

ROUTE 66

Session Number Fifteen

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THE GOSPELS / PART THREE / JOHN

Had you been a traveler in Israel 2000 years ago, and had made your way to the beautiful Sea of Galilee, on the extreme northern end of the Lake you would have come to the little village of Bethsaida.

1 Most of the residents there made their living from the water which teemed with fish. Not
2 too far from the water's edge, one might have come across a larger building than most
3 with a sign hanging over the door, ZEB'S FISH HOUSE. The proprietor of the place
4 was a man named Zebedee, who was not only proud of his business but also proud of his
5 family. His wife's name was Salome. It is believed she was the sister of Mary, Jesus'
6 mother, which, if true, would have made Jesus, James and John cousins. Zebedee's two
7 boys, who were a great help in his fishing business, were the afore-mentioned James and
8 John.

9
10 On a quite ordinary day, James and John were sitting in a boat, mending their fish nets.
11 Their father was working nearby. Then the most extraordinary thing happened:

12
13 Matthew 4:18-22

14 **Walking along the beach of Lake Galilee, Jesus saw two brothers: Simon (later**
15 **called Peter) and Andrew. They were fishing, throwing their nets into the lake. It**
16 **was their regular work. [19] Jesus said to them, "Come with me. I'll make a new**
17 **kind of fisherman out of you. I'll show you how to catch men and women instead of**
18 **perch and bass." [20] They didn't ask questions, but simply dropped their nets and**
19 **followed.**

20 **[21] A short distance down the beach they came upon another pair of brothers,**
21 **James and John, Zebedee's sons. These two were sitting in a boat with their father,**
22 **Zebedee, mending their fishnets. Jesus made the same offer to them, [22] and they**
23 **were just as quick to follow, abandoning boat and father.**

24
25 It is interesting to note that John followed Jesus' invitation quickly. In so doing, he left
26 a rather prosperous business. We know that his family had some means as they
27 employed servants - and the fact that John knew the high priest well enough to gain
28 entrance to the courtyard where Jesus was tried suggests that the family was not exactly

1 poor.

2
3 There was something about John that made him a favorite of the Christ. He was one of
4 three disciples closest to Jesus, the others being his brother James and Peter. These three
5 witnesses had the thrill of seeing the raising of Jairus' daughter from the dead. And,
6 wonder of wonders, they were present at the transfiguration of Jesus on Mount Hermon.
7 But even more impressive, they were nearest to Jesus during our Lord's agony in the
8 Garden of Gethsemane.

9
10 We should carefully note that it was John who had the courage to be present at the
11 crucifixion, where he received Jesus' directive to care for Mary, Jesus' mother.

12
13 The Book of Acts - which is the greatest "church growth book" ever given to us reveals
14 John's activity in the early church in Jerusalem. He was with Peter at the healing of the
15 man who had been lame from his birth. He was sent to Samaria where Jesus' followers
16 prayed and laid hands on the people to receive the Holy Spirit. He enjoyed decades of
17 pastoral leadership in western Turkey - particularly in Ephesus - where he was arrested by
18 Roman authorities in his early 90's and banished to Patmos - the death island of Rome
19 located off the Turkish coast in the Aegean Sea.

20
21

THE PICTURE OF THE ICON ON PAGE 1, REPRESENTING JOHN THE APOSTLE, WAS PURCHASED BY PASTOR BETZER IN A LITTLE SHOP ON PATMOS SEVERAL YEARS AGO. THE ICONS, FEATURED IN GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCHES, WERE A GREAT HELP TO EARLY CHRISTIANS WHO COULD NOT READ TO UNDERSTAND THE SCRIPTURES BY USE OF PICTURES. MANY OF THE ANCIENT ICONS ARE WORTH A FORTUNE.

