁶

Jeremiah 25.^{15-17, 27}

Revelation 14.¹⁰⁻¹¹

Alma 40.²⁶;

DC 101.¹¹

Psalms 75.⁸

Jeremiah 51.⁷⁻⁹

Revelation 16.¹⁹

D&C 29.¹⁷

- ? After reading these passages, what do you think Jesus meant when he spoke of his “cup”?

The following words and phrases are associated with the cup mentioned in the previous scriptures:

“Torment... as a lake of fire and brimstone”

“Be moved and mad”

“Awful view of... guilt and abominations”

“Be drunken, and spue, and fall”

“Shrink from the presence of the Lord”
 “Astonishment and desolation
 “State of misery and endless torment”
 “Wrath of God”
 “Snares, fire and brimstone”
 “Indignation”
 “Horrible tempest”
 “Fierceness of his wrath”
 “Dregs”
 “Cast out”
 “Fury”
 “Unclean”
 “Cup of trembling”

? What does all of this language suggest to you about the nature of Jesus’ cup—his mission and suffering?

3. While John does not mention Jesus’ suffering in the garden or his prayer that the cup be removed, he does mention the cup. When Peter attempted to use violence to rescue Jesus from arrest, Jesus responded, “Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?”

? What does this suggest to your mind about the nature of the “cup” Jesus drank from?

It seems clear that the “cup” was not only whatever suffering Jesus experienced in the garden, but including the suffering he was yet to experience—false arrest and trial, torture, crucifixion, death, etc.

? What do you think and feel when you contemplate that Jesus’ cup including events and suffering that not only took place in the garden but afterwards as well?

? How does John’s somewhat different report of Jesus’ use of “cup” suggest about those who maintain that the Garden of Gethsemane was the real place of suffering and atonement rather than, for example, the cross?

? How is Judah’s betrayal of Jesus and, indeed, all the disciples’ denial of him—for all abandoned him at the time of his arrest—in the Garden of Gethsemane part of the “cup” that caused Jesus to suffer?

? How is Jesus’ arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane part of the “cup” that caused Jesus to suffer?

? In what ways might we all “betray” and “deny” Jesus?

4. In a clear attempt to rescue Jesus from arrest, “Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest’s servant, and cut off his right ear.” While all three synoptic Gospels mention this reaction to Jesus’ arrest, only John informs us that it was Peter who possessed, drew, and used the sword.

? Why did Jesus resist Peter’s attempt to deliver him?

Matthew reports Jesus responding to Peter’s attempt to deliver him as follows:

“Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?” (26.⁵²⁻⁵⁴).

? What role did Peter’s use of violence play in Jesus’ rejection of his attempt to rescue him?

? How does this confirm that part of Jesus’ “cup” was the violence he suffered, including especially his violent death?

? What do you learn about violence and its use from Jesus’ rejection of the use of violence to deliver him?

? How does Jesus’ “all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword,” demonstrate that

- his thoughts about the use of violence went beyond its use in service to his rescue?
- ? What do you think and feel when you contemplate Jesus' assertion that violence only begets more violence?
5. At the time of his arrest, Jesus asked that the officials "let these [his disciples] go their way."
- ? What do you think and feel when you contemplate Jesus' desire to save his disciples from arrest and ensuing trial, torture, and even death?

John 18.^{12-14, 19-24}

¹²Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him, ¹³and led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year.

¹⁴Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people...

¹⁹The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. ²⁰Jesus answered him, "I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. ²¹Why askest thou me? Ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said."

²²And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, "Answerest thou the high priest so?"

²³Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?"

²⁴Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.

Questionary

This is our 34th reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus' final hours on earth. This year, our readings largely focus on the Gospel of John.

1. John informs us that the High Priest, Caiaphas, "gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people."

? What does this mean to you?

? What did it mean to Caiaphas?

? Some read this as if Caiaphas somehow had some time of premonition about Jesus and his death. How do you feel about this understanding? How likely is it?

Many hear in Caiaphas' "counsel" the same sentiment expressed in 1 Nephi 4.¹³: "It is better that one man should perish than that a nation should dwindle and perish in unbelief."

? If this is Caiaphas' meaning, what did he mean by it?

? How do you feel about his justification for killing Jesus?

