

The Gospel According to

SAINT MATTHEW

SAINT MARK

SAINT LUKE

SAINT JOHN

NOTHING RECORDED	NOTHING RECORDED	NOTHING RECORDED	CHAPTER 3, VERSES 23 - 36
			<p>3:23 - And John¹ also² was baptizing³ in Ænon⁴ near⁵ to Salim⁶, because there was much water there⁷; and they came⁸, and were baptized⁹.</p> <p>3:24 - For John¹ was not yet¹⁰ cast into prison¹¹.</p> <p>3:25 - Then there arose a question¹² between¹³ some of John's disciples¹⁴ and the Jews¹⁵ about purifying¹⁶.</p> <p>3:26 - And they came unto John¹, and said unto him, Rabbi¹⁷, he that was with thee¹⁸ beyond Jordan¹⁹, to whom thou barest witness²⁰, behold, the same baptizeth²¹, and all men²² come to him²³.</p> <p>3:27 - John¹ answered and said, A man²⁴ can receive nothing²⁵, except²⁶ it be given²⁷ him from heaven²⁸.</p> <p>3:28 - Ye²⁹ yourselves bear³⁰ me witness³¹, that I said, I am not the Christ³², but that I am³³ sent³⁴ before him³⁵.</p> <p>3:29 - He that hath the bride³⁶ is the bridegroom³⁷; but the friend of the bridegroom³⁸, which standeth³⁹ and heareth⁴⁰ him, rejoiceth greatly⁴¹ because of the bridegroom's voice⁴²: this my joy⁴³ therefore is fulfilled⁴⁴.</p> <p>3:30 - He must increase⁴⁵, but I must decrease⁴⁶.</p> <p>3:31 - He that cometh from above⁴⁷ is above all⁴⁸: he that is of the earth⁴⁹ is earthly⁵⁰, and speaketh⁵¹ of the earth⁴⁹: he that cometh from heaven²⁸ is above all⁴⁸.</p> <p>3:32 - And what he hath seen and heard⁵¹, that he testifieth⁵²; and no man⁵³ receiveth⁵⁴ his testimony⁵⁵.</p> <p>3:33 - He that hath received his testimony⁵⁵ hath set to his seal⁵⁶ that God⁵⁷ is true⁵⁸.</p> <p>3:34 - For he whom God⁵⁷ hath sent³⁴ speaketh⁵⁹ the words of God⁵⁷: for God⁵⁷ giveth not⁶⁰ the Spirit⁶¹ by measure⁶² unto him.</p> <p>3:35 - The Father⁶³ loveth⁶⁴ the Son⁶⁵, and hath given all things⁶⁶ into his hand⁶⁷.</p> <p>3:36 - He that believeth⁶⁸ on the Son⁶⁵ hath everlasting life⁶⁹: and he that believeth⁶⁸ not the Son⁶⁵ shall not see life⁷⁰; but the wrath of God⁷¹ abideth⁷² on him⁷³.</p>

CHRONOLOGY: Between the end of Passover, 15 April 27CE and June 27CE. ["There is no New Testament account of any act or word of either Jesus or John from the summer of A.D. 27, when the Baptist bore his wondrous witness, to November or December of that year." (The Mortal Messiah: Volume 1, Collector's Edition, Bruce R. McConkie, page 326).]

LOCATION: Most Probably on the Decapolis/Judæa border at Ænon near Salim. The setting is in an area of springs near the Jordan River. The exact area is unclear.

COMMENTARY: John the Baptist is preaching the Gospel of repentance, and consequently inviting people into the waters of Baptism somewhere in close proximity to the Jordan River or in a nearby area containing springs and much water. Things have changed from the time John baptized Jesus. Just 4 or 5 months prior, John found himself surrounded by multitudes of people desiring to be baptized. He had hundreds, maybe even thousands, of followers. How quickly things changed. The multitudes now followed Jesus. Though John still had a following, he was no longer the attraction. As he preached at Aenon, a Jew came with a question about purification. We are not sure what the exact question was, but it sparked a concern among John's disciples. They approached John in a respectful fashion calling him Rabbi. They were concerned about Jesus, and the fact all the people had left their beloved master to follow Him. There may have been jealousy, or just a desire to protect the man they loved. John took the opportunity to teach. Through a parable like analogy, He compared himself to the best man at a wedding. He prepared for the Groom, but never intended to replace the Groom. John bore testimony that he was not the Messiah, but that Jesus was indeed the promised Christ. He declared that exaltation has been committed to Jesus' hand, and therefore John's mission must conclude so the Savior could fulfill His.

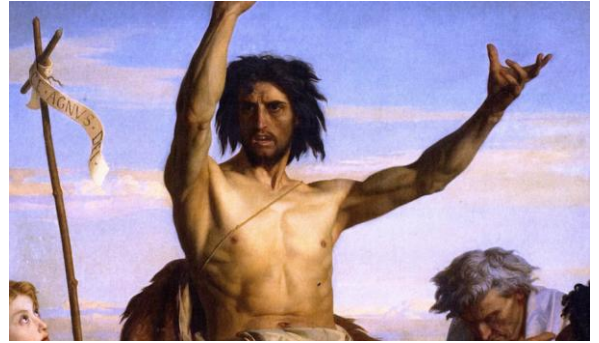
FOOTNOTES:

1- **John** – The name "John" is written in its Greek form "Ἰωάννης" or "Iōannēs". The name, translated literally, means "Jehovah is a gracious giver". The Greek name is a transliteration of the Hebrew name "יְהוָה יָחִיד" or "Yowchanan" or "Johanan". The Hebrew name, translated literally, means "Jehovah is graced".

John was a prophet of God. He was called of God like Aaron. He spoke with power and authority, not because of any earthly position, but because he had been endowed on High with heavenly power and authority. The people that came searching for God recognized that John was indeed His representative. John received respect and reverence from the people. He became renowned.

John taught the fundamental principles of the Gospel. He taught faith in God, and the promised Messiah. He taught repentance, and a change in lifestyle both in thought and deed. Finally, he invited all to act on that faith and be baptized. He offered all men the opportunity to enter into a covenant with God. That would place them on the road to return to their Father in Heaven.

John started his ministry in October/November of 28CE. According to Elder McConkie, this chapter takes place between April and June of 27CE. He wrote, **"It is now at least six months - probably seven, and possibly eight - since the son of Zacharias baptized the Son of God. And it is five or six months since the appointed Elias bore fervent witness that Jesus was the Lamb of God."** (The Mortal Messiah: Volume 1, Collector's Edition, Bruce R. McConkie, page 323).



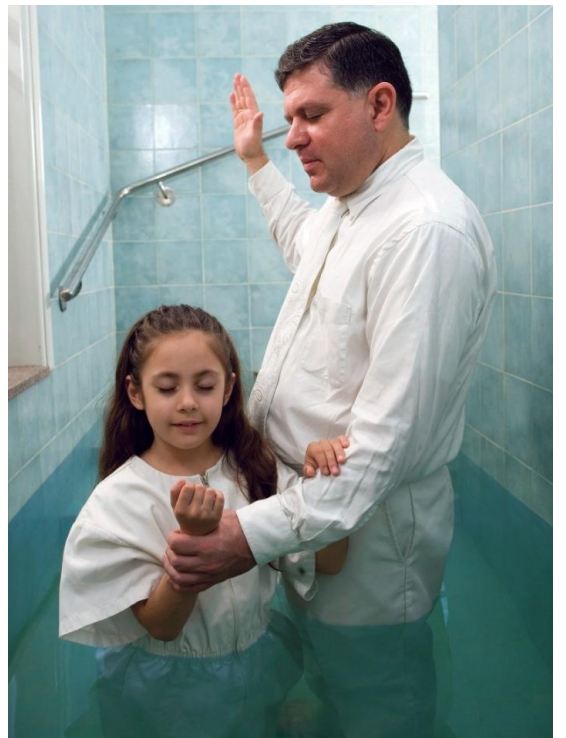
2- **also** – The word "also" is translated from the Greek word "καί" or "kai". It means and, also, even, indeed or but. In addition to John, Jesus was also baptizing. They were not offering different baptisms. They were indeed offering the same saving ordinance, using the same Priesthood power. The word "also" should not infer any competition between John and Jesus. They absolutely worked for the same cause, and offered the same ordinance of baptism.

3- **baptizing** – The word "baptizing" is translated from the Greek word "βαπτίζω" or "baptizō". The Greek word means to dip repeatedly, to immerse, or to submerge (of vessels sunk). It can also mean to cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water, to wash one's self, or bathe. Finally, it can be used in the sense of being overwhelmed.

Regardless of what may have been written, baptism was an ordinance established before the foundations were laid for this earth. Adam was baptized. In every age, where the principles of the Gospel were being taught by God's authorized servants, baptisms were performed.

Unfortunately, the decades, even centuries, prior to John the Baptist were ones of apostasy and spiritual neglect. Because of the peoples lack of desire for God, the Lord had withdrawn his chosen servants. The people had altered and distorted the ordinance of baptism. They knew what baptism was on an intellectual level, but they lacked spiritual understanding and adherence. They expanded and changed baptism to meet their own needs, rather than changing themselves to meet God's requirements. The Jews that saw **"baptism was an ordinance of purification, and the Jews had numerous rituals of purification. Some Jewish religious groups extended the original laws Jehovah had given them and were meticulous to the extreme in their ceremonial washings and cleansings."** (The Four Gospels - Verse by verse, D. Kelly Ogden and Andrew C. Skinner, page 126).

The Jews decided that they had no need of baptism since they were the descendants of Abraham. Only those converting to Judaism needed to be baptized. They added additional washings, and established their own regulations. The Christian world acted very similarly after the death of Jesus and His authorized servants. They distorted the restored nature of baptism, and instituted sprinkling, child baptism, and other unauthorized rituals. The Prophet Joseph Smith was called upon to restore the ordinance of Baptism. John Taylor wrote, **"I have heard the Prophet Joseph quote from the German Bible in support of our method of baptism by immersion, showing that the German Translation of the New Testament favored this idea, and that the word 'Taufen' in that language means 'to dip,' the same as our term immersion does; and that when John the Baptist was spoken of as John the Baptist it was 'Johannes der Tauffer,' or John the Dipper, which is correct."** (Journal of Discourses, Volume 25, John Taylor, June 29, 1884, pages 213-214).



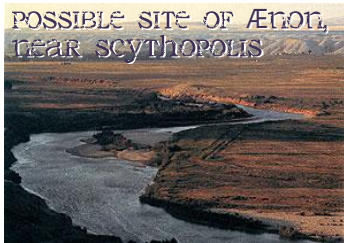
John was baptizing in locations where there was enough water to fully immerse those that wanted to enter into the covenant. At this point in our chronology, **"We find that John was no longer baptizing at Bethabara on the East side of Jordan, but had taken his disciples to the community of Aenon, which means a place of springs where there was 'much water'."** (The Days of the Living Christ: Volume 1, W. Cleon Skousen, page 155). It probably doesn't matter where John conducted his ministry. Such locations are not the meat of the story. Even so, there has been much speculation as to where John preached and why. **"Although there have been a few traditions to the contrary, it appears that John conducted his entire ministry 'beyond' the River Jordan. That is where he was preaching at Bethabara on the east side of the river at the beginning of his ministry, and he was still there at the end of his ministry when he was arrested by Herod Antipas. This district was known as Perea, and was governed by Herod Antipas who also governed Galilee."** (The Days of the Living Christ: Volume 1, W. Cleon Skousen, pages 155-156). One might speculate that he stayed in Perea to keep himself outside of the legal jurisdiction of the Great Sanhedrin in Jerusalem. Of course, that would only be speculation.

4- **Ænon** – The name "Ænon" is translated from the Greek word "Αἰνῶν" or "Ainōn". The name means literally "Springs". The Greek name is a transliteration of the Hebrew word "אֵי" or "ayin". It also means "spring" or "fountain". The Hebrew word can also mean "eye". The Codex Sinaiticus changes the word "Ænon" to "Enon". (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, John, Chapter 3, Verse 23, page 168).



Finding the ancient site of Ænon is more difficult than it appears. Many Bible maps will locate the site near the ancient city of Scythopolis; however, they fail to inform the reader that the site is questionable. Speaking of John the Baptist, Cannon Farrar wrote, "He had removed to Ænon, near Salim, a locality so wholly uncertain that it is impossible to arrive at any decision respecting it." (The Story of a Beautiful Life: Farrar's Life of Christ, The New 20th Century Edition, 1900, Canon Farrar, D.D., F.R.S., page 146). Making matters worse, we have few external references to the site. In all his writings, Josephus make not a single mention of "Ænon", even using alternative spellings. We are left, primarily, with the Bible record to locate the site. The Bible is less than definitive on the matter.