22
23 Roman Emperor Domitian ruled the empire from AD 81-96. He was known chiefly for
24 the reign of terror under which prominent members of the Senate lived during his last
25 years. He was the second son of Emperor Vespasian. He despised Christianity and
26 determined to destroy it within his empire, chiefly by either executing or exiling its
27 leaders - such as John. The great old Apostle - now 90 or so - was sent to the Isle of
28 Patmos, off the Turkish coast in the Aegean Sea. He was sent there to die. However,
29 the emperor died first. He was assassinated by a man named Stephanus - although once
30 the first knife blow was struck seven further wounds finished him off. Thus, John was
31 sent back home to his church in Ephesus, Turkey.

32
33 While on Patmos, John had a visit from Jesus Himself. Rev. 1:9-20 [The Message]
34 **I, John, with you all the way in the trial and the Kingdom and the passion of**
35 **patience in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of God's Word, the**

1 witness of Jesus. [10] It was Sunday and I was in the Spirit, praying. I heard a loud
2 voice behind me, trumpet-clear and piercing: [11] "Write what you see into a book.
3 Send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis,
4 Philadelphia, Laodicea." [12] I turned and saw the voice.

5 I saw a gold menorah
6 with seven branches,
7 [13] And in the center, the Son of Man,
8 in a robe and gold breastplate,
9 [14] hair a blizzard of white,
10 Eyes pouring fire-blaze,
11 [15] both feet furnace-fired bronze,
12 His voice a cataract,
13 [16] right hand holding the Seven Stars,
14 His mouth a sharp-biting sword,
15 his face a perigee sun.

16 [17] I saw this and fainted dead at his feet. His right hand pulled me upright, his
17 voice reassured me:

18 "Don't fear: I am First, I am Last, [18] I'm Alive. I died, but I came to life, and
19 my life is now forever. See these keys in my hand? They open and lock Death's
20 doors, they open and lock Hell's gates. [19] Now write down everything you see:
21 things that are, things about to be. [20] The Seven Stars you saw in my right hand
22 and the seven-branched gold menorah—do you want to know what's behind them?
23 The Seven Stars are the Angels of the seven churches; the menorah's seven branches
24 are the seven churches."

25
26 It has always seemed strange to me that we never - or seldom - see pictures of Jesus
27 portrayed like this. Most pictures make Him really quite feminine; however, He is
28 anything but that! Jesus, knowing of course that John would be released back to the
29 ministry in Ephesus, had some messages for John to carry to the world. And apparently
30 John had was a bishop or superintendent over other churches in that area: Ephesus,
31 Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. You can read the
32 message Jesus had for each church in Revelation chapters two and three. But Jesus also
33 had a message for all of us - the revealing of the end time. John wrote the book of
34 Revelation (either in his cave home on Patmos or later back in Ephesus) as well as I, II
35 and III John.

36
37 But it is John's glorious GOSPEL that occupies our time here today. I want to spend
38 some time in the very first chapter of John, which I believe is the most incredible message
39 ever given to mankind.
40

1 John 1:1-18 New American Standard

2 **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was**
3 **God. [2] He was in the beginning with God. [3] All things came into being by Him,**
4 **and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. [4] In Him**
5 **was life, and the life was the light of men. [5] And the light shines in the darkness,**
6 **and the darkness did not comprehend it.**

7 **[6] There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. (Not the apostle, but**
8 **John the Baptist) [7] He came for a witness, that he might bear witness of the light,**
9 **that all might believe through him. [8] He was not the light, but came that he might**
10 **bear witness of the light.**

11 **[9] There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.**
12 **[10] He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did**
13 **not know Him. [11] He came to His own, and those who were His own did not**
14 **receive Him. [12] But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become**
15 **children of God, even to those who believe in His name, [13] who were born not of**
16 **blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.**

17 **[14] And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory,**
18 **glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. [15] John (The**
19 **Baptist) bore witness of Him, and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said,**
20 **'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.' "** [16]
21 **For of His fulness we have all received, and grace upon grace. [17] For the Law was**
22 **given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. [18] No**
23 **man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the**
24 **Father, He has explained Him.**