It seems highly unlikely that a man such as Caiaphas, so wicked as to plan the murder of Jesus, is receiving any kind of divine "inspiration." Rather than hearing in his "counsel" a statement about a real and necessary "atonement," we should hear a cynical political statement: "Its better for us politically if Jesus dies."

? How do you feel about understanding Caiaphas' "counsel" in this way?

? Was he right to believe that Judah and Jerusalem would be better off politically with Jesus out of the way?

? What political/social/cultural problems was Jesus creating for the Jewish ruling elite?

? How does Caiaphas' cynical approach to Jesus impact the way you read the justification for Nephi's killing of Laban?

? How often do political powers get rid of those who challenge them with the same sort of justification that Caiaphas used?

? How do you feel about such justifications?

2. Jesus is sometimes thought of as a "scapegoat."

? What is a scapegoat?

? In choosing one person or group as scapegoat, the masses who so select find harmony and unity among themselves, at least temporarily.

? How does a scapegoat serve to unite people?

- ? How do you feel about people being united and “saved” through uniting around a scapegoat?
- ? How did Jesus’ being scapegoated by Caiaphas and those who supported him serve to bring at least temporary harmony and political stability?
- ? How does the following passage relate to the previous question?

“And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves” (Luke 23.¹²).

- ? What do you think and feel knowing that at least in the short term, Caiaphas was right about the political benefits of killing Jesus?
3. In being questioned by the high priest, Jesus replied with, “I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. ²¹Why askest thou me? Ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said.”
- ? As you read this reply, what is the tone you hear in Jesus’ answer? Why do you answer as you do?
 - ? What tone did those present hear?
 - ? Were they right in what they heard? Why do you answer as you do?

John 18.^{15-18, 25-27}

¹⁵And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. ¹⁶But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. ¹⁷Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, “Art not thou also one of this man’s disciples?”

He saith, “I am not.”

¹⁸And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself...

²⁵And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, “Art not thou also one of his disciples?”

He denied it, and said, “I am not.”

²⁶One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, “Did not I see thee in the garden with him?”

²⁷Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew.

Questionary

This is our 35th reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus’ final hours on earth. This year, our readings largely focus on the Gospel of John.

1. John reports that Peter denied being associated with Jesus three times.
 - ? When you stop to imagine Peter’s denials, what tone do you hear in his voice and see in his body language?
 - ? What, do you think, is the significance of Peter denying Jesus not once, or twice, but three times?
 - ? What would you think and feel if the thrice repeated denial was more than numerical, but symbolic of the intensity of Peter’s desire in the moment to distance himself from Jesus in order to save himself?

Consider Matthew’s account of Peter’s denials.

“Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, ‘Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.’ But he denied before them all, saying, ‘I know not what thou sayest.’

And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, ‘This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth.’ And again he denied *with an oath*, ‘I do not know the man.’

And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, ‘Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee.’ *Then began he to curse and to swear*, saying, ‘I know not the man.’

And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, ‘Before the cock crew, thou shalt deny me thrice.’

And he went out, and wept bitterly” (26.⁶⁹⁻⁷⁵; emphasis added).

- ? How does Matthew’s account confirm that Peter was very, very intense in his desire to not be associated with Jesus in that moment?
- ? What do you think and feel when you consider that Peter resorted to a religious oath and then to profanity in order to distance himself from Jesus and prove to those around him that he was not a disciple?

2. Twice, we are informed that Jesus stood near a fire in order to warm himself. The first time, we are informed that “the servants and officers stood there... and *Peter stood with them*, and warmed himself.”
 - ? Might this notice of Peter joining others by the fire to warm himself function as more than meteorological information? Might it be sending another message? If so, what message might that be?
 - ? What would you think and feel about the suggestion that this notice sends the message that in this moment—when he avoided the discomforts of Jesus and concerned himself with his own comforts—Peter had closer affinity to those present at Jesus’ “trial” than to Jesus?
 - ? What do you think and feel when we suggest that, often, we all have far more in common with each other—the best of us having more in common with the worst of us—than we do with Jesus?

John 18.²⁸⁻⁴⁰

²⁸Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.

²⁹Pilate then went out unto them, and said, "What accusation bring ye against this man?"