Because the biblical site is questionable, doesn't mean that there are not good possibilities as to where it might have been. The name itself provides a great clue. It is undoubtedly a place of "much" water, being fed by springs. The water would have to have been deep enough to allow for baptism by immersion. McConkie taught, "Ænon, a land of springs, where, in a desert country, ample water was found in which to immerse repentant souls. No special location is required for baptism when the false practices of sprinkling or pouring are followed." (The Doctrine New Testament Commentary - The Gospels, Volume 1, Bruce R. McConkie, page 147). Since Palestine contains vast amounts of desert, this narrows down the possible sites for Ænon. Brown outlines the three most probable theories. He wrote, "There are three important traditions for localizing these sites. (a) In Perea, the Transjordan. We know that John the Baptist was active in this region (i 28), and the reference to Judea in vs. 22 may imply that he was close by (Perea is just across the river). The 6th century mosaic Madaba map (BA 21 [1958, No. 3]) has an Ænon just northeast of the Dead Sea, opposite Bethabara (see Note on i 28); there are contemporary pilgrim indications to the same effect. (b) In the northern Jordan valley, on the west bank some eight miles south of Scythopolis (Bethshan). In the 4th century Eusebius (Onomasticon, in GCS 11¹, p. 40:1-4; p. 153:6-7) has this tradition, as has the pilgrim Aetheria. The Madaba map has another Ænon in this vicinity. Eusebius speaks of Salim in reference to Salumais, and there is a modern Arabic name of Tell Sheikh Salim in the area. One objection to both these sites in the Jordan valley is that, with the river Jordan nearby, John's mention of the availability of water seems superfluous. (c) In Samaria. Four miles east-southeast of Shechem there is a town of Sâlim known from early times; eight miles northeast of Sâlim lies modern 'Ainûn (1:100,00 map: 187190), 193-194. It would agree very well with the strong tradition ties that connect John the Baptist with Samaria. The usual attempt to dismiss the peculiarly Johannine geographical information as pure symbolism is made here. Krieger, ZNW 45 (1953-54), 122, speaks of fictional springs (Ænon) near salvation (Salim). One may well ask why John would have associated the baptism of John the Baptist and not that of Jesus with the symbolic site of salvation. If we are told that John the Baptist was near salvation, that is, near Jesus, then we may ask why Jesus is not placed at Salim, instead of Judea? Bultmann, p. 124⁵, believes that the names are real but that possibly they have a symbolic meaning for the evangelist." (The Gospel according to John: I-XII, Anchor-Yale Bible, Raymond E. Brown, S.S., page 151).



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The madeba mosaic map

Brigham Young University professors Ogden and Skinner outlined similar theories. They speculate, "There are three possibilities for the place where John was baptizing. The sixth century Medeba Map, an east-oriented, mosaic map that is our oldest cartographic representation of the Holy Land, shows Aenon on the eastern side of the Jordan River opposite Jericho, near Bethabara where John was baptizing (John 1:28; the town of Medeba, where the unique map was found, is in today's nation of Jordan). Eusebius preserved a tradition (in the early church father's listing of biblical place-names called the Onomastikon, 40:1) of Aenon being about seven miles south of Beth-shan (in the Roman period called Scythopolis), which is about twenty miles south of the Sea of Galilee. There is a nearby site called Salem, now Tel Shalem. Still another possible location for Aenon was near Neapolis (modern Nablus, or ancient Shechem), not far from where Eusebius noted that another Salim/Salem was located (Onomastikon, 160:13; cf. Genesis 33:18). Aenon means 'springs' in Hebrew, and there are many of them around that country. There seems to be no way at present to identify with certainty which of the three sites is alluded to in this particular passage, but it does appear possible that John baptized in more than one location in the land of the Jews." (The Four Gospels - Verse by verse, D. Kelly Ogden and Andrew C. Skinner, pages 125-126).

Let's summarize the theories on a map, and take a look at their likelihood;

THEORY #1: Aenon is near Bethabara. This makes sense in the fact that John baptized Jesus in the Jordan River at Bethabara. We know that the people traveled, sometimes great distances, to be baptized of John. Word had spread, and the people came to him. I would speculate that John would have wanted to be a stationary target so that the honest seekers could find him. The Medeba Map reinforces this location.

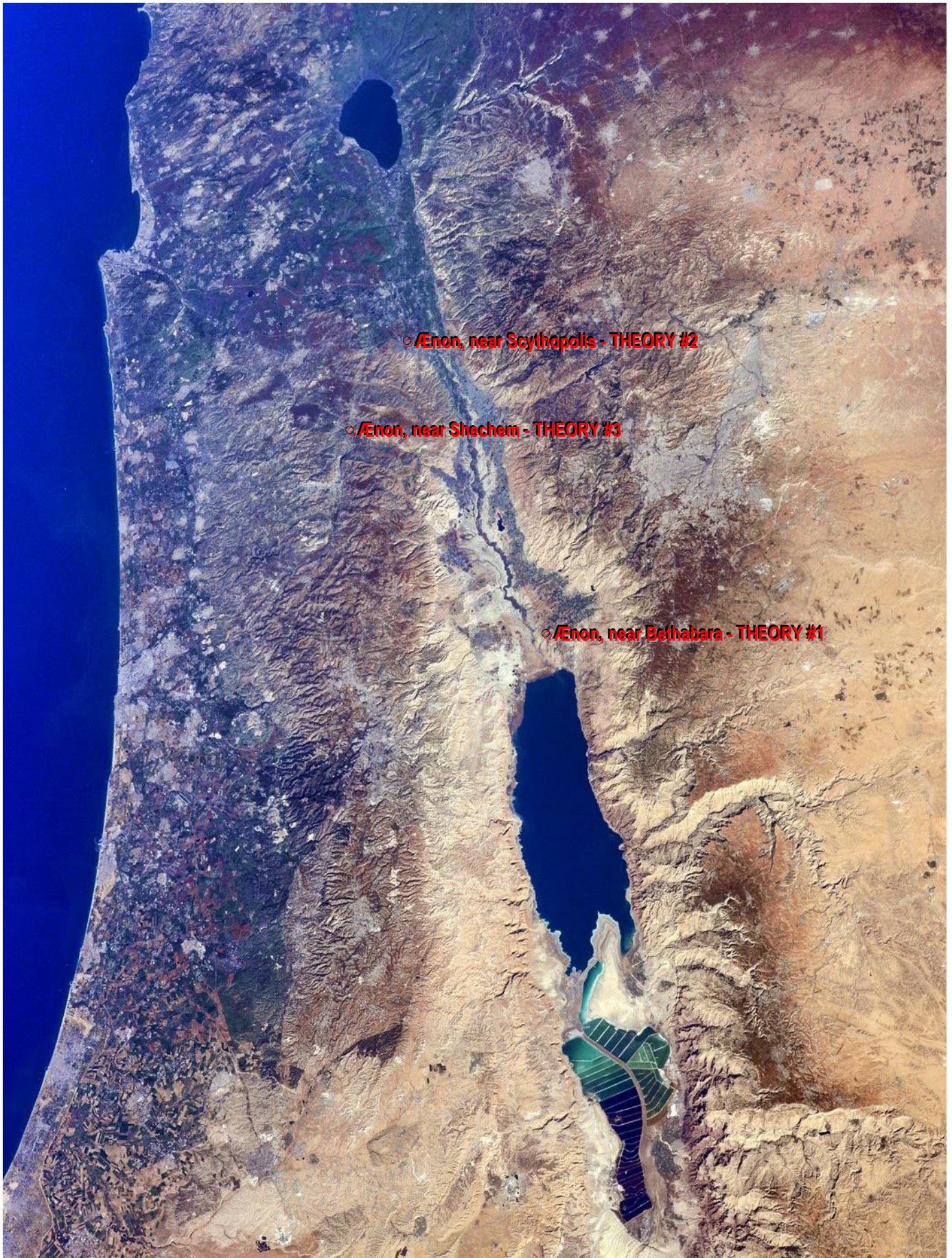
THEORY #2: Aenon is near Scythopolis. Most Bible maps seem to confirm this location. It fits the description of a place with much water. There are several natural springs in the area. It is located in a river valley connecting the rich Meggido Valley and the River Jordan Valley. It would have been a natural passage way.

THEORY #3: Aenon is near ancient Shechem or the Roman city of Neapolis. This theory is based on the fact that archeologist have unearth a nearby village by the name of Salem. Since Aenon is recorded in the Bible as being near "Salim", which should probably be translated as "Salem", it is theorized that Aenon would naturally be close by. Unfortunately, Salem was a common village name, and there are other sites that share this name. In fact, Jerusalem was originally the city of "Salem". Additionally, this seems like an unlikely retreat for John. It was far from the desert he grew up in, and the location he was known to preach at.

aenon: THEORIZED LOCATIONS







5- **near** – The word "near" is translated from the Greek word "ἐγγύς" or "eggys". It means to be near of a place and or position. Bible scholars have debated, to no avail, as to what "near" should be defined as. Some feel that near was with a mile, while others feel that the distance could be as much as 8-10 miles and still be considered near. Until we can talk to the gospel writer and ask him to define the word, we are left to speculate.

6- **to Salim** – The name "Salim" is translated from the Greek word "Σαλείμ" or "Saleim". The name, literally translated, means peace. The ancient town is considered to be a well known location 8 miles (11 Kilometers) south of Scythopolis. The Codex Sinaiticus changes the word "Salim" to "Salem". (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, John, Chapter 3, Verse 23, page 168). **"Aenon. The name is from the Aramaic plural of the word for 'spring,' while 'Salim' reflects the Semitic root for 'peace'."** (The Gospel according to John: I-XII, Anchor-Yale Bible, Raymond E. Brown, S.S., page 151). Like Aenon, Salim is a location shrouded in mystery. In all his writings, Josephus made not a single mention of "Salim" in all his writings.



Alfred Edersheim seems to favor the theory that Salim is located near Scythopolis. He wrote, **"But the oldest tradition, which places it a few miles to the south of Bethshean (Scythopolis), on the border of Samaria and Galilee, has this in its favour, that it locates the scene of John's last public work close to the seat of Herod Antipas, into whose power the Baptist was soon to be delivered."** (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume 1, Alfred Edersheim, page 393). Edersheim dismisses any theory that Salim is located south of Jerusalem. He wrote, **"No fewer than four localities have been identified with Aenon and Salim. Ewald, Hengstenberg, Wieseler, and Godet, seek it on the southern border of Judaea. This seems so improbable as scarcely to require discussion. Dr. Barclay finds it a few miles from Jerusalem in the Wady Fâr'ah, but admits that there are doubts about the Arab pronunciation of this Salim. Lieut. Conder finds it in the Wady Fâr'ah, which leads from Samaria to the Jordan. Here he describes most pictorially 'the springs' in the open valley surrounded by desolate and shapeless hills, with the village of Salim three miles south of the valley, and the village of Ainân four miles north of the stream. Against this there are, however, two objections. First, both Aenon and Salim would have been in Samaria. Secondly, so far from being close to each other. Aenon would have been seven miles from Salim."** (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume 1, Alfred Edersheim, page 393).

7- **there was much water there** – The word "much" is translated from the Greek word "πολύς" or "polys". It means many, much, or large. The word "water" is translated from the Greek word "ὕδωρ" or "hydōr". It means water in many forms or states. It can be used figuratively of many people, though this is probably not the usage here. Symbolically, water is used to symbolize many things. Water is considered the medium between heaven and earth. Water is considered an agent of change, symbolically changing a person so as to qualify to go to the next state. Water symbolically washes away spiritual dirt or sin. (Encyclopedia of Traditional Jewish Symbols, Ellen Frankel and Betsy Platkin Teutsch, page 186-187). Water is an essential element in the ordinance of Baptism, and John would have had to have "much" water in order to immerse converts in the rite of Baptism.

8- **they came** – The phrase "they came" is translated from the Greek word "παράγινομαι" or "paraginomai". It means to be present, to come near, approach, to come forth, or to make one's appearance. "They came" is an indication that the people came to John, rather than John coming to the people. Originally, hundreds, maybe thousands, came to John to hear his words and receive the baptism he was authorized to perform. **"Some still came to his baptism, though probably in diminished numbers, for a large multitude now began to flock to the baptism of Christ's disciples."** (The Story of a Beautiful Life: Farrar's Life of Christ, The New 20th Century Edition, 1900, Canon Farrar, D.D., F.R.S., page 146).

9- **were baptized** – The word "baptized" is translated from the Greek word "βαπτίζω" or "baptizō". The Greek word means to dip repeatedly, to immerse, or to submerge (of vessels sunk). It can also mean to cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water, to wash one's self, or bathe. Finally, it can be used in the sense of to overwhelm. It should be noted that under the guise of Heaven there is but one baptism. Regardless of who performs the rite, so long as the officiator is an authorized, worthy holder of the Holy Priesthood, sanctioned under heaven, it does not matter who they are. The baptism of John was no different than the baptism performed by the disciples of Jesus. The difference referred to in other passages of the Bible is that Jesus held the Higher Priesthood, and therefore could follow the baptism by water with a baptism of Fire.

