

Seeing Jesus, Part 2

(as He really is rather
than how we want)



by *Philip C. Strong*

Introduction to Part 2

“Seeing Jesus” clearly, which includes *correctly*- as He manifested Himself rather than how we might want to see Him, is vital to our being “*healed*” (from sin, Matthew 13:15) as well as our ability “*follow*” Him, cf. Luke 9:57-62. So, let’s be sure we understand what it means to “see” Jesus. Consider a couple of quick points on “seeing” from His own words in Matthew 13:13-15:

- One can “see” (behold) without “seeing” (perceiving). We’ve all “seen” something without really being able to “discern/perceive” what it is that we’re “seeing.”
- “Hearing” and “understanding” are the same way. We “hear” (audibly detect sound) from the other room, but immediately ask, “What did you say?” This is a failure to comprehend- we “heard,” but did not “hear.”
- The “*healing*” Jesus provides our souls is dependent upon “*seeing with the eyes,*” “*hearing with the ears,*” “*understanding with the heart,*” and “*turning again*” in response to what we see, hear, and understand about and from Him!

In John 12:20-21, some Greek men wanted to see Jesus. They may have been Greek-speaking Hebrews as in Acts 6:1, or proselyte Gentiles who had heard of Jesus (since they were “*going up to worship at the feast*”), and sought an audience with Him, cf. John 7:35. They approached Philip- perhaps because his name was Greek, or because he was from Bethsaida of Galilee (which was heavily populated with Gentiles), saying, “**Sir, we wish to see Jesus.**” This was not a request for Philip to merely *point out* Jesus to them so they could *get a glimpse of* or *be able to recognize* Him as sight-seeing tourists. They wanted to “see” Jesus in the same sense we want to “see” the doctor when we’re sick; *i.e. to have an audience, meeting, converse, and interact* with Him to receive the benefit of “seeing” Him.

In Part 1 of our study, we examined 7 different *manifestation* or *revelation opportunities* that allowed us to “see” Jesus more clearly. They were examples of His character and nature that were shown through His interaction with ordinary people a lot like you and me. Through these vignettes, we “saw” Jesus through His: **Humility** (through His *birth, life, and death*), **Submission** (to *teachers, parents, Law, authorities, and God*), **Teaching** (by *sermon, parable, miracle, and example*), **Compassion** (toward *ignorance, helplessness, and sin*), **Sacrifices** (of His *time, friends, family, and Himself*), **Exaltation** (at or through His *teaching, baptism, transfiguration, resurrection, and ascension*), and **Salvation** (of *Zaccheus, the disciples, the thief, and anyone*).

Now in Part 2 of our study, it seems fitting to endeavor to “see” Jesus more fully through His own words; what He said about Himself, and how He described or illustrated Himself. Obviously, such a comprehensive and exhausted examination of *everything* Jesus said about Himself would not be conducive to the limitations of our class, so we will limit the scope of our study to the “*I am*” statements as recorded in John. Through these declarative statements, Jesus revealed Himself as: the *Light* of the world; the *Bread* of life; the *Door* of the sheep; the *Good Shepherd*; the *Way, Truth, and Life*; the *True Vine*; and, the *Resurrection* and the *Life*. (Note: this is not the order they appear in the Text, but will be the order in which we examine them.) Surely, to clearly “see” Jesus, we must get into proper focus these “self-portraits” He provided us.

Philip C. Strong

“Seeing Jesus” Part 2

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* Unless otherwise specified, all Scripture references and quotations are from the New American Standard Bible; The Lockman Foundation, 1960-63.

Lesson 1: Seeing Jesus as *The Light of the World*

The gospel of John is different in many ways from the synoptics (Matthew, Mark, and Luke). For instance, it was written about thirty years later, to a different generation, and for somewhat of a different purpose. It was not an “*in consecutive order*” account of the details of Jesus’ movements, actions, and lessons like Luke. Neither was it written to a specific audience like Matthew (written to Jews) or Mark (written to Roman Gentiles). John takes a step back as it were, and using a broad approach, manifests Jesus as the *Word* who was *God from the beginning* rather than as descendant of Adam (Luke) or Abraham (Matthew); as the *Creative Power of Life* itself, and as “*the light (that) shines in darkness,*” 1:1-5,9. Additionally, John deals with a limited number of *signs* (seven, five of which are not otherwise recorded) that manifest Jesus’ power over specific elements, rather than listing 35 (or more) of them, as do the other accounts.

Among John’s other distinct features are the “*I am*” statements of Jesus. These allow us to “see” the Savior through His own words in these declarative statements of *being* and *purpose*. Though we’ll examine all seven of these statements, let’s begin by endeavoring to “see” Jesus as “*the light of the world.*”

There are several passages in which Jesus is manifested as *the light*, 1:1-5,9; 3:19; 8:12; 9:4-5; and 12:35,46. We’ll give the bulk of our attention to the passage in John 8.

