

Sixth Sunday of Easter

FIRST READING – Acts 10:34-48

34 So Peter opened his mouth and said: “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, 35 but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. 36 As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), 37 you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: 38 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. 39 And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, 40 but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, 41 not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. 42 And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. 43 To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

10:34-43 To adequately set the context for this passage for the average hearer would almost require a full commentary on the Book of Acts. Here, however, it will have to suffice to challenge two common misguided but interrelated assumptions about this book. First of all, it is assumed that Acts is not about Jesus. He is gone. He ascends, so to speak, as the curtain is raised on Acts 1, scene 1, only to appear again as the ghostly vision in Acts 9. Second, it is assumed Acts is about the Holy Spirit and the Church. A view of the book much more in keeping with Luke’s purpose might sound something like this: In the Book of Acts, Luke tells the story of the risen Lord Jesus’ ongoing work to save his world, making his presence known through the presence of his Spirit and making his voice heard through the mouths of a restored and reconstituted people of God, those who hear and see and proclaim what he, Jesus, is continuing to do and to teach. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

It is of some comfort to us that Peter and the other members of this new people of God in Acts had to learn the same lessons that we readers today must learn. Peter had been with Jesus throughout Jesus’ ministry, had been his disciple, had even been sent out to proclaim the kingdom of God (Lk 9:1–6), but when it came to the climax of Jesus’ ministry, Peter’s denial was ironically true: Peter really did not know Jesus (Lk 22:54–62). Even after a now-risen Jesus taught Peter and the others how to read the Scriptures, proved to them that he had risen and that he had to die, and taught them over the course of forty days about the kingdom of God, Peter still needed time to work out the full implications of all that he now knew and believed about Jesus. Much of that happens in this story with Cornelius (Acts 10:1–11:18). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

Our Gospel shows Peter right at one of the most important moments of realization and insight. Peter’s words, “truly I understand,” connect with this story of Peter slowly coming to grasp what it means for the world that “Christ is risen; he is risen indeed.” In fact, Peter’s opening confession turns this whole section into a story that is just as much about Peter’s conversion as it is about Cornelius’s. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

The importance of this event for Luke is indicated by the fact that he presents the reader with three accounts of it: here in chapter 10, again in chapter 11, and finally a brief summary in chapter 15. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

10:34-38 The polarization of the races was deeply rooted in the mind-set of the first-century Roman and Jew. One can only imagine how revolutionary the young church's approach to interracial relationships must have been. Roman soldiers treated Jews terribly (Mk 15:16–20). The popular sentiment among the Jews toward the Romans wasn't much better (Mk 12:13–17). And Peter, among others, spent the 40 days between Christ's crucifixion and Pentecost hiding, immobilized by fear of the Romans. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

After Pentecost, we have a different Peter, a God-intoxicated Peter, a Spirit-driven Peter. Before the death and resurrection of Jesus, Peter could not have said what he said in v 34. But Peter, like his Jesus before him, has been anointed by the Holy Spirit with power. The Holy Spirit is denoted with one purpose in the book of Acts and that is to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ from Jerusalem, to Judea, to Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). To accomplish this, the Spirit would use the once-impulsive Peter. God sent Peter to Cornelius in Joppa. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

Peter says to the large crowd gathered inside the house of Cornelius, "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean" (Acts 10:28). In response, Cornelius tells Peter why he was asked to come. "Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us" (10:33). This is the immediate contextual background to our passage. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

10:34-35 God's message of salvation goes out to all people because all the earth is His. God will write His Word on the hearts of all who believe (Jer 31:33). Cf Rm 14:11; Rv 14:6. (TLSB)

10:34 *I understand - Katalambanomai*. Both active and passive forms of the verb have the connotation of "to be seized upon" or "to grasp." St. Paul uses it in both senses in Phil 3:12, "But I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me." John uses it in his Gospel to demonstrate how darkness cannot overcome [understand] light (Jn 1:5). As the verb contains the preposition *kata*, its emphasis is that "the seizing" comes from above (as Peter had experienced at Pentecost and in the vision of the animals in the sheet). This Greek word also connotes that the seizing takes place "suddenly" as God did to the crafty in Job 5:13. Arndt and Gingrich state that it also has the emphasis of someone coming into an inheritance - the exact time is not planned, of course. If we paraphrase the poignant v 34, we come up with this. Peter opened his mouth and said, "I have been seized from above by the once culturally concealed truth of God that he shows no favoritism between racially different peoples." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

"Truly I understand." Luke does not use the word *katalambanō* ("I understand") in his Gospel, but he does use it three times in Acts. Although a word's etymology does not always have a direct relationship to its meaning, there does seem to be something of the original meaning of the components still in the meaning of this compound. In other contexts, the verb means simply to seize or grasp someone; here, of course, it is used figuratively for the "grasping" done by the mind. If there is anything that the three uses in Acts have in common (4:13; 10:34; and 25:25), it seems to be the idea of bringing very disparate pieces of information together to form a conclusion that "comprehends" all the data. Often, the individual pieces of information appear to be at opposite ends of the spectrum, rendering comprehension impossible, such as the boldness of the apostles in 4:13 together with their illiterateness and lack of education. For an extreme example, see Eph 3:18. Here in Acts 10, Peter seems to have been able finally to bring together into his own comprehension the fact that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God who claimed Israel as a people for his own possession, the God who sent his own Son into the world as a son of

Abraham and a son of David, does not have a favorite among the nations of the earth. Few modern readers can appreciate the magnitude of this realization. The idea that God is not a respecter of persons, that he “shows no partiality” (v 34), is not, of course, a new idea. Already in Deut 10:12–22, a passage with many thematic connections to ours, God is revealed as one who shows no partiality and takes no bribes. Now, however, Peter is beginning to see clearly what that means for the way that he, Peter, should relate to other people. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

truly - alētheias: This word is rich in meaning. Its first meaning is “truthfulness, dependability, uprightness, perfect fidelity” with a secondary meaning of “reality as opposed to mere appearances.” In the Old Testament it is used to denote a reality which is regarded as *emet*, “firm,” therefore, “solid,” “valid,” or binding.” It signifies what is “true.” When used of persons, it sometimes expresses that which predominantly characterizes their speech, action, or thought. Deut 22:20 says the charges against a violated virgin must be true. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

Etymologically *alētheia* has the meaning of nonconcealment. It is disclosed or discloses itself. It might be concealed, falsified, truncated, or suppressed. It is the full or real state of affairs. *Alētheia* denotes an aspect of the *logos* and causes that which is to be seen. For Plato it is concealed from the senses, which may be comprehended by thinking. It is the opposite of a “reflection” or an “appearance.” The disciples of the Pharisees sense truth about Jesus in their question to him about taxes (Mk 12:14). St. Paul uses it in relation to the motives of the preachers of the Gospel in Phil 1:18, and he uses it in terms of God’s judgment against sinners in Rom 2:2. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