10- **not yet** – The phrase "not yet" is translated from the Greek word "οὐπω" or "oupō". It means not yet.

The next chapter will discuss John's imprisonment at the order of Herod Antipas. Suffice it to say that John's days of freedom are numbered. **"He will continue as a free man to speak and baptize for another four or five months, until November or December of A.D. 27; then he will be imprisoned by Herod. He will languish in the dungeons of Machaerus for more than a year; perhaps 15 months, before Herod's headsman, at the word of the almighty Antipas, will send him to a martyr's grave, from which he shall come forth, with Christ, to receive glory and honor in the kingdom that is prepared."** (The Mortal Messiah: Volume 1, Collector's Edition, Bruce R. McConkie, page 324).

11- **cast into prison** – The word "cast" is translated from the Greek word "βάλλω" or "ballō", which means to throw or let go of a thing without caring where it falls. The word "prison" is translated from the Greek word "φυλακή" or "phylakē". It means to guard or watch. It can be used to refer to a place where captives are kept.

In much of the ancient world, judges did not sentence offenders to serve time in prison. This has become more of a modern punishment. Prisons in the ancient world were more like holding cells for the accused awaiting trial or for the condemned awaiting punishment. Mosaic law does not prescribe any penalty that includes imprisonment. Joseph, the son of Israel, languished in an Egyptian prison while other prisoners were released for judgment. The Philistines blinded and imprisoned Samson so they could keep him as a showpiece of their mastery: Being kept alive in that condition was a greater and more humiliating punishment than death. Indecisive King Zedekiah threw Jeremiah into the dungeon during time of war, an indication of the king's unwillingness either to execute or to free the prisoner. The psalmist prays for God's help for prisoners; and the parallel thought of the Hebrew poem shows that prisoners, often neglected while awaiting further official action, are those doomed to die (Psalm 79:11). In the days of the Old Testament, imprisonment was not typically a punishment. Prisons were populated mainly by those awaiting trial—however long that wait might be—and by those whose sentence had yet to be carried out.





Often, prisons of this kind were dug out of solid rock and were underground. Prisoners, their guards (on occasion), and their provisions were lowered through an opening the size of a manhole. This manhole was the only means of entrance and exit. In the Roman colony of Alba, the prison was under the marketplace. Rain and debris from the market and from animals easily dropped into this "house of darkness." Neither animal waste nor that of the prisoners found its way out easily. It was common to find iron shackles fixed to the walls. Depending on the cruelty of the guards and those who ordered the confinement, the length of the chain was determined. The chain was commonly fastened to the shackles and the wall. A short chain forced the inmate to stand upright, even when they needed to sleep. A longer chain showed more compassion. There were no restrooms for those imprisoned. They defecated and urinated in the same place they slept, ate and abode. The lighting was poor. It was cold, and the stench was appalling.

A few prisoners might have friends or paid guards to provide them clothing, blankets, food, and water. These persons would also change the bedding straw and clean away the human waste. Other prisoners had no such provision. Visiting a prisoner could be dangerous. A prison visitor was no longer one of the anonymous crowd. Someone might associate the visitor with the alleged crimes of

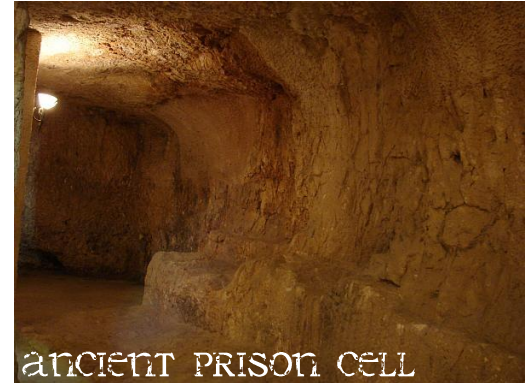
the accused.

Neglect and abuse was known in the matter of diet and hygiene. Securing adequate nourishment fell on the shoulders of the prisoners (family and friends); poor prisoners often were neglected and suffer great misery. To depend on the ration of the prison was actually to put their life at risk, because of its lack of variety, quantity and quality. In fact, the food of prisoners was about half the amount of food given to slaves. The food barely sustained life, and they could be turned easily into a weapon of punishment, torture or even execution when withheld by guards. The only generosity in official provision for many was the last meal before execution. Lastly, for a Jew, prison signifies a place of profound uncleanness, especially a gentile prison. The matters of Jewish tradition and food purity regulations, was impossible to follow, unless outside benefactors really helped.

Barbers knives were a danger to security; therefore prisoners had to put up with long uncombed and matted hair; often full of lice. The clothes worn in the filth of the prison, on bodies that were seldom washed or bathed, became absolutely soiled and deteriorated rapidly as it was used as work clothes and night wear.



With little space, especially when prisons were overcrowded, prisoners had to do "everything" in the same place. Moreover, the dead (those who died of lack of air, or illness, or changes of temperature) were piled in a corner to be taken away later.



John the Baptism would soon, within 4 to 5 months, find himself under these conditions. Such was the worldly reward for the greatest prophet the world had seen, aside from the Messiah Himself. John would be imprisoned in the fortress of Machaerus, just east of the Dead Sea. The details of this prison, and how John found himself there will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

12 - there arose a question – The phrase "there arose" is translated from the Greek word "γίνομαι" or "ginomai". It means to become, i.e. into existence, to begin to be, or to be made. The word "question" is translated from the Greek word "ζήτησις" or "zētēsis". It means a seeking, enquiry, a questioning, debate or matter of controversy. The Codex Sinaiticus replaces the word "question" with "discussion". (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, John, Chapter 3, Verse 25, page 168). **"We know not the special point in dispute, nor does it seem of much importance, since such questions would naturally suggest themselves to a cavalier or opponent who encountered those who were administering Baptism. What really interests us is, that somehow this Jewish objector must have connected what he said with a reference to the Baptism of Jesus' disciples. For, immediately afterwards, the disciples of John, in their sore zeal for the honour of their master, brought him tidings, in the language of doubt, if not of complaint, of what to them seemed interference with the work of the Baptist, and almost presumption on the part of Jesus."** (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume 1, Alfred Edersheim, page 391).

Any question raised by "a Jew" regarding the differences between the purifying of the Jews and John or Jesus' Baptism would have just been a teaching opportunity. The question itself would have been undoubtedly answered to hundreds of searching Jews. John and his disciples would have answered these types of questions on a routine basis. The fact that a question arose was normal. Elder McConkie explains, **"It is not unnatural that these diverse views should arouse questions 'between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying,' and that those disciples should come to John to inquire about Jesus and the baptizing being done by him and his disciples. In answer John preached one of the greatest sermons ever delivered on the divinity of Christ and the obligation resting upon all men to accept him as the Son of God if they would be saved. Few if any prophets have ever preached stronger doctrine or testified more powerfully to the divinity of their Lord than did the Lord's own forerunner on this occasion."** (The Doctrine New Testament Commentary - The Gospels, Volume 1, Bruce R. McConkie, pages 146-147).

13 - between – The word "between" is translated from the Greek word "μετά" or "meta". It means with, after or behind. The Codex Sinaiticus translated the word "between" as "on the part of". (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, John, Chapter 3, Verse 25, page 168). The question was between "a Jew" and the men of God. The problem was not the question, but rather a lack of spiritual understanding on the part of John's disciples. They knew the answer to the question, but the answer raised deeper concerns. How did Jesus fit in with John. John was their master and they revered him. Surely no man could replace the prophet that they loved so much. It is apparent that some of the disciples had jealousy when it came to Jesus and His disciples. Farrar wrote, **"But the ignoble jealousy which could not darken the illuminated soul of the Forerunner, found a ready place in the hearts of his followers. How long it may have smoldered we do not know, but it was called into active display during a controversy excited by the fact that two great Teachers, of whom one had testified to the other as the promised Messiah, were baptizing large multitudes of people, although the Sanhedrin and all the appointed authorities of the nation had declared against their claim."** (The Story of a Beautiful Life: Farrar's Life of Christ, The New 20th Century Edition, 1900, Canon Farrar, D.D., F.R.S., page 146).

14 - some of John's disciples – The phrase "some of" is translated from the Greek word "ἐκ" or "ek". It means out of, from, by or away from. The word "disciple" is translated from the Greek word "μαθητής" or "mathētēs". It means out of, from, by, or away from. In other words, a portion of John's followers had concerns over Jesus' role. **"Probably the discussion originated with John's disciples - the objector being a Jew or a professing disciple of Christ, who deprecated their views. In the one case they would in his opinion be too low; in the other too high. In either case the subject in dispute would not be baptisms, but the general subject of purifications - a subject of such a wide range in Jewish theology, that one of the six sections into which the Mishnah or traditional Law is divided, is specifically devoted to it."** (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume 1, Alfred Edersheim, page 391).

- 15 - **the Jews** – The word "Jews" is translated from the Greek word "Ἰουδαῖος" or "Ioudaios". The word means Jewish, as in belonging to the Jewish nation or with respects to birth origin or religion. The Codex Sinaiticus translated the phrase "the Jews" as "a Jew". (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, John, Chapter 3, Verse 25, page 168). Elder Talmage clarifies that it was indeed "a Jew" that came with a question. Talmage wrote, "**The Jews" or "A Jew."**--We read that "there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying" (John 3:25). Bearing in mind that the expression "the Jews" is very commonly used by the author of the fourth Gospel to designate the officials or rulers among the people, the passage quoted may be understood to mean that the Baptist's disciples were engaged in disputation with the priestly rulers. It is held, however, by Biblical scholars generally, that "the Jews" in this passage is a mistranslation, and that the true rendering is "a Jew." The disputation concerning purifying appears to have arisen between some of the Baptist's followers and a single opponent; and the passage as it appears in the King James version of the Bible is an instance of scripture not translated correctly." (Jesus the Christ, James E. Talmage, page 141).

This Jew, whether he was sincere or not, exposed a troubling concern that had been festering among the disciples of John. So much so, that the disciples voiced their concerns to John himself. Farrar wrote, "**Some Jews had annoyed the disciples of John with a dispute about purification, and they vented their perplexed and mortified feelings in a complaint to their great master.**" (The Story of a Beautiful Life: Farrar's Life of Christ, The New 20th Century Edition, 1900, Canon Farrar, D.D., F.R.S., page 146).

- 16 - **about purifying** – The word "about" is translated from the Greek word "περί" or "peri". The word means about, concerning, on account of, because of, around or near. The word "purifying" is translated from the Greek word "καθαρισμός" or "katharismos". It means a cleansing, purification, a ritual purgation or washing. It can be used of several practices; (a) of the washing of the Jews before and after their meals (b) of levitical purification of women after childbirth (c) a cleansing from guilt of sins wrought by the expiatory sacrifice of Christ.

The Codex Sinaiticus translates the word "purifying" as "purification". (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, John, Chapter 3, Verse 25, page 168).

Purification laws and practices at the time of Jesus would encompass a very large subject. A significant portion of the Mishnah is dedicated to purification. The Mishnah is divided into 6 sections, with 1 of the sections being entirely committed to "Purities". 245 pages out of 1,138 pages outline the Jewish oral law regarding purification. 21.5% of the Mishnah is devoted to purification. Not only was it an exhaustive subject, but a significant part of Jewish life. Nearly every aspect of Jewish life was connected with purification law.



Jews, born into a covenant family, believed that they were free from any requirement of baptism. They believed that they had the blessings and promises of the covenant of Abraham by virtue of their genealogy. They believed in the ordinance of baptism, but believed that it was used for converts to Judaism, rather than the children of Israel. Jeremias wrote, "**Schurer rightly decides that 'formal conversions to Judaism do not seem to have been as frequent as a loose attachment in the form of ἀεποφειωσ. However the baptism of proselytes in the pool of Siloam in Jerusalem was not a rare occurrence. It is easy indeed to imagine that Gentiles came to Jerusalem for their conversion to Judaism, if only to offer the sacrifice demanded by the occasion.'**" (Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: An investigation into Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament Period, Joachim Jeremias, page 320).



The Jews believed that they needed to maintain a level of ritual purity, but believed that they were inherently pure through their bloodline. Unfortunately, their apostate society had even lost a proper understanding of spiritual purity. They replaced spiritual purity with a twisted and adulterated volume of laws to be considered necessary for ritual purity. The Mishnah focuses its pages on things like the purity of dishes and cooking utensils. It focuses on things of an outward purity, and almost wholly neglects the inner vessel. Ritual purity had more to do with ceremonial washings after contact with a dead corpse or a leper than it did with repentance. (The Mishnah: A New Translation, Translated by Jacob Neusner, pages 893-1138).