I. “Seeing” Jesus as “*the Light of the World,*” John 8:12-20.

A. *The Light as the illumination of life*, v.12. (all references are in John unless otherwise noted)

1. Generally and physically, *light* is necessary to *life*. It was the first creation of God which enabled (in the sense of being *necessary* for them) all others that followed, cf. Gen.1:3-5.
2. As *the light*, Jesus was not created, but was *with* God and *was* God at *the beginning*, 1:1-5.
3. But Jesus was also *the light* that *came into the world* which provided spiritual *life*, 1:4 (cf. Matt.5:14-16), and which *enlightens every man*, 1:9.
4. Jesus is, therefore, the *source* of light that provides *life* itself (physically and spiritually), and the *illumination* (guidance) of it. This *light*, however, is not *salvation* itself, but the *source* from which *salvation* comes (*cause and effect*), cf. 1:12 and Heb.3:4.

B. *The Witness of the Light*, vv.13-14.

1. In v.13, the Pharisees appeal to the Law of Deut.17:6; 19:15, which stated that *evidence* could only be received on the basis of *two witnesses*.
2. Jesus immediately affirmed the *truth* of His statement (of being *the light of the world*) even if it was *singular*, but also added that its *truthfulness* was tied to *knowledge*, v.14.
3. No witness can be heard or received, let alone believed, who has no *knowledge*. Jesus’ *knowledge* was first-hand; it came from *being there!* That is, Jesus states, “*I know where I came from*” (heaven), and “*where I am going*” (heaven again!), cf. 1:1-5. This *witness* can be believed because of *first-hand* knowledge, cf. v.24!

C. *The Judgment of the Light*, vv.15-18.

1. Secondly, Jesus affirms that His *judgment is true* because He was “*not alone in it,*” v.16. He calls *God the Father* as His *second witness* through the assertion that it was “*He who sent Me*” to be the *light of the world*; to give it *life* and *illumine* it!
2. He then appeals back to the same Law (from Deut.17:6; 19:15) to verify the *truth* of His being exactly what He claimed to be on the basis of *His own* and *His Father’s* words, vv.17-18.

D. The Revelation of the Light, vv.19-20.

1. The Pharisees then, surely with a tone of incredulity and sarcasm, ask, “*Where is your father?*” In essence, they are asking Jesus to produce His second witness in order to verify the testimony given, v.19a. It seems as if they might have a *legal leg to stand on*...
2. But then Jesus cuts their apparent *legal leg off at the knee* by stating that they knew “*neither Me nor My Father*” for two simple reasons:
 - a) the *oneness* of Jesus and the Father; cf. 10:30; and,
 - b) the *revelation* of the Father by the Son, cf. 1:18.

II. Conclusions: Take-Home Points

To receive the spiritual *life-giving* benefits of this *light*, we must:

1. *Love* and *prefer it to darkness*, cf. 3:19;
 2. *Comprehend it, believe it to be light*, and *receive it* as such, 1:5,7,12; and finally,
 3. *Follow it*, 8:12.
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Lesson 1: Study/Discussion Questions

1. Since our study will be based in John:
 - a. Who (which one) is the writer?
 - b. When was it written?
 - c. What is its purpose?
 - d. How is it different from the Synoptics (Matthew, Mark, and Luke)?

2. What is the purpose of Jesus' "*I am...*" statements?
3. Why was "*light*" created first? cf. Genesis 1:3ff
4. Since Jesus said, "*I am the light of the world,*" does this mean that He was created? Why, or why not?
5. In what two particular senses is Jesus "*the light of the world*"? Please explain.
6. On what basis did the Pharisees sought to dismiss Jesus' claim of being "*the light of the world*"?
7. What two *witnesses* does Jesus provide to testify to the *truthfulness* of His claim of being "*the light of the world*"?
8. Even if Jesus was the only *witness* to His claim, how does He affirm its veracity?
9. What does Jesus mean in v.19 when He says, "*if you knew Me, you would know My Father also*"?
10. What three things must we do to receive the benefits of "*the light of the world*"?
 - a. 3:19,
 - b. 1:5,7,12,
 - c. 8:12,

Lesson 2: Seeing Jesus as “The Bread of Life”

Jesus’ “I Am” statements in John are integral to properly “seeing” Him. At the time, and since, they were given to help people more clearly “see” *who* He was, *what* His role was/is, and *how* all people should regard and respond to Him. These things have not changed. We still need to “see” Him in these same ways.

I. “Seeing” Jesus as “*the Bread of Life*,” John 6:1-59

A. Context: Setting the Table

Jesus’ statements of being “*the bread of life*” in vv.35,48, and “*the living bread*” of v.51, must be taken in context to even begin to fully digest the rich nutrients of their meaning. So, let’s begin with a few pertinent details from the overall story.