God shows no partiality. God does not favor an individual because of his station in life, his nationality or his material possessions (see note on Jas 2:1). He does, however, respect his character and judge his work. This is evident because God “accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right” (v. 35). Cornelius already worshiped the true God, but this was not enough: He lacked faith in Christ (v. 36). (CSB)

“Peter opened his mouth” (NRSV). An important utterance is about to take place. Peter has played a major role in Acts up to this point. But Peter is about to fade into the background as Acts points steadily toward the ministry of St. Paul. In fact, a threefold movement in Acts makes this apparent. The geographical movement is from Jerusalem to Rome; the religious movement is from Jews to Gentiles; the apostolic movement is away from the Twelve, especially Peter, to St. Paul. But Peter is still part of the narrative, and he has just learned through his vision at Joppa that God shows no partiality (10:9–33). This whole incident may seem a bit trite to today’s hearers, given the present day climate of multiculturalism, political correctness, and ecumenicity. But Peter’s vision was revolutionary for the hearers in his day. Luke fills his gospel as well as this his second volume with a theology of universal grace. God extends himself through Christ and the church to all nations. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 9, Part 1)

Prosōpolēemptēs, “favoritism,” literally means “to accept a face.” The reference is to a courtroom or a judge who isn’t swayed by the appearance of the person being tried. The most frequent way to translate the word is “partiality.” In Deut 1:17, Moses instructs the leaders of his people. “Do not show partiality in judging; hear both small and great alike. Do not be afraid of any man, for judgment belongs to God.” God shows no partiality to Greek or Jew (Rom 2:11), to master and slave (Eph 6:9), and is no respecter of persons in Acts 10:34. But the Christian to whom James writes his letter shows favoritism to the rich over the poor (James 2:9). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

10:35 *every nation* - *ethnei* has the meaning of “people” as opposed to “kings.” The risen Christ spoke to Ananias about Saul in Acts 9:15: “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings.” It also connotes “nations” (as peoples) who oppose each other, as in Mt 24:7, “nations will rise against nations.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

In the Old Testament the word *goiy* is related to it, meaning “foreigner” or “non-Jew.” The disciples who were sent out would be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. Here the word refers to the non-Jew—the nations who hear God and work deeds of righteousness. Cornelius already believes in God but has not been overcome by the love of Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

It is very easy to make this verse say more than it says or less than it says. Peter does not simply say that everyone is acceptable to God no matter what nation he/she comes from, and he certainly does not say everyone is acceptable to God no matter what religion he/she comes from. The “anyone” is qualified by “who fears him and does what is right.” On the other hand, the phrase “in every nation” must be given its full weight. Peter’s vision and the events that followed it have brought him to the understanding that even people outside his cultural, national, racial group, even outside his recognized religious community, can genuinely fear God and live righteously and be accepted by God as his own. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

what is right - Here *ton logon*, “message,” connects with *alētheia* in v 34. The concealed truth has been revealed in the word about Jesus Christ. The *logos* and the *alētheia* are connected to the *euangellion*, which literally means “good announcement.” The “good announcement” is that hostility doesn’t exist between nations, but peace because of Jesus Christ, who is Lord over all nations. We can only imagine how much personal hostility Peter had to overcome to make this announcement to the Gentiles standing before him. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

10:36-37 These verses provide a summary of the entire apostolic ministry and mission. Even though the Gospel reading is Mt 3:13–17, the Acts passage aligns better with Mark’s gospel, which begins not with the birth narrative, as do Luke and Matthew, but with Jesus’ Baptism, which for Luke is the beginning of Jesus’ ministry. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 9, Part 1)

Peter was at the home of Cornelius. The question arises as to what language Peter spoke. He may very well have spoken Greek through an interpreter. Most scholars agree, however, that more than likely he spoke Aramaic. The text is filled with “Aramaisms.” Luke is heavily dependent on the sources he tells us he is using (Lk 1:1–4). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 9, Part 1)

10:36 *peace*. Between God and man (reconciliation). (CSB)

The hallmark of the kingdom of God is the announcement of peace, healing, and forgiveness. (TLSB)

Lord of all. Lord of both Jew and Gentile (see vv. 34–35). (CSB)

A brief confession or creed, appropriate among Gentiles who had worshiped idols and who perhaps wondered whether the true God would be their God. (TLSB)

We must not let the textual and translational challenges of this verse distract us from the irony of Peter’s statement. If God did play favorites, that is, if his favorite had been Israel, if no other nation on earth enjoyed such a right and privileged relationship with God, then why would God need to send the sons of Israel “good news of peace”? (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

Recent commentators seem inclined to agree with Tannehill that the statement “He is Lord of all” is not a parenthetical doxology but, on the contrary, the main point of the verse (Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke–Acts: A Literary Interpretation*, vol. 2, *The Acts of the Apostles* [Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1990], 139–40). This good news of peace came in the form of a birth announcement, the news that a Savior who is both Messiah and Lord had been born. The angel had said that this announcement would bring joy to all people (Lk 2:10–14), but Peter is just now realizing that, if Jesus came to be the Lord of all, he must also be the Savior of all. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

10:37-43 This section compounds the difficulty of describing Cornelius’s “spiritual condition” with satisfying precision. He has already been described as a devout, God-fearing, alms-giving man who prayed continually to God (v 2). An angel of the Lord confirms that his prayers have been heard by God and that his actions have borne witness to his faith (v 4). His own people describe him as *dikaios* (righteous according to human standards, or in a right relationship with God?) and add that the entire Judean nation will back them up on this (v 22). In v 37, Peter begins to recite a history of the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus. He begins by saying, “You yourselves know . . .” The difficulty is in determining where the knowledge of Cornelius and his household ends. There is no clear “But now know this” or “But now I will tell you something you don’t know.” Some readers see a break coming at v 39, but if it is a break at all, it is not as clear or strong as it could have been. Remember that in what follows there is no call to repentance or to faith issued to Cornelius. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

10:37 *you yourselves know*. Though they had heard about Jesus’ ministry, Peter gave them an eyewitness account of Jesus’ ministry, death, and resurrection. Cf 1Jn 1:1–4. (TLSB)

the baptism John proclaimed. Similar to the outline of Mark’s Gospel, Peter’s sermon begins with John’s baptism and continues to the resurrection of Jesus. This is significant since the early church fathers viewed Mark as the “interpreter” of Peter (see Introduction to Mark: Author). See previous summaries of Peter’s preaching (2:14–41; 3:12–26; 4:8–12; 5:29–32); see also note on 2:14–40. (CSB)

humeis oidate What Cornelius and his household know is that the Good News about Jesus Christ began with the preaching of John at the Jordan River. They know the story—how John’s preaching led to baptism and to the baptism of Jesus. *Ekēruxen* means “proclaimed” or “announced.” It is the fish-swallowed man, Jonah, preaching repentance (Mt 12:41) and about Jesus Christ in Rom 16:25. It is a story spread widely (Mk 1:45) and includes repentance (Mark 1:4). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