In its apostate condition, there were still many Jews who recognized that their religion was seriously corrupt and lost. The Essenes are a great example of this. They removed themselves from Jerusalem, and often voiced concerns that the High Priest had not been called of God and that the Jewish hierarchy was not sanctioned by heaven. They were right. They retired to the desert and tried to restore the lost truths on their own. Unfortunately, what they had lost needed to be restored by heaven, and they lacked a living prophet to make that happen. They did however make great attempts. One of the areas that they focused on was ritual purity, and they even managed to understand that ritual purity meant very little without strides towards spiritual purity. The Essenes focused on a change in lifestyle that denied the temptations of mortality and elevated the things that pertained to heaven. They even recognized the need for baptism. They built large baptismal fonts, which in the Hebrew tongue are called "Mikvahs". The Essenes required a ritual washing by immersion in a Mikvah for conversion, similar to baptism. They also believed that such a baptism needed to be repeated often for purity to be maintained. So, they baptized themselves before every meal and before bed. Without a living prophet, they were not able to restore properly what they recognized was lost. This was the state of the Jews at the time of Jesus; spiritually lost.

It is no wonder that a Jew might question how the rituals of purity in their society coincided with the apostate regulations of the Jewish religion. I could easily see a Jew that had been raised under a complex set of rules for ritual purity would be highly confused by the baptism of John and Jesus. How did baptism fit into the structure and were their differences between John and Jesus Baptism. What we don't know is exactly what the Jew's question was. Brown wrote, "**The relation of the controversy to what follows in vs 26 is not clear. Are we to think it was about the relative value of the baptisms of John the Baptist and of Jesus? Or, since the word 'purification' reminds us of the water 'prescribed for Jewish purifications' in ii 6, are we perhaps to think of a dispute about the relative value of John the Baptist's baptism and of the standard Jewish purificatory washings? Was this Jew posing questions about John the Baptist's baptism like those put by the Pharisees in i 25? Or was there a general controversy about the value of all the types of purification by water (the various baptisms; the washings of the Pharisees; Essene lustrations)?" (The Gospel according to John: I-XII, Anchor-Yale Bible, Raymond E. Brown, S.S., page 151-152). We should understand that the baptism of Jesus and John, by water, were the same baptism. Additionally, we should understand that the purity rituals of the Jews had nothing to do with the**



baptism of John and Jesus. The Jewish rituals were apostate in nature and lacked divine guidance. Truth was being restored through a living prophet and the Messiah Himself. The people needed to let go of the doctrines of man, and embrace to the laws of Heaven.

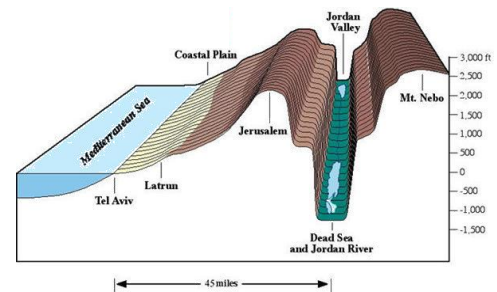
17- **Rabbi** – The title of "Rabbi" is translated from the Greek word "ῥαββί" or "rabbi". It means my great one, or my honorable sir. The title of Rabbi is used by the Jews to address their teachers. It was a title of honor. The Greek word is a transliteration of the Hebrew word "רַבִּי" or "rab". The Hebrew word means greater than, strong, great, abundant, many or much. A large following saw John as a great teacher, and addressed him by a respected title. Even those that were not baptized could see his great teachings and recognize him as a Rabbi. Brown writes, "John reflects the memory that John the Baptist was looked on as a teacher, as well as a prophet." (The Gospel according to John: I-XII, Anchor-Yale Bible, Raymond E. Brown, S.S., page 152).



18- **he that was with thee** – The fact that they address Jesus in an informal way, not using His Name, but rather "he that was with thee" is an indication of their feeling towards John in relation to Jesus. These followers or disciples of John were devoted and committed to John. They had not transitioned to the Messiah, but were stuck on their love of the prophet John. Farrar wrote, "The significant suppression of the name, the tone of irritation at what appeared to them an encroachment, the scarcely subdued resentment that any one should be a successful rival to him whose words had for a season so deeply stirred the hearts of men, are all apparent in this querulous address." (The Story of a Beautiful Life: Farrar's Life of Christ, The New 20th Century Edition, 1900, Canon Farrar, D.D., F.R.S., page 146).

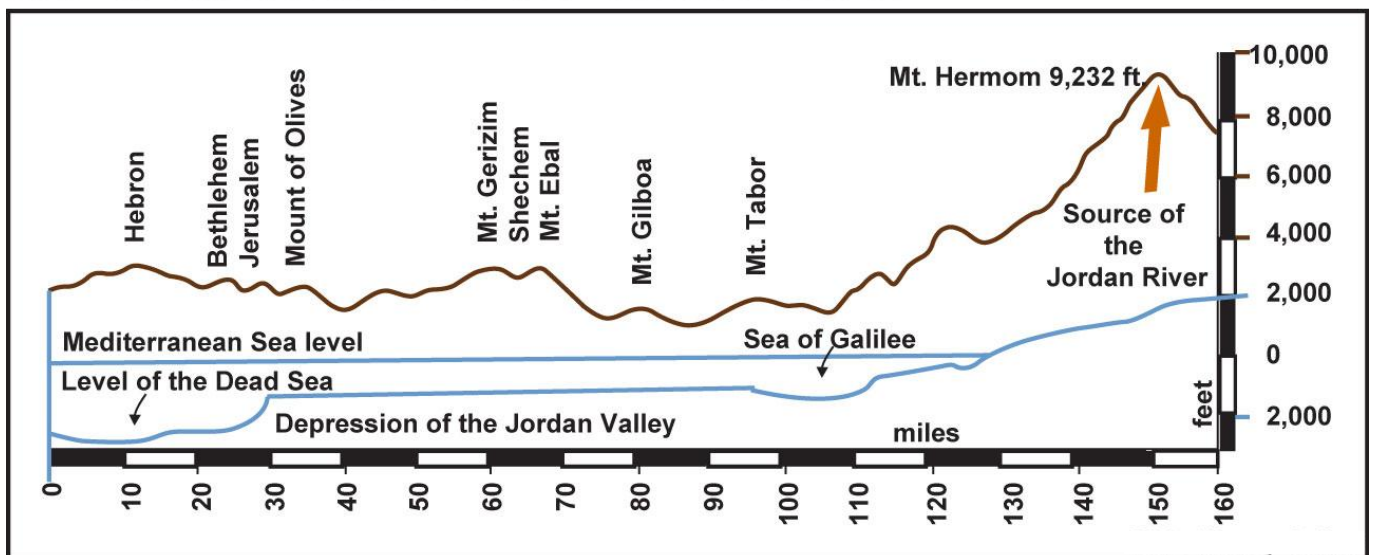
Another misconception posed by this passage is that Jesus was baptizing close by, in direct competition with John. In fact, my initial read of the biblical passage associated with this chapter left me with the false idea that Jesus was baptizing near Salim. This is not true. "There is no necessity for supposing that John and the disciples of Jesus baptized at, or quite close to, the same place. On the contrary, such immediate juxtaposition seems, for obvious reasons, unlikely. Jesus was within the boundaries of the province of Judæa, while John baptized at Ænon (the springs) near Salim." (The Gospel according to John: I-XII, Anchor-Yale Bible, Raymond E. Brown, S.S., page 152). Though they were not in the same physical area, there may have been feelings of competition. What the disciples of John did not understand is that their master John considered Jesus his Master. They were all on the same team. John was preparing them to receive the Messiah. Elder McConkie wrote, "The ministries of Jesus and John overlapped. Both were now preaching and baptizing. John's baptisms were in water only, after which his disciples were told (as John the apostle and Andrew had been) to follow Jesus who would baptize them with fire and the Holy Ghost. Jesus' baptisms were also in water unto repentance, but then he added the promise that in due course his converts would be baptized by the spirit. Further, John, who had once baptized to cleanse, purify, and prepare a people for a Messiah who was to come, now was baptizing into the kingdom set up by the Holy One of Israel who had come. However, according to the apostate Jewish traditions, the purifying power of baptism was needed only for Gentile proselytes; those of the seed of Abraham claimed exemption from its cleansing power and substituted various ritualistic cleaning ordinances of their own." (The Doctrine New Testament Commentary - The Gospels, Volume 1, Bruce R. McConkie, page 146).

19- **beyond Jordan** – The word "beyond" is translated from the Greek word "πέραν" or "peran". It means beyond, or on the other side. The name "Jordan" is translated from the Greek word "Ἰορδάνης" or "Iordanēs". The name translated literally means "the descender". The name "Jordan" is a transliteration of the Hebrew word "יַרְדֵּן" or "Yarden". It can also be translated literally as "descender". The name makes reference to the fact that the Jordan River starts at nearly 2,000 feet above sea level and descends below sea level until it empties into the Dead Sea at over 1,300 feet below sea level. The Jordan River drops over 3,300 feet in about 130 miles of linear distance. The Jordan River is the largest river in Palestine. It rises at the foot of the Antilibanus and ends where it empties into the Dead Sea.



The Jordan River might appear to us as a dirty or unimpressive river, but in Palestine it was a symbol of life. The Jordan River fed the Sea of Galilee. The sea supported the economy of Galilee. It also brought water through the desert. The desert communities relied on the River for life sustaining water. The term beyond references the East side of the Jordan River, specifically Bethabara where Jesus was baptized.

MAP OF THE PROFILE OF THE JORDAN RIVER



20 - whom thou barest witness – The phrase "barest witness" is translated from the Greek word "μαρτυρέω" or "martyreō". The Greek word means to be a witness, to bear witness, i.e. to affirm that one has seen or heard or experienced something, or that he knows it because taught by divine revelation or inspiration. The Codex Sinaiticus translates the phrase "thou barest witness" as "thou hast testified". (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, John, Chapter 3, Verse 26, page 168). I find it interesting that the Greek word for witness has the word martyr at its root. A martyr is someone that sacrifices or gives his life for a cause or belief. A witness is someone that would attest to the truthfulness of something and be willing to swear to the truthfulness of it. What we often do not see in this definition is the cultural implications of the ancient word. The ancient Arabians, including Palestine, viewed their word in a different fashion than our modern society. To the ancients, an oath was a serious matter. One would willingly die before going back on one's word or oath.

The act of ancient witnessing was a matter of oath and honor. It was a matter of life and death. This is why the interchange between Zoram and Nephi is so significant. Remember that Zoram, Laban's servant, followed Nephi outside the city walls of Jerusalem because he thought Nephi was his master Laban. Such a trick would not be seen as a violation of one's word because no oath had been entered. A witness always testifies under oath. When Zoram realized that it was a trick he tried to flee. Nephi records, **"And it came to pass that when the servant of Laban beheld my brethren he began to tremble, and was about to flee from before me and return to the city of Jerusalem. And now I, Nephi, being a man large in stature, and also having received much strength of the Lord, therefore I did seize upon the servant of Laban, and held him, that he should not flee."** (1st Nephi 4:30-31). This all seems very logical up until this point. Nephi now offers Zoram an oath. He says, **"And it came to pass that I spake with him, that if he would hearken unto my words, as the Lord liveth, and as I live, even so that if he would hearken unto our words, we would spare his life. And I spake unto him, even with an oath, that he need not fear; that he should be a free man like unto us if he would go down in the wilderness with us."** (1st Nephi 4:32-33). The words as the Lord liveth, and as I live are the language of Arabian oaths. He is offering his life as a sure witness of the truth. What seems illogical to us, until we understand the culture of oaths in the ancient world, is that after Zoram **"made an oath unto us, our fears did cease concerning him."** (1st Nephi 4:37). They no longer held him prisoner, nor did he attempt to run. Such is the nature of oaths in the ancient world. Bearing witness was always associated with an oath, hence the root word martyr: as I liveth.

What we often fail to recognize is that the covenants we make in the gospel carry similar oaths. We bear our witnesses of the truth and the Savior under oath. Where do we make such an oath? Every time we partake of the sacrament we make an oath, **"...that they may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son, and witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son..."** (Doctrine and Covenants 20:77). If we were ancient Jews, we would see the sacrament as a life promise to witness of the truth. This is serious business.

The Jews were looking for the promised Messiah. **"They had reason to look for that day, because the old Prophets had foretold it, and John the Baptist came along as a special Prophet, and nearly all that people had received him as a Prophet, professedly, though in reality, some of them received him, and he told them some of those things were about to be fulfilled. He had told them about their king, about the Lamb of God, about the Messiah, and that they must repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins, and make his paths strait."** (Journal of Discourses, Volume 3, Parley P. Pratt, October 7, 1855, page 130). Evidentially, not all of the disciples of John had recognized Him that John had testified of as the Messiah. They should have, John had offered a witness. **"He took up the work of His Forerunner, and continued it. The baptismal rite of John administered with the sanction of Jesus, was the highest witness that could be born to it."** (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume 1, Alfred Edersheim, page 393).

