

Joy in the Gospel of John: 'Our Journey to Joy'

Cork Scripture Group – Phil Mortell – Spring 2026

The original ending for John's Gospel was Jn 20:31: "But these [signs] are written/recorded so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through this believing you may have [eternal.] life in his name." And, in that single sentence John has identified some of the main themes of his Gospel (Believing, The Promised Messiah, The Son of God) and its overall purpose (namely, that Jesus has been Sent into the world so that we, his followers, "may have [eternal] life in his name" (Jn 20:31).

Throughout John's Gospel, there is a sense of being on a journey towards fuller faith ("so that you might come to believe"), and/or a sense of being "summoned to deeper faith" (*The Gospel of John*, Keener, Vol 2, 1242). The accounts of the Nicodemus at Night (Jn 3:1-21), Woman at the Well (Jn 4:3-42), the Man born Blind (Jn 9:1-41), the Raising of Lazarus (Jn 11:1-43) and many others are all invitations to his listeners/readers **to come to belief or to deepen their belief so that they might have eternal life. That's why God the Father sent his Son into the world. That's what John's Gospel is all about!**

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life..... that the world might be saved through him" (Jn 3:16-17). Love for his world was God's motivation for sending Jesus into the world.

Jn 17:3-4 explains that "Now this is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ."

1. [John 3:29]

John, the Baptist, is the final prophet of the Messiah/Messianic Age (Jn 3:22-30). The Baptist states unequivocally that he is "not the Messiah, but I was sent before him" as Precursor or Forerunner, (Jn 1:20, 3:28).

John the Baptist acknowledges Jesus saying "Now I have seen and testified that he [Jesus] is the Son of God" (Jn 1:34). Andrew tells his brother, Simon Peter, that "We have found the Messiah" (Jn 1:41). Later, Philip found Nathanael and told him that "We have found the one about whom Moses wrote in the law, and also the prophets, Jesus, son of Joseph, from Nazareth" (Jn 1:45). And, Nathanael, having met Jesus, says "You are the Son of God" (Jn 1:49). Also, Nicodemus

recognises that Jesus has “come from God” (Jn 3:2, 16, 17, 18). So, John the Evangelist understands clearly that Jesus is “the One from Heaven/above” (Jn 3:31-36), the Divine/Son of God (i.e. begotten of God). In Jn 1:29, 34, 36, 41, 49, Jesus is addressed as the Son of God (or, the Lamb of God).

In Jn 8:53, Jesus said to his opponents “Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham came to be, I AM.” This was a clear claim by Jesus to be Son of God. The reaction of his opponents shows clearly that they understood what Christ was claiming; “So, they picked up stones to throw at him; but Jesus hid and went out of the temple area” (Jn 8:59).

He also uses the metaphor of Jesus as the “bridegroom” (see Mk 2:18-19, “can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them), reflecting the OT theme of the marriage of God and His Chosen People. In Jn 3:22-30, John the Baptist is presented as the “groomsman”/“best-man,” the one who takes care of the wedding arrangements and, on the day, announces the arrival of the bride and the bridegroom [Jesus].

He “rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice. So, this joy of mine has been completed/made complete” (Jn 3:29). In other words, John the Baptist can now leave the spotlight because he has completed his prophetic role of announcing the Son of God and that completion/fulfilment makes his joy complete.

In short, John the Evangelist is very clear, in the opening chapters of his Gospel, that John the Baptist is the Precursor/Forerunner of the Messiah, come to announce the arrival of Jesus, the Christ, the One from Heaven, the Son of God, the Saviour. At Jesus’ arrival on earth, John the Baptist’s work is done/completed. He (John the Baptist) “must now decrease” (Jn 3:30) because “He [Jesus] must increase” (Jn 3:30). In Jn 3:26, 29, 34-36

John the Evangelist is very clear on JOY. There is only one real joy – the everlasting joy to be experienced by the person who has done what God sent him on earth to do.

2. [John 4:36]

“The sower and the reaper will rejoice/be glad together.”