10:38 *how God anointed Jesus*. See Isa 61:1–3; Lk 4:18–21. (CSB)

ekrisen “anointed” is an aorist active verb, meaning the act has been done or has been completed. Jesus speaks of himself, quoting Isaiah, in Lk 4:18 as anointed by the Spirit of the Lord to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim freedom for the prisoners, recovery of sight to the blind, and to release the oppressed. In Baptism the apostles (and all Christians) are anointed by the Spirit of God. “He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come” (2 Cor 1:21b–22). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

Luke connects Jesus' Baptism and the descent of the Holy Spirit here in the same way that he does in his gospel account (Lk 3:21). Unlike Mark, however, Luke places a prayer in between Jesus' Baptism and the descent of the Holy Spirit. Some scholars have argued that this serves to delineate clearly between the Baptism of John and the anointing, of Jesus by the Holy Spirit (Gerhard Krodel, *Acts, Proclamation Commentaries* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981] 42). Here is the allusion to Christ's absolute power and victory over the forces of darkness. Jesus manifests his epiphany and "God was with him." The Holy Spirit's anointing is strongly linked to Is 42:1-2 and the anointing of the Servant. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 9, Part 1)

with the Holy Spirit and with power - Pneumati agiōi, "with the Holy Spirit" for the Spirit features prominently in the writings of St. Luke. A better title for this book could be, "The Acts of the Holy Spirit." Having been baptized and having been anointed by the Holy Spirit with power from above, St. Paul, in Col 1:11, prays that the Christians there would be "strengthened with all power" so that they may have endurance and patience. Peter has been given power from above to declare that God accepts all nations and races in Christ Jesus. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

Christ, the Anointed One, fulfilled the prophecies regarding the Messiah (Gn 3:15; 49:10; Is 7:14; Mi 5:2; Mt 1:20; Jn 1:1). (TLSB)

10:39-40 "They put him to death . . . but God raised him." Many readers of Luke, both scholarly and popular, fail to find a theology of the cross in either of his two contributions to the New Testament. It is true that in the sermons in Acts we hear much more regularly and much more explicitly "you/they killed him" than we hear "he died for you/them." This may serve more as a criticism of contemporary theologies of the cross than it does as a criticism of Luke's, however, for there is a point to these messages in Acts that is too often neglected in our preaching. Before they could hear that Jesus died *for their sins*, Peter's hearers, including even Cornelius and his household, needed to take seriously what it meant for the whole world that Israel had not only rejected but also murdered the Messiah of God. Notice the change in pronouns as the message moves beyond the immediate vicinity of Jerusalem: "you crucified and killed" (2:23); "this Jesus whom you crucified" (2:36); "you killed the Author of life" (3:15); "they put him to death" (here, in 10:39); "those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers . . . asked Pilate to have him executed" (13:27-28); and so on. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

10:39 *hanging him on a tree*. Jesus' condemnation on the cross came despite God's anointing, the power of the Holy Spirit, and His gracious healing of many. *tree*. Adam and Eve's willful reach for Eden's tree was cured by Christ's willing grasp of the cross. Cf Dt 21:23; Gal 3:13; 1Pt 2:24. (TLSB)

10:40-41 God demonstrated Jesus to be His Son esp through the resurrection, as believers realize (Rm 1:4). (TLSB)

10:41 *who ate and drank*. Those who ate with Jesus after he rose from the dead received unmistakable evidence of his bodily resurrection (see Lk 24:42-43; Jn 21:12-15). (CSB)

10:42 Luther: "Who will harm the man when the great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, to whom the Day of Judgment belongs, is on his side and stands before him with all His glory, greatness, majesty, and might?" (WLS § 2178). (TLSB)

10:43 *forgiveness of sins through His name.* “Peter says we receive forgiveness of sins through Christ’s name, that is, for His sake. It is not for the sake of our merits, not for the sake of our contrition, attrition, love, worship, or works. He adds: *When we believe in Him.* Peter requires faith. For we cannot receive Christ’s name except by faith” (Ap IV 83). Luther: “Cornelius (Acts 10:43) had to be brought to the new faith that Christ had already come” (WLS § 2125). (TLSB)

10:34–43 Peter affirms for devout Cornelius that Jesus is truly the Christ; the Spirit affirms for Peter that the Gospel applies to all people without partiality. The Holy Spirit unites one and all in the Body of Christ. • Father, thank You for the gift of salvation through Your Son, Jesus Christ. Make me a faithful witness of Your love. Amen. (TLSB)

The Holy Spirit Falls on the Gentiles

44 While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. 45 And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. 46 For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, 47 “Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.

10:44-48 The rest of the chapter, as well as the additional references to this event, go beyond the text for this Sunday and the purposes of this study. Still, the preacher needs first to come to a clear understanding of what is happening in the passage as a whole before he can proclaim even a portion of it. Hopefully, even without an investigation of these additional passages, we can agree that, if this is an account of Cornelius coming to faith in Jesus, it is at least as much an account of Peter coming to recognize in Cornelius a fellow believer. If Jesus is Lord of all (v 36), then he must also be the Savior of all, and his is the one name that brings forgiveness to the believer. If this is true, the people he gathers in his name will not be composed of just Abrahams, Isaacs, and Jacobs (and Simon Peters); there will also be Corneliuses, and we will find ourselves embracing as brothers and sisters people whose names we cannot yet pronounce with confidence. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

10:44 *the Holy Spirit fell on all.* The Holy Spirit comes through the Word to everyone who hears and believes. Cf Rm 10:17; 15:13; 1Co 2:10–14; 6:11; 1Pt 2:9. Luth: “[Faith is] a living spiritual flame, by which hearts are set afire, born anew and converted through the Holy Spirit, so that they desire, will, do, and are exactly what the law of Moses expressly commands and requires [Jer 31:33; 2Co 3:3; Rm 3:27; 8:2; 2Co 4:13].... For the living Word of Christ, when preached, imparts the Spirit, who writes the law of God in our hearts with living fire, as happened to Cornelius in Acts 10 [:44], and again Gal. 4 [3:2]: ‘Did you receive the Spirit by works or by the preaching of faith?’ Hence the gospel is called a word of life in John 6[:68]” (AE 36:200–201). (TLSB)

10:45 *Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles* – By giving these Gentiles the same gift He gave the apostles and others at Pentecost, the Lord was dramatically demonstrating that He had broken down the wall of separation. They, as Gentiles, were no longer strangers and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household (Eph. 2:19).

astonished ... even on the Gentiles. Apparently the early Jewish Christians failed to understand that the gospel was for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews, and that they would share alike in the benefits of redemption. Gentile proselytes to Judaism, however, were accepted (see 6:5). (CSB)

10:47 *Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people?* † The Gentiles had received the same gift (11:17) as the Jewish believers. This was unavoidable evidence that the invitation to the kingdom was open to Gentiles as well as to Jews. (CSB)