25
26 Here was John's approach in this glorious book: Up until this time, almost every
27 follower of Jesus was a Jew. The church had begun in Jerusalem. Jesus Himself was a
28 Jew. The early believers used Jewish ways of expression, which was fine at the
29 beginning - but would not suffice with the avalanche of Greeks everywhere. By the time
30 Christianity arrived in Rome, there may have been a hundred thousand Greeks for every
31 Christian who was a Jew. So the Holy Spirit used John to use different means of
32 expression to reach the Greek mind. This is still our problem: How do we express
33 Christianity today to a world that hasn't the foggiest idea what we're talking about?
34

35 E. J. Goodspeed observed: *"Must a Greek who was interested in Christianity be routed*
36 *through the Jewish ideas and through Jewish ways of thinking - or could some new*
37 *approach be found which would speak out of his background to his mind and heart?"*
38

39 Enter John! He lived in a Greek society (Ephesus) and dealt mainly with Greeks to
40 whom Jewish ideas were strange. How could John find a way to reach them effectively?

1 John had a problem: The Jews (Hebrews) used a limited vocabulary - perhaps as few as
2 10,000 words. But the Greeks had a vocabulary then of over 200,000 words. But John
3 knew that both Jew and Greek were fascinated by the concept of THE WORD.
4

5 Now hear this: The Greek term for "Word" is LOGOS. "Logos" means not only
6 "word," but also "reason." Early Greeks believed the cosmos was a mess - a fluctuating
7 mass of change. For example: "You cannot step twice into the same river. You step in
8 once and step out; but when you step in again, the water has changed. It's not the same."
9

10 Chaos! Complete chaos! The one thing that causes the world to make sense is LOGOS
11 - the principle of order under which a world can exist. The universe had a grand design:
12 THE MIND OF GOD - WHICH WAS LOGOS. So note how John begins his amazing
13 story of the Christ: "In the beginning was the Word - the Logos - the Reason of God
14 And the Logos came to this world in human flesh. That 'logos' was Jesus, the Christ of
15 God, who is the power of God which created the world in the first place, and the reason
16 which sustains it. John's opening lines are powerful! IF YOU WANT TO KNOW
17 GOD....LEARN OF JESUS.
18

19 CHRIST'S HUMANITY 20

21 But John would not only talk of "the reason of God or divinity - this Jesus," he also taught
22 about the HUMANITY of Jesus as well. I have taught before that Jesus was God and
23 man. That does not mean He was 50% man and 50% God (that's the mythical Greek
24 myth man Pan). No - Jesus was 100% God and 100% man. His humanity showed up
25 many times: He was ANGRY at those who bought and sold in the Temple courts (Jn
26 2:15); He was physically weary as He sat by the well in Samaria (4:6); His disciples
27 offered Him food in the way in which they would offer it to any hungry human (4:13);
28 Jesus had sympathy for those who were hungry and those who were afraid (6:5 and 20);
29 Jesus knew grief and He wept tears as any grief-stricken man might do (11:33 and 35:38);
30 in His human agony, Jesus cried out from the cross through parched lips, "I thirst!"
31

32 CHRIST'S DIVINITY 33

34 But John also wrote about the PRE-EXISTENCE of Jesus (8:58: "Before Abraham was, I
35 am"); John writes of the glory which Jesus enjoyed with the Father long before the
36 world was ever created (17:5). Often John wrote of "Jesus coming down from Heaven"
37 (6:33-38). How John gloried in the omniscience (all power) of Jesus: He knew the
38 record of the woman of Samaria (4:16, 17); He knew how long the man beside the
39 healing pool had been ill (5:6). He knew that Judas would betray Him long before the
40 foul deed was even conceived 6:61-64). And He knew of the death of Lazarus before

1 He was even told about it (11:14).

2
3 **WHY DID JOHN WRITE HIS GOSPEL? LIFE!**

4
5 Chapter 20, verse 31 gives us 'why': **....so that men might believe that Jesus is the**
6 **Christ, the Son of God, and believing might have life through His Name.**

7
8 In John 10:10 it is Jesus' claim that He came to give humanity ABUNDANT LIFE.
9 In John 14:6 Jesus stated emphatically that He is the way, the truth and THE LIFE.
10 In this Gospel, the Greek word for life is *zoe* and it occurs over 35 times and the verb to
11 live - or to have life (*zen*) occurs another 15 times.