Jesus states that “in four months the harvest will be here” and he then invites them to “look up and see the fields ripe for the harvest” (Jn 4:35-36). Jesus is not getting his seasons mixed up. He is speaking of the harvest of believers (“Many of the Samaritans of that town began to believe in him because of the word of the woman who testified, ‘He told me everything I have done,’” Jn 4:39). Jesus stayed in that Samaritan town for two days and “many more began to believe (other translations say ‘came to faith’) in him because of his word” and acclaimed Jesus

as “truly the saviour of the world” (Jn 4:40-42, see also 1 Jn 4:14).

In the Samaritan conversions Jesus sees, not just the ‘sowing of the seeds’ of faith, but also the eventual harvest – **the salvation of the entire world** (Jn 4:42). The Sower (Jesus and his disciples) and the Reaper (i.e. the later disciples) may, “even now be glad together” (Jn 4:36).

In other words, the disciples see that the Messianic Age has really come/begun and in these beginnings they can – with the eyes of faith – ‘see’ the eventual harvest. Also, these initial conversions ARE the work of the Messianic Age that HAS come (with Jesus’ arrival) ‘here and now.’

3. [John 8:31-56-59]

In John’s Gospel (Jn 8:21-30), Jesus explains that he has come into the world (sent by the Father, i.e. as the Father’s Ambassador) (Lewis, 48), to reveal God’s Plan to the people and to call all people to understand and live that Plan.

This is a sharp or vitriolic exchange between Jesus and “a group of halfway believers” (Lewis, 49), they have begun to believe in Jesus but are still holding on to a lot of un-Christ-like behaviours (e.g. murderous intent as in Jn 8:1-11).

(Jn 8:31-59): Jesus appeals to those who have come to believe in him (Jn 8:31) to ‘hold fast,’ ‘remain steadfast,’ because their “incipient faith has a long way to go” (Lewis, 50). Then, they will know real freedom – because they will be living as they were created to live. Jesus gives the example of children obeying their parent

even ‘abide’ so as to bring their faith to ‘true liberation’ (v.32). True liberation/freedom consists in knowing/obeying the Father, whom Jesus is revealing. But, in rejecting Jesus they are also rejecting the Father.

The group claim that as the children of Abraham they are already free and that they have never been enslaved to anyone – conveniently forgetting their time of slavery in Egypt (in Moses’ time) and their subjection/oppression by the Romans (in the present century). By denying God as their Father – and not doing what he wishes - they are in league with the Devil/sin and are doing the Devil’s wishes. Strong words!

The group’s next ploy is to claim to be God’s children – to which Jesus replies that if they truly were God’s children then they would not be rejecting him/Jesus who is bringing them God’s message/truth. But, they continue to reject Him/Jesus.

In Jn 8:31-59, in an argument about slavery and freedom, a group of Jews assert that they are the

children of Abraham and that they have never been enslaved to anyone – conveniently forgetting their enslavement in Egypt (in Moses' time) and to the Romans (in their own time). Jesus replies that if they were true children of Abraham they would believe him [Jesus] not deny him! And, that belief/faith would truly “set them free” (Jn 8:32) and they would never see death (Jn 8:52). When Jesus says “Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever keeps my word will never see death” they are “sure” that Jesus is possessed. They reply that Abraham died and all the prophets died. But, Jesus is speaking, not of temporal life, but of eternal life. He then claims that **“Abraham, your father, rejoiced to see my day; he saw it and was glad.”** They misunderstand him saying that Jesus is “not yet fifty years old and claim(s) to have seen Abraham” (v.57). **In other words, Abraham, with the eyes of faith or belief, saw Jesus' day/coming and rejoiced.** Jesus continues saying “Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham came to be, I AM” (v.58) – a clear indication of Jesus' claim to be Son of God. “So, they picked up stones to throw at him; but Jesus hid and went out of the temple area” (Jn 8:59).

This event characterises Abraham as ‘the father of the Jews,’ and a ‘man of faith’ who accepted/believed God's message/word asking him to lead His people ‘to Canaan’ (McKenzie, 5-6). The climax of the dispute comes when Christ claims that “mere carnal descent from Abraham is not enough” (McKenzie, 6). [St Paul, too, talks of Abraham as a ‘hero of faith’ and states that faith in Christ makes one a true descendant of Abraham.]