³⁰They answered and said unto him, "If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee."

³¹Then said Pilate unto them, "Take ye him, and judge him according to your law."

The Jews therefore said unto him, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death:" ³²that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.

³³Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, "Art thou the King of the Jews?"

³⁴Jesus answered him, "Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?"

³⁵Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?"

³⁶Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."

³⁷Pilate therefore said unto him, "Art thou a king then?"

Jesus answered, "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."

³⁸Pilate saith unto him, "What is truth?"

And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, "I find in him no fault at all." ³⁹But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?"

⁴⁰Then cried they all again, saying, "Not this man, but Barabbas."

Now Barabbas was a robber.

Questionary

This is our 37th reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus' final hours on earth. This year, our readings largely focus on the Gospel of John.

1. John informs us that the religious leaders who brought Jesus to Pilate "went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled."
 - ? What do you think and feel when you consider the irony in their fear of defilement?
 - ? How do we sometimes fear false religious "defilement" even as our attitude and treatment of others is inconsistent with God's moral and ethical norms?
2. After Pilate suggested that he had no interest in getting involved in a religious power struggle, the religious leaders responded, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death."
 - ? What does this tell you about the intentions of the religious leaders?
3. Earlier, we saw at the time of Jesus' arrest that he was adamantly opposed to using force and violence to save himself. In today's reading, Jesus publicly reaffirms his opposition to the use of violence in defense of kingdom, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."
 - ? How do you feel about the near universal use of force and violence that takes place in the world, not only among non-Christian nations but among and between Christian nations?
 - ? What do you think and feel when you read that Jesus' "kingdom is not of this world"?
 - ? How much time do you spend thinking and working for the things of the kingdoms of this world as opposed to the things of the kingdom of God?

4. When Pilate asked Jesus if he were a king, Jesus answered, “To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.” Jesus, then, saw the purpose of his kingship as witnessing to “the truth.”
 - ? To what truths did Jesus witness?
 - ? To what truths about his Father did he witness?
 - ? To what truths about the kingdoms of this world did he witness?
 - ? To what truths about the kingdom of God did he witness?
5. In response to Jesus’ contention that he was a witness of truth, Pilate asked, “What is truth?”
 - ? How would you answer this question?
 - ? How devoted are you to the pursuit of truth? To what evidences in your daily life would you point to confirm your answer to this question?
6. When offered a chance to select a prisoner to be released during Passover, the multitude gathered at the judgment hall shouted, “Not this man [Jesus], but Barabbas” who “was a robber.”
 - ? How do you feel about the multitude’s choice of a robber over Jesus?
 - ? How is such a choice repeated today?
 - ? What symbolism do you find in this choice?

³⁶Jesus answered, my kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

Jesus speaks of God's kingdom some forty times in the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus' announcement of God's kingdom were Jesus' first words as recorded in the Gospel of Mark. In the idea of God's kingdom, Jesus found a primary and motivational principle and value. It was a central feature of his ministry. In this series of questionaries entitled, "Jesus and the Kingdom of God," we examine Jesus' sayings about the kingdom of God and what he hoped and intended to happen as a consequence of his focus on God's kingdom. This questionnaire is the fourth in this series.

In introducing Jesus' ministry, Mark characterizes Jesus as "preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God." We might translate, "preaching the positive proclamation about God's kingdom." Matthew not only introduces the beginning of Jesus' ministry as one focused on "the kingdom of heaven," but says that "*from that time* Jesus began to preach... the kingdom of heaven," suggesting that the kingdom of God/heaven remained a central feature of Jesus' teachings and intentions throughout his ministry.

In our first questionnaire, we attempted to suggest that the kingdom of God be thought of as that group or society that adopts God's rule over them, i.e. accepts and lives by the principles and values by which He, Himself lives and governs?

In our second questionnaire, we attempted to suggest that in proclaiming the kingdom of God Jesus hoped and intended to change this world and the principles and values by which it what governed and by which it lived. The kingdom of God on earth was in preparation for a kingdom of God in heaven, but he always intended that life on earth be improved and that the kingdom of God become an experience of human history on earth.

In our third questionnaire, we focused on the two things that Jesus encourages people to do in response to the good news of the imminent inauguration of the kingdom of God: repent, or change their perspectives/world view, and believe the good news.

