

Three Books

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Gospel of John
Acts of the Apostles
Epistle to the Romans

February 2, 2015

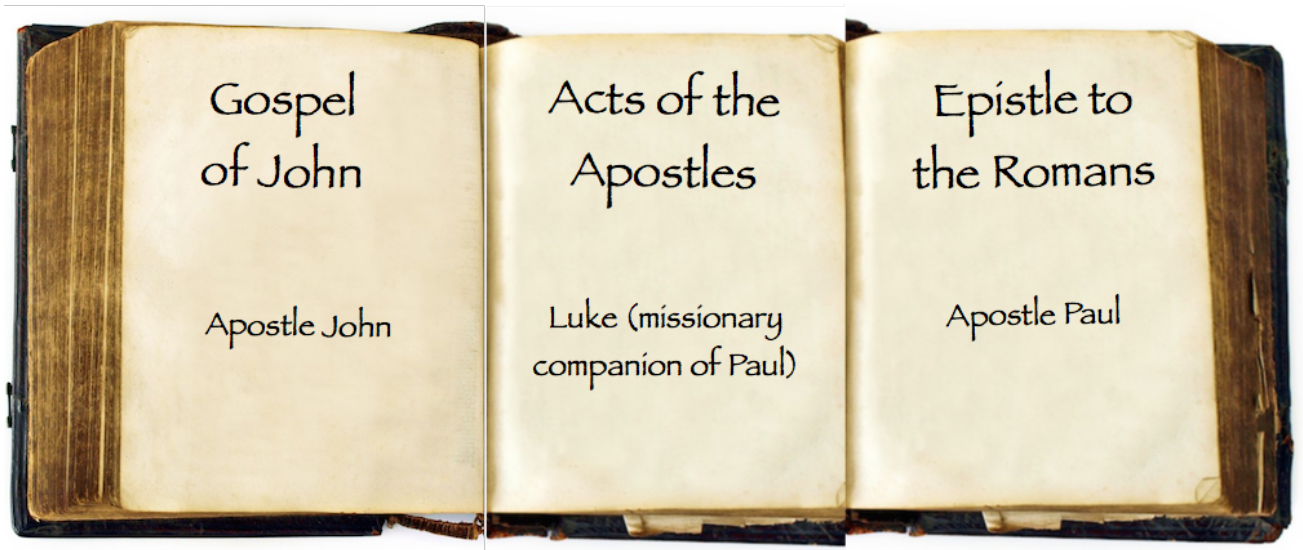
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Purpose of This Book

The primary purpose of this Book is to introduce a new reader, or refresh a previous reader, into the great truths of the Bible, in particular the Person of Jesus Christ, by providing an accessible, essential portion of the New Testament.

This small book is mostly three great books that occupy a central place in the New Testament of the Bible, namely: (1) the Gospel of John, (2) the Book of Acts, and (3) the Epistle to the Romans. They are structured as chapters--65 in total--and individual verses within each chapter where each such verse is usually a single sentence. The chapters and verses of these three books of John, Acts, and Romans are presented in their entirety in the left-most column, in non-italicized font.

These three books, which follow in sequence in all Bible translations, are from each of three main categories of New Testament books: Gospels (John), Epistles (Romans), and the book connecting John to Romans, namely Acts. The 65 total chapters are exactly 25% of the New Testament (on a chapter basis), and approximately 5% of the entire Bible.

John, one of the four Gospels in the New Testament, gives us the most complete perspective of the earthly work of Jesus Christ, beginning from His existence in eternity past to His crucifixion and resurrection. Acts gives us the journey of the Church, energized and guided by The Holy Spirit, from its creation through its missionary expansion to the capital city of the vast Roman Empire. Romans contains the most comprehensive overview of the core doctrines (truths) about Christ's work as it relates to our condition and need.

The Bible used here is a solid, modern, literal translation: the NET Bible, First Edition (Noteless), published, and copyrighted, by the Biblical Studies Press. Details on the translation and free downloadable texts are available at www.bible.org. (I have no affiliation with such publisher). The NET Bible is a scholarly translation based on the best textual analysis of the many thousands of the ancient Greek manuscripts in which the New Testament was originally written and subsequently copied and preserved.