4. [Jn 11:15]

This is the only passage in John's Gospel where Jesus expresses his own joy.

Again, a somewhat puzzling event as Jesus, after hearing of his friend's/Lazarus' death delays going to his home to sympathise with Lazarus' sisters. But, Jesus knew that his miracle of raising Lazarus would provide another opportunity of demonstrating that he is truly the Son of God and, through the raising to life of Lazarus, many others would begin to believe. In Jn 4:36 Jesus' preaching brought many to belief/faith. Here (Jn 11:15) it is Jesus' action of raising Lazarus that brings many to belief/faith.

Here, as in Jn8:35, Jesus speaks an “I AM” statement, saying “I am the resurrection and the life” (Jn 11:25). It also draws a statement from Martha, namely, “Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world” (Jn 11:27). And, Jesus also assures his followers that “anyone who **lives and believes** in me will never die” (Jn 11:26).

5. [Jn 14:28]

“If you loved me, you would rejoice/be glad that I am going to the Father.”

This is at the beginning of Jesus' Farewell Speech (Jn, chapters 14-17)..

Jesus reminds the disciples that he had already told them that he would be leaving them soon and that he would be returning to them again (Jn 14:28). He appeals to them not to be in any way troubled by this fact (Jn 14:27), especially not to be sad as they should be joyful that he is going to the Father. Jesus is saying that, as he is going to the Father (in the Ascension), this means that he has done all that the Father asked of him, and that the Father's Plan is being brought towards its ultimate completion. Also, Jesus' going to the Father is an occasion of joy for the disciples because, when he goes to the Father, he will return (Risen).

6. [Jn 15:11]

In chapter 15, Jesus is anxious to 'complete' the disciples' joy. Although he is going to the Father, he will still be with the disciples in their continuing spiritual union. 'And, he explains this phenomenon by the metaphor of the Vine and the Branches (Jn 15:1-10). The ongoing union of Jesus and his disciples was stated repeatedly in Jn 14:2-3, 15:18-23; it was amplified and explained by means of the vine and branches metaphor in Jn 15:1-10; and also in Jn 15:11-17 Jesus explains the practical effects of this union (Brodie 1997: 479-483). **Seen from this perspective the disciples' joy in Jn 15:11 is the effect or result of their union with Christ.**

It is a 'here-and-now' experience of the eschatological Christ who comes to life in them in their union with Christ. [It seems to me that Jordaan, Bultmann and Bouma are all saying the same thing, namely, that they see, through the eyes of faith, that in Christ God is indeed present and that by the Holy Spirit the believers are indeed one with Christ (Brodie, 1997, 482-483).

Because, through the eyes of faith they are seeing a reality, a spiritual reality, invisible to the naked, temporal, eye (Mows)].

['Seeing' and 'wanting' the Father's Plan, on the basis of their union with Father/Son, the disciples experience joy – eschatological joy in the 'here and now' - and hopefully later. Compare with the Samaritan 'harvest is here..' Link also with Graham's 'Raise me Up' – 'sometimes I think I glimpse eternity.']

7. [Jn 16:20-24]

"In summary: In John 16:20-24 Jesus speaks of the joy his disciples will receive when they see him as the Risen Lord. The joy would be special because they will see him as the Lord who has conquered death and thereby has made God's kingdom to break through into this world. Their cup of joy would be even more overflowing since after his ascension they will have Jesus as the legal basis for their prayers to be heard by the Father" (Jordaan, 11).

‘Our Journey to Joy’

[Listen, Learn, Live]

[Possibly start with an account of the Rite of Acceptance (RCIA) on the first Sunday of Advent, its Journeying theme and ‘Year-long Course’ before An Adult Baptism on Easter Saturday night); a very Johannine concept – and one we seem to have forgotten; Journeying from a young person’s understanding of their faith towards an Adult Faith/Believing literally takes a lifetime.

The original ending for John’s Gospel was Jn 20:31: “But these [signs] are recorded so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name.” And, in that single sentence, John has identified some of the main themes of his Gospel (Believing, The Promised Messiah, The Son of God, Saviour) and its overall purpose (namely, that Jesus has been Sent by the Father into the world so that we, his followers, “may have [eternal] life in his name” (Jn 20:31).