10:44–48 The Holy Spirit demonstrates to the Jewish believers that God indeed desires to pour out His Spirit on “all flesh” (2:17), even Gentiles. The water, the Word, and the Holy Spirit go together. So Peter urges that the Gentiles be baptized right away, without concern for circumcision or ritual purity according to the old covenant. These blessings of Word and Sacrament abide with us today. • Lord, give us Your Word, that our thankfulness points many to Your grace. Amen. (TLSB)

EPISTLE – 1 John 5:1-8

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. 4 For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. 5 Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

St. John is writing in view of the growing heresy of Gnosticism, which held that matter was evil and spirit was good. Some said that Christ only seemed to have a human body (Docetism). It was unthinkable to the Gnostics that the Son of God would become a physical human being, since flesh was evil. Others held that the divine Christ came upon the man Jesus in His Baptism and left Him when He was crucified (Cerinthianism). For the Greek it was unreasonable that the Son of God would be crucified. John testifies that indeed the man Jesus is the Son of God (v. 5), and indeed He is the one who came not by water only, but “by water and blood” (v.6) (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 2)

5:1 *Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.* Faith in Jesus as the Christ is a sign of being born again, just as love is (4:7). (CSB)

Only those born of God are able to believe in Jesus as their Savior, true God and true man. (TLSB)

Beginning our text are the words *pas ho pisteuōn*, “Each believing one.” The present participle indicates an ongoing and constant state of faith. The object of the faith is Jesus, the Christ/ Messiah. Such a believing one has already been “born of God” (perfect tense verb for completed action; NIV translates as if it were a present). “Born” reminds the reader of John’s earlier discussion of being “born of God” (Jn 1:13), “born again/from above” (Jn 3:3, 7) through “water and the Spirit” (Jn 3:5) in Holy Baptism. All that follows speaks of the fruit of the state of faith resulting from the new birth. Fruit flows from “the love God has for us” (4:16). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

This is a great verse to reassure Christians of their salvation. Whoever believes in Jesus, the Christ, has already been reborn unto eternal life—period. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

“born of God”: (*ek tou theou gegennētai*, perf. pass. of *gennaō* “of God has been begotten”). The *ek tou theou* here and *ex autou* at the end of the verse in “having been begotten of/from him” indicate that the sense is a “begetting of/from the father” (A. T. Robertson, Lenski). See 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:4, 18. “The Johannine writings use the expression *gennēthēnai ek* (to be begotten of) to describe the origin of the believer” (Colin Brown, *The Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, vol 1, “Birth,” I. Guhrt [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981] 179). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

New life, rebirth, faith comes of and “from” God. It is something God does as surely as begetting is something that a human father does. We do not “beget” ourselves. The believer is “born from above and again” (Jn 3:3). *Gennēthēi anōthen* is purposely ambiguous and means both born from above and born again (Arndt Gingrich, *A Greek Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* [Chicago: University of Chicago, 1957] 76). The rebirth is given from the Father: “children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God” (*ek theou*) (Jn 1:13). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

pisteuo to *have faith* —believe, commit (to trust), put in trust with.

The present participle indicates an ongoing and constant state of faith. The object of the faith is Jesus. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 2)

He is presently, actively believing. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 2)

Anybody who believes that the man Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, that is, everything the OT predicted about that Christ (that is, the Anointed One” or “Messiah”) must have been reborn by God’s initiative and power. (PBC)

1 Corinthians 12:3, “Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.”

gannaō - to *procreate*; figuratively to *regenerate*:—bear, beget, be born, bring forth, conceive. – New life, rebirth, faith comes of and from God. It is something God does as surely as begetting is something that a human father does. We do beget ourselves. The believer is born from above and again (John 3:3)

All that follows speaks of the fruit of the state of faith resulting from new birth. Fruit flows from “the love God has for us” (4:16). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 2)

Here verse 1 summarizes the message of 4:7-21: If you have been born again, you love God. If you love God, you will automatically love people. If you love the Father, you will love His children too. Seamless. (PBC)

the Christ. “Jesus is the Christ”: Definite article. He is the Messiah. He did not become the Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

everyone who loves the father loves whoever has been born of him. John wrote at a time when members of a family were closely associated as a unit under the headship of the father. He could therefore use the family as an illustration to show that anyone who loves God the Father will naturally love God’s children. (CSB)

Since all believers are born of God, they are all one family of God. All who have fellowship with God by faith in Jesus also share in fellowship with one another. (TLSB)

The rest of v 1 simply and logically says that whoever loves the Father, who gives the new birth, also loves those who have been reborn. In the Third Article of the Creed, we confess both the Baptism that gives the forgiveness of sins, and the catholic church that results from the new birth. If we love God (a fruit of faith), then we also love one another as fellow Christians. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

“Everyone who believes”: Original language (“everyone believing,” pres. part). He is presently, actively believing. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

“And everyone who loves the father loves his child as well”: Cf. 4:7: “everyone who loves (pres. part.) has been born of God (*ek tou theou*) and knows God.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

“Loves his child as well”: Original language (“loves the one having been begotten of /from him”). We show our love for our Father by loving the brother or sister who was begotten by the same heavenly Father. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

5:2 *we love the children of God when we love God* – The loving is something that keeps on being done. The love of God and his children, our brothers and sisters, are mutually inclusive, and the one gives proof of the other.

We evidence our love for God and his children by “carrying out his commands.” God’s *entolai*, “commands,” like his statutes in the Torah, encompass both Law and Gospel. They include all that our Lord taught and commissioned us to do, as he said: “baptizing . . . and teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you” (Mt 28:19–20). The “obedience that comes from faith” (Rom 1:5) could be brought in here. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

Original language “And whenever we keep on doing (present subjunctive) His commandments.” The love of God and the love of His children, our brothers and sisters, are mutually inclusive, and the one gives proof of the other. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 2)

Real faith and real love are inseparable. They are like heads and tails on a coin – two faces of the same power. Loving God automatically involves being willing to submit to God, to put His thoughts and ideals into your head, to let Him steer your behavior, to view obedience as exhilarating, not demeaning. (PBC)

The goal of saving us was not merely negative – to get us out of hell – but to transform us into something positive, to be men and women who think and act like God. (PBC)

5:3 *this is the love of God*. The love of God is so powerful that it inspires and enables one to keep His Commandments. But only those who keep His Commandments by loving their brother truly walk in God’s love. (TLSB)

his commands are not burdensome. † Not because the commands themselves are light or easy to obey but, as John explains in v. 4, because of the new birth. The one born of God through faith is enabled by the Holy Spirit to obey. (CSB)

In contrast to the demands of the old covenant. With the Gospel, believers cannot help but love one another; it is what children of God naturally do. (TLSB)

The love of God (objective genitive) is manifest in the relationship between God and the believer. God is our loving Father. We respond to the new birth by embracing his commands—again, the whole Word, Law and Gospel. His commands are not heavy or burdensome. Religions based on Law are unbearably heavy, as Jesus said (Lk 11:46). Christianity is not one of them, for Jesus lifts those burdens and replaces them with his “easy” yoke (Mt 11:30). Because we have been born anew of God, we delight in his Word (Psalm 119). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