In our fourth questionnaire, we heard once more Jesus' own belief that God sent him for the very purpose of proclaiming the good news about the imminent inauguration of God's kingdom. We also saw that Jesus' healing of the sick was paired with and related to the kingdom of God and his proclamation of it.

1. In this reading from John, Jesus is undergoing trial/ interrogation by Pilate. Because of rumors swirling around Jesus and the accusations that Jewish leaders make against him, Pilate asks Jesus, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" This is Jesus' reply.
? What do you learn about the kingdom of God from Jesus' response to Pilate?
2. We have asserted that in proclaiming the kingdom of God, Jesus thought not only of existence in an afterlife but of fundamentally changing the world as it is. In answering Pilate, Jesus says, "my kingdom is not *of* this world."
? What does this mean to you?
? Does this response seem to confirm or challenge our assertion? Why do you answer as you do?

Consider the words, "*of* this world." Elsewhere, Jesus says, "If ye were *of the world*, the world would love his own: but because ye are *not of the world*, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (Jn. 15.¹⁹). Consider too, Jesus' intercessory prayer offered in behalf of his disciples.

"I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are *not of the world*, even as I am not *of the world*. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not *of the world*, even as I am not *of the world*"

(Jn. 17.¹⁴⁻¹⁶).

- ? After reading these passages, how do you understand the prepositional phrase, “of the world”?
- ? How would you feel about understanding it to mean something like, “like the world,” “after the manner of the world,” etc.? Why do you answer as you do?

Jesus reminds Pilate how the subjects of a worldly kingdom, with the king’s blessing, would respond to an attack on its king.

- ? What is that response?
- ? How is the response of those in Jesus’ kingdom different?
- ? How do you feel about the nonviolent response to threats and attacks against Jesus?
- ? What does it have to say about the way in which Jesus’ kingdom “is not of this world”?
- ? How, then, does this passage confirm rather than challenge our assertion that the kingdom of God as Jesus envisioned it was an alteration to the ways of this world and could serve to change and improve the world?
- ? How does the following passage relate to Jesus’ statement to Pilate and his expectations that his kingdom could operate in this world to change and improve it?

“Therefore, be not afraid of your enemies, for I have decreed in my heart, saith the Lord, that I will prove you in all things, whether you will abide in my covenant, even unto death, that you may be found worthy. For if ye will not abide in my covenant ye are not worthy of me.

Therefore, renounce war and proclaim peace, and seek diligently to turn the hearts of the children to their fathers, and the hearts of the fathers to the children; and again, the hearts of the Jews unto the prophets, and the prophets unto the Jews; lest I come and smite the whole earth with a curse, and all flesh be consumed before me” (dc 98.¹⁴⁻¹⁷).

So, Jesus’, we submit, could and did hope and intend that his kingdom would exist on earth and in time. It would be very different from the kingdoms of this world. For example, it would, we learn in Jesus’ answer to Pilate, be very different in its use or non-use of violence and violent resistance.

- ? In what other ways is the kingdom of God different from the kingdoms of this world? (This question is one that the reader should keep in mind throughout our explorations of Jesus and the kingdom of God)

(edition: November 30, 2024)

John 19.¹⁻⁶

¹Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. ²And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, ³and said, “Hail, King of the Jews!” And they smote him with their hands.

⁴Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, “Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.”

⁵Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, “Behold the man!”

⁶When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, “Crucify him, crucify him.”

Pilate saith unto them, “Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him.”

Questionary

This is our 38th reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus’ final hours on earth. This year, our readings largely focus on the Gospel of John.

1. After having Jesus scourged, humiliated, and dressed as a king, Pilate so presented him to the Jews to indicate that “ye may know that I find no fault in him.”
 - ? What is entailed in scourging?
 - ? How did this treatment and presentation of Jesus serve as evidence that Pilate found Jesus innocent?
 - ? What does it say about Pilate and Roman law that while it was hesitant to apply capital punishment in Jesus’ case, it was perfectly willing to resort to torture of an innocent man?
 - ? What does it say about Pilate’s opinion of the Jews that he thought they would be satisfied with Jesus’ torture?
 - ? What do you think and feel when you consider the willingness to resort to torture in order to perhaps satiate the stirred passions of a group? What do you think of groups that need/ want such actions?
2. We have many times quoted the Book of Mormon’s Jacob when he admonished his audience to “view his [Jesus’] death.” While today’s reading does not involve his death, it is part of his final passion as he sought to reveal the Father and His commitment to humanity.
 - ? Take a few moments to close your eyes and visualize Jesus’ scourging and mocking. You might want to compare the other Gospel accounts of these events. What do you see? What do you feel?