12
13 **John 3:16 KJV For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that**
14 **whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.**

15
16 What is "life?" It is the opposite of destruction, condemnation and death. William
17 Barclay properly points out in his commentary (JOHN / Westminster) that "the man who
18 lives a Christ-less life exists but he does not know what life is. Jesus is the only One
19 Who can make life worth the living."

20
21 **Eternal Life**

22
23 Of course, eternal life means going on forever, without end. But it is so much more than
24 that. **THERE MUST BE A QUALITY OF LIFE.** Life is not desirable without quality.
25 The adjective John uses to define life is the Greek word "aionios" which really means
26 "God-life." So eternal life is that life which God lives.

27
28 **Light**

29
30 This word is used by John 21 times. Jesus is "the Light of men." Twice Jesus referred
31 to Himself as "the Light of the world."

32
33 I love this early passage regarding "light:" Genesis 1:3 **And God said, Let there be**
34 **light: and there was light.** The "light" chased away all those ingredients of the chaos
35 that preceded it. Even so, Jesus is the Light Who ends the chaos and darkness in our
36 lives.

37
38 The light which Jesus is has always been a light showing direction or pathway. John 1:5
39 **And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.**

1 I am a night prowler in our home. The lights in the house are out; however, I can
2 navigate the rooms because of one tiny little nightlight plugged into a corner outlet.
3 Jesus becomes our "light in the night." John 8:12 **Then spake Jesus again unto**
4 **them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in**
5 **darkness, but shall have the light of life.**

6 7 JESUS' FIRST KNOWN PUBLIC MIRACLE

8
9 John 2:1-11

10 **Three days later there was a wedding in the village of Cana in Galilee. Jesus'**
11 **mother was there. [2] Jesus and his disciples were guests also. [3] When they started**
12 **running low on wine at the wedding banquet, Jesus' mother told him, "They're just**
13 **about out of wine."**

14 **[4] Jesus said, "Is that any of our business, Mother—yours or mine? This isn't my**
15 **time. Don't push me."**

16 **[5] She went ahead anyway, telling the servants, "Whatever he tells you, do it."**

17 **[6] Six stoneware water pots were there, used by the Jews for ritual washings.**
18 **Each held twenty to thirty gallons. [7] Jesus ordered the servants, "Fill the pots with**
19 **water." And they filled them to the brim.**

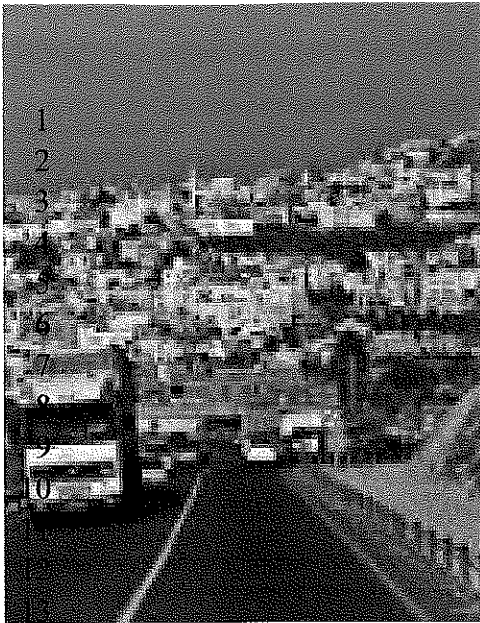
20 **[8] "Now fill your pitchers and take them to the host," Jesus said, and they did.**

21 **[9] When the host tasted the water that had become wine (he didn't know what**
22 **had just happened but the servants, of course, knew), he called out to the**
23 **bridegroom, [10] "Everybody I know begins with their finest wines and after the**
24 **guests have had their fill brings in the cheap stuff. But you've saved the best till**
25 **now!"**