21 - the same baptizeth – The word "same" is translated from the Greek word "οὗτος" or "houtos". It means this, these, this one, etc. Baptism, as we discussed earlier, is the act of immersion or literally dipping. Baptism was not an isolated religious ritual. The Essenes practiced it, the Jews practiced a form of it, for maintaining purity and the Jews even baptized converts. **"Water was essential to purification. Most impurities required bathtings, and some necessitated washing the clothes and other objects. Water and ashes helped purge corpse impurity, but bathing was also necessary. At least as early as the Hasmonean period Palestinian Jews began to define 'bathing' and the water used for it. By our period, 'bathing' meant 'immersion'. Quite remarkably, Palestinian Jews seem all to have agreed."** (Judaism: Practice and Belief 63BCE-66CE, E.P. Sanders, page 222). It had even become common for Jews, especially the wealthy, to have private Mikvahs for purification rituals. **"In Palestine, few people lived near a spring or river, and those who did not do so dug deep pools and channeled rain water into them. The pools were cut into bedrock. This method of construction reflects the view that purifying water should not be carried into anything that a person built. In Rabbinic parlance, it should not be 'drawn water'. Preferably, there should be a natural pool of water. Since large natural pools were in inadequate supply, people imitate nature by making pools in rock."** (Judaism: Practice and Belief 63BCE-66CE, E.P. Sanders, pages 222-223).

The question doesn't seem to be a question of the validity of baptism in regard to purification; but rather whose baptism is considered valid. John himself bore testimony that Jesus "baptizeth". It would appear that there are questions arising around the validity of John's baptism versus Jesus'. They failed to understand the order of things. John was not the way, Jesus was. John only baptized to bring people to Christ. Those that understood and accepted John's teachings shifted their belief to the Messiah. Elder McConkie explained. **"Two reasons identify the basis for this shift in public opinion: the word of truth and salvation was with the Source of truth and the Author of salvation, as it should have been; and when John made converts, he sent them to Jesus. Whereas the forerunner had once baptized in the name of Him who should come and had made ready a congregation to receive the Lord, he now baptized in the name of Him who had come and invited his converts to join the congregation of His Leader. The converts were Christ's. The gathered sheep belonged to the Shepherd. John claimed no personal preference. He was a servant, and his glory was to serve the Master."** (The Mortal Messiah: Volume 1, Collector's Edition, Bruce R. McConkie, pages 323-324).

22 - all men – The word "all" is translated from the Greek word "πᾶς" or "pas". On an individual basis it means each, every, any, all, the whole, everyone, all things, or everything. Collectively, it means some of all types. This is the ultimate goal of the gospel of Jesus Christ: to invite ALL MEN to come unto Jesus. The disciples of John were concerned because they saw this happening. They loved and revered John. They saw the multitude leaving their master, and flocking to Jesus. If this continued, John would be without a following. They failed to understand that this is exactly what John wanted. Edersheim wrote, **"And then, in the high-day of his power, when all men had gathered around him and hung on his lips; when all wondered whether he would announce himself as the Christ, or, at least, as His forerunner, or as one of the great Prophets; when a word from him would have kindled that multitude into a frenzy of enthusiasm - he had disclaimed everything for himself, and pointed to Another."** (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume 1, Alfred Edersheim, pages 391-392)

23 - came unto him – Joseph Smith adds some clarity to the passage as he translates "all men come unto him" as **"... and he receiveth of all people who come unto him."** (Joseph Smith Translation of John 3:27). The fact is, no man will be forced to come unto Jesus. We must come unto Him of our own free will and choice. At the same time, Jesus will receive all that come unto Him. That's right. He will receive the sinner, the tax collector, the Samaritan, the rejected of society and the undesirable of man.

What does it mean to come unto him? Heber C. Kimball taught, **"When Jesus Christ came to this earth, he came to fulfil the law, and he taught the people to seek to the Father with a broken heart and contrite spirit, and then whatever they asked He would give. If you so come unto Him, repenting and being sorry for your sins, then He will hear you and forgive you, and He will forgive this whole people. Why? Because brother Brigham never would have said to you that God would forgive you if you would repent, unless he had received some intimation of that kind from the Father and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. But brother Brigham told you the truth, and the Lord will forgive you, if you stop sinning now, and begin anew to-day to work righteousness with full purpose of heart."** (Journal of Discourses, Volume 4, Heber C. Kimball, March 1, 1857, page 248). It appears that the first step in coming unto Jesus is humility and perspective. Having a broken heart is a perspective that we are incapable of salvation on our own. It is knowing that the desires of our heart, are removed and replaced with godly desires. **"The Savior's perfect submission to the Eternal Father is the very essence of a broken heart and a contrite spirit. Christ's example teaches us that a broken heart is an eternal attribute of godliness. When our hearts are broken, we are completely open to the Spirit of God and recognize our dependence on Him for all that we have and all that we are. The sacrifice so entailed is a sacrifice of pride in all its forms. Like malleable clay in the hands of a skilled potter, the brokenhearted can be molded and shaped in the hands of the Master."** (General Conference, "A Broken Heart and a Contrite Spirit", Bruce D. Porter, October 2007).

Many of the Jews heard of John, and even more heard of the new teachings he was spreading among the populace. Why were they not all converted? Why did so many reject his invitation? Quite simply their heart was not broken. They were set in their own ways, and upon the desires of their own heart. They were prideful. Pride is the opposite of a broken heart. It hinders eternal progression.

There are many different levels of pride. Many of the disciples of John were submissive enough to follow John, but had too much pride to leave John and follow Jesus. They felt like they had something with John and were too prideful to accept Jesus. C.S. Lewis wrote, "**Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man. We say that people are proud of being rich, or clever, or good-looking, but they are not. They are proud of being richer, cleverer, or better-looking than others. If every one else became equally rich, or clever, or good-looking there would be nothing to be proud about. It is the comparison that makes you proud: the pleasure of being above the rest. Once the element of competition has gone, pride has gone.**" (Mere Christianity, C.S. Lewis, 1960, page 95). It is understandable that they loved John; in fact, one can respect their loyalty and reverence. Even so, such loyalty must not hinder our progression. Edersheim wrote, "**While fully alive to their grievous error, perhaps in proportion as we are so, we cannot but honour and sympathise with this loving care for their master.**" (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume 1, Alfred Edersheim, page 391).

- 24 - **A man** – The word "man" is translated from the Greek word "άνθρωπος" or "anthrōpos". The word means a human being, whether male or female. It is used symbolically to represent any one, including you and I.
- 25 - **can receive nothing** – The word "receive" is translated from the Greek word "λαμβάνω" or "lambanō". It means to take, lay hold of, to take to one's own, or to make one's own. The word "nothing" is translated from the Greek word "οὐδείς" or "oudeis". It means no one or nothing. The Codex Sinaiticus translates the word "nothing" as "anything". (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, John, Chapter 3, Verse 27, page 168). Here in is reference to the fact that there are things that are beyond the natural reach of mortal man. Though we have been blessed with many capabilities, the things that are of most importance require the grace of Heaven.
- 26 - **except** – The word "except" is translated from the Greek phrase "ἐὰν μή" or "ean mē". The word means if not, unless, or whoever....not. The Codex Sinaiticus translates the word "except" as "unless". (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, John, Chapter 3, Verse 27, page 168).
- 27 - **it be given** – The word "given" is translated from the Greek word "δίδωμι" or "didōmi". The word means to give. "**Among the sure signs of the true church of Christ are the accompanying spiritual gifts. This has always been from the beginning. When the authority of the priesthood has been found on the earth, it is accompanied by the manifestations of spiritual gifts.**" (General Conference, "Gifts of the Spirit", James A. Cullimore, October 1974).
- 28 - **from Heaven** – The word "heaven" is translated from the Greek word "οὐρανός" or "ouranos". It means the vaulted expanse of the sky with all things visible in it. Certain gifts cannot be given from man, because he has no ability to give them. Spiritual things come solely from Heaven.
- 29 - **Ye** – The word "ye" is translated from the Greek word "ὑμεῖς" or "hymeis". The word mean "you".
- 30 - **bear** – The word "bear" is translated from the Greek word "μαρτυρέω" or "martyreō". The Greek word means to be a witness, to bear witness, i.e. to affirm that one has seen or heard or experienced something, or that he knows it because taught by divine revelation or inspiration.
- 31 - **witness** – The word "witness" is translated from the Greek word "μαρτυρέω" or "martyreō". The Greek word means to be a witness, to bear witness, i.e. to affirm that one has seen or heard or experienced something, or that he knows it because taught by divine revelation or inspiration. See footnote #20 of this chapter.
- 32 - **I am not the Christ** – The title "Christ" is translated from the Greek word "Χριστός" or "Christos". It means anointed. It is not a transliteration of the Hebrew word for Messiah; however, the Hebrew word for anointed is Messiah. The two words have identical meaning and can be used interchangeably. The Messiah was expected to be a great prophet, and would carry the spirit of God. He would bear the Priesthood of God, and perform great things. Though there was much more to the Messiah than these qualification, John had at the very least met these. Not surprising, many experienced John and wondered if he was the promised Messiah. To this John clearly declared He was not.
- 33 - **I am** – The word "am" is translated from the Greek word "εἰμί" or "eimi". It means to be, to exist, to happen, or to be present.
- 34 - **sent** – The word "sent" is translated from the Greek word "ἀποστέλλω" or "apostellō". It means to order one to go to an appointed place, to send away, or send off. It should be noted that the Greek word for "sent" is derived from a root word that we derive our English word "Apostle". Apostles are special witness of "Christ" that are "sent" forth from God. It is interesting that John was "sent" forth.
- 35 - **before him** – The word "before" is translated from the Greek word "ἐμπροσθεν" or "emprosthen". It means in front or before. The word "him" is translated from the Greek word "ἐκεῖνος" or "ekeinos". It means he, she, it, etc. Here is reference to the fact that John was a forerunner to the Messiah. He was sent before him. Such was fulfillment of prophecy. The prophet Malachi had long since prophesied, "**Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.**" (Malachi 3:1). **Herein is the prophecy fulfilled.**
- 36 - **bride** – The word "bride" is translated from the Greek word "νύμφη" or "nymphē". The word means a betrothed woman, a bride, a recently married woman, a young wife, a young woman, or a daughter in law. The usage in this scripture is strictly figurative. "**The bride**" is the "**Jewish people**". (The Doctrine New Testament Commentary - The Gospels, Volume 1, Bruce R. McConkie, page 148). More specifically, we are to understand the bride to be the people of the covenant.

To fully understand the analogy that John is making in this footnote, we must understand how an ancient marriage worked. Edersheim teaches, "**The marriage... ceremony itself consisted in leading the bride into the house of the bridegroom, with certain formalities, mostly dating from very ancient times. Marriage with a maiden was commonly celebrated on a Wednesday afternoon, which allowed the first days of the week for preparation, and enabled the husband, if he had a charge to prefer against the previous chastity of his bride, to make immediate complaint before the local Sanhedrim, which sat every Thursday. On the other hand, the marriage of a widow was celebrated on Thursday afternoon, which left three days of the week for "rejoicing with her."... As it was deemed a religious duty to give pleasure to the newly-married couple, the merriment at times became greater than the more strict Rabbis approved.... It deserves notice, that at the marriage in Cana there is no mention of "the friends of the bridegroom," or, as we would call them, the groomsmen. This was in strict accordance with Jewish custom, for groomsmen were customary in Judaea, but not in Galilee (Cheth. 25 a). This also casts light upon the locality where John 3:29 was spoken, in which "the friend of the bridegroom" is mentioned. But this expression is quite different from that of "children of the bridechamber," which occurs in Matthew 9:15, where the scene is once more laid in Galilee. The term "children of the bridechamber" is simply a translation of the Rabbinical "bene Chuppah," and means the guests invited to the bridal. In Judaea there were at every marriage two groomsmen or "friends of the bridegroom"—one for the bridegroom, the other for his bride.**