*****Jn 17:3-4 explains that **“Now this is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ.” In other words, ‘knowing God,’ who is Love, and Jesus as the One Sent, and living in that Love.**

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life..... that the world might be saved through him” (Jn 3:16-17).

And that’s where they will find joy unending and all-encompassing.

So, Jesus was sent by the Father, as His Ambassador, to make God’s love for his creation known. And, this is the love Jesus showed through his words and actions/signs/miracles during his public life ... this is the love he showed in voluntarily accepting his passion, crucifixion and death on the cross. Sadly, John’s Gospel mentions that many did not understand those words and actions (Jn 13: 1-8, see Moloney, 158). And, as the Father sent Jesus into the world to make his divine love for all creation known, Jesus sends his disciples into the world to continue the same mission.

It is clear, also, from John’s Gospel, that believing in the God of eternal love is a life-long and life-wide mission or journey towards Eternal Love and consequent Eternal Joy.

Throughout John’s Gospel, there is a sense of being on a journey towards “a deeper faith” (*The Gospel of John*, Keener, Vol 2, 1242; Brodie, *The Gospel According to John*, 37). The accounts of Nicodemus visiting Jesus at Night (Jn 3:1-21), the Woman at the Well (Jn 4:3-42), the Man born Blind (Jn 9:1-41), the Raising of Lazarus (Jn 11:1-43), the Greek group (Jn 12:20-22), Mary

Magdalene (Jn 20:11-18), Thomas (Jn 20:24-29), and many others are all invitations to his listeners/readers to come to an initial belief and/or to deepen their believing so that they might have eternal life. That's why God the Father sent his Son into the world. That's what John's Gospel is all about! – that the sending of the Son by the loving Father would eventually lead all who believe in Jesus into the relationship/unity enjoyed by the Father and the Son (Jn 3:16, 17:24-26) – and consummate/complete joy.

In John's understanding/theology all Journeys start and end 'in God.'

The Greek group (Jn 12:20-22) are an example. They are searching for the true God and, in their searching/journeying, they ask to see Jesus (Brodie, 413).

The sending (mission) that flows from God's love (Jn 3:16-17) eventually leads all who believe in Jesus into the loving unity enjoyed by the Father and the Son (Jn 17:24-26).

1. **For the disciple life is a journey that begins with a searching for a deeper faith.**
2. **The journey progresses through many stages.**
3. **This journeying towards believing is dynamic/active and reaches ever deeper and wider.**
4. **It is completed in the Resurrection – a 'now' reality.**
5. **One's belief must be 'lived out.'**
6. **Joy, for John, is in the realisation/completion/consummation of the Union in Christ/God/Spirit.**

Regarding 1: **For the disciple life is a journey that begins with a searching for initial or deeper faith).**

Example: Nicodemus (Jn 3:1-21), The Greek Group (Jn 12:20-22).

In Jn 12:42 John highlights an underlying fear many 'believers' - "even among the authorities" - experienced, namely, a fear of the 'Pharisees' and of "being expelled from the synagogue." Nicodemus, described in Jn 3:1 as "a ruler of the Jews" (possibly, a member of the ruling Sanhedrin, the governing body of Jewish society), was "a good man, a devout Jew, who searched for the truth" (Mullins, 135-136), but he was afraid to approach Jesus openly/publicly, so he came to Jesus "at night" (Jn 3:2). The parents of the man born blind also experienced this fear (Jn 9:22 – "for if anyone acknowledged him [Jesus] as the Messiah, he would be expelled from the synagogue").

Early in his discussion with Jesus, Nicodemus addresses Jesus as "Rabbi"/Teacher and he declares that he is impressed by Jesus' signs and miracles. He recognises that "God is with"

Jesus, saying that “no one can do these signs that you are doing unless God is with him” (Jn 3:2). Jesus replies, in effect, that calling him a miracle-worker is not enough and that it is necessary to advance to ‘seeing’/‘entering’ the kingdom of God (but, “no one can see/enter the kingdom of God unless he/she is born from above or born of water and the Spirit. In other words belief comes from God, brought by Jesus as God’s revealer.