26 **[11] This act in Cana of Galilee was the first sign Jesus gave, the first glimpse of**
27 **his glory. And his disciples believed in him.**

28
29 On then next page, page 8, you will find a small picture in the upper left corner of the
30 road leading north from Nazareth to Cana, about five miles from one village to the other.
31 This is the very road Jesus would have taken, along with His mother Mary and others, to
32 the wedding in Cana (although it would not have been this paved highway, obviously, but
33 a hard-packed road of dirt and stone).

34
35 I have ridden down this steep hill dozens of times through the years, actually performing a
36 wedding in the little church built over this biblical site of the wedding. According to the
37 scriptures above, the six stone water pots held between 120-180 gallons of water.
38 According to the size of the wedding site, I surmise that perhaps fifty guests were there.
39 Jesus would have provided somewhere around three or four gallons of wine - per guest!
40 Perhaps He said, "That should hold 'em."



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It is interesting to note that Mary is mentioned here without Joseph. He apparently had passed away. Between the time of his passing and Jesus' entrance into public ministry, He apparently stayed at home and cared for His mother until his brothers and sisters were able to look after Mary and themselves.

This wedding was a "big deal" in those days. I have attended such weddings in Israel - usually at night after a feast. Following the ceremony, the couple would be taken to their home. In the darkness, they would be escorted through the village streets with the light of torches and a canopy over their heads. The sociology of that day indicated there were very few, if any, honeymoons for ordinary folks. They stayed at home and for seven days kept open house for well-wishers.

The couple was treated as royalty. In a society where there was much poverty and back-breaking work, this week of festivity and joy was one of the great pleasures of life. Small wonder Jesus chose the occasion to perform His first public miracle.

Nicodemus by Night

John 3:1-6 KJV

There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: [2] The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. [3] Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. [4] Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? [5] Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. [6] That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Nicodemus was a well-to-do Pharisee (there were 6,000 of them, a brotherhood entered into by taking a pledge in front of witnesses that they would spend all their lives observing every detail of the scribal law. They passionately believed the "law" was the first five books of the Old Testament - the Pentateuch, or Torah. They were the separated ones." Nicodemus also belonged to the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling council of 70.

1 He was obviously impressed with the miracles of Jesus. But our Lord responded that it
2 was not the signs and wonders that mattered so much as the change in a person's inner
3 life upon encountering Christ that could be described best as "the new birth."
4

5 This phrase, "born again" or "rebirth" runs through all of the New Testament.
6 (Following verses from KJV)

7 1 Peter 1:3 **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which**
8 **according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the**
9 **resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,**

10 1 Peter 1:22-23 **Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the**
11 **Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure**
12 **heart fervently: [23] Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible,**
13 **by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.**

14 James 1:18 **Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a**
15 **kind of firstfruits of his creatures.**

16 Titus 3:5 **Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his**
17 **mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;**

18 2 Cor. 5:17 **Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are**
19 **passed away; behold, all things are become new.**

20 Galatians 6:15 **For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor**
21 **uncircumcision, but a new creature.**
22

The new birth means Christ's life literally coming into your mortal body and soul.
As Paul put it, "I live - yet not I, but Christ IN me, the hope of glory." Galatians

23 The Woman of Samaria

24
25 John 4:1-15 [The Message] **Jesus realized that the Pharisees were keeping count of**
26 **the baptisms that he and John performed (although his disciples, not Jesus, did the**
27 **actual baptizing). They had posted the score that Jesus was ahead, turning him and**
28 **John into rivals in the eyes of the people. [2] [3] So Jesus left the Judean**
29 **countryside and went back to Galilee.**

30 **[4] To get there, he had to pass through Samaria. [5] He came into Sychar, a**
31 **Samaritan village that bordered the field Jacob had given his son Joseph. [6] Jacob's**
32 **well was still there. Jesus, worn out by the trip, sat down at the well. It was noon.**

33 **[7] A woman, a Samaritan, came to draw water. Jesus said, "Would you give me a**
34 **drink of water?" [8] (His disciples had gone to the village to buy food for lunch.)**

35 **[9] The Samaritan woman, taken aback, asked, "How come you, a Jew, are asking**
36 **me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?" (Jews in those days wouldn't be caught dead**

1 talking to Samaritans.)