The Three Books of John, Acts, and Romans lead us through two amazing journeys, one that takes place in literal Space-Time (our world) and one that takes place outside of Space-Time, in the realm of the Infinite-Eternal made accessible to our innermost being through the work of the The Holy Spirit of God.

To aid our grasping of these two journeys, the Bible's text has been laid out in a way to make as accessible as possible. The text has been annotated to highlight these twin journeys as well as particularly important words and verses. In the right column, paralleling the Bible's text, and shown in this italic font, is a limited commentary intended to aid a new or unfamiliar reader.

Reading just a single Chapter a day--65 chapters in all--will, in just over two months, provide, by a great inner journey, a dramatic opening into the deepest issues of life, and beyond. The Bible claims for itself to be the very word of God, and to be both alive and powerful. See for yourself.

The depth and expanse of these Bible texts is beyond full human comprehension. They provide insight into answers to the three most important questions that can be asked:

- 1. Who is Jesus Christ?*
- 2. What did He do (does now, and will yet do)?*
- 3. What does that mean to me, to us?*

Additional information on this book itself can be found at: www.ThreeBooks.org.

What the Bible Claims of Itself

(the below selected verses are taken from the New King James Version)

Psalm 119

Forever, O Lord, **Your word** is settled in heaven. (vs. 89)

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. (vs. 105)

Proverbs 30:5

Every **word of God** is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him.

Luke 4:4

But Jesus answered him, saying, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every **word of God.**'"

Acts 12:24

But the **word of God** grew and multiplied.

Romans 10:17

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the **word of God.**

Heb 4:12

For **the word of God** is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart

1 Peter 1:22-25

22 Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, 23 having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through **the word of God** which lives and abides forever, 24 because

"All flesh is as grass,

And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass.

The grass withers,

And its flower falls away,

25 But **the word of the Lord** endures forever."

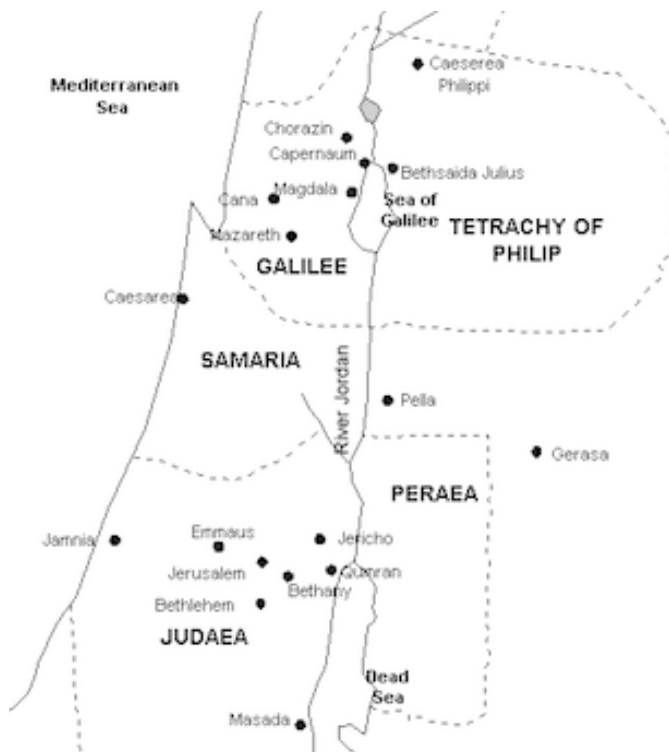
Book 1: The Gospel of John

The Gospel of John gives the biography of Jesus Christ beginning with His Being in Eternity, His then entering our habitation of Space-Time as Jesus of Nazareth, and ending with His death by the judgment of crucifixion, concluding by His resurrection from death. It is His astonishing Journey across the Space-Time boundary that drives the spiritual Journeys of some men to Faith, and some men to hatred. John's Gospel shows us the physical journeys of Jesus, his followers, and his enemies. But more significantly, John discloses that inner spiritual journey that some take to become followers and others to become enemies.

The first journey is physical, geographical, moving about through Space-Time; the below map shows the overall territory.

