A HARMONY OF THE FOUR GOSPELS — CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

John 18–21: The Arrest, the Trials, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection Appearances in John

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Preface: The Conclusion of the Fourth Gospel

Chapter twenty-one brings the four-Gospel harmony to its close, covering John 18–21 — the Johannine Passion narrative and resurrection accounts. The events covered here overlap with those presented in chapter fifteen and sixteen of this harmony (the Synoptic Passion and resurrection), but John's account is distinctive in detail, emphasis, and theological depth at nearly every point.

John 18 covers the arrest in the garden (with the unique detail of the soldiers falling to the ground at Jesus's self-disclosure), Peter's first denial in Annas's courtyard, and the trial before Pilate — which John narrates at far greater length than any of the three Synoptics, giving extended dialogue between Jesus and Pilate that is unparalleled in the tradition. John 19 covers the crucifixion with unique details: the crown of thorns and Pilate's statement *"Behold the man"*; the episode of the beloved disciple and Mary at the cross; the piercing of Jesus's side; and the burial by Nicodemus as well as Joseph of Arimathaea. John 20 presents the resurrection appearances to Mary Magdalene in the garden (one of the most intimate scenes in the Gospels), to the disciples without Thomas, and then the decisive encounter with Thomas whose confession — *"My Lord and my God"* — is the highest explicit Christological confession in any Gospel. John 21, widely regarded as an epilogue, presents the appearance on the shore of Galilee, the miraculous catch of fish, the breakfast of bread and fish, and the threefold restoration of Peter.

Each section is identified by its source: **[John]** throughout.

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Part Twenty: The Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus in John

Section 221 — The Arrest in the Garden [John 18:1–14]

When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Kidron, where was a garden, into which he entered, himself and his disciples.

Now Judas also, who betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus often resorted thither with his disciples. Judas then, having received the band of soldiers, and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.

Jesus therefore, knowing all the things that were coming upon him, went forth, and saith unto them, Whom seek ye?

They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. He saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, who betrayed him, was standing with them.

When therefore he said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground.

Again therefore he asked them, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I told you that I am he; if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: that the word might be fulfilled which he spake, Of those whom thou hast given me I lost not one.

Simon Peter therefore having a sword drew it, and struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. Now the servant's name was Malchus.

Jesus therefore said unto Peter, Put up the sword into the sheath: the cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

So the band and the chief captain, and the officers of the Jews, seized Jesus and bound him, and led him to Annas first; for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, who was high priest that year.

Section 222 — Peter's Denial; Jesus Before Annas [John 18:15–27]

And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Now that disciple was known unto the high priest, and entered in with Jesus into the court of the high priest; but Peter was standing at the door without.

So the other disciple, who was known unto the high priest, went out and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.

The maid therefore that kept the door saith unto Peter, Art thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not.

Now the servants and the officers were standing there, having made a fire of coals; for it was cold; and they were warming themselves: and Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself.

The high priest therefore asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his teaching.

Jesus answered him, I have spoken openly to the world; I ever taught in synagogues, and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and in secret spake I nothing.

Why askest thou me? ask them that have heard me, what I spake unto them: behold, these know the things which I said.

And when he had said this, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?

Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?

Annas therefore sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.

Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They said therefore unto him, Art thou also one of his disciples? He denied, and said, I am not.

One of the servants of the high priest, being a kinsman of him whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?

Peter therefore denied again: and straightway the cock crew.

Section 223 — Jesus Before Pilate: The Kingdom Not of This World [John 18:28–40]

They lead Jesus therefore from Caiaphas into the Praetorium: and it was early; and they themselves entered not into the Praetorium, that they might not be defiled, but might eat the passover.

Pilate therefore went out unto them, and saith, What accusation bring ye against this man?

They answered and said unto him, If this man were not an evil-doer, we should not have delivered him up unto thee.

Pilate therefore said unto them, Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law. The Jews said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.

Pilate therefore entered again into the Praetorium, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews?

Jesus answered, Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee concerning me?

Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?

And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find no crime in him.

But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews? They cried out therefore again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.

Section 224 — Ecce Homo: Behold the Man [John 19:1–16]

Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him.

And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and arrayed him in a purple garment; and they came unto him, and said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they struck him with their hands.

And Pilate went out again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him out to you, that ye may know that I find no crime in him.

Jesus therefore came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold, the man!

When therefore the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take him yourselves, and crucify him: for I find no crime in him.

The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.

When Pilate therefore heard this saying, he was the more afraid; and he entered into the Praetorium again, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.