Before marriage, they acted as a kind of intermediaries between the couple; at the wedding they offered gifts, waited upon the bride and bridegroom, and attended them to the bridal chamber, being also, as it were, the guarantors of the bride's virgin chastity. Hence, when St. Paul tells the Corinthians (2 Cor 11:2): "I am jealous over you with godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ," he speaks, as it were, in the character of groomsmen or "bridegroom's friend," who had acted as such at the spiritual union of Christ with the Corinthian Church. And we know that it was specially the duty of the "friend of the bridegroom" so to present to him his bride. Similarly it was his also, after marriage, to maintain proper terms between the couple, and more particularly to defend the good fame of the bride against all imputations. It may interest some to know that his custom also was traced up to highest authority. Thus, in the spiritual union of Israel with their God, Moses is spoken of as "the friend of the bridegroom" who leads out the bride (Exo 19:17); while Jehovah, as the bridegroom, meets His Church at Sinai (Psa 68:7; Pirke di R. El. 41). Nay, in some mystic writings God is described as acting "the friend of the bridegroom," when our first parents met in Eden. There is a touch of poetry in the application of Ezekiel 28:13 to that scene, when angels led the choir, and decked and watched the bridal-bed (Ab. de R. Nathan iv. and xii.)...it was most strictly enjoined upon women to have their head and hair carefully covered. This may throw some light upon the difficult passage, 1 Corinthians 11:1-10. We must bear in mind that the apostle there argues with Jews, and that on their own ground, convincing them by a reference to their own views, customs, and legends of the propriety of the practice which he enjoins. From that point of view the propriety of a woman having her head "covered" could not be called in question. The opposite would, to a Jew, have indicated immodesty. Indeed, it was the custom in the case of a woman accused of adultery to have her hair "shorn or shaven," at the same time using this formula: "Because thou hast departed from the manner of the daughters of Israel, who go with their head covered; . . . therefore that has befallen thee which thou hast chosen." This so far explains verses 5 and 6. The expression "power," as applied in verse 10 to the head of woman, seems to refer to this covering, indicating, as it did, that she was under the power of her husband, while the very difficult addition, "because of the angels," may either allude to the presence of the angels and to the well-known Jewish view (based, no doubt, on truth) that those angels may be grieved or offended by our conduct, and bear the sad tidings before the throne of God, or it may possibly refer to the very ancient Jewish belief, that the evil spirits gained power over a woman who went with her head bare. The custom of a bridal veil—either for the bride alone, or spread over the couple—was of ancient date. It was interdicted for a time by the Rabbis after the destruction of Jerusalem. Still more ancient was the wearing of crowns (Cant 3:11; Isa 61:10; Eze 16:12), which was also prohibited after the last Jewish war. Palm and myrtle branches were borne before the couple, grain or money was thrown about, and music preceded the procession, in which all who met it were, as a religious duty, expected to join. The Parable of the Ten Virgins, who, with their lamps, were in expectancy of the bridegroom (Matt 25:1), is founded on Jewish custom. For, according to Rabbinical authority, such lamps carried on the top of staves were frequently used, while ten is the number always mentioned in connection with public solemnities. The marriage festivities generally lasted a week, but the bridal days extended over a full month." (Sketches of Jewish Social Life, Alfred Edersheim, pages 84-87).

37 - bridegroom – The word "bridegroom" is translated from the Greek word "νυμφίος" or "nymphios". It means a bridegroom. The term is used symbolically of Jesus. Elder McConkie stated, "Jesus was the Bridegroom". (The Doctrine New Testament Commentary - The Gospels, Volume 1, Bruce R. McConkie, page 148).

In the last footnote, #36, we connected the symbol of the bride with the Jews or the covenant people. Now we are to connect the bridegroom with the Messiah Himself. This is probably not a revelation to most men, as these symbols are commonly understood. What many fail to understand is why they symbols were chosen. The symbols are significant because a bride and bridegroom are joined through an ordinance. This ordinance was binding through covenant, and obedience to the covenant thereafter. It interesting that John brings this analogy up during a discussion about baptism. I would suggest that the marriage ceremony itself is a symbol for baptism. It is at baptism that we enter into a binding covenant with Jesus. Zondervan makes reference to the oath or covenant taken during a Jewish marriage, "Marriage customs in the Bible center around the two events of betrothal and wedding. The wedding itself did not include a religious ceremony, although it is probable that the betrothal was ratified by an oath; and after the Exile written contracts were drawn up and sealed. On the day of the wedding the bride dressed in white, elaborately embroidered robes, bedecked herself with jewels, and put on a veil and a garland. The bridegroom, attended by friends and accompanied the musicians and singers, went to the bride's house; and then after receiving her from her parents with their blessing he conducted the whole party back to his own house. On the way other friends of the bride and groom joined the party, and there was much music and dancing. A feast was held at the bridegroom's house. Later in the evening the bride's parents escorted her to the nuptial chamber, while he was led there by his friends or the bride's parents. The next day the festivities were resumed and continued for one or two weeks. The wedding festivities included much music and joking." (The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary, General Editor – Merrill C. Tenney, page 889).



38 - friend of the bridegroom – The word "friend" is translated from the Greek word "φίλος" or "philos". It means a friend, an associate, to be friendly to one, or a companion. "Literally, 'The Friend of the Bridegroom'...This is the *shoshben* of Jewish custom, the groom's closest friend who takes care of arranging the wedding. Paul claims this role in II Cor. xi 2; and Moses was given this role by the rabbis in the marriage between God and Israel. Because of this special trust any impropriety between the best man and the bride was regarded as particularly heinous (whence Samson's anger at the injustice in Judg xiv 20). This John the Baptist, as the best man, could never marry the bride; his only function was to prepare her for Jesus." (The Gospel according to John: I-XII, Anchor-Yale Bible, Raymond E. Brown, S.S., page 152).

Now, we need to turn back to John's analogy of the bride and the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom is mentioned, and is obviously another symbol. The friend of the bridegroom makes all the preparations for the covenant between the bride and bridegroom. All eyes are fixed upon him while the preparations are made. The bride looks to the friend of the bridegroom to know where and when to go for the marriage to be bound. The bride also relies on the friend to protect her purity so that she is worthy to enter into the marriage covenant. In a broad sense, the friend of the bridegroom represents any sanctioned priesthood holder that prepares the way of the Lord, and protects the people from behavior that would disqualify them. In a stricter sense of the word, the symbolic friend of the bridegroom is one who holds the office of Elias. John the Baptist was an Elias. Elder McConkie taught, "I, John, came only as the promised Elias...He is the Bridegroom; I, his servant, am as the friend of the bridegroom, the one sent to make arrangements for the wedding. My reward is to be near him, to hear his voice, to know my mission was successful; in this my joy is full." (The Mortal Messiah: Volume 1, Collector's Edition, Bruce R. McConkie, page 325). It is clear that John the Baptist is the friend of the bridegroom in John's own analogy.

The Friend of the Bridegroom was key to the marriage covenant. Everything centered upon the covenant. The Friend of the Bridegroom could easily be expanded to be missionaries, Bishops, Stake Presidents, Apostles, the Prophet, or anyone given stewardship over the souls of men. The Friend of the Bridegroom may also be referred to as a groomsmen. A groomsmen would never think of taking center stage. He always know the job at hand, and is happy when his job is successful and the bridegroom arrived. He witnesses the marriage covenant, but allows the marriage couple to fulfill their covenant. Talmage explains, "Judean marriage customs in the days of Christ required the appointing of a chief groomsmen, who attended to all the preliminaries and made arrangements for the marriage feast, in behalf of the bridegroom. He was distinctively known as the friend of the bridegroom. When the ceremonial requirements had been complied with, and the bride had been legally and formally given unto her spouse, the joy of the bridegroom's friend was fulfilled inasmuch as his appointed duties had been successfully discharged. (John 3:29.) According to Edersheim, (Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, vol. 1, p. 148), by the simpler customs prevalent in Galilee a "friend of the bridegroom" was not often chosen; and (pp. 663-4) the expression "children of the bridechamber" (Matt. 9:15; Mark 2:19; Luke 5:34, in all of which citations the expression is used by Jesus), was applied collectively to all the invited guests at a wedding festival. He says: "As the institution of 'friends of the bridegroom' prevailed in Judea, but not in Galilee, this marked distinction of the 'friend of the bridegroom' in the mouth of the Judean John, and 'sons (children) of the bridechamber' in that of the Galilean Jesus, is itself evidential

of historic accuracy." " (Jesus the Christ, James E. Talmage, page 141). One of the functions of the Friend of the Bridegroom is to bring the bride to the Bridegroom, or symbolically bring men unto Christ.

Another function of the Friend of the Bridegroom is to protect the wedding couple after they entered into the marriage covenant. The Friend of the Bridegroom stood guard over the bridal chamber until the Bride was finally united with the Bridegroom. Barclay explains, "The friend of the bridegroom, the *shoshben*, had a unique place at a Jewish wedding. He acted as the liaison between the bride and the bridegroom; he arranged the wedding; he took out the invitations; he presided at the wedding feast. He brought the bride and the bridegroom together. And he had one special duty. It was his duty to guard the bridal chamber and to let no false lover in. He would open the door only when in the dark he heard the bridegroom's voice and recognized it. When he heard the bridegroom's voice he let him in and went away rejoicing, for his task was completed and the lovers were together. He did not grudge the bridegroom the bride. He knew that his only task had been to bring bride and bridegroom together. And when that task was done he willingly and gladly faded out of the centre of the picture. John's task had been to bring Israel and Jesus together; to arrange the marriage between Christ the bridegroom and Israel the bride. That task completed he was happy to fade into obscurity for his work was done. It was not with envy that he said that Jesus must increase and he must decrease; it was with joy. It may be that sometimes we would do well to remember that it is not to ourselves we must try to attach people; it is to Jesus Christ. It is not for ourselves we seek the loyalty of men; it is for him." (The Gospel of John, Volume 1, William Barclay, pages 143-144).

- 39 - **Standeth** – The word "standeth" is translated from the Greek word "στημι" or "histēmi". The word means to cause or make to stand, to place, put or set. "According to the custom of the day, the friend of the bridegroom arranged the marriage contract and presided at the wedding." (The Doctrine New Testament Commentary - The Gospels, Volume 1, Bruce R. McConkie, page 148). He stood watch before and after the marriage. He assured that only those with invitations were allowed to enter. He assured that the requirements of the wedding were met. There are interesting parallels to the saving ordinances and covenants required for exaltation. All ordinances and covenants require a level of worthiness. One is presented before an authorized representative of the Lord, and worthiness is established. After covenants are made, the Lord's authorized representatives guard over and assist the process of keeping covenants. The Friend of the Bridegroom standeth guard against evil.
- 40 - **heareth** – The word "heareth" is translated from the Greek word "ἀκούω" or "akouō". It means to be endowed with the faculty of hearing, not deaf. "Marriages were celebrated with a wedding feast. The ritual included having the bride brought to the wedding by the groomsmen while the bridegroom was accompanied to the celebration by the bridesmaids. A steward was placed in charge of the arrangements for the feast." (Manners and Customs in the Bible, Victor H. Matthews, page 225). The Friend of the Bridegroom stands guard waiting for the voice of the Bridegroom. He is in charge, until the Bridegroom arrives. At that point, the Friend of the Bridegroom concedes to the Bridegroom. He is waiting to hear his voice.
- 41 - **rejoiceth greatly** – The word "rejoiceth" is translated from the Greek word "χαίρω" or "chairō". It means to rejoice, be glade, to be well, thrive, or have joy. The word "greatly" is translated from the Greek word "χαρά" or "chara". The word means joy or gladness and oddly has no connection with the word greatly. After much preparation, responsibility, and anxiety, the Friend of the Bridegroom would have been happy to hear the voice of the Bridegroom. He would have celebrated his arrival, and felt great joy that his job was complete. Edersheim wrote, "In the silence, which was now gathering around him, he heard but one Voice, that of the Bridegroom, and he rejoiced in it, though he must listen to it in stillness and loneliness. For it he had waited and worked. Not his own, but this had he sought. And now that it had come, he was content; more than content: his 'joy was fulfilled'. 'He must increase, but I must decrease'. It was the right and good order. With these as his last words publically spoken, this Aaron of the New Testament unrobed himself ere he lay down to die. Surely among those born of women there was not one greater than John." (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume 1, Alfred Edersheim, page 392).
- 42 - **bridegroom's voice** – The word "voice" is translated from the Greek word "φωνή" or "phōnē". It means a sound, a tone, a voice or speech. "The exact picture is not clear. Some think of the best man as at the bride's house, standing guard and waiting to hear the noise of the groom's procession as it comes to fetch the bride. Others picture the best man as at the groom's house after the bride has been brought there; he rejoices to hear the groom speaking with the bride." (The Gospel according to John: I-XII, Anchor-Yale Bible, Raymond E. Brown, S.S., page 152).

One final piece of trivia should be related. The ancient Jews were prone to play on words. In fact, there are often hidden meanings when one discovers such plays. Brown relates, "In this little parable and the aphorism that follows it, Black, p, 109, has found traces of a number of Aramaic plays on words that indicate a Semitic origin, e.g., 'bride' is kalltâ; 'voice' is qâlâ; 'to be complete' is k'alal; 'to decrease' is qelal." (The Gospel according to John: I-XII, Anchor-Yale Bible, Raymond E. Brown, S.S., page 153). The Paleo-Hebrew for the word voice is also quite interesting. The Hebrew word for "voice" is "קול" or "kol". The Paleo-Hebrew breakdown of the word is quite interesting;

קול

ל

- The PaleoHebrew form of the letter is the "Shepherd's Crook" - Represents Mercy, Love, and Compassion

ו

- The PaleoHebrew form of the letter is the "Nail" - Represents the covenant, the connector, the atonement

פ

- The PaleoHebrew form of the letter is the "Flail" - Represents Justice

The voice of the Savior is the reconciling of Mercy and Justice. John spoke by the spirit which is essentially the same voice, in that the Spirit would only testify of such truths.