The second Journey takes place within our innermost being, where each of us seeks to grasp the ultimate meaning of life both here and now, and the unbounded, eternal 'beyond;' every one of us, in some way, has taken or is yet proceeding on this inner Journey.

We will see the various physical (Space-Time) Journeys intertwined with the inner, Spiritual ones, the physical one giving us an external representation of the Spiritual one. It is this inner, Spiritual Journey that is the focus of John's biography of Jesus, as it was (and is) of Jesus's mission. The maps below each show the Land of Israel during the period of the Three Books. The right map is topographical illustrating the mountainous ridge running approximately North-to-South in the central region mid-way between the Mediterranean Sea on the West and the Jordan River valley on the East. The distance from the region around the Sea of Galilee in the north to Jerusalem in the south is about 60 miles in a direct line.



Source of map: <http://www.bible-lands.net/maps>
<http://virtualreligion.net>

Chapter 1: The Prologue to the Gospel

Words highlighted in **bold** font are direct references to Jesus Christ; later, **bold-italic** will be used for references to the Holy Spirit. Certain "Journey" words / ideas are shown by underlining: solid underlines designate physical, Space-Time Journeys; dashed underlines are used to highlight Journeys of the innermost being, the "Spiritual Journey."

1 In the beginning was **the Word**, and the Word was with **God**, and the Word was fully God. The **Word** was with **God** in the beginning. All things were **created by him**, and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created. In him was **life**, and the life was **the light** of mankind. And the light shines on in the darkness, but the darkness has not mastered it.

6 A man came, sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify about the light, so that everyone might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify about **the light**.

9 The true **light**, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was **created by him**, but the world did not recognize him. He came to what was his own, but his own people did not receive him. But to all who have received him - those who believe in his name - he has given the right to become God's children - children not born by human parents or by human desire or a husband's decision, but by God.

14 Now the **Word** became **flesh** and took up residence among us. We saw his glory - the glory of the one and only, full of grace and truth, who came from the Father. John testified about him and shouted out, "This one was the one about whom I said, 'He who comes after me is greater than I am, because he existed before me.'" For we have all received from his fullness one gracious gift after another. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came about through **Jesus Christ**. No one has ever seen God. The only one, himself God, who is in closest fellowship with the Father, has made God known.

The Testimony of John the Baptist

19 Now this was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed - he did not deny but confessed - "I am not the Christ!" So they asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not!" "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No!" Then they said to him, "Who are you? Tell us so that we can give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

This Book begins its story in the eternal reaches of the past, before there was even the existence of our Space-Time. The Being identified as "the Word," "God," source of "life." "the light," creator, and truly man, is Jesus, who is the beginning-to-end subject of John's Gospel.

(The "John" here and in the other references in this Gospel is John the Baptist, not the Apostle John, the writer of this Gospel).

Just as the creation of the universe began with "let there be light" (Genesis 1), in like manner Jesus Journeyed into the world as a man giving the "light" of life to mankind, principally by means of words (proclaimed teaching).

The greatest possible Journey occurred when Jesus, the eternal creator, entered Space-Time becoming a man, literally the unique God-man inside His own Creation.

"The Word"—Jesus, the God-man—is the ultimate revelation of God, of "grace and truth" in fulfillment / completion of the Mosaic (Old Testament) Law.

"Christ" is the Greek word for the Hebrew "Messiah," the One promised in the Old Testament to be ultimate King / Deliver of Israel.

23 John said, “I am the voice of one shouting in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way for **the Lord**,’ as Isaiah the prophet said.” (Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) So they asked John, “Why then are you baptizing if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?”

26 John answered them, “I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not recognize, who is coming after me. I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandal!” These things happened in Bethany across the Jordan River where John was baptizing.

29 On the next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, **the Lamb of God** who takes away the sin of the world! This is the one about whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who is greater than I am, because he existed before me.’ I did not recognize him, but I came baptizing with water so that he could be revealed to Israel.”

32 Then John testified, “I saw **the Spirit** descending like a dove from heaven, and it remained on him. And I did not recognize him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘The one on whom you see **the Spirit** descending and remaining - this is the one who baptizes with **the Holy Spirit**.’ I have both seen and testified that this man is **the Chosen One of God**.”