1. Jesus fed *the multitude* of well over 5,000 the day before with *five barley loaves and two fish*, vv.1-13. From this miracle the people concluded that He was “*the Prophet who is come into the world*,” v.14.
2. However, their intentions regarding Him were misguided, and He *withdrew* from them, vv.14-15.
3. The next day, they found Him on the other side of the sea, and wondered how He had gotten there (He *walked across the sea*), vv.22-25.
4. He then accused them of being interested in Him for purely *physical reasons*- i.e. *loaves*, v.26.
5. He also urged them toward more *spiritual motivations and interests* through true *belief in Him*, vv.27-29.
6. They asked for a *sign* that they might see and *believe*, v.30. This request manifests their insincerity, as well as the accuracy of His charge of purely *physically oriented motivations and perspectives*, since they had already been given a clear *sign* the day before with *physical bread and fish!* Next, they attempted to further goad Him into providing another meal by referring back to the *manna from heaven* that their *fathers* were provided and *ate*, v.31.
7. Jesus, again, attempts to make a distinction between the *physical bread* they wanted, and the *spiritual bread* they needed, vv.32-33. But there is something subtle in their request and Jesus’ reply that we also need to note.
 - a. Their *fathers* were given bread *from heaven*, but they had to *work* to get it, *trust* God for its provision tomorrow, and *repeat the process every day* (of gathering and preparing it), cf. Ex.16.
 - b. Jesus’ audience had also been given *bread from heaven*. But this time, it was bread: for which *they did not work*, either in gathering or preparing it; and, *this bread did not perish daily*, v.35! They seemed to relish *this kind of bread from heaven*, though surely for the wrong reason(s), and without truly understanding its nature or value, v.34.
 - c. They associated the *previous bread* with *Moses*, and this *new freer bread* with Jesus, rather than God as the *source* of both cp. vv.31-33. Obviously, they were still thinking in purely *physical terms*.
8. But the *true bread*, the *bread of life* to which Jesus referred, did have requirements attached:

- a. Recipients would have to *come to Jesus*, fully accepting Him as the *Messiah* and *God in the flesh* rather than just a *Prophet* and *provider* (like Moses), vv.35a,36; and,
 - b. They would have to *believe in Jesus*- fully trusting in Him enough to comply with His words by obedience, vv.35b,36; 14:15. These two requirements Jesus further explains in vv.38-40.
9. These things they had not been willing to *believe* or *do*, and were obviously yet unwilling, vv.41-42.
 10. Jesus then attempted yet again to get them to “see” Him as *the bread of life* in vv.43-59. In order to do so, and to receive the benefits of such:
 - a. They would have to change their perception of His *origin*, v.41.
 - b. This would, in turn, enable them to be *drawn* to Him (v.44) by *hearing, learning, being taught*; and then *coming* to Him (v.45) that they might truly see Him as “*the bread of life*,” vv.46-48!

B. Jesus as *the Bread of Life*

Now with the table fully set through understanding the context, “seeing” (and consuming!) Jesus as “*the bread of life*” is hopefully made easier.

1. Jesus is the *true bread* (as opposed to only *physical manna*), v.32. And yet, how often *would-be followers* ultimately reject Him because their *physical life* and its *provisions* are not as they desire and expect, cf. Matt.10:34-39.
2. As *the bread of life*, Jesus quenches the *hunger* of man’s *spirit* rather than his stomach, v.35. Jesus’ audience on this occasion rejected Him (cf. vv.60ff) because were *drawn to Him* by *physical* rather than *spiritual* motivations, cp.vv.26-27 with vv.44-45. If we are *drawn to the bread of life* by our own *physical* motivations, or through *physical/carnal* means (cf. 1Cor.3:1-3; 1Tim.6:5ff), we, too, will likely *fail to understand* (v.52), *grumble about Him* (v.41), and ultimately *withdraw* from and refuse to *walk with Him* (v.66).
3. Jesus, *the bread of life*, is the basis of our *access to God* (vv.53-58; cf.14:6), and the *sustenance* our *relationship* with Him, vv.35-38. Jesus equated *doing the will of Him who sent Me*, and *accomplishing His work*, to *food/bread*, v.38; 4:31-34. Obviously, *the bread of life* sustains our spiritual lives us in this way also.
4. The *bread of life* provides *security* now and *resurrection* later, vv.37,39-40. *Security* must be maintained through *continually* feasting on *the bread of life*, cf. 14:15 and Jude 21; and in such case, we have the *assurance* of v.37. Though all will be *resurrected*, 5:28-29, but only those *drawn to* and *sustained* by Jesus as *the bread of life* will be resurrected to reward, vv.39-40, 47-51.
5. The *bread of life* allows one to *see* God, and be *drawn* to Him, vv.44-46. John earlier expressed the truth that Jesus *explained* that which “*no man has seen*,” cf.1:18. Further, Jesus told Philip that those who see Him also see *the Father*, cf. 14:6-9. Jesus, as *the bread of life*, allows us to “see” (know by *experience with*) God.
6. Is the *nutrient* that provides *eternal life*, vv.47-51. The Corinthians were *spiritually* “*weak and sick, and a number sleep*” (were *spiritually dead*) because, at least in part, they weren’t getting the *proper nutrition* they needed

through properly *eating the Lord's Supper*, cp. 1Cor.11:20-34. Our *souls* need *the bread of life* to live!

II. Conclusions: Take Home Points

- We must not only “see” Jesus as *the bread of life*, He must be *the bread* (the primary/basic necessity) of our lives.
- If Jesus, as *the bread of life*, is that for which we *long* and with which we are *filled*, then we will be content, and free from worry about *physical* bread, Matt.6:25-33; 1Tim.6:6.
- *Eating the flesh* (and *drinking the blood*) of the *bread of life* is important because it is a proclamation of *who* He is, and *what* He has and will do, v.54 and 1Cor.11:26.