In one of the most famous passages from the New Testament, Jesus authoritatively announces that “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life” (Jn 3:16). The belief Jesus brings to the world is “not intellectual assent to doctrine, **but total surrender and openness to the object of belief [God]**” (Lewis, 22).

John, in his Gospel gives us many other examples of people searching for, or journeying towards, true belief/worship of God. The simplest and clearest example is in Jn 12:20-22. A group of ‘Greeks’ approach Philip and ask to see Jesus. They are not Jews but Gentiles and, possibly, ‘God-fearers’ (people who were searching for a better understanding of God). “The fact that they have come to worship at the [Jewish ‘Tabernacles’] feast shows that they are open to all that is good in the Jewish heritage” and were attracted to Judaism but were not yet fully committed, convinced, integrated Jews.

[Jn 12:42 states the “many of the rulers believed in him [Jesus], but because of the Pharisees, they did not confess it, that they might not be put out of the synagogue. John has little time for these as, in his view, “they loved human glory more than the glory of God.”

2. The journey progresses through many stages.

Example: The Samaritan Woman (Jn 4:4-43), and The Man Born Blind (Jn 9:1-41) progress through a number of stages.

The Samaritan Woman first sees Jesus as a “Jew” (Jn 4:9), then she calls him a “prophet” (Jn 4:19), whereas The Man Born Blind realises that Jesus is a Wise Man/Healer, next a prophet (Jn 9:17, then Son of God/Man, and lastly Lord (Jn 9:38).

Jn 9:1-40 is the miraculous cure of a man born blind – he was not only cured of his blindness but he went through a number of stages of advancing insight. He began his journey as a man born blind, then Jesus anointed his eyes and he was able to see (Jn 9:7). The once-blind man then saw Jesus as “the man called Jesus,” that is, an ordinary person (Jn 9:11). Under cross-examination by the Pharisees he came to believe that Jesus was a God-gifted healer/prophet (Jn 9:17). Later still, in a second interrogation by the Pharisees he declared that Jesus was ‘Sent’ by God (Jn 9:33). Finally, when asked by Jesus if he believed that he [Jesus] was the Son of Man, he replied “‘I do believe, Lord’ and he worshipped him” (Jn 9:37).

John the Evangelist's account of this miraculous event may be interpreted at a number of different levels – as a background account or reflection of the early Johannine community being ostracised by the Jewish authorities, and/or as Jesus restoring an individual man's sight, and/or, and/or as 'representative' man, journeying through the different stages of faith/belief from 'blindness' (not knowing Jesus) to 'seeing' Jesus as Lord/God.

3. This journeying towards believing is dynamic/active and reaches ever deeper and wider.

The journeying towards deeper belief involves a deepening union (in the Father, through the Son, by the Holy Spirit) – as seen in the Parable of the Vine and the Vine-dresser (Jn 15:1-17).

Through this indwelling/union the disciple comes to know - and to live – with the life of the Father and the Son (the love-life of the Father, Son and Spirit). 'As the vine provides life-giving sap to its branches so that they can bear fruit, only because of their union with the vine, likewise the believers (disciples) can only bear fruit as long as they remain in union with Christ (Jn 15:4-8). And from this fruit follows a special gift, which consists in the joy of seeing through the eyes of faith that in Christ God is indeed present and that by the Holy Spirit the believers are indeed one with Christ (Brodie, 482-483).]

4. It is completed in the Resurrection – a now reality.

"Mary Magdalene does not even imagine resurrection as the explanation for the empty tomb (Jn 20:1-2, 11-15), Peter and the Beloved Disciple run to the tomb in puzzlement and perhaps hope (Jn 20:3-7), while Thomas will believe only if he is granted a physical experience of Jesus' crucified and risen body (Jn 20:24-29)" - (Moloney, 164). Different disciples at different stages of their journeys.

While the Beloved Disciple believes that Jesus has been raised (without seeing Jesus), the others (after they have seen the risen Jesus) come quickly to believe that Jesus has been raised by God.