John 19.⁷⁻¹⁵

⁷The Jews answered him, “We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.”

⁸When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; ⁹and went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, “Whence art thou?”

But Jesus gave him no answer. ¹⁰Then saith Pilate unto him, “Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?”

¹¹Jesus answered, “Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.”

¹²And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, “If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar’s friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar.”

¹³When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. ¹⁴And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, “Behold your King!”

¹⁵But they cried out, “Away with him, away with him, crucify him.”

Pilate saith unto them, “Shall I crucify your King?”

The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Cæsar.”

Questionary

This is our 39th reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus’ final hours on earth. This year, our readings largely focus on the Gospel of John.

1. John reports that in Pilate’s second interrogation of Jesus, Jesus “gave him no answer.”
 - ? Why, after Jesus’ rather free answers to Pilate’s questions during the first interrogation, do you think Jesus stayed silent?
 - ? What would you think and feel about the suggestion that Jesus remained silent because he saw that Pilate was vacillating about allowing Jesus to be punished and Jesus did not wish to do anything to influence him to be lenient?
2. When Pilate was met with Jesus’ silence, he challenged Jesus’ silence with, “Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?” Jesus replied, “Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above.”
 - ? What do you think and feel when you read Jesus’ contention that part of the power of worldly leaders is not in their control?
 - ? Does this mean that we simply accept, or even support the evil that worldly powers and leaders do? Why do you answer as you do?
 - ? How do you navigate this paradox and make decisions about who and how you support worldly leaders?
3. In earlier readings, we witnessed Judas betray and Peter deny Jesus. We witnessed the multitude deny Jesus by choosing a thief over Jesus for release.
 - ? How does the multitude indicate their denial of not only Jesus but of God in today’s reading?
 - ? What do you think and feel when you hear the multitude pledge allegiance to Caesar over God?
 - ? How can hate pervert the mind so much that it can cause us to make choices that are utterly contrary to our normal thoughts, feelings, choices, etc.?

John 19.¹⁶⁻²⁷

¹⁶Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away.

¹⁷And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha: ¹⁸where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.

¹⁹And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews." ²⁰This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. ²¹Then 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.'"

²²Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.

²³Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.

²⁴They said therefore among themselves, "Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be:" that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, 'They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots.' These things therefore the soldiers did.

²⁵Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, "Woman, behold thy son!" ²⁷Then saith he to the disciple, "Behold thy mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

Questionary

This is our 40th reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus' final hours on earth. This year, our readings largely focus on the Gospel of John.

1. Like the three synoptic Gospel writers, John reports Jesus' crucifixion. Take a few minutes to compare John's account with those of the other Gospels.
 - ? What similarities do you find?
 - ? What differences do you find?
2. John informs us that even as Jesus was suffering and dying on the cross, he was concerned for his mother and made arrangements for her future care.
 - ? From your readings of all the gospel accounts of Jesus' crucifixion, for who else did Jesus show compassion and care?
 - ? What do you think and feel when you consider that even in his darkest hours Jesus was thinking of and caring for others?
 - ? What thoughts do you have when you consider that Jesus' crucifixion is not only a sign of Jesus' death, but of his selfless service to others?
 - ? How can you use the cross and Jesus' experience of it as motivation to increase and deepen your service to others?

John 19.^{16-18, 23-37} — Atonement

¹⁶Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away.

¹⁷And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha: ¹⁸Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst...

²³Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.

²⁴They said therefore among themselves, "Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be:" that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, "They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots." These things therefore the soldiers did.

²⁵Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, "Woman, behold thy son!" ²⁷Then saith he to the disciple, "Behold thy mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

²⁸After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, "I thirst."

²⁹Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. ³⁰When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, "It is finished:" and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

³¹The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. ³²Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. ³³But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: ³⁴But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.