- 43 - **my joy** – The word "joy" is translated from the Greek word "χαρά" or "chara". The word means joy or gladness. The Friend of the Bridegroom's joy was complete when his friend is united under covenant with his bride. Freeman clarified, "The friend of the bridegroom' was the person selected by the bridegroom to conduct the marriage negotiations on his part. It was he who carried messages between the bridegroom and the bride during the time of the betrothal. When, on the occasion of the marriage, they were brought to see each other in a private room or under a canopy provided for the purpose, the 'friend of the bridegroom' stood without, eager to catch the first words of delight which came from the bridegroom's lips, expressive of the satisfaction he experienced on conversing with his betrothed. This position John the Baptist claims for himself figuratively. He is not the Christ, but bears a relation to him similar to that borne by the *paronymph* to the bridegroom. He makes arrangements for bringing Christ, the bridegroom, to the church, his bride. He waits with reverence and respect to hear words of joy coming from the lips of Christ because he has found a waiting and a willing Church. As the services of the *paronymph* only occupied a short time, so the Baptist's mission would soon be over: 'He must increase, but I must decrease'." (Manners and Customs of the Bible, James M. Freeman, page 423).
- 44 - **fulfilled** – The word "fulfilled" is translated from the Greek word "πληρώω" or "plērōō". The word means to make full, to fill up, to render full, to complete or to realize. "As we have seen before, one of the difficulties in the Fourth Gospel is to know when the characters are speaking and when John is adding his own commentary. These verses may

be the words of John the Baptist; but more likely they are the witness and the comment of John the evangelist." (The Gospel of John, Volume 1, William Barclay, page 144).

45 - **increase** – The word "increase" is translated from the Greek word "αύξάνω" or "auxanō". It means to cause to grow, augment, to increase, or become greater. **"The two Greek verbs in vs. 30 are also used for the waxing and the waning of the light of heavenly bodies."** (The Gospel according to John: I-XII, Anchor-Yale Bible, Raymond E. Brown, S.S., page 153). Such interesting choices in words. Both men were full of heavenly spirit or light. It was time for the prophet John to close his mission. His light was to wane so that the Light of the Messiah might bring greater light; the light of salvation. As this light grew, so did the powers of darkness. Franklin Richards taught, **"When John the Baptist had gone forth among the people of Palestine, telling them that the kingdom of heaven was at hand and calling upon all who entertained faith in his mission to come and be baptized – it appears that he created quite a sensation among the people, insomuch that all they of Jerusalem and Judea and the regions round about went forth and were baptized by him in great multitudes, as recorded in Mark, i, 8. This had a political effect upon the rulers of that day, and when John was followed by Jesus and his wonderful works, they began to say – "If we let him thus alone all men will believe on him, and the Romans will come and take away our place and nation." It was very directly a matter of political significance and importance."** (Journal of Discourses, Volume 20, Franklin D. Richards, October 6, 1879, page 310)

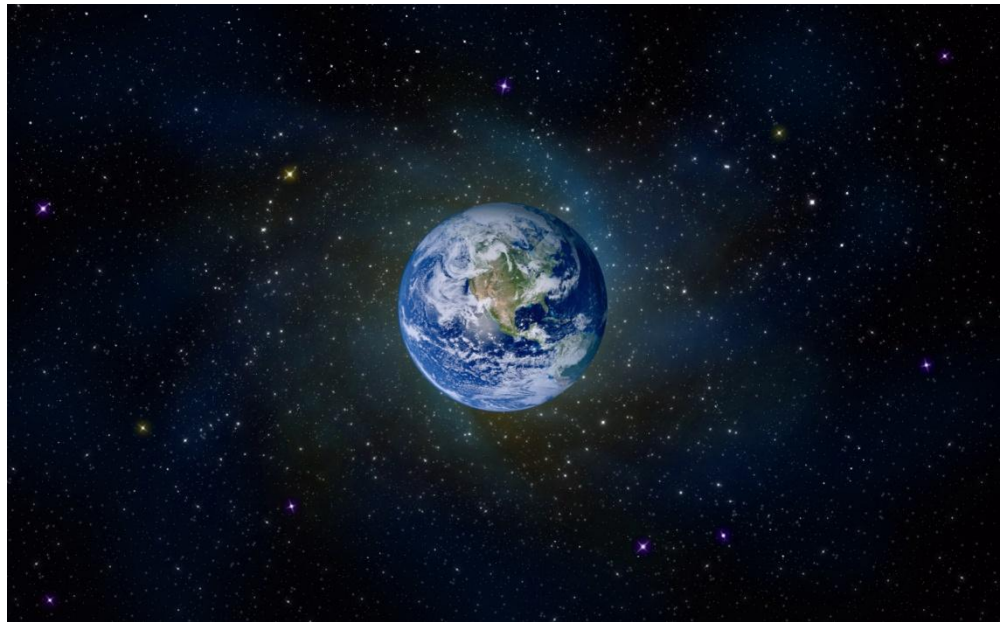
46 - **decrease** – The word "decrease" is translated from the Greek word "ἐλαττώω" or "elattoō". It means to make less or inferior. It can also mean to decrease in authority or popularity. The Codex Sinaiticus translated the word "decrease" as "become less". (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, John, Chapter 3, Verse 30, page 169). **"The Greek verb elattoun is related to elassōn, the adjective 'inferior' used to describe the ordinary wine at Cana (ii 10). Thus, there are three parallels between iii 22-30 and the Cana scene; (a) 'purification' in 25; (b) the marriage theme; and (c) this vocabulary similarity. It seems adventurous, however, to regard these rather incidental parallels as theologically significant. They are interesting, however, in view of the possibility that the material in iii 22-30 once immediately preceded the Cana scene."** (The Gospel according to John: I-XII, Anchor-Yale Bible, Raymond E. Brown, S.S., page 153).

The Father's plan for His children's happiness requires great sacrifice on the part of those that would have Father's richest blessings. John was a faithful servant. He had done that which was required, and now after much success was required to quietly, and without any degree of applaud, remove himself from the scene. **"The answer which the Baptist made, may be said to mark the high point of his life and witness. Never before was he so tender, almost sad; never before more humble and self-denying, more earnest and faithful. The setting of his own life-sun was to be the rising of One infinitely more bright; the end of his mission the beginning of another far higher."** (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume 1, Alfred Edersheim, page 392).

47 - **cometh from above** – The phrase "from above" is translated from the Greek word "ἀνωθεν" or "anōthen". The word means from above, or from a higher place. **"Here anōthen clearly means 'from above'."** (The Gospel according to John: I-XII, Anchor-Yale Bible, Raymond E. Brown, S.S., page 157). The Savior Himself would later teach, **"And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world."** (John 8:23). The message here is that the Savior is not a product of this world. His Father is the God of the Universe. His purpose on earth is divine in nature. His ways are the ways of His Father. **"John the Baptist uses this as a title for the one whom he is expecting."** (The Gospel according to John: I-XII, Anchor-Yale Bible, Raymond E. Brown, S.S., page 157).

48 - **above all** – The word "above" is translated from the Greek word "ἐπάνω" or "epanō". It means above a place or above a number (more than). The Codex Sinaiticus translates the word "above" as "over". (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, John, Chapter 3, Verse 31, page 169). **"It is difficult to decide whether the 'all' in John is masculine (above all teachers) or neuter (above all things). John probably means above the whole realm of man."** (The Gospel according to John: I-XII, Anchor-Yale Bible, Raymond E. Brown, S.S., page 157).

49 - **the earth** – The word "earth" is translated from the Greek word "γῆ" or "gē". It can mean the earth as a whole, or in reference to the ground or land associated with it. The word earth is used symbolically to represent mortality, baseness, and evil. Brown teaches, **"John does not usually have the implication of hostility that 'world' has. It refers to the natural level of man's existence as contrasted with the supernatural or heavenly. The 'world' has the cloak of Satanic hostility about it. To illustrate the difference(which is not always preserved) we may contrast 'one who is of the earth' in our present passage with the false prophets and antichrists of I John iv 5 who are 'of the world and speak on a worldly plane:'"** (The Gospel according to John: I-XII, Anchor-Yale Bible, Raymond E. Brown, S.S., page 157-58).



50 - **earthly** – The word "earthly" is translated from the Greek word "ἐκ" or "ek". The word is a reference word used in association with the word earth earlier in the sentence. It means out of, from, by or away from. **"Literally 'of earth'."** (The Gospel according to John: I-XII, Anchor-Yale Bible, Raymond E. Brown, S.S., page 158). The earth is symbolic of matter, and creation. It is often symbolized by the square. (An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Traditional Symbols, J.C. Cooper, page 59). The earth symbolizes blessing, curse, death, divine will, fertility, rebirth, resurrection, sin and the source of life. (Encyclopedia of Traditional Jewish Symbols, Ellen Frankel and Betsy Platkin Teutsch, page 43-44). It becomes a very interesting symbol in that it represents everything that is good, and evil at the same time. It represents the opposition necessary for God's plan for His children.

51 - **heard** – The word "heard" is translated from the Greek word "ἀκούω" or "akouō". It means to be endowed with the faculty of hearing, not deaf.

52 - **testifieth** – The word "testifieth" is translated from the Greek word "μαρτυρέω" or "martyreō". The Greek word means to be a witness, to bear witness, i.e. to affirm that one has seen or heard or experienced something, or that he knows it because taught by divine revelation or inspiration. See footnotes #20 and #31 of this chapter.

53 - **no man** – The word "no" is translated from the Greek word "οὐδεὶς" or "oudeis". The word means no one or nothing.

54 - **receiveth** – The word "receiveth" is translated from the Greek word "λαμβάνω" or "lambanō". It means to take, lay hold of, to take to one's own, or to make one's own. The word nothing is translated from the Greek word "οὐδείς" or "oudeis". It means no one or nothing.

55 - **his testimony** – The word "testimony" is translated from the Greek word "μαρτυρία" or "martyria". It means a testifying, or what one who testifies. See footnotes #20, #31, and #52.

56 - **set to his seal** – The word "seal" is translated from the Greek word "σφραγίζω" or "sphragizō". It means to set a seal upon, mark with a seal, to conform or attest. The Codex Sinaiticus translates "set to his seal" as "attested that". (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, John, Chapter 3, Verse 33, page 169). A seal symbolizes authority; power; possession; individuality; also secrecy; virginity; and conclusion. (An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Traditional Symbols, J.C. Cooper, page 146). According to the authorized LDS scripture footnotes, the phrase "set to" could be translated as declared that or certified that. **"The metaphor is one of setting a seal indicating approval on a legal document...setting a seal means to accredit. This use of 'seal' may be more Semitic (hātam) than Greek."** (The Gospel according to John: I-XII, Anchor-Yale Bible, Raymond E. Brown, S.S., page 157).



Seal of King Jeroboam



Ancient Israelite Seal
in Paleo Hebrew

Seals are somewhat foreign to us of a modern age. In an ancient world, they were necessary to validate if something was real. **"Seals are used primarily to authenticate documents, specifically those which carry some legal import. There are two main ways in which a seal may be attached to a document. It may be applied directly to the face of the paper or parchment (an applied seal); or it may hang loose from it (a pendent seal). A pendent seal may be attached to cords or ribbons (sometimes in the owner's livery colors), or to the two ends of a strip (or tag) of parchment, threaded through holes or slots cut in the lower edge of the document: the document is often folded double at this point (a plica) to provide extra strength. Alternatively, the seal may be attached to a narrow strip of the material of the document (again, in this case, usually parchment), sliced and folded down, as a tail or tongue, but not detached. The object in all cases is to help ensure authenticity by maintaining the integrity of the relationship between document and seal, and to prevent the seal's reuse. If a forger tries to remove an applied seal from its document, it will almost certainly break. A pendent seal is easily detached by cutting the cords or strips of parchment, but the forger would then have great difficulty in attaching it to another document (not least because the cords or parchment are normally knotted inside the seal), and would again almost certainly break it."** (Wikipedia.com, (Seal) Emblem).

We use the term seal in modern language in a somewhat figurative manner. We seal blessings upon the heads of the sick and afflicted. We seal covenants, and families in sacred ordinances. The sealing is a divine approval and authentication. **"In the ancient world, if a man wished to give his full approval to a document, such as a will or an agreement or a constitution, he affixed his seal to the foot of it. The seal was the sign that he agreed with this and regarded it as binding and true. So when a man accepts the message of Jesus, he affirms and attests that he believes what God says is true."** (The Gospel of John, Volume 1, William Barclay, page 145).