Pilate therefore saith unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to release thee, and have power to crucify thee?

Jesus answered him, Thou wouldest have no power against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath greater sin.

Upon this Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou release this man, thou art not Caesar's friend: every one that maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.

When Pilate therefore heard these words, he brought Jesus out, and sat down on the judgment-seat at a place called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha.

Now it was the Preparation of the passover: it was about the sixth hour. And he saith unto the Jews, Behold, your King!

They therefore cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.

Then therefore he delivered him unto them to be crucified.

Section 225 — The Crucifixion: John's Account [John 19:17–30]

They took Jesus therefore: and he went out, bearing the cross for himself, unto the place called The place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha: where they crucified him, and with him two others, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.

And Pilate wrote a title also, and put it on the cross. And there was written, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title therefore read many of the Jews, for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city; and it was written in Hebrew, and in Latin, and in Greek.

The chief priests of the Jews therefore said to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but, that he said, I am King of the Jews.

Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.

The soldiers therefore, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also the coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore one to another, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

Now there were standing by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold, thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold, thy mother! And from that hour the disciple took her unto his own home.

After this Jesus, knowing that all things are now finished, that the scripture might be accomplished, saith, I thirst.

There was set there a vessel full of vinegar: so they put a sponge full of the vinegar upon hyssop, and brought it to his mouth.

When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up his spirit.

Section 226 — The Piercing of the Side; the Burial [John 19:31–42]

The Jews therefore, because it was the Preparation, that the bodies should not remain on the cross upon the sabbath (for the day of that sabbath was a high day), asked of Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

The soldiers therefore came, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other that was crucified with him: but when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and straightway there came out blood and water.

And he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye also may believe.

For these things came to pass, that the scripture might be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.

And after these things Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked of Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took away his body.

And there came also Nicodemus, he who at the first came to him by night, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds.

So they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury.

Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new tomb wherein was never man yet laid. There then because of the Jews' Preparation (for the tomb was nigh at hand) they laid Jesus.

Section 227 — Mary Magdalene and the Empty Tomb [John 20:1–18]

Now on the first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, while it was yet dark, unto the tomb, and seeth the stone taken away from the tomb.

She runneth therefore, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him.

Peter therefore went forth, and the other disciple, and they went toward the tomb. And they ran both together: and the other disciple outran Peter, and came first to the tomb; and stooping and looking in, he seeth the linen cloths lying; yet entered he not in.

Simon Peter therefore also cometh, following him, and entered into the tomb; and he beholdeth the linen cloths lying, and the napkin, that was upon his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but rolled up in a place by itself.

Then entered in therefore the other disciple also, who came first to the tomb, and he saw, and believed.

For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

So the disciples went away again unto their own home.

But Mary was standing without at the tomb weeping: so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb; and she beholdeth two angels in white sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

When she had thus said, she turned herself back, and beholdeth Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turneth herself, and saith unto him in Hebrew, Rabboni; which is to say, Teacher.

Jesus saith to her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father: but go unto my brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God.

Mary Magdalene cometh and telleth the disciples, I have seen the Lord; and that he had said these things unto her.

Section 228 — The Appearance to the Disciples; Thomas [John 20:19–31]

When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

And when he had said this, he showed unto them his hands and his side. The disciples therefore were glad, when they saw the Lord.

Jesus therefore said to them again, Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit: whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.

And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.

Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and see my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

Jesus saith unto him, Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name.

Section 229 — The Appearance on the Shore of Galilee [John 21:1–14]

After these things Jesus manifested himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and he manifested himself on this wise.

There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples.

Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also come with thee. They went forth, and entered into the boat; and that night they took nothing.

But when day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach: yet the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.

Jesus therefore saith unto them, Children, have ye aught to eat? They answered him, No.

And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

That disciple therefore whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. So when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his coat about him (for he was naked), and cast himself into the sea.

But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from the land, but about two hundred cubits off), dragging the net full of fishes.

So when they got out upon the land, they see a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now taken. Simon Peter therefore went up, and drew the net to land, full of great fishes, a hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, the net was not rent.

Jesus saith unto them, Come and break your fast. And none of the disciples durst inquire of him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.

Jesus cometh, and taketh the bread, and giveth them, and the fish likewise.

This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples, after that he was raised from the dead.

Section 230 — The Restoration of Peter [John 21:15–23]

So when they had broken their fast, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

He saith to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Tend my sheep.

He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of John, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.

Now this he spake, signifying by what manner of death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; who also leaned back on his breast at the supper, and said, Lord, who is he that betrayeth thee?

Peter therefore seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?

Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.

Section 231 — The Closing Word of the Evangelist [John 21:24–25]

This is the disciple that beareth witness of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his witness is true.

And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written.

Appendix: Notes on Chapter Twenty-One

On the Soldiers Falling at Gethsemane

John's arrest narrative (Section 221) includes a detail found in no other Gospel: when Jesus identifies himself with the words *"I am he"* (*Egō eimi*), the entire band of soldiers — a Roman cohort of up to 600 men plus the Temple officers — falls backward to the ground. The detail is startling and has generated extensive discussion. At its most basic level it illustrates John's consistent theological point: Jesus is not arrested; he gives himself up. He controls the entire event. He asks twice whom they seek; he protects his disciples; he identifies the name of the servant (Malchus) whose ear Peter cuts off; and he rebukes Peter's violence with the language of the cup: *"The cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"* The cup language connects directly to the Synoptic Gethsemane prayer — John does not record the Gethsemane anguish, but this single sentence shows that he knows it.

On Pilate's Trial in John

John's account of the trial before Pilate (Sections 223–224) is by far the most extended of the four Gospels, presenting seven scenes alternating between Pilate's conversations with Jesus inside the Praetorium and his negotiations with the crowd outside. The structure is precise: outside (accusations), inside (conversation), outside (Barabbas), inside (scourging), outside

(*Ecce Homo*), inside (source of authority), outside (judgment). The effect is to place Pilate perpetually between two worlds — the world of Roman political power and the world of divine truth — and to show him retreating from the latter under pressure from the former.

The interior conversations between Pilate and Jesus are the most theologically rich moments of the trial. Jesus's declaration — *"My kingdom is not of this world"* — does not mean his kingdom is irrelevant to the world but that its origin and character are different: it does not depend on human violence for its maintenance. Pilate's question — *"What is truth?"* — is among the most famous rhetorical questions in Western literature, spoken by a man who is in the presence of the one who has just described himself as the embodiment of truth (14:6: "I am… the truth") and who is about to condemn him. Pilate does not wait for an answer; he goes back out to the crowd.

The political pressure that finally breaks Pilate is not the crowd's religious objection (*"he made himself the Son of God"*) but the threat: *"If thou release this man, thou art not Caesar's friend: every one that maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar."* The accusation of disloyalty to Caesar — in the volatile political climate of Pilate's prefecture — is the lever that moves him. John's presentation of Pilate as a man who knows the truth, fears it, and surrenders to political pressure anyway is one of the most psychologically acute portraits in the Gospel tradition.

On "It Is Finished"

Jesus's final word from the cross in John (Section 225) — *"It is finished"* (*Tetelestai*) — is a single word in Greek: *tetelestai*, the perfect passive of *teleō*, to complete or accomplish. The same root gives *teleios* (complete, perfect, mature — the word used in Matthew 5:48: "Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect") and *telos* (end, goal, completion). *Tetelestai* is the perfect tense — the tense of completed action whose effects continue in the present — and it was used on commercial receipts to mean "paid in full." The word is not the gasp of the exhausted but the declaration of the accomplished: the work given by the Father (17:4: "I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do") is now complete.

John alone records that Jesus says this and then bows his head and gives up his spirit — in that order. He does not slump into death; he deliberately bows his head (as one laying down to rest) and delivers his spirit. The voluntary character of the death is John's consistent emphasis: *"No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself"* (10:18).

On the Piercing of the Side

The piercing of Jesus's side (Section 226) is unique to John and is one of the most discussed details in the Passion narrative. John insists on its eyewitness authenticity: *"he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true."* The outflow of blood and water has been interpreted medically (hemopericardium, with serum and blood separating after death), theologically (blood and water as signs of the sacraments of the Eucharist and baptism), and eschatologically (drawing on Zechariah 12:10: "they shall look on him whom they pierced," quoted in Section 226). John applies two scriptures: Psalm 34:20 (*"A bone of him shall not be broken"*, originally about the Passover lamb, Exodus 12:46) and Zechariah 12:10.

The appearance of Nicodemus at the burial (Section 226) — bringing a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes for the burial wrappings — is John's final narrative of the man who came to Jesus by night in John 3. He has appeared three times: in the night conversation of John 3; as a dissenting voice in the Sanhedrin of John 7; and now, openly, at the cross, in the full light of day. His trajectory from secrecy to public confession is one of John's most carefully constructed character arcs.