³⁵And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. ³⁶For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, "A bone of him shall not be broken." ³⁷And again another scripture saith, "They shall look on him whom they pierced."

Questionary

1. Like the three synoptic Gospel writers, John reports Jesus' crucifixion. Take a few minutes to compare John's account with those of the other Gospels.
 - ? What similarities do you find?
 - ? What differences do you find?
2. From the beginning of his Book, John has spoken of Jesus as "the Lamb of God," signifying the Passover Lamb. There are several elements to John's reporting of Jesus' crucifixion that point the mind to Passover and the Passover lamb.
 - ? What elements do you find in Jesus' crucifixion that point toward Jesus being the Passover lamb.
 - ? How does the presence of "hyssop," only mentioned in John, point to the Passover?
 - ? How does the fact that Jesus' legs were not broken—it was common for victims of crucifixion to have their legs broke so that they would die faster—point to Jesus as the Passover lamb?
3. John speaks of Jesus' spirit going out of him. Then, unique among the Gospel writers, John reports that Jesus was pierced in the side (piercing the heart) and that "blood and water" came out.
 - ? What does the presence of "blood and water" in Jesus' wound tell you about the nature and cause of death?

- ? What is the symbolic meaning of John’s having “spirit,” “blood,” and “water” present at Jesus’ death?
- ? How are the elements of “spirit,” “blood,” and “water” related to an actual birth?
- ? How are the elements of “spirit,” “blood,” and “water” related to our spiritual rebirth?
- ? How do the following passage relate to and amplify your answer to the previous two questions?

“And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one” (1 Jn. 5.⁸).

“That by reason of transgression cometh the fall, which fall bringeth death, and inasmuch as ye were born into the world by water, and blood, and the spirit, which I have made, and so became of dust a living soul, even so ye must be born again into the kingdom of heaven, of water, and of the Spirit, and be cleansed by blood, even the blood of mine Only Begotten; that ye might be sanctified from all sin, and enjoy the words of eternal life in this world, and eternal life in the world to come, even immortal glory; for by the water ye keep the commandment; by the Spirit ye are justified, and by the blood ye are sanctified...” (Moses 6.⁵⁹⁻⁶⁰).

- ? What do you think when you consider that John is really signifying that our spiritual birth came at the time of or through Jesus’ crucifixion?
 - ? How would you feel about the suggestion that John’s emphasis of Jesus’ crucifixion being the cause of our spiritual birth really makes an appeal to a feminine element—Jesus being more of a mother given birth than of a father siring a child?
4. Each of the Gospel writers record different statements that Jesus made from the cross—totally, between them, seven.
- ? What words does John report?
 - ? What is the significance of Jesus’ words to and about his mother?
 - ? How do you feel about and what do you learn from Jesus showing concern for his mother during his moment of greatest pain and suffering?
- * The following ten titles are part of our atonement series:
- “Fall: Our Need of Atonement”
 - “Grace: The Savior’s Generous and Earnest Invitation”
 - “At-one-ment: The Savior’s unity and connectedness with us”
 - “Sacrifice: What Jesus Suffered for Us”
 - “Glorification: The Savior’s Resurrection, Ascension, and Enthronement”
 - “Justification: How We Repent and Change”
 - “Renewal: The Hope, Joy, Peace, and Power of Atonement”
 - “Sanctification: Imitating and living Jesus’ life of Atonement”
 - “Thanksgiving: In Praise of Atonement”
 - “The Song of the Righteous: A Song unto Me”

John 19.²⁸⁻³⁷

²⁸After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, "I thirst."

²⁹Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. ³⁰When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, "It is finished:" and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

³¹The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. ³²Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. ³³But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: ³⁴But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.

³⁵And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. ³⁶For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, "A bone of him shall not be broken." ³⁷And again another scripture saith, "They shall look on him whom they pierced."

Questionary

This is our 41st reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus' final hours on earth. This year, our readings largely focus on the Gospel of John.