Lesson 2: Study/Discussion Questions

1. What motivated the Jews (of vv.1-14) to attempt *taking Jesus by force to make Him king* (v.15)?
2. What did His audience obviously fail to “see” when they asked Jesus for “*a sign, that we may see, and believe in you*” (cf. v.30)?
3. How was *manna in the wilderness* **like** and **unlike** *the bread from heaven* (Jesus as *the bread of life*)?
4. What was the stated purpose of Jesus? How does this differ from the purpose of His audience in this chapter?

5. As *the bread of life*, what *hunger* of man does He satiate?

6. What determines who is included/excluded from “*All that the Father gives Me*” (v.37)?

7. If *all* (both *good* and *evil*) will be *resurrected* as 5:28-29 declares, why does v.40 speak only of those who *behold* and *believe* in Jesus being *raised*?

8. What, specifically, caused the *grumbling* of v.41? Why?

9. From v.40, how does the Father *draw* us to Himself?

10. How does one *eat* the *bread of life* as described in v.51?

Lesson 3: Seeing Jesus as “The Door”

We’ve been endeavoring to “see” Jesus as He is (cf. John 12:21; Matt.13:14ff), rather than just as we might want Him to be in this series of lessons. We’ve looked to His *humility, submission, teaching, compassion, sacrifices, exaltations, and salvation* to do so. But we’ve also begun to consider the express statements He made about Himself in this effort; specifically, the “*I am*” statements as recorded in John. In this installment, we’ll consider His declarative statement, “*I am the door of the sheep*” from John 10:1-10.

Many, if not most, of Jesus’ figurative illustrations are specific to their context. This one certainly seems to be also. So, let’s spend a moment considering the specific context that led to it.

I. “Seeing” Jesus as “the Door”

A. Context, John 9:1-41

1. Vv.1-7, Jesus has healed a man that was blind from birth.
2. Vv.8-12, The people who witnessed the results discussed among themselves whether or not the man healed was the one they previously had known.
3. Vv.13-23, When the now “seeing” man was brought to those who should have rejoiced both at his healing as well as the implications of it (that the Messiah had come, cf. 2:11; Matt.11:2-6), they sought to discredit the evidence and deny its conclusions.
4. Vv.24-34, The result was that they ultimately, after trying to get the man to bear false witness, put him out of the synagogue.
5. Vv.35-39, Jesus, after hearing about the expulsion, found him and explained both *who* He was and *why* He had come into the world.
6. V.40, Some of the Pharisees heard the explanation and felt that the words of Jesus regarding “*the blind*” were being aimed at them and the other Pharisees. This conclusion was obviously correct since they had rejected not only His teaching, but also the evidence before them of His authority. Such surely prompted what was incredulously intended to be a rhetorical question, “*We are not blind too, are we?*”
7. V.41, The Lord’s answer reveals both their “*willful sin*” (Heb.10:26), and blatant *self-righteousness* (Luke 18:9ff).

Jesus then proceeds, with the parable which follows in chapter 10, to demonstrate that the Pharisees, because of their rejection of Him and their attitude/activity toward to the man born blind, were refusing to enter “*the door*” God graciously offered to *sight, salvation, and safety*. In an ironic twist, it was they, because of their rejections and refusals, who could not see, and thus refused to be *healed!*

B. The basic parable, John 10:1-10

Parables use *earthly stories* centered on everyday life with which everyone was familiar to teach *spiritual truth*. Thus, the individual essential *elements* of the *earthly story* are representative of *spiritual entities* and *activities* that are necessary to the particular *spiritual truth* being revealed. So...

1. **Sheep** represent people; the objective that Jesus Christ came to *shelter*,

save, and secure, cf. 3:17; 9:39,41; 10:8-10;

2. The **door** is obviously Jesus Himself, cf. v.7,9;
3. The **doorkeeper** (or *porter*) is perhaps only part of the structure of the story since no further mention is made of him. But if any association is intended, it would have to be God the Father, the *ultimate possessor* of the fold, cf. v.29;
4. The **fold** (or *sheepfold*) would be the place wherein the *door* would provide shelter and safety from the evils without; i.e. *the church*, Eph.4:14-16; and,
5. **Thieves and robbers** would, from the preceding context, signify specifically the Pharisees themselves, cf. v.20; or more generally anyone who would *steal, kill, or destroy* the flock, vv.8,10; cf. Matt.24:23-24; 2John 9-10; 3John 9-11.

C. Seeing Jesus as “the door”

Since our purpose for looking at this particular text is not the parable itself, but the specific statements that Jesus made identifying Himself as “the door” within it, let’s consider a few points to that end:

1. Jesus, as *the door*, provides **access** to God’s eternal blessings and protection (salvation), v.7. However, it also important to realize that He is the only door through which such can be attained, Acts 4:12!
2. Jesus, as *the door*, is also **exclusive**, vv.1,8. Doors both allow and prevent access. The same door that allowed *access* to Noah and his family into the ark (based on their obedient faith), also *excluded* those who disbelieved and were disobedient, cf. Gen.7:16. Jesus, as *the door*, functions in the same way, cp. Matt.25:10-13.
3. Jesus, as *the door*, provides **protection**, vv.9-10. Those who *enter by the door* are under the protection of *the doorkeeper* and the *fold itself*, cf. Rom.8:31-39.
4. Jesus, as *the door*, must be **actively entered** to access the blessings and benefits of salvation and protection in the *sheepfold*. Thus, one must *hear, follow, enter, and remain* in it, vv.3-5. These blessings and protections are not unilateral. They require not only acquiescence, but also activity and adherence. We must, therefore, be willing to *recognize and hear, follow, enter, and remain*. Jesus is *the door*, not an *escalator* or *chute*; willingness to *actively enter* is required!