35 Again the next day John was standing there with two of his disciples. Gazing at Jesus as he walked by, he said, “Look, **the Lamb of God!**” When John’s two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. Jesus turned around and saw them following and said to them, “What do you want?” So they said to him, “**Rabbi**” (which is translated **Teacher**), “where are you staying?” Jesus answered, “Come and you will see.” So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day. Now it was about four o’clock in the afternoon.

Andrew’s Declaration

40 Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of the two disciples who heard what John said and followed Jesus. He first found his own brother Simon and told him, “We have found **the Messiah!**” (which is translated **Christ**). Andrew brought Simon to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon, the son of John. You will be called Cephas” (which is translated Peter).

The Calling of More Disciples

“Way” (literally: “road”) is here used of the necessary Spiritual Journey. “The Lord,” used of Jesus, is the common Old Testament name for God. These and other key words are discussed in more detail in the companion website, www.ThreeBooks.org

“Baptize” was an outward sign of humility undertaken by those who experienced a change of mind about their righteousness before God.

The “Lamb” revelation of the Person of Jesus anticipates His Work on the Cross. The sacrificed lamb was an Old Testament picture of God’s provision of the life of the innocent to cover the sins of the guilty. Jesus became that Lamb.

God is One. But we see in this opening chapter three Persons within that One: God (the Father), God the Son (Jesus Christ), and God the Spirit (the Holy Spirit). This deep revelation is commonly referred to as the Triune God, or the Trinity. Such term does not reference three ‘gods.’

“Rabbi” means “teacher,” something like ‘professor.’ Jesus was that, but far more than just that.

The Jewish people had been anticipating their “Messiah” (Deliverer / Savior) for more than 400 years since the close of the final writings in the Old Testament. So “Jesus Christ” means, literally, that Being identified (humanly) as Jesus is actually the One Who is Messiah (Christ). Such revelation comes only by an inner, Spiritual Journey.

43 On the next day Jesus wanted to set out for Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, “Follow me.” (Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the town of Andrew and Peter.) Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found **the one Moses wrote about** in the law, and **the prophets also wrote about - Jesus of Nazareth**, the son of Joseph.” Nathanael replied, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip replied, “Come and see.”

47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and exclaimed, “Look, a true Israelite in whom there is no deceit!” Nathanael asked him, “How do you know me?” Jesus replied, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” Nathanael answered him, “**Rabbi**, you are **the Son of God**; you are **the king of Israel!**” Jesus said to him, “Because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these.” He continued, “I tell all of you the solemn truth - you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on **the Son of Man.**”

Chapter 2: Turning Water into Wine

The territory of the physical Journeys in John is ancient Israel, a country approximately the size and shape of New Jersey, located on the Eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, straddling the three continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa. This land had been promised by God to Abraham some 2,000 years before Christ. By the time of Christ, after many wars, the land was controlled by the Roman Empire, and recognized to have three distinct areas: (from South to North) Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. Jerusalem and God's Temple (the site of the sacrificial system and Mosaic priesthood) were in Judea, along with the Jewish religious and political leadership (under Rome's authority). Samaria was an area and people despised by the Jewish people for historic reasons. Galilee was a 'backwater' region.

1 Now on the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding. When the wine ran out, Jesus' mother said to him, “They have no wine left.” Jesus replied, “Woman, why are you saying this to me? My time has not yet come.” His mother told the servants, “Whatever he tells you, do it.”

6 Now there were six stone water jars there for Jewish ceremonial washing, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus told the servants, “Fill the water jars with water.” So they filled them up to the very top. Then he told them, “Now draw some out and take it to the head steward,” and they did. When the head steward tasted the water that had been turned to wine, not knowing where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), he

Jesus was not anti-Moses. Rather, He was the very One Moses (and the Prophets) promised to come.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem, but was lived in the small Galilean town of “Nazareth,” far in both distance and fame from Jerusalem. (See the map preceding Ch. 1)

Yet another title for Jesus is “Son of Man.” This was a prophetic Old Testament title. It signified the mystery that Jesus was both the son of God (meaning same as God) and the son of man (having also the Being of man).