1. From the beginning of his Book, John has spoken of Jesus as "the Lamb of God," signifying the Passover Lamb. There are several elements to John's reporting of Jesus' crucifixion that point the mind to Passover and the Passover lamb.
 - ? What elements do you find in Jesus' crucifixion that point toward Jesus being the Passover lamb?
 - ? How does the presence of "hyssop," only mentioned in John, point to the Passover?
 - ? How does the fact that Jesus' legs were not broken—it was common for victims of crucifixion to have their legs broken so that they would die faster—point to Jesus as the Passover lamb?
 - ? What does it tell you about Jesus and his physical state that he died without having his legs broken?
2. John speaks of Jesus' spirit going out of him. Then, unique among the Gospel writers, John reports that Jesus was pierced in the side (piercing the heart) and that "blood and water" came out.
 - ? What does the presence of "blood and water" in Jesus' wound tell you about the nature and cause of death?
 - ? What is the symbolic meaning of John's having "spirit," "blood," and "water" present at Jesus' death?
 - ? How are the elements of "spirit," "blood," and "water" related to an actual birth?
 - ? How are the elements of "spirit," "blood," and "water" related to our spiritual rebirth?
 - ? How do the following passage relate to and amplify your answer to the previous two questions?

"And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one" (1 Jn. 5.⁸).

"That by reason of transgression cometh the fall, which fall bringeth death, and inasmuch as ye were born into the world by water, and blood, and the spirit, which I have made, and so became of dust a living soul, even so ye must be born again into the kingdom of heaven, of water, and of the Spirit, and be cleansed by blood, even the blood of mine Only

Begotten; that ye might be sanctified from all sin, and enjoy the words of eternal life in this world, and eternal life in the world to come, even immortal glory; for by the water ye keep the commandment; by the Spirit ye are justified, and by the blood ye are sanctified...” (Moses 6.⁵⁹⁻⁶⁰).

- ? What do you think when you consider that John is really signifying that our spiritual birth came at the time of or through Jesus’ crucifixion?
 - ? How would you feel about the suggestion that John’s emphasis of Jesus’ crucifixion being the cause of our spiritual birth really makes an appeal to a feminine element—Jesus being more of a mother given birth than of a father siring a child?
3. Each of the Gospel writers record different statements that Jesus made from the cross—totally, between them, seven.
- ? What words does John report?

John 19.³⁸⁻⁴²

³⁸And after this Joseph of Arimathæa, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. ³⁹And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. ⁴⁰Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. ⁴¹Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. ⁴²There laid they Jesus... for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

Questionary

This is our 42nd reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/ Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus' final hours on earth. This year, our readings largely focus on the Gospel of John.

1. Two individuals are identified as caring for Jesus' body after his death: Joseph of Arimathæa and Nicodemus.
 - ? What do you know about these two, and how do you feel about it being these two "outsiders" who risked caring for Jesus' body?
 - ? Why didn't those who supposedly cared most for him, his disciples, care for his body?
 - ? What lessons or principles can be drawn from these surprising circumstances?
2. In considering Jesus' experience in Gethsemane and at Gogotha, we have suggested that you close your eyes and "view" those events in your mind. Imagine, now, that you are present when Jesus' body is removed from the cross, and that you accompany the small group that transports his body to the tomb, places it in the tomb, and closes the tomb up.
 - ? What do you see?
 - ? What is the mood?
 - ? How do you feel?

John 20.¹⁻¹⁸

¹The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. ²Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, “They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.”

³Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. ⁴So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. ⁵And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. ⁶Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, ⁷and the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. ⁸Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed. ⁹For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. ¹⁰Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

¹¹But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, ¹²and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. ¹³And they say unto her, “Woman, why weepest thou?”

She saith unto them, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.”

¹⁴And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. ¹⁵Jesus saith unto her, “Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?”

She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, “Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.”

¹⁶Jesus saith unto her, “Mary.”

She turned herself, and saith unto him, “Rabboni;” which is to say, Master.

¹⁷Jesus saith unto her, “Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.”

¹⁸Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.

Questionary

Happy Easter! This is our 43rd and final reading of the Lent and Easter season. During our Lent/Easter readings, we are examining the events of Jesus’ final hours on earth. This year, our readings largely focus on the Gospel of John.

1. One can easily imagine that it takes a good bit of power to raise the dead.
? When you consider scripture’s testimony of the resurrection, how sure are you of the reality of life after death?