On Mary Magdalene in the Garden

The appearance of the risen Jesus to Mary Magdalene (Section 227) is the most intimate resurrection appearance in any of the four Gospels. Mary stands weeping outside the empty tomb after Peter and the Beloved Disciple have come and gone. She sees the angels, speaks with them, turns, sees Jesus, and does not recognize him — supposing him to be the gardener. The single word that opens her eyes is her name: *"Mary."* She turns and says *"Rabboni"* — the heightened form of "Teacher," the same word used by Bartimaeus in Mark 10:51. The recognition is accomplished by a voice, not by sight — which is precisely what the Good Shepherd discourse had promised: *"the sheep hear his voice… and he calleth his own sheep by name"* (10:3).

Jesus's instruction — *"Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father"* — has puzzled interpreters. The most natural reading is that Mary is trying to hold him, to prevent the loss of him again, and Jesus redirects her: the relationship with him is now to be constituted differently, not by physical proximity but by the Spirit. Her mission is the same mission given to the women in the Synoptics: go and tell the brethren.

On Thomas

The encounter with Thomas (Section 228) is the Fourth Gospel's ultimate Christological confession. Thomas's condition — seeing the nail-prints, touching the wound — is one of the most honest expressions of grief-driven skepticism in the Gospel tradition. When Jesus appears and offers exactly what Thomas demanded, Thomas does not need to touch. He sees, and the confession breaks from him entire: *"My Lord and my God"* (*Ho Kyrios mou kai ho Theos mou*) — the highest explicit Christological confession in the canonical Gospels. No other human character in any Gospel addresses Jesus directly as God.

Jesus's final beatitude — *"Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed"* — is addressed not to Thomas but to all subsequent generations of believers, including the readers of the Gospel. Thomas believed because he saw; the Gospel was written that others might believe without seeing.

The purpose statement of John 20:30–31 — *"these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name"* — is the Gospel's own declaration of its aim. It is the hermeneutical key to the entire Fourth Gospel: everything was selected and shaped for the purpose of generating and sustaining saving faith.

On the Restoration of Peter

The threefold restoration of Peter (Section 230) is one of the most structurally precise and emotionally resonant scenes in the Gospel tradition. Peter denied Jesus three times around a fire

of coals (*anthrakia*, John 18:18); now he is restored three times beside a fire of coals (*anthrakia*, John 21:9) — John uses the word *anthrakia* only twice in the entire Gospel, in these two scenes. The structural parallel is unmistakable: the charcoal fire of the denial is answered by the charcoal fire of the restoration.

The Greek of the exchange is more nuanced than any English translation captures. In the first two questions, Jesus uses *agapaō* (the love of full commitment); in each, Peter answers with *phileō* (the love of affection and friendship). In the third question, Jesus descends to Peter's own word and asks *"Lovest thou me?"* using *phileō*. Peter is grieved — not at the repetition but at what the repetition implies: does Jesus doubt even the lesser love? His answer is now entirely thrown on Jesus's knowledge: *"Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee."* He cannot claim the higher love; he can only appeal to Jesus's own omniscience.

To each confession corresponds a commission: feed my lambs, tend my sheep, feed my sheep. The shepherd who denied his Lord is restored to the shepherding of the Lord's flock. And the word with which the commission closes is the same word with which the call began in the Synoptic Gospels, on the shore of this same sea, beside other nets: *"Follow me."*

On the Closing Word of the Evangelist

The final two verses of John's Gospel (Section 231) are the evangelist's own closing witness. He has selected from an unimaginably larger store: *"if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written."* The hyperbole is not false modesty; it is a statement about the nature of what has happened. The life of Jesus, fully narrated with all its implications worked out, is larger than any book, any library, any world of discourse.

The harmony ends here — at the edge of what can be written, looking toward what cannot be contained.

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A Final Note: The Harmony Complete

This harmony has now covered all four Gospels — Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John — across twenty-one chapters and 231 sections, from *"In the beginning was the Word"* and *"The book of the generation of Jesus Christ"* to *"even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written."*

The translation used throughout has been the **American Standard Version (ASV) of 1901**, which is entirely in the public domain and may be reproduced without restriction.

The four evangelists remain four distinct and irreducible voices even in harmony. Matthew sees every event through the lens of Old Testament prophecy fulfilled. Mark moves with urgent, eyewitness immediacy. Luke writes as a careful historian with profound attention to the poor, to women, and to the outsider. John reflects from a depth of theological contemplation that sees the eternal meaning shining through every temporal event.

Together they do not tell four stories. They tell one story through four irreplaceable perspectives — which is the shape of all genuine witness to events that are larger than any single account can contain, and to a Person who exceeds what any book, or any world of books, could hold.