Here’s a surprise: God’s commands now become joyful to obey. The law of God is indeed bad news to people without faith in Christ. But believers love to hear God’s will and do it. His commands are not burdensome. His yoke really is easy and His burden real is light. How many heads fit in a yoke? Two, right? Who is pulling alongside of you? Jesus, of course. He daily assures us of forgiveness for our failure and gives us strength and stamina for each new day. Psalm 119:35 says, “Direct me in the path of your commands, for there I find delight.” WE come to see that all commandments of God really are good for us and actually lead to happiness. (PBC)

The love of God (objective genitive) is manifest in the relationship between God and believer. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 2)

“This is love for God: to obey his commandments. And his commands are not burdensome”: cf. Jn 15:12, 14. “His commands are not burdensome”: “Not because the commands themselves are light or easy to obey but, as John explains in v 4, because of the new birth. The one born of God through faith is enabled by the Holy Spirit to obey” (*Concordia Self-Study Bible* [St. Louis: Concordia, 1984] 1931). The Father through his Spirit gives us new life and with it a new delight in the commandments of God. The keeping of his commandments is “acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Pet 2:5). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

1 Peter 2:5, “You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

5:4 *born of God* – Obedience is possible for believers, who have been regenerated and renewed by the Holy Spirit. The Word and Sacraments really do have that much power. (PBC)

Ephesians 2:1, “As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins”

Romans 3:10, “As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one”

Ephesians 2:9, “not by works, so that no one can boast.”

overcomes ... has overcome. To overcome the world is to gain victory over its sinful pattern of life, which is another way of describing obedience to God (v. 3). Such obedience is not impossible for the believer because he has been born again and the Holy Spirit dwells within him and gives him strength. John speaks of two aspects of victory: (1) the initial victory of turning in faith from the world to God (“has overcome”); (2) the continuing day-by-day victory of Christian living (“overcomes”). (CSB)

Believers may not feel like conquerors of the world, but, thankfully, overcoming the world depends not on our feelings or experiences but on our faith. Luther: “This must happen through faith in Christ, which is the victory. For what could this fragile vessel accomplish against Satan, the god of the world (2 Cor. 4:4)? But God is greater. He always triumphs in us through Christ. (cf. 2 Cor 2:14). Therefore all glory of victory must be ascribed to God Himself, not by any means to us. We are far too insignificant for this. Here, however, the Word of God is required - the Word which promises and extends grace to the

believers, so that when they have hurred into so many great trials and weighed down under such great and crafty spirits, they nevertheless fight their way out and triumph. But to be born of God is to believe in Jesus Christ. He who believes in Christ is now a warrior... For we are still engaged in the battle itself and are about to be victorious... God has placed us in the midst of wolves, in the kingdom of the devil. As weapons He has given us His Word and Spirit, and He tells us to do battle and to conduct ourselves as bold warriors under Him Himself as our Prince while He Himself looks on and is also victorious” (AE 30:21). (TLSB)

“For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith”: Jesus said, “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (Jn 16:33). The world is everything that opposes Christ. “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first” (Jn 15:18). See 1 Jn 2:15–17; 3:1, 13; 4:17. The world and its prince oppose Christ. We will be persecuted by the world because of our identity with Christ. We overcome the world because Christ overcame it and the prince of this world (Jn 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). His victory overcame the world. The victory is ours through God-given faith in him. Original language (“everyone having been begotten of God is victorious over the world”) “everyone born of God overcomes the world.” The victory is ours “because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world” (1 Jn 4:4). So John can ask. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

The new birth gives us faith, which is our victory over the world. Key Easter words are *nikaō*, “be the victor, prevail, conquer, overcome” (twice in our verse), and its noun *nikē*, “victory” (only here in the NT). Jesus overcame the evil world; its prince, the devil; and sin, the cause of death. In Christ, the believer conquers as well. We know this because our faith has conquered (aorist for completed action) the world. Through faith Christ’s completed victory is already ours too. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

So what is this “overcoming the world?” (PBC)

- rejoicing in the life, hope, and forgiveness we have through Christ
- staying loyal to Jesus in spite of Satan’s attacks.
- resisting the devil, knowing he will have to flee (James 4:7)
- adopting God’s value system instead of attractive human philosophies
- using and enjoying things without becoming materialistic
- enduring pain and hardship without despairing or becoming bitter
- rising from the dead to eternal life on judgment day

Our faith is the victory which has already overcome the world. All that is born of God overcomes the world. Our Christian faith is born of God. It is that spiritual life which was begotten in us by regeneration. Therefore faith has divine power to overcome the world. Faith overcomes all hostility, all wickedness, all lust of the world, and so faith is described as the victory that has overcome the world. (Stoekhardt)

world. In the world sin and unrighteousness hold their sway. (Stoekhardt)

5:5 *he that overcomes* – This is present participle which means “who continues to conquer.” This is the believer in Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 2)

Original language (“Who is the one conquering [pres. part.] the world except the one believing [pres. part.] that Jesus is the Son of God?”) “Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.” It will not do to believe that Jesus is anything less. He is the Son of God and as the Son of God his blood “purifies us from all sin” (1 Jn 1:7). He is the “atoning sacrifice for our sins” (1 Jn 2:2). Only he is able to condemn the prince of this world (Jn 16:11) and give us the victory. This faith is a living, present reality (pres. part.). Note the humanity (Jesus) and the divinity (Son of God) are both united in the person of the Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

Who continues to conquer (present participle) the world? Based on the previous verses, that is easy: the believer in the Christ. The three verbs are all present tense. The one who is believing is also overcoming and enjoying victory. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

When the world makes our going hard, so that we think we will have to admit defeat, then we Christians should remember that God has planted the Christian faith in our heart, which is the victory that already has overcome the world, and by this faith they will also receive strength for the last decisive battle. (Stoeckhardt)

Son of God. For parallel confessions see 2:22; 4:2; 5:1. (CSB)

Victory belongs only to those who believe that Jesus is the divine Son of God. Hus: “Peter confessed Christ to be very God and very man (Mt. 16:16). And among all the articles of faith, this one appertains most to the edification of the Church” (The Church, p. 84). (TLSB)

5:1–5 The children of God bear the family traits of their Brother, Jesus. He has faith, love, and victory over the world. The world tempts us to think of our Lord’s Commandments as a burden, too hard and too heavy for us to bear. The world seems too much for us to overcome. But our Lord Jesus has overcome the world for us. He has fulfilled all of God’s Commandments for us. He made Himself our human Brother, that through Him we might become the children of His Father and share in His great family of love. • Father, let me live in Your love through believing that Jesus is the Christ, the divine Son of God. Amen. (TLSB)

Testimony Concerning the Son of God

6 This is he who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. 7 For there are three that testify: 8 the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.