II. Conclusions: Take Home Points

- A. **We must not only “see” Jesus as *the door*, but *our door*.** Personalize the parable. He is not just *the* access to *salvation, shelter, and security*, He is *my/your* access to the same!
- B. **Though *sheep*, we must be *active* rather than *passive* to receive the benefits of Jesus as “*the door*.”** Though someone else may operate them (the *doorkeeper/porter*), *doors* must be *entered* to provide their benefit. From the story, we must realize that *the sheep* have the responsibility to *listen* (hearken), *recognize* (acknowledge ownership), and *follow* (operate under directions of) the *shepherd*, v.3.
- C. **The security of *the door* is afforded to those willing to stay *within its confines*.** Though the *door’s* protects against the purpose of the *thief* or *robber*

(or wolf!) is to *steal, kill, and destroy*, it only does so for those willing to stay behind it in the *sheepfold*, v.10; cf. Jude 21.

Lesson 3: Study/Discussion Questions

1. What is the connection between the events of John 9 and Jesus as *the door* in 10:1-10?
2. Since a *parable* is an *earthly story with a heavenly meaning*, please identify and explain how each of the following *physical* entities represent *spiritual* ones:
 - a. *Sheep*-
 - b. *Doorkeeper/Porter* (if applicable)-
 - c. *Fold/Sheepfold*-
 - d. *Thieves/Robbers*-
3. How, or in what ways, should we “see” Jesus as *the door* in parable?
4. How, or in what ways, must we “see” Jesus as *our door*?

Lesson 4: Seeing Jesus as “The Good Shepherd”

We, as well as all peoples, need to “see” Jesus as He is (cf. John 12:21; Matt.13:14ff), rather than just as we might want Him to be. To that end, in the lessons of Part 1 we carefully examined His *humility, submission, teaching, compassion, sacrifices, exaltations, and salvation*. Subsequently, in Part 2 we’ve also begun to consider the express statements He made about Himself; specifically, the “*I am*” statements as recorded in John (*light of the world, bread of life, and the door of the sheepfold*). In this lesson we’ll continue our efforts to better “see” Jesus by considering His declarative statement, “*I am the good Shepherd*” from John 10:1-10.

I. “Seeing” Jesus as “*the Good Shepherd*,” John 9:1 – 10:30

A. Context: The *Prelude* to the Parable

Many, if not most, parables are specific to their context. This one certainly fits into that category. So, let’s spend a moment considering the specific context that led to it from John 9.

1. Vv.1-7, Jesus has healed a man born blind.
2. Vv.8-12, The people who witnessed the results discussed among themselves whether the man healed was the one they previously had known.
3. Vv.13-23, When the healed man was brought to those who should have rejoiced both at his healing and the implications of it (that the Messiah was come), they rejected the conclusions of what they saw.
4. Vv.24-34, The result was that they ultimately, after trying to get the man to bear false witness, put him out of the synagogue. In so doing, they functioned as “a door”!
5. Vv.35-39, After hearing about the expulsion, Jesus found the formerly blind man and explained who He was and why He had come into the world to him.
6. V.40, One of the Pharisees heard the explanation, and felt that the words of Jesus regarding “*the blind*” were being aimed at him and the other Pharisees. This conclusion was obviously correct since they had rejected not only Jesus’ teaching, but also the evidence before them of His authority. These things prompted his question, “*We are not blind too, are we?*”
7. V.41, The Lord’s answer reveals both their “*willful sin*” (Heb.10:26) and blatant *self-righteousness* (Luke 18:9ff).

Jesus then proceeds, with the parable which follows in chapter 10, to demonstrate that the Pharisees, because of their rejection of Him and attitude/activity toward to the man born blind, were refusing to enter “*the door*” God graciously offered to salvation and safety. In an ironic twist, it was they, because of their rejection and refusal, who not could not see; and even refused to be healed! Now, reread John 10:1-10 with these contextual insights in view.

B. The basic parable, 10:1-10 (copied from the previous lesson for review here)

1. The ***sheep***- the people; the objective that Jesus came to save, vv.3-5; 3:17;
2. The ***door***- obviously Jesus Himself, cf. vv.7,9;
3. The ***doorkeeper*** (or *porter*)- perhaps only part of the structure of the story since no further mention is made of him; otherwise, it would have to be God the Father, the *ultimate possessor* of the fold, cf. v.29;

4. The **fold-** (or *sheepfold*)- the place of shelter and safety from the evils without; i.e. *the church*, vv.1,16; Eph.4:16; and,
5. The **thieves and robbers** - specifically, the Pharisees themselves, cf. v.20, or more generally anyone who would distort, pervert, or otherwise mislead the flock, Matt.24:23-24; 2John 9-10; 3John 9-11.