As to human Being, Jesus was a descendent of the great Old Testament king, David. Pilate will write this as Jesus' title on the cross.

Ten distinct words / phrases are used in this opening chapter to refer to Jesus. The rest of John's Gospel enriches these descriptions.

Jesus' physical Journey begins westward from the Jordan River, the Eastern boundary of Israel, and the place of His identification by John the Baptist, to a small town in Galilee, the northern province of Israel.

Jesus' first miracle transformed 'dead' water to 'living' wine, a type (illustration) of the necessary spiritual Journey that He has come to proclaim.

The water goes on both a physical and (in type) spiritual Journey, becoming wine in the wine steward's cup.

called the bridegroom and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the cheaper wine when the guests are drunk. You have kept the good wine until now!” Jesus did this as the first of his miraculous signs, in Cana of Galilee. In this way he revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

Cleansing the Temple

12 After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples, and they stayed there a few days. Now the Jewish feast of Passover was near, so Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

14 He found in the temple courts those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers sitting at tables. So he made a whip of cords and drove them all out of the temple courts, with the sheep and the oxen. He scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold the doves he said, “Take these things away from here! Do not make **my Father’s** house a marketplace!” His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for your house will devour me.”

18 So then the Jewish leaders responded, “What sign can you show us, since you are doing these things?” Jesus replied, “Destroy **this temple** and in three days I will raise it up again.” Then the Jewish leaders said to him, “This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and are you going to raise it up in three days?” But Jesus was speaking about the temple of his body. So after he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and the saying that Jesus had spoken.

Jesus at the Passover Feast

23 Now while Jesus was in Jerusalem at the feast of the Passover, many people believed in his name because they saw the miraculous signs he was doing. But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people. He did not need anyone to testify about man, for he knew what was in man.

Chapter 3: Conversation with Nicodemus

1 Now a certain man, a Pharisee named Nicodemus, who was a member of the Jewish ruling council, 2 came to Jesus at night and said to him, “**Rabbi,** we know that you are **a teacher** who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs that you do unless God is

Capernaum, another Galilean town, was a fishing village on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. From there Jesus went south about 60 miles to that most-important city, Jerusalem.

The “temple” is the reconstructed Temple of God’s presence originally constructed by Solomon on Mount Moriah, an adjoining hilltop to Mount Zion and the city of Jerusalem. The temple was the central place of worship under the Old Testament Law. But the ‘worship’ had become corrupted (in large part) by money making and falsely believing in personal works creating personal righteousness before God.

Jesus foretells the great physical and spiritual Journey He will undertake upon His death, and subsequent resurrection. To refer to Jesus’ body as “a” or especially “the” temple was deeply offensive, even blasphemous, to the Jewish leaders who considered only the then re-constructed Temple in Jerusalem, as the holiest and unique place of God’s presence.

The Passover celebrated the great deliverance God the Father provided the night before the Exodus from Egypt 1500 year prior. Christ’s future sacrifice in Jerusalem, on Passover, would be the ultimate realization of God the Father’s redeeming His own from spiritual slavery.

The Pharisees were Jews who held to the strict observance of the Mosaic Law. They were firmly, and ultimately mortally, opposed to Jesus’s teaching and claims. Nicodemus’s Journey to Jesus at night was a sign of the deep darkness in

with him.” **3** Jesus replied, “I tell you the solemn truth, unless a person is born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” **4** Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter his mother’s womb and be born a second time, can he?”

5 Jesus answered, “I tell you the solemn truth, unless a person is born of water and spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” **6** What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of *the Spirit* is spirit. **7** Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘You must all be born from above.’ **8** The wind blows wherever it will, and you hear the sound it makes, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going. So it is with everyone who is born of *the Spirit*.”

9 Nicodemus replied, “How can these things be?” **10** Jesus answered, “Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you don’t understand these things? **11** I tell you the solemn truth, we speak about what we know and testify about what we have seen, but you people do not accept our testimony. **12** If I have told you people about earthly things and you don’t believe, how will you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? **13** No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven - **the Son of Man**. **14** Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, **15** so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.”