The apostle Paul hopes that we can understand “what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward,” comparing the power with which he works in our lives with the “mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet...”

? How do you feel about having access in this life to the same quality and quantity of power that was exercised in raising Jesus from the dead?

? How actual has this been in your life? Why do you answer as you do?

2. Throughout the four Gospels, we read much of Jesus’ disciples. Little of it is unreservedly positive. They seldom understand Jesus or his mission. Sometimes they outright get him and it entirely wrong. In today’s reading John informs us, “For as yet they knew not the scripture, that

he must rise again from the dead.

? Of what are they ignorant—his resurrection or the theological and scripture predictions of and justifications for believing in his resurrection? Why do you answer as you do?

Luke informs us that when Mary and the women who were with her told the disciples of Jesus' resurrection, the disciples considered their words, "idle tales, and they believed them not" (Lk. 24.11).

? How does this influence the way you answer the previous question?

3. While we read much of Jesus' disciples in the Gospels, we read next to nothing of Mary Magdalene. Yet, in reporting what must be thought of as the most important event in human history—the initial realization of Jesus' resurrection—the narrative begins and ends with Mary Magdalene.

? Why, do you suppose, this is?

? Is it simply historical reporting of the actual events, or is it more? Why do you answer as you do?

? What is the significance of the first reports of Jesus' resurrection coming from women rather than "apostles"?

4. Jesus revealed himself after his resurrection to Mary with a single word, "Mary."

? What do you think and feel when you consider this?

? What are your thoughts and feelings when you contemplate that Jesus was seen of Mary even before his Father in Heaven?

5. Having revealed himself to Mary, he asked her to "go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."

? What do you think and feel when you consider that Mary was messenger to the disciples rather than the disciples being messenger to Mary?

John 20.¹⁹⁻³¹— Atonement

¹⁹Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, “Peace be unto you.”

²⁰And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. ²¹Then said Jesus to them again, “Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.”

²²And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost: ²³whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.”

²⁴But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵The other disciples therefore said unto him, “We have seen the Lord.”

But he said unto them, “Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

²⁶And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, “Peace be unto you.”

²⁷Then saith he to Thomas, “Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.”

²⁸And Thomas answered and said unto him, “My Lord and my God.”

²⁹Jesus saith unto him, “Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.”

³⁰And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: ³¹But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

Q

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This reading is one in a series of readings on Atonement that we entitle, “Glorification: The Savior’s Resurrection, Ascension, and Enthronement” *

1. Upon visiting his disciples after his resurrection, Jesus said, “Peace be unto you.”
 - ? What do you think and feel when you read this greeting?
 - ? What do you think and feel when you read this greeting in light of the fact that the disciples had shut themselves up inside a house “for fear of the Jews”?
 - ? What do you think and feel when you read his second greeting, “Peace be unto you,” in light of his following, “as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.”
2. In being informed of Jesus’ resurrection, the absent Thomas responded, “Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.”
 - ? Do you relate to Thomas’ feelings? If so, why? If not, why not?
3. Jesus invited to Thomas to “Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side...”
 - ? What do you see in your mind when you try to picture this scene?
 - ? How common an invitation, do you think, is this?
 - ? What other individuals or groups have received a similar invitation?
 - ? Does Jesus’ “Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed,” mean that others are less likely to receive a similar invitation?
 - ? In what way might this invitation be extended to you?
- ? Take some time to close your eyes, imagine the Savior standing before you and inviting you to touch him as Thomas and others have been invited to do. What do you see? What do you feel?

* The following ten titles are part of our atonement series:

“Fall: Our Need of Atonement”

“Grace: The Savior’s Generous and Earnest Invitation”

“At-one-ment: The Savior’s unity and connectedness with us”

“Sacrifice: What Jesus Suffered for Us”

“Glorification: The Savior’s Resurrection, Ascension, and Enthronement”

“Justification: How We Repent and Change”

“Renewal: The Hope, Joy, Peace, and Power of Atonement”

“Sanctification: Imitating and living Jesus’ life of Atonement”

“Thanksgiving: In Praise of Atonement”

“The Song of the Righteous: A Song unto Me”

john 21.²⁵

And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

Questionary

? What has Jesus done in your life that is worthy of addition to the history of Jesus' ministry?