C. The addendum to the parable, 10:11-18

Jesus does something somewhat unique with this parable. He mixes in another parable, or at least another distinct application point, within the basic structure of this one. He not only presents Himself as *the door* of the *sheepfold*, but also as *the good shepherd* of the *sheep*. This makes it kind of a parable within a parable; a two-for-one! He is speaking to the same audience, and uses the same basic structure (the *earthly story* part) to make another application (the *heavenly meaning* part) to help them, and us, “see” Him more clearly.

1. Characteristics of the *Good Shepherd*:
 - a. Provides Abundant Life, v.10b;
 - b. Self-Sacrifice, vv.11,15b,17-18;
 - c. Intimate Knowledge, vv.14-15; and,
 - d. Not Exclusive- has *Other Sheep*, v.16 (*Gentiles* rather than *denominations* as some claim, cf. 3:16; 4:39-42; 6:32-33,40,44-45; Isa.56:8; Mic.4:1-5).
2. Contrasted Characteristics of the *Thief* and *Hireling*:
 - a. The *thief* comes only to *steal, kill, and destroy*, v.10;
 - b. The *hireling* is not a *shepherd*, (and in many ways is like the *thief*, the very opposite of the *good shepherd*), vv.12a; likewise,
 - c. Does not *own* the sheep; thus, has no *vested interest* (not only does not *know* the sheep, does not *care* for them either), v.12b; and,
 - d. Is, therefore, *cowardly* and concerned only with *self-preservation* (the opposite of *self-sacrificing*), vv.12c,13. They are the Pharisees of chp.9!

D. Seeing Jesus as “*the Good Shepherd*”- Reactions and Subsequent Teaching, 10:19-30

1. Division resulted between those able to “see” Jesus, and those who remained *blind*, vv.19-21 (remember the setting from 9:1-41!).
(There may be a time-gap of roughly two months between v.21 and v.22. But regardless of how much time may or may not have lapsed, *contextually* the discussion and events that follow are linked to those previous.)
2. Those *not of My sheep* (comparable to *the goats* of Matt.25:33ff):
 - b. *Do not “see,”* vv.24-25;
 - c. *Do not believe* what they “see” because they don’t want to be *sheep*, v.26; cf. 9:1-41; and thus,
 - d. Will not *hear, listen, or follow* the Shepherd to *abundant life*.
3. By contrast, *the sheep*:

- a. *Hear, recognize (or see), listen to, and follow* the Shepherd to *abundant life*, cf. vv.3-4,27-28a; and thus,
- b. Have the *eternal provision/protection* of a *self-sacrificing Shepherd*, vv.28b-29.

II. Conclusions: Take-Home Points

- A. The **primary point** of this parable (or these parables) is toward the **Pharisees/Jewish leaders to whom Jesus spoke**. They are the *blind*, the *hirelings* and *thieves*. They are not *the sheep*, but rather *steal, kill, destroy, or abandon* them. Those with similar motives and activities today become their equivalents.
- B. **We must want to be sheep of the Good Shepherd**. Many do not. They don't want to be *sheep* that *see, know, hear, and follow* Jesus. Or, they want to be the *door* or *shepherd* themselves (like the presuming Pharisees did).
- C. To “see” Jesus as **the Good Shepherd** we must recognize and remember His: **Intent** (provide *abundant life*); **Self-Sacrifice** (for *the sheep*); **Knowledge and Possession** (of those who are *His own*); and, **Accessibility** (to all who will truly *hear and follow*).

Lesson 3: Study/Discussion Questions

1. What is the contextual connection between the events of chp.9 and the parables of *The Door* and *The Good Shepherd* in chp.10?

2. How did the Pharisees act:
 - a. As a *door* to the formerly blind man?

 - b. As a *shepherd* to the formerly blind man?

3. How did Jesus act:
 - a. As *the Door* to the formerly blind man?

b. As *the Good Shepherd* to the formerly blind man?

4. What do you think are the applications for us today of:

a. Jesus as *the Door*?

b. Jesus as *the Good Shepherd*?

Lesson 5: Seeing Jesus as “The Way, the Truth, and the Life”

We’ve been attempting to “see” Jesus as He was/is (based on John 12:21 and Matt.13:14) rather than as we might *want* to see Him in this series. Previously in Part 1, we endeavored to “see” Him more clearly through examples of His *humility, submission, teaching, compassion, sacrifices, exaltations, and salvation*. But in Part 2, we’ve also considered the express statements He made about Himself- specifically, the “*I am*” statements as recorded in John. In this lesson, we’ll consider His declarative statement, “*I am the way, and the truth, and the life*” from John 14:1-6.

I. “Seeing” Jesus as “The Way, the Truth, and the Life,” John 14:1-6

A. The Setting

1. This is the betrayal night (starting at 13:1).
2. Jesus is addressing His disciples for the last time prior to His betrayal, trials, crucifixion, and resurrection.
3. Along with the Sermon on the Mount, this is one of His longest recorded discourses. It spans 13:1 through 17:26.