57 - **God** – The word "God" is translated from the Greek word "θεός" or "theos". It means deity. It is a generic term for God, and can be used of any deity or divinity. It is often used for the one and only true God.

58 - **true** – The word "true" is translated from the Greek word "ἀληθής" or "alēthēs". It means true, loving the truth, truthful, or speaking of the truth. Another title for Jesus is the truth. He is the answer to all the lies of this world. He cannot lie, not because He is incapable, but because it is against His nature. He conquered mortality, and became the eternal truth. He is the only constant we can hope for in mortality.

59 - **speaketh** – The word "speaketh" is translated from the Greek word "λαλέω" or "laleō". It means to utter a voice or emit a sound. It means to speak, talk, utter or tell. This is the call of the prophets. They speak the words of eternal life. The Messiah is the greatest of all the prophets. He came not only to speak words of eternal life, but to actually deliver up eternal life itself. The prophet Isaiah, speaking Messianically, wrote, **"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;"** (Isaiah 61:1).

60 - **giveth not** – The word "giveth" is translated from the Greek word "δίδωμι" or "didōmi". The word means to give. The Lord blesses us with a measure of the spirit in proportion to our obedience. The Lord taught Joseph Smith, **"There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated— And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated."** (Doctrine and Covenants 130:20-21). It is why we feel the spirit in varying degrees in our life. It is not because God is inconsistent, but rather that we are inconsistent in living the laws of heaven. So what happens when someone lives in perfect obedience? It would follow that the spirit would flow without restriction. It would be given without measure. Joseph translated this verse of scripture and clarified the verse as follows, **"... for God giveth him not the Spirit by measure, for he dwelleth in him, even the fullness."** (Joseph Smith Translation of John 3:34).

61 - **the spirit** – The word "spirit" is translated from the Greek word "πνεῦμα" or "pneuma". The word has multiple uses and definitions. The most predominate are as follows;

- I. the third person of the triune God, the Holy Spirit, coequal, coeternal with the Father and the Son
 - A. sometimes referred to in a way which emphasizes his personality and character (the "Holy" Spirit)
 - B. sometimes referred to in a way which emphasizes his work and power (the Spirit of "Truth")
 - C. never referred to as a depersonalized force
- II. the spirit, i.e. the vital principal by which the body is animated
 - A. the rational spirit, the power by which the human being feels, thinks, decides
 - B. the soul
- III. a spirit, i.e. a simple essence, devoid of all or at least all grosser matter, and possessed of the power of knowing, desiring, deciding, and acting
 - A. a life giving spirit
 - B. a human soul that has left the body
 - C. a spirit higher than man but lower than God, i.e. an angel
 - i. used of demons, or evil spirits, who were conceived as inhabiting the bodies of men
 - ii. the spiritual nature of Christ, higher than the highest angels and equal to God, the divine nature of Christ
- IV. the disposition or influence which fills and governs the soul of any one
 - A. the efficient source of any power, affection, emotion, desire, etc.
- V. a movement of air (a gentle blast)
 - A. of the wind, hence the wind itself
 - B. breath of nostrils or mouth

The Holy Ghost is probably the most difficult member of the Godhead to understand, and yet He is the member that we have the greatest association with. Perhaps it is because we do not know His name, nor do we have a properly comprehend how a body of spirit functions. What we do know is that **"The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of the Lord, and issues forth from Himself, and may properly be called God's minister to execute His will in immensity; being called to govern by His influence and power; but He is not a person of tabernacle as we are, and as our Father in Heaven and Jesus Christ are."** (Journal of Discourses, Volume 1, Brigham Young, April 9, 1852, page 51).

The Holy Ghost is absolutely our lifeline to the eternities. He is an essential ingredient to our progression. He is our guide through trials and tribulations. The closer we stay to our guide, the easier the passage we will have through mortality. Brigham Young Taught, **"When a man is full of the light of eternity, then the eye is not the only medium through which he sees, his ear is not the only medium by which he hears, nor the brain the only means by which he understands. When the whole body is full of the Holy Ghost, he can see behind him with as much ease, without turning his head, as he can see before him. If you have not that experience, you ought to have. It is not the optic nerve alone that gives the knowledge of surrounding objects to the mind, but it is that which God has placed in man – a system of intelligence that attracts knowledge, as light cleaves to light, intelligence to intelligence, and truth to truth."** (Journal of Discourses, Volume 1, Brigham Young, April 8th, 1852, pages 70-71). So significant is the power of the Holy Ghost that Brigham once said, **"Nothing short of the Holy Ghost will do us any lasting good."** (Journal of Discourse, Volume 1, Brigham Young, June 13th, 1852, page 93).

62 - by measure – The word "measure" is translated from the Greek word "μέτρον" or "metron". It means a measure, or an instrument for measuring. **"The commercial advantage of a standardized system of weights and measures was recognized very early in Israelite history."** (Manners and Customs in the Bible, Victor H. Matthews, page 243). Every civilization comes to a system of measurement. The systems were developed to determine values and trade.

John uses the term "by measure" in reference to the Holy Ghost. **"Literally 'not by measure'; although ek metrou is not found elsewhere in Greek writings, the equivalent expression, 'by measure,' is not uncommon in rabbinic literature. In the Midrash Rabbah on Lve xv 2, Rabbi Aha says, 'The Holy Spirit rested on the prophets by measure.' If a similar idea is behind the statement in John, then Jesus is being contrasted with the prophets (as in Heb. i 1). However, the statement may simply mean that with Jesus we have the definite eschatological outpouring of the Spirit."** (The Gospel according to John: I-XII, Anchor-Yale Bible, Raymond E. Brown, S.S., page 158).

The Savior was perfect in his actions, choices, and thoughts. He was strictly obedient. As consequence, the spirit would have naturally been unrestrained. Barclay taught, speaking of Jesus, that **"on him God poured out the Spirit in full measure, keeping nothing back. Even the Jews themselves said that the prophets received from God a certain measure of the Spirit. The full measure of the Spirit was reserved for God's own chosen one. Now, in Hebrew thought the Spirit of God had two functions—first, the Spirit revealed God's truth to men; and, second, the Spirit enabled men to recognize and understand that truth when it came to them. So to say that the Spirit was on Jesus in the completest possible way is to say that he perfectly knew and perfectly understood the truth of God. To put that in another way—to listen to Jesus is to listen to the very voice of God."** (The Gospel of John, Volume 1, William Barclay, page 145).



63 - The Father – The word "Father" is translated from the Greek word "πατήρ" or "patēr". It is used to refer to a generator or male ancestor. It can be used for a father, forefather, our founder of a nation or people. In this case, the reference is made to God, the Father, or our Heavenly Father, the Father of our spirits.

64 - loveth – The word "loveth" is translated from the Greek word "ἀγαπάω" or "agapaō". It means to welcome, entertain, to be fond of or to love dearly. We are to understand that John is speaking of a perfect and total love which the Father of Heaven has for His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

65 - the Son – The word "Son" is translated from the Greek word "υἱός" or "huios". It means a son, and is generally used for the offspring a men rather than animals. Here the word is capitalized, making reference to the Son of God.

66 - given all things – The word "given" is translated from the Greek word "δίδωμι" or "didōmi". The word means to give. The phrase "all things" is translated from the Greek word "πᾶς" or "pas". It means, on an individual basis, each, every, any, all, the whole, everyone, all things, or everything. Collectively, it means some of all types. Here the word is being applied individually. The Savior accepted the role as Savior and Redeemer. As such the Father committed ALL things unto Him. He has literally given all things into his hands.

67 - his hand – The word "hand" is translated from the Greek word "χεῖρ" or "cheir". It means by the help or agency of any one, or by means of any one. It is often used figuratively to God's might, activity, and power. In Hebrew tradition, the hand of God represents the right hand of majesty on high. The hand representing one's ability to act and do. The hand is used in entering covenants as it commits one's actions and deeds. (An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Traditional Symbols, J.C. Cooper, page 78). The hand symbolizes blessing, creativity, divine power, divine protection, good luck, productivity, redemption, and unity. (Encyclopedia of Traditional Jewish Symbols, Ellen Frankel and Betsy Platin Teutsch, pages 70-71).



68 - believeth – The word "believeth" is translated from the Greek word "πιστεύω" or "pisteuō". The word means to think to be true, to be persuaded of, to credit or place confidence in. **"The Latin tradition reads 'disbelieves' on the analogy of iii 18 and because this gives a better contrast to 'believes' in the first line of vs. 36. 'Disobeys', the most difficult reading, occurs only here in John; its introduction by scribes is not easily explained, and so it is probably original."** (The Gospel according to John: I-XII, Anchor-Yale Bible, Raymond E. Brown, S.S., page 158). The Prophet Joseph Smith translated this portion of scripture. He recorded, **"And he who believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and shall receive of his fullness. But he who believeth not the Son, shall not receive of his fullness; for the wrath of God is upon him."** (Joseph Smith Translation of John 3:36).

69 - everlasting life – The word "everlasting" is translated from the Greek word "αἰώνιος" or "aiōnios". It means to be without beginning and end, or that which always has been and always will be. The word "life" is translated from the Greek word "ζωή" or "zōē". It means life as in a living soul. There is a common confusion between immortality and eternal life. Since neither term is used here, but rather everlasting life, it is even more unclear. Immortality is to live past death, having the spirit and the body reunited never to die again. It has nothing to do with the status of that living, but just that we live. Eternal life, like immortality is to live past death, but unlike immortality, eternal life is to live in a glorious state

with our Father in Heaven. Through Jesus Christ, all mankind will receive immortality. The same is true of eternal life except the gift is conditional upon our acceptance and obedience to the terms set by Heaven. If we do this, we qualify to receive eternal life. Another word for eternal life is exaltation. John Taylor explained, **"I will go back further, and find the spirits that are existing with him in the eternal world. They came here, and obtained bodies, that both bodies and spirits might receive an exaltation among the Gods, and be capable of eternal increase worlds without end."** (Journal of Discourses, Volume 1, John Taylor, June 12, 1853, page 158). And how do we receive such a gift? Brigham Young stated, **"This is what you must do to obtain an exaltation. The Lord must be first and foremost in our affections, the building up of His kingdom demands our first consideration."** (Journal of Discourses, Volume 1, Brigham Young, April 6, 1852, pages 202-203). We are left to understand that everlasting life is used to mean eternal life or exaltation.

- 70 - not see life** – The word "see" is translated from the Greek word "ὀππάνομαι" or "optanomai". It means to look at, behold, to allow one's self to be seen, or to appear. ALL mankind, who chose to enter mortality, will live again. Not everyone will see life eternal or exaltation. Those that fail to receive this gift are often referred to a spiritually dead since they will be cut off from the spirit of God for all eternity. Yes they will live, but in a state of spiritual darkness. Barclay wrote, **"It has been said that all life concentrates upon a man at the crossroads. Once again John returns to his favourite thought. What matters is a man's reaction to Christ. If that reaction be love and longing, that man will know life. If it be indifference or hostility, that man will know death. It is not that God sends his wrath upon him; it is that he brings that wrath upon himself."** (The Gospel of John, Volume 1, William Barclay, pages 145-146).
- 71 - wrath of God** – The word "wrath" is translated from the Greek word "ὀργή" or "orgē". The word means anger, the natural disposition, temper, or character. It means indignation or wrath. The wrath of God references the judgment that will be extended to all mankind who reject the mercy of Jesus Christ's atonement. It is a righteous wrath, being perfect in motive, judgment and execution. Brigham Young taught, **"But when the light of the knowledge of God comes to a man and he rejects it, that it is his condemnation. When I have told all I have been authorized to declare to him in the name of the Lord, if he does not have the visions of eternity, it is all nonsense to him. To know the truth of my testimony he must have the visions and revelations of God for himself. And when he gets them, and turns aside, becoming a traitor to the cause of righteousness, the wrath of God will beat upon him, and the vengeance of the Almighty will be heavy upon him. This comes, not because their fathers lived in darkness before them, and the ancestors of their fathers before them; not because the nations have lived and died in ignorance; but because the Lord pours the spirit of revelation upon them, and they reject it. Then they are prepared for the wrath of God, and they are banished to another part of the spirit world, where the devil has power and control over them."** (Journal of Discourses, Volume 2, Brigham Young, Dec., 3, 1854, page 141).
- 72 - abideth** – The word "abideth" is translated from the Greek word "μένω" or "menō". The word means to remain or abide. The word does not imply residence in this usage, but rather that the wrath of God was by place or issued to such a person.
- 73 - on him** – The word "on" is translated from the Greek word "ἐπί" or "epi". The word means upon, on, at, by or before. The word "him" is translated from the Greek word "αὐτός" or "autos". The word means himself, herself, themselves, itself, he, she, or it.