For example: Jn 14:1-31: At the beginning of the Last Supper Discourse(s), Jesus tells the disciples that he is going "to prepare a place for you," and that later he will return to bring the disciples with him (Jn 14:3). He has come from the Father and is soon to return to the Father. And, when Thomas asks where Jesus is going or the way there, **Jesus said: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (Jn 14:6). When the disciples fail to understand him, Jesus explains the indwelling (of the Father in Jesus and of Jesus in the Father) and that the evidence for this indwelling is in the works that this indwelling empowers Jesus to do (Jn 14:12-14). In other words, Jesus is able to do the**

‘works’/‘signs’ he does because of the mutual indwelling of the Father and Jesus – and it will be the same for his disciples. Jesus, on the basis of his union with/indwelling in the Father is accomplishing/achieving the Father’ Plan – it will be the same for his disciples. And, the Father will be glorified in them (Jn 14:13).

This is a union with the crucified and risen Christ.

In Jn 17:20-24, Jesus says: “I pray not only for them (my disciples), but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me. And I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may be brought to perfection as one, that the world may know that you sent me, and that you loved them even as you loved me. Father, they are your gift to me. I wish that where I am they also may be with me, that they may see my glory that you gave me, because you loved me before the foundation of the world.”

5. One’s belief must be ‘lived out.’

Later, in John’s Gospel (Jn 7:50, 19:39), Nicodemus “demanded justice and fair play for Jesus when he was under suspicion and risked the hostilities of the authorities and of the crowd in giving Jesus a fitting burial, in the absence of his [Jesus’] more prominent disciples” (Mullins, 136).

“When Jesus lives in us, he will also act through us”

“In John’s uncompromising polemic, Nicodemus (Jn 3:1-21) is used to challenge followers [of Christ] to make a public commitment and face the cost!” One cannot straddle two different worlds (Lewis, 19-20).

“Whoever believes in me will do the works that I do... and greater” (Jn 14:12).

Lewis says that **“Although Jesus is the gate/way to the Father it is in the living out of this spiritual path or pattern that one has access to God” (Lewis, 73). Jesus has given us “an example of complete self-giving, love, and service to humanity” (Lewis, 73). Our lives, lived in complete union with Christ’s, are a realisation of our true being, as created!!!!**

John states that there is only one way of experience real, deep, heartfelt joy, and that’s in the way of love for God expressed in obedience to his commandment(s). This is no straitjacket, but our natural state – as created by Love, in Love, to Love and for Love.

6. **Joy, for John, is in the real-isation/completion/consummation of the Union in Christ/God/Spirit.**

Jn 17:10, 17-19, 20-23 explain that this coming to union/unity is a coming to one's true self, to wholeness (Brodie, 505).

The word 'abide' is used 10 times in Jn 15:1-10.

The theme of joy in John's Gospel is rooted in abiding/living in Christ's love – a love that is real, self-sacrificing, enduring, and moving towards completion. It is a joy that cannot be taken from them – because it is given by God???

That joy can only be completely experienced/enjoyed in 'completed' union (through Christ) with God the Father. However, it can be glimpsed in the works of the Father on earth. Remember the song: "You Raise Me Up and its line 'And when you comeI glimpse eternity.'

In Jn 15:11 Jesus says "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."

Nota Bene: This 'Journey of/to Joy' has some distinctively Johannine emphases (e.g. its realised state, its empowerment by self-sacrificing love)

This 'Journey of/to Joy' has some distinctively Johannine emphases (e.g. its realised state) - that joy can only be glimpsed in the 'works of the Father' on earth as the 'completed' union (through Christ) with God the Father can only be experienced in heaven. For example: Jn 4:4-42 (The Samaritan Woman at the Well, - Sean and his father-in-law, Gary at the Belarus Orphanage.

Bultmann (1971: 541) says that "Jesus' joy becomes the [disciples'] joy because in their union with him the disciples receive the 'eschatological existence [realised eschatology].'"

"And this is eternal life, that they know you (the Father) the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (Jn 17:3).