5:6 *by water and blood.* Refers to the testimony of Jesus’ Baptism and crucifixion, which revealed the love of God and accomplished His will for the salvation of the world. (TLSB)

Water symbolizes Jesus’ baptism, and blood symbolizes his death. These are mentioned because Jesus’ ministry began at his baptism and ended at his death. John is reacting to the heretics of his day (see Introduction: Gnosticism) who said that Jesus was born only a man and remained so until his baptism. At that time, they maintained, the Christ (the Son of God) descended on the human Jesus, but left him before his suffering on the cross—so that it was only the man Jesus who died. Throughout this letter John has been insisting that Jesus Christ is God as well as man (1:1–4; 4:2; 5:5). He now asserts that it was this God-man Jesus Christ who came into our world, was baptized and died. Jesus was the Son of God not only at his baptism but also at his death (v. 6b). This truth is extremely important, because, if Jesus died only as a man, his sacrificial atonement (2:2; 4:10) would not have been sufficient to take away the guilt of man’s sin.

Here Jesus is referred to in (aorist) past tense: “the one who came” by water and blood, which most commentators agree is a reference to his Baptism and crucifixion. He was baptized into his role as the atoning Christ, and he completed his work on the cross. John’s statement that he came not by water only, but also by blood, means that Jesus finished what he started. The Spirit bore public witness at Christ’s Baptism, and continues to bear witness about Christ to us, so that we are witnesses of Christ to the world (Jn 15:26–27). “Truth” is frequently predicated of Christ in John’s gospel (1:14, 17; 14:6; etc.) but here designates the Spirit who testifies of Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

As Christ came by water and blood, so also he now comes to us through water and blood—in Baptism, which gives the new birth, and in the Lord’s Supper, which sustains the faith that loves God and keeps his commands. The great importance of vv 68 to the sacramental and trinitarian theology of the early church is shown by the long addition to vv 7–8 found in the Vulgate. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

“This is the one who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood.” Jesus was not only baptized with water as the Son of God, but he came “by blood.” That is he shed his blood as the Son of God. The Gnostics believed that only his phantom was crucified or that the spirit of the “Christ” left him. In view of the present influence of the New Age, it is very important to proclaim that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God and that he, as such, shed his blood. The New Age religion believes that Jesus became the Christ and a Son of God by getting in touch with his higher “Christ consciousness.” For them Christ is not Savior but rather a model for how we too may achieve a higher “Christ consciousness.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

the Spirit is the one who testifies. The Holy Spirit testifies that Jesus is the Son of God in two ways: (1) The Spirit descended on Jesus at his baptism (Jn 1:32–34), and (2) he continues to confirm in the hearts of believers the apostolic testimony that Jesus’ baptism and death verify that he is the Christ, the Son of God (2:27; 1Co 12:3). (CSB)

Just as Jesus is the truth, so also His Holy Spirit is the truth. The Spirit testified at the Baptism of Jesus, marking Him as the Christ who was to come and the Son of God (Jn 1:29–34). The Holy Spirit reminds every believer of all that Jesus has said (Jn 14:26). The Holy Spirit always testifies to Jesus and glorifies Jesus and guides us into all truth (Jn 16:13–14). Luther: “The water of Baptism is sanctified through the blood of Christ. Therefore it is not plain water; it is water stained with blood because of this blood of Christ which is given to us through the Word, which brings with it the blood of Christ. And here we are said to be baptized through the blood of Christ, and thus we are cleansed from sins” (AE 30:314). (TLSB)

5:7–8 The Holy Spirit, the water of Christ’s Baptism, and the blood of His death on the cross all bear witness that this man, Jesus of Nazareth, is the Christ of Israel and the divine Son of God. (TLSB)

5:7 *three.* The OT law required “two or three witnesses” (Dt 17:6; 19:15; see 1Ti 5:19). text note. But the addition is not found in any Greek manuscript or NT translation prior to the 16th century. (CSB)

There are three interesting interpretations for these unusual words:

1. For centuries, going clear back to St. Augustine in the 5th century, many Christians assumed that “water and blood” was an allusion to the separated fluids that ran from the pierced side of the crucified Savior. John was right there at the time, and in his biography of Jesus, John immediately points to those separated fluids as proof that Jesus Christ was really dead, proof that the OT Scriptures had been carefully fulfilled, and proof that the sacrifice for the world’s sins had really been made. He wrote: “The man who saw it [that is, John] has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: ‘Not one of His bones will be broken,’ and, as another scripture says, ‘They will look on the one they have pierced’” (John 19:35-37) (PBC)

John’s point in our verse, then, would be to contradict the false teachers’ claim either that the death of Christ never happened or that it was only the death of Jesus but not the death of the heavenly Christ. (PBC)

2. Another interesting and scriptural possibility for the meaning of blood, water and spirit is that they are references to the means of grace – the gospel that brings Christ to us in Baptism (water), the Lord’s Supper (blood) and the Word of God (inspired by the Holy Spirit). These three things, after all, are our lifeline to Christ. This is how we know. The testimonies of the apostles and prophets are the foundation for everything we know about God. They alone bear sure witness to the creation, fall, promises, incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. What better way to drive doubt from our hearts than to go to the Word. (PBC)

The sacraments confirm the work of the Word that brings us to faith and keeps us in faith. The sacraments personalize the gospel in a most wondrous way. A person could read the Bible or hear a sermon and think, “That doesn’t apply to me.” There is no mistaking, however, who is meant when the water of rebirth and renewal splashes on someone’s head. There is no mistaking for whom God’s love and forgiveness are intended when the body and blood of the Lord Himself are placed right in someone’s mouth. What better way to drive doubt from our hearts than to receive the Sacred Supper? (PBC)

The Word of the prophets and apostles, first oral and then written, is the special and joyful work of the Holy Spirit, whose great mission in human history is to connect individual sinners by faith with their great Savior. Peter wrote, “Prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21). Jesus promised (again in the upper room), “The spirit of truth ... will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13). The Word and sacraments nest together perfectly – “The three are in agreement” (verse 8). (PBC)

3. There is a third possibility that appeals to many contemporary commentators. That is the words water and blood refer to the beginning and ending of Jesus public ministry. Cerinthus and other Gnostic teachers denied the two natures of Christ, claiming that the “Christ” from heaven simply came down and rested on the man Jesus during His teaching ministry. They were more interested in Jesus as a teacher of morality than as the personal sacrifice of God’s Son for the sins of the world. (PBC)

John’s reference to water, then would be to Jesus’ baptism, His anointing as our Prophet, Priest, and King in the Jordan River. At the Jordan, the Father’s voice boomed out His authentication of Jesus’ identity as His Son and His approval of the Son’s mission. The reference to blood would be to the crucifixion, where the words of Jesus and the signs and wonders that occurred at His death convinced even a Roman military officer and his execution detachment: “Surely he was the Son of God!” (Matthew 27:54). (PBC)