B. The Context

1. Context is always critical to interpretation, and often dictates it. This text of John 14:1-6 fits into both categories.
2. In these last hours spent with His disciples, Jesus provides critical information to *them* and *us* to enable truly “seeing” and “knowing” Him. Apparently from His words here, some of them did not yet clearly “see” or “know” Him, cf. vv.7-10. Perhaps they could not even do so at this time, at least until after His death, burial, and resurrection, cp.16:12 with Luke 24:44-49 and Acts 1:6-11.
3. Note what has just happened in chp.13 leading up to our text:
 - a. He has *eaten Passover* with them, vv.1-2; but has also instituted a new *memorial* with words that are both unfamiliar and uncomfortable, cf. Matt.26:26-29;
 - b. He has *washed their feet*, vv.3-17;
 - c. He has revealed that *one of them would betray Him*, vv.18-27; but they did not know what He meant, vv.28-30; and perhaps most importantly,
 - d. He told them He was *going away*, and that *could not follow at that time*, but *later*, vv.31-38.
 - e. Surely, this context sheds much light on our text of 14:1-6! Jesus would be: *the way* to the place He went to prepare for them, 14:1-2; *the truth* that He would come again for them, 14:3a; and *the life* that they would receive there from and in Him, 14:3b.
4. Let’s illustrate the importance of context toward interpretation with a question regarding “*the way*.” Is Jesus referring to *the way* into *the church* (as some claim), or *heaven*? As *the way* clearly refers to the *path* or *direction* to a *certain place*, identification of that *place* becomes relative and important to our understanding of exactly how He is *the way* to it. So, does *the way* refer to *the church* or *heaven*? Please consider the following in these regards:
 - a. He equates *the place* to His *Father’s house*, v.2;

- b. If *the way* is to *heaven*, then He is *going there* to *prepare places* for His disciples within it, v.2b;
- c. But if *the way* is to *the church* (the *kingdom of God on earth*), then He is going to *prepare places* for His disciples in a *house* that does not yet exist, cf. Matt.16:18.
- d. When Jesus left the earth, He went to *heaven*, not the *church*, Acts 1:9-11.
- e. Therefore, Jesus is describing Himself, in the context of our text at least, as *the way* to *heaven*. John 13:33,36 further supports this interpretation. The disciples *could* and *would* soon enter *the church*, as per Acts 2, but would only “*follow* (Jesus) *later*” into *heaven*.

C. “Seeing” Jesus as “*the way*:”

- 1. Implies singularity- He is the *only way*, Acts 4:12; and,
- 2. Implies access- He is both *the door* and *the way*, 10:7,9; 14:6b;
- 3. This *way* is not always easy, cf. Matt.7:13-14; but it is always available while physical strength prevails.

D. “Seeing” Jesus as “*the truth*;”

- 1. Within Him (as *the truth*) is the embodiment of *all knowledge* essential to be in/on *the way*, 1:17-18; Heb.1:3; Matt.11:27.
- 2. We must “see” Jesus as *the truth* of *who was/is*, vv.7-11; 20:31a; and,
- 3. We must “see” Jesus as *the truth* of His *purpose*, vv.12-17; 10:10b; 20:31b.
- 4. We must “see” Jesus is *the truth* that was *revealed in person* to those who *saw* and *heard* Him in person vv.7-10, as well as *revealed* in Him through *the word* to those of later generations, v.10; cf. 1:1,14; Heb.1:1-3.

E. “Seeing” Jesus as “*the life*:”

- 1. Again, “*the*” implies singularity. There is also *physical life*, obviously. Those who are *born* attain it. But “*the life*” to which Jesus refers is *the spiritual life* entered by being *born again*, 3:3-5.
- 2. Many search for “the meaning of life” in various ways, purposes, and places. It is only found in one *Person*, Jesus Christ. Anything and everything else pales by comparison, and fails to be true *life*, 1:4; 11:25; 1John 5:20!
- 3. This means that Jesus must be “seen” as the *purpose*, *center of existence*, and *sum total* of our lives!

II. Conclusions: Take-Home Points

We, like His disciples long ago, must “see” Jesus as:

- A. “*The Way*”- the *only path* leading to God and heaven;
- B. “*The Truth*”- the personification of all saving truth and knowledge; the *revelation* of God, truth, and knowledge; and,
- C. “*The Life*”- both the *source* and *preserver* (by resurrection) of *eternal life*!

Can you now “see” Jesus, 1John 5:10-12?

Lesson 5: Study/Discussion Questions

1. What is the specific *setting* (time, location, occasion) of John 14:1-6?
2. What seems to be the specific *purpose(s)* Jesus had in mind for His disciples with this part (14:1-6) of the discourse?
3. Is Jesus saying He is “*the way*” to *heaven* or into *the church*? Please explain your answer.
4. How was Jesus “*the way*” for His disciples at that time? Is He “*the way*” for us today any differently than He was for them? Please explain your answer.
5. How was Jesus “*the truth*” for His disciples at that time? Is He “*the truth*” for us today any differently than He was for them? Please explain your answer.
6. How was Jesus “*the life*” for His disciples at that time? Is He “*the life*” for us today any differently than He was for them?

Lesson 6: Seeing Jesus as “The True Vine”

In this study, we’ve been attempting to “see” Jesus as He was/is (based on John 12:21 and Matt.13:14) rather than as we might *want* to see Him. Having examined His *humility, submission, teaching, compassion, sacrifices, exaltations, and salvation* in Part 1 of the series, in Part 2 we’ve been considering the express “*I am*” statements He made as recorded in the Gospel of John (the *Light of the World, Bread of Life, Door, and Good Shepherd, Way, Truth, and Life*). In this lesson, we’ll specifically study His declarative statement, “*I am the true vine*” from John 15:1-8.