"Knowledge of God comes through the revealing words and actions of the Sent One" (see Jn 1:14, 16-18, 3:14-15, 16-17, 31-36a, 4:13-14, 5:24-25, 6:35, 7:37-38, 8:12, 9:5, 10:27-29, 11:42, 13:18-20, 14:6-7). "Jesus' words and works have revealed God [who so loved the world] and thus made eternal life possible for 'all flesh' (Jn 17:2-3, in M.63).

"The Fourth Gospel makes clear that God has a [loving] relationship with the Son, and that he has sent the Son so that others may enter that same relationship and continue the mission of Jesus (Jn 17:18, 20, 20:21).

Conclusion:

John's Gospel is ultimately about God the Father (Moloney, 38) – and our journey to Him.

Temporal and/or Spiritual: both are real! If the Spiritual is not real, then love isn't real, and Hate isn't real!

Jesus came – or, rather he was Sent on earth by the Father (this sending is mentioned 20 times in the Gospel, e.g. Jn 3:16-17) - to 'Make the Father Known' (Jn 4:34, 5:36 and, also, 17:4). Not only to make the Father known but in doing so to offer eternal life/salvation with the Father to all believing disciples (M 54). In other words, so that those disciples might journey into the relationship he [Jesus] has had with God from all time (Moloney, 56). In Jn 17:4 Jesus states that he has brought to perfection the task he was sent on earth to do, and in so doing, he has glorified the Father, and the Father has glorified him [Christ] (Moloney, 54). That too is our challenge.

In John's Gospel, 'Believing' is always an active verb in John's Gospel (never a noun!); it means that we accept that we journey towards belief through many stages – and not always in a straight line!

At the end of the Gospel John explains that he selected from among many signs and episodes those that would indicate that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing they might have [eternal] life in his name" (Jn 20:31).

The Father sends the Son into the world as an act of divine Love, as the gift of salvation to the world, through his Son (Jn 3:16-17).

"God's love makes the gift of eternal life possible [for humanity], and the mission of Jesus is to make that love known" (M. 61).

"Motivated by God's love for the world, the Son must bring to perfection the task he has been given by God" (M. 68). And, at the end of his life Jesus says "It is finished" (Jn 19:30), that is, all has been achieved.

"The reader/listener expects the Fourth Gospel to present Jesus' death as unique, as his most significant achievement. It promises to be a moment when he brings to perfection the task given him by the Father, the one who sent him, glorifying God by making him known, and achieving his own glory by means of it" (M. 97-98). It should be similar for each disciple!

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Compare Jn 4:4-42 with 1 Jn 2:3-11.

In Jn 4:4-42 Jesus is left alone at the Well with a Samaritan woman and in the ensuing conversation crosses “ethnic, religious, and gender boundaries” as the Jews considered that the Samaritans were ethnically impure (they were not ‘pure’ Jewish, rather mixed-race), held a different version of the Torah, and it was considered ‘not appropriate’ (even ‘scandalous!’) for a Jewish man to converse with a Samaritan woman (Lewis, 24). Today????

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Brendan Graham’s song “You Raise Me Up” has some interesting – and Johannine – ideas in it.

“Sometimes, I think I glimpse eternity” – ‘glimpse’ is a momentary or partial view.

Through that lens (Graham) compare Jn 4:4-42 and 1 Jn2:3-11.

The ‘overlap’

But, the New World has begun, The Risen World has begun...

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The Samaritan Woman’s encounter with Jesus is particularly interesting. Because, it highlights one of John’s Gospel’s clearest statements – the Messianic Age is now here (with/in Jesus)!

Initially, she calls him “a Jew” (Jn 4:9), next “Sir” (Jn 4:15), and then “a prophet” (Jn 4:19).

When she says “I know the Messiah is coming, the One called Anointed, when he comes he will tell us everything” (Jn 4:25), Jesus replies “I am he, the one who is speaking with you” (Jn 4:26).

In Jn 4

The Messianic Age is here now!

This fact is further confirmed in Jn 4:35-36. As Lewis says: “the eschatological harvest is ready now, not in the future, as the openness of the Samaritans to the Word of God proves..... the new universal order described in verses 21-24 is making its appearance” (Lewis, 28).

‘I glimpse eternity’??????