5:8 Luther: “The water cannot be proclaimed without the blood. Nor is the blood of Christ given without the water of Baptism. Besides, the blood and the water do not come to us except at the instance of the Holy Spirit, who is in the Word. Therefore those three cannot be separated, but the three do one thing... For these three constantly accompany one another, and through the Word a daily immersion and a perpetual Baptism takes place, a perpetual shedding of the blood of Christ and of the Holy Spirit, a continual cleansing from sins” (AE 30:315). (TLSB)

GOSPEL – John 15:9-17

9 As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. 10 If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. 11 These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. 12 “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command you. 15 No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. 17 These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

15:9 *so have I* – kago - Means “me also.” There is to be a responding reaction to an action (in this case to God’s love documented in verses 9-16). This is a thread that runs through this text. It is the love the Father has had for the Son from the beginning. It is the love that prompted the Father to send the Son (3:16) and prompted the Son to do His Father’s will. As the Father loved the Son, so the Son loved His disciples and has invited them to remain in His love. All, then, are His disciples who by faith remain in His love. (PBC)

As -- *so have I* are correlative adverbs of manner, meaning "just as-so also." See John 3:35: the Father gave the incarnate Christ all things so that He might accomplish His work. See John 10:17: He loves Him because He lays down His life to take it again. And at 17: 23: "You (the Father) loved them just as you loved Me (Jesus)." There is nothing more certain than the love of the Father in Christ for believers. We so easily forget that. (Buls)

This verse has a pair of correlative adverbs of manner, *kathōs* and *kai* (compounded in *kagō*). The pair mean “just as—so also.” Jn 3:35 says the Father loved his Son by placing everything in his hands, so that the Son might do his work in this world. The Father loves him for laying down his life (Jn 10:17). Jesus returns to this theme in the High Priestly Prayer (In 17:23). The Father’s love for us is demonstrated in the love the Father showed for his Son. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

The Father’s love for Jesus is self-giving. All that Jesus has, he has from the Father (16:15). Jesus’ statement that he loves us “just as,” *kathōs*, the Father loves him points forward to when Jesus will give himself to us on the cross. This is the manifestation of the Father’s love for us (3:16; 1 Jn 4:9–10). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

love – agape - Love that acts without any expected return. Charity. It is this form of love that is mentioned 8 times.

Love is defined and demonstrated by God. It is self-giving for the unworthy. God's love comes from himself and is demonstrated on the cross (Jn 3:16; Rom 5:8). It is a creative love, evoking in his followers the same kind of unselfish, sacrificial love. Hence, self-love short-circuits the dynamic of God's love in us. Yet in this text, the tension is not between God's love and our self-love. It is the contrast between God's/Christian love and the world's hatred (vv 18–19). The malady comes primarily from the rejection of Christ's love and his followers by the unbelieving world. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

John 3:35, "The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands."

John 10:17, "The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again."

John 17:23, "I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

remain – meno - Continue to be a part of something. For the disciples and us this means holding fast to the faith God have given us as exhorted in Revelation 2:10. The way to do this is to use God's Word and Sacraments to continue to grow in our faith life.

Now Jesus gives a command: "Remain in My very own love." This means the love which Christ has for us, not the love we have for Him. His love for us is a fact. Just don't abandon it. (Buls)

Remaining is difficult to define. To say it is a mutual indwelling or that Christ is in us keeps this spiritual state vague and abstract. Helpful is to retain the Vine and branch imagery from the verses before the text. This is a picture of the remaining Jesus calls for. Then, when you place the joining of Vine and branch under a theological microscope, you see Baptism, Lord's Supper, and Word as the means of remaining. Love and obedience are fruit, and they are necessary to remain on the Vine. But such love and obedience come through our remaining on the Vine by being joined to Christ in Word and Sacrament. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

The Father loves the Son, who fulfills the mission. The Son loves those for whom the mission is fulfilled. The love is the same. To remain in Jesus is to remain in his love. *meinate*, "abide," aorist imperative. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

15:10 *if* - The difficult word is *if* (vv 10, 14). To our ears, *if* is a law word. *If* you do something, then you will receive some reward or punishment. It is nearly impossible for a congregation to hear the word in any other way. Of course, the text does not imply any such legalism. The Vine/branch imagery (v 5), being called friends (v 15), and Jesus choosing his disciples (v 16) all prevent any such works-righteousness. Instead, Jesus weaves together his love, sacrifice, and friendship with remaining in him, human obedience and love in such a way that none can be neglected. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

commandments – Jesus’ obedience to His Father, a central theme of Jn. Cf 8:29. (TLSB)

Note that "commands" or "injunctions" is in the plural. "Commands" is far more than the ten commandments. It includes all His words to His disciples. In the first part of this verse, Jesus is stressing the fact that the proper attitude toward His Word in general assures one of the fact that he is of the true faith, remaining in His love for that person. Now comes "obey" again. Common to both parts of the verse are the verbs "remain" and "obey" and the nouns "commands" and "love." Implicit in this verse are the two natures in Christ. He speaks of the Father as *MY* Father in a very special way. And yet it is very plain that He speaks as a true human. He confides in the love of the Father for Christ. The Christian is a reflection of Christ in what he does and in what he trusts. (Buls)

All of Jesus’ Gospel words to his disciples, not just the Ten Commandments, are included in “commands.” We may be sure we will remain in the true faith when we remain in the true Word. The “just as” phrase in v 10 is parallel to the one in v 9. Note the implication of the dual natures of Christ in this verse. As true man, he is our model for observing God’s commands and remaining in God’s love. As true God, he fulfilled God’s commands perfectly on our behalf, and by his obedience he gained God’s love for us despite our disobedience. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

The Nestle-Aland Greek text begins a subparagraph at v 11. The antecedent of “these things” (NIV: “this”) is all of vv 1–10. Jesus told them for the purpose (*hina*) that we might share in his joy. Jesus’ joy stems from completing the work of redemption and returning to his Father. Jesus’ joy is in obedience to his Father’s will (“he will delight in the fear of the Lord,” Is 11:3), not simply for his own benefit, but so that his joy might be in us too. Note that *plērōthēi*, “be fulfilled” (NIV: “be complete”) is passive; Christian joy comes from outside ourselves. Here is joy more lasting than the joy of good weather, or the joy between friends, between parents and children, or even between spouses. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

keep...as I have kept. Again the importance of obedience (cf. 14:15, 21, 23), and again the example of Christ (cf. 14:31). (CSB)

The key is proper relationship. Our obedience does not bring Christ’s love, but it is the evidence that we are remaining in his friendship. Christ’s choosing us does not depend on our love, but remaining in Christ’s love and doing what he commands go hand in hand. We love because he first loved us—and

loving each other is how Christ's disciples will be known in the world. We are called to be Christ's friends—and to be obedient. Both are emphasized by Jesus, and we can neither play one against the other nor omit one to focus solely on the other. What Jesus has joined together so masterfully, we must not separate. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

How do we remain in Jesus' love? The same way that Jesus remains in the Father's love—by obeying his commands (*entolas mou tērēsēte*). To remain in the love of the Son is to remain in the love of the Father. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

Whenever we keep Jesus' commandments, we are bearing fruit (15:8). This fruit demonstrates that we are still attached to the vine (15:5). This is not, however, a matter of simple obedience. To "keep" something, *tērēsēte*, is to hold fast to it and cherish it. Jesus' commandments, *tas entolas*, encompass all that God's Word teaches (1 Tim 6:14; 2 Pet 2:21; Mt 28:18–20) but are chiefly fulfilled in love (v 12). The "just as," *kathōs*, shows us that Jesus is applying what he has said of himself in v 9 to us in v 10. Narrowly speaking, Jesus identifies love as the greatest fruit of faith. More broadly, however, keeping the commandments speaks of a love for all that God has spoken (Psalm 1). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

Some meanings are: To be prevented from escaping like in a fortress; to hold fast without letting go like being detained in the custody of the law.