2 [10] Jesus answered, "If you knew the generosity of God and who I am, you
3 would be asking me for a drink, and I would give you fresh, living water."

4 [11] The woman said, "Sir, you don't even have a bucket to draw with, and this
5 well is deep. So how are you going to get this 'living water'? [12] Are you a better
6 man than our ancestor Jacob, who dug this well and drank from it, he and his sons
7 and livestock, and passed it down to us?"

8 [13] Jesus said, "Everyone who drinks this water will get thirsty again and again.
9 [14] Anyone who drinks the water I give will never thirst—not ever. The water I
10 give will be an artesian spring within, gushing fountains of endless life."

11 [15] The woman said, "Sir, give me this water so I won't ever get thirsty, won't
12 ever have to come back to this well again!"

13
14 Israel is - and was - divided into three main sections: north, Galilee; south, Judea; and in
15 the middle, Samaria. Since the Assyrian invasion of Israel in 720 B.C. racial
16 disharmony had existed between Jews and Samaritans (intermarried to Jews). To save
17 time, rather than traverse north along the Jordan valley Jesus went through Samaria and
18 came to a well. I have been to that well a few times and even drank water from it. The
19 woman Jesus met there had been married five times and was then living with a fellow to
20 whom she was not married. Not only did Jesus give her "living water" and a new life in
21 Him, but He taught on "true worship." John 4:22-24 [The Message] **You worship
22 guessing in the dark; we Jews worship in the clear light of day. God's way of
23 salvation is made available through the Jews. [23] But the time is coming—it has, in
24 fact, come—when what you're called will not matter and where you go to worship
25 will not matter. "It's who you are and the way you live that count before God.
26 Your worship must engage your spirit in the pursuit of truth. That's the kind of
27 people the Father is out looking for: those who are simply and honestly themselves
28 before him in their worship. [24] God is sheer being itself—Spirit. Those who
29 worship him must do it out of their very being, their spirits, their true selves, in
30 adoration."**

31
32 Here are some points to consider:

- 33 • A false worship selects what it wishes to know and understand about God and
34 omits what it does not wish
- 35 • We must learn the entirety of God's Word - not just a few favorite verses
- 36 • A false worship is an ignorant worship. It involves the entire man, including your
37 BRAIN!
- 38 • While a person's spiritual journey often begins emotionally, there comes a time
39 when the experience has to be thought out. 1 Peter 3:15 KJV **But sanctify
40 the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every
41 man that asketh you A reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and
42 fear:**

1 The Gospel of John can be divided into two main parts: Ch 1 - 13: the life of Jesus on
2 this earth. Here we read of miracles, of encounters with friends and foes alike, of
3 teachings and parables. When we get to chapter 13, Jesus has congregated with His 12
4 disciples for the last time on Mount Zion. . It will be "the last supper." During that
5 time, Judas slipped out to meet with Temple authorities to set up his betrayal of his Lord.
6 From this time until the first nail would be pounded through His flesh, Jesus had only
7 about 10-14 hours. When He and his remaining 11 men left the Upper Room later that
8 night, they headed down the stone steps (that still remain) to the bottom on the Kidron
9 Valley (where it intersected with the Pool of Siloam) and then turned sharply left to the
10 north toward the Great Temple. Following the Valley, they walked through the night in
11 the valley to where they headed up the steep hill known as the Mount of Olives, where
12 there was a large olive tree orchard known as the Garden of Gethsemane. From chapter
13 through 17, Jesus taught His disciples and prayed for them.

14

15 I will deal with this dramatic portion of John's Gospel next week. It is truly the drama of
16 the ages.