16 For this is the way God loved the world: He gave his one and **only Son**, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. **17** For God did not send **his Son** into the world to condemn the world, but that the world should be saved through him. **18** The one who believes in him is not condemned. The one who does not believe has been condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the one and **only Son of God**. **19** Now this is the basis for judging: that the light has come into the world and people loved the darkness rather than the light, because their deeds were evil. **20** For everyone who does evil deeds hates the light and does not come to the light, so that their deeds will not be exposed. **21** But the one who practices the truth comes to **the light**, so that it may be plainly evident that his deeds have been done in God.

Further Testimony About Jesus by John the Baptist

which the Pharisees dwelt. Jesus shocks Nicodemus by informing him that his Spiritual blindness can only be cured by a new birth. His physical Journey would never be sufficient, even one to hear Jesus Himself.

This rich dialogue shows the difficulty of making the necessary inner, Spiritual Journey. It requires more than natural language and reasoning. It takes a new, second, heavenly birth into a Spiritual childhood, and Journey.

Nicodemus’s question was sincere; his law-keeping, self-righteous framework had no place, or need, for a new birth. But Jesus illuminates Nicodemus’s real need, and the Spiritual Journey’s requirement: belief in Jesus as the Son of God, sent One from God (Messiah), in fulfillment of all that the Old Testament Law had pointed toward.

Jesus anticipates His coming crucifixion and drawing men to eternal life by the Journey of Faith in what He will have accomplished on their behalf.

God the Father gives us God the Son (Jesus) as our only means to Journey to Eternal Life.

As with the original creation of Space-Time, God’s Son (Jesus) becomes the very light that makes possible the new, Spiritual Life.

“Light” is a central attribute of Jesus’ Being in Space-Time.

22 After this, Jesus and his disciples came into Judean territory, and there he spent time with them and was baptizing. 23 John was also baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because water was plentiful there, and people were coming to him and being baptized. 24 (For John had not yet been thrown into prison.)

25 Now a dispute came about between some of John's disciples and a certain Jew concerning ceremonial washing. 26 So they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, the one who was with you on the other side of the Jordan River, about whom you testified - see, he is baptizing, and everyone is flocking to him!"

27 John replied, "No one can receive anything unless it has been given to him from heaven. 28 You yourselves can testify that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but rather, 'I have been sent before him.' 29 The one who has the bride is **the bridegroom**. The friend of **the bridegroom**, who stands by and listens for him, rejoices greatly when he hears **the bridegroom's** voice. This then is my joy, and it is complete. 30 He must become more important while I become less important."

31 The one who comes from above is superior to all. The one who is from the earth belongs to the earth and speaks about earthly things. The one who comes from heaven is superior to all. 32 He testifies about what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. 33 The one who has accepted his testimony has confirmed clearly that God is truthful. 34 For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for he does not give the Spirit sparingly. 35 The Father loves **the Son** and has placed all things under his authority. **36** The one who believes in the Son has eternal life. The one who rejects **the Son** will not see life, but God's wrath remains on him.

Chapter 4: Departure From Judea

Highlighted below, following the format previously introduced, a solid underline designates a significant Journey in Space-Time, and a dashed underline the companion, and more significant inner, Spiritual Journey.

1 Now when Jesus knew that the Pharisees had heard that he was winning and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus himself was not baptizing, but his disciples were), he left Judea and set out once more for Galilee.

Conversation With a Samaritan Woman

4 But he had to pass through Samaria. Now he came to a Samaritan town called Sychar, near the plot of land that

Baptism is about identification, as in being marked for life as new. It was a symbol (demonstration) of the real identification that comes from the baptism of the Spirit making us new.

Later in Scripture "the church" (made up of Believers) is portrayed as the bride of Christ.

The central testimony of John the Baptist is that Jesus is not (just) another prophet: Jesus is the wholly 'other,' the unique One, sent directly by God from heaven, as the Son. "Heaven" was not the "sky" or "atmosphere:" it is the Infinite-Eternal domain of God.

Belief (faith) is the necessary, inner, Spiritual Journey responding to God's revelation of the true Person and Work of Jesus Christ. There is no other means or source of salvation, not even that of law-keeping.

Jesus' Journeys from where He had been baptizing (with water) to 'baptize' (with living