I. “Seeing” Jesus as “The True Vine,” John 15:1-8

A. The Setting

1. Jesus is speaking to His disciples on the night of His betrayal (the setting is the same from John 13:1 – 17-26). He has just identified Himself as *the way, the truth, and the life* in 14:1-6; explained His *oneness* with *the Father*, 14:7-12; and promised the coming of *the Helper* after His own departure, 14:13-31.

B. The Context

1. Israel was a type of *vine, planted and tended* by the Almighty, Ps.80:8-13; Isa. 5:1-7; Ezk.19:10-14. So, the imagery Jesus is employing is not new to Jews familiar with these passages. But, now Jesus is identifying Himself as *the true vine* from this *root*, cf. Isa.11:1 (see also Matt.3:10).
2. Also remember that Jesus, on this same occasion and with these same disciples, instituted the Lord’s Supper in which the *fruit of the vine* represented His blood that would soon be shed on the cross for the sins of the world, cf. Matt.26:26-29.

C. The Text

1. V.1, Jesus as the *true vine* has implications:
 - a. The use of such language certainly suggests the presence or possibilities of **false vines**. There had been *false Christs/Messiahs*, cf. Acts 5:36-37, and there would be more of them, cf. Matt.24:23-24. But He was and would always be the *true* one!
 - b. At the time Jesus speaks these words, the corrupted leadership of the Jewish nation seems to be seeing itself as the *vine* rather than Him, cf. 8:33,37,39ff and 9:16a,22,24,28,31,34. His disciples needed to be perfectly clear regarding the *true vine*.
2. V.2a, As the *true vine*, all *branches* must also be *in Him* to be *true*, cf. John 14:6; and Acts 4:12; Gal.3:26-29.
3. V.2b, But even of those who are *in Him*, and thus part of the *true vine*, the *unfruitful branches* are *taken away*, cf. v.6; cp. Isa.5:1-7; Rom.11:11-24.
4. V.2c, *Fruitful branches* are *pruned* (*kathairo-* to cleanse or prune) to produce *more fruit*. Note that this *cleansing/pruning* is accomplished by “*the word*,” v.3. Thus, after initially becoming part of *the vine*, this *cleansing* and *pruning* by *the word* is in preparation to (or more) *fruit bearing*, cf. Gal.5:22-25; 2Pet.1:5-7 → 2Pet.1:8; see also Matt.13:18-23.
5. V.4, *Fruit-bearing* is unmistakably tied to remaining *on the vine*, i.e. *in Me* (Christ). This, too, has implications:

- a. The *possibility* of apostasy is clearly indicated. But, *abiding in Him* is the responsibility of the *branch*, not the *vine*, Heb.13:5.
- b. *No fruit* can be born unless the *branch* bearing it is and remains *on the vine*, cf. Matt.7:21-23.
6. V.5, *Much fruit* is expected, cf. Matt.13:23. While this includes the *fruit of the Spirit* from Gal.5:22-25, remember that the *fruit* of which He speaks here contains the *seed* of the *gospel*, and from it *spiritual reproduction* occurs, vv.8,16; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 1:8.
7. V.6, The result of not *bearing fruit* is clear. We usually find ways to do that for which we understand responsibility. Though Jesus is speaking directly and primarily to the Twelve (of whom there were only 11 after cf.13:30), *spiritual reproduction* is a responsibility for ALL who are *on the vine*, Matt.13:23; Acts 8:1-4; Rom.7:4; 2Tim.2:2; Heb.6:7-8.
8. V.7, Abundant *help* is provided to those *abide in Him* as *fruit-bearing branches*, 1Cor.3:6; Jas.1:5-6!
9. V.8a, The *glorification of God* is the point that, at least in this context, is accomplished by *bearing much fruit*, cf. v.11 and Matt.13.
10. V.8b, The *bearing of much fruit* is the *proof* (or *proving*) of true *discipleship*. Such is not accomplished by merely being *on the vine*! In fact and as we have seen, *unfruitful branches* are not allowed to remain *on the vine* indefinitely, vv.2,6.

II. Conclusions: Take-Home Points

- A. **Morality alone will not save; one must be *on the True Vine*.**
 - B. **Productivity is required; one cannot remain *on the True Vine* without it.**
 - C. **All fruit-bearing must be done *on/in the True Vine*- one cannot bear *true fruit* apart from the *True Vine*. And,**
 - D. **All is to be (and must be done) done to the *glorification of God*, cf. Matt.5:16!**
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Lesson 6: Study/Discussion Questions

1. What is the setting for John 15:1-8?

2. Why does Jesus present Himself as the "*true vine*"? (Who is the *false vine* to whom He is comparing Himself?)

3. What happens to a *branch*, even one which is *on the true vine*, if it does **not bear fruit**? What does this mean?

4. Why are *fruit-bearing* branches *pruned*?

5. What *implement* is used to *prune* the *fruit-bearing branches*? How does this *pruning* occur?

6. How does the context limit the promise in v.7 to “*ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you*”?

7. How or why does *bearing much fruit* prove discipleship?