Just as – *katao* - Even so. Has similar meaning as the "so have" in verse 9.

Our Savior gives us His own example of what it means to remain in His love. It means keeping God's commandment as a show of that love at work in our lives, just as Jesus kept all of the Father's commands. The fruits of our faith will demonstrate the faith in our hearts. (PBC)

my love ... his love. See vv. 12, 14. Obedience and love go together (see 1Jn 2:5; 5:2–3). (CSB)

15:11 *joy*. Mentioned previously in this Gospel only in 3:29, but one of the characteristic notes of the upper room discourse (16:20–22, 24; 17:13). The Christian way is never dreary, for Jesus desires his disciples' joy to be complete. (CSB)

Note that the Nestle Greek text begins a subparagraph at this point. The pronoun "this" is quite frequent in these chapters. For example, in 16:1-4 it occurs four times! One must always determine its antecedent. Here in verse 11, likely the antecedent is verses 1-10. "So that" denotes purpose. "My joy" means "my very own joy." What joy? The joy of going to the Father, to complete His work of redemption and to return to the Father. Jesus found joy in doing the Father's will. But not for Himself. He spoke so that His very own joy might be in them, might be their very own by faith. (Buls)

That becomes clear in the remainder of the verse. "Your joy" means that it becomes theirs. "May be complete" is very strong, "might be fulfilled," "completely realized." The Christian's true joy always

comes from the outside, from Christ. The joys of this life, if in keeping with the ten commandments, are not wrong. There's the joy of the relationship between husband and wife, between parents and children, between friends, the joy of good weather, etc. But, sooner or later, we must realize that the only lasting joy is that of remaining in Jesus' love and keeping His commandments. (Buls)

Jesus' joy stems from completing the work of redemption and returning to His Father. Jesus' joy is in obedience to His Father' will (He will delight in the fear of the Lord," Is. 11:3), not simply for His own benefit, but so that His joy might be in us too. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 2)

hina . . . hē chara humōn plērōthēi, “that your joy may be full.” The disciples are to enjoy Jesus' love for them. That is his purpose in speaking (the *hina* clause). Jesus' commands are not intended to be burdensome, and they are not; they bring nothing but happiness. The purpose of God's commands is to bring people to Jesus. Their joy will eventually be made full. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

Jesus delivers his gifts to us with words. His Word takes what is his and bestows it on the hearer. Here, the gift is joy. When we have Jesus' joy, we have the fullness of joy (our joy “may be full,” *plērōthēi*). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

Not the ephemeral happiness that worldly pleasures bring, but deep and abiding joy of being loved by God through Jesus Christ. (TLSB)

full – Meaning to be fully supplied; perfect. Christ has done it all, there is nothing for us to do but respond. This could be compared to a cup that is filled to overflowing.

Note that *plerotha*, “be fulfilled” or “be complete” is passive; Christian joy comes from outside ourselves. Here is joy, more lasting than the joy of good weather, or the joy between friends, between parents and children, or even between spouses. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 2)

15:12-13 The Father has bestowed his self-giving love on Jesus (v 9). Now Jesus commands that we love one another in the same way. Jesus loves us by laying down his life (v 13) for us. “For,” *hyper*, indicates substitution. Jesus dies in our place. Jesus' commandment is that we love one another in the same sort of sacrificial way (Eph 5:1–2). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

15:12 COMMAND – *entellomai* To charge someone with doing a task. While this is not new, it is the first time that this kind of love is perfectly modeled by Christ. It also appears in verses 14 and 17.

The 26th edition of the Nestle-Aland text introduces another subparagraph with v 12. Even though God's command to love each other is as old as Lev 19:18, Jesus' command is “new” (Jn 13:34). Its newness consists in its fulfillment in its highest sense by him. Never before had ultimate love for others been

demonstrated. Christians especially are the “others” to be loved, and Christians, sadly, sorely need to be told to love one another. Often we are hardest on each other. “As” implies that failure to love one another is a denial of Christ’s love for us. Note the Fifth Petition of the Lord’s Prayer. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

love one another – hina agapate allēlous kathōs ēgapēsa humas, “that you love one another as I have loved you.” This command is not to serve as a summary. This is to be a sample of what his precepts are like. We love just as Jesus loves us, which is very different from the love of the world. We love as we aid people in keeping the faith. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

Here, unlike the 25th edition, the 26th makes a subparagraph. Paragraphing in the Gospel of John not always easy. At any rate, the meaning is: "This is my very own injunction." The divinity of Jesus is implicit in this statement. (Buls)

He doesn't say "that you *like* one another." Love is far greater than self-gratifying liking. This verse is made plain at John 13:34. It's a *new* commandment in the sense that He fulfilled it in its highest sense. (Buls)

"Each other" denotes Christians. Must Christians be told to love each other? They surely must! How often don't Christians detest each other! That should not be. If persisted in, it leads to a denial of what Christ did for the Christian, because Christ says "as I have." He loved me in all my misery. I must love fellow Christians in all their misery. His love covered all my sin. My love must cover the sins of fellow Christians. (Buls)

15:13 Christ’s love was not only in words but also in his sacrificial death. (CSB)

Now Jesus explains how lofty this love is. This verse is an axiom, a generally accepted truth. People stand in awe of someone who will lay down his life in behalf of his friends. It is the greatest sacrifice which a human being can make. But, though such a sacrifice on the part of a mere human being can save no one's soul, Jesus is implicitly reminding us of what He has already said in John 10:11.15.17. It reminds us of 1 John 3:16. (Buls)

This verse does not deny the universal atonement. It does not deny that Jesus died for His enemies. But Jesus is using an axiom in verse 13 which involves friends and now He is about to apply this to the disciples specifically. (Buls)

lay down – Highest expression of love. (TLSB)

tautēs, “this.” This verse tells us how far our love ought to be able to go. Our love can still be like this, like his, without our laying down our physical lives. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

for his friends. Gk *hyper*, “on behalf of”; giving one’s life as a sacrifice for a friend. (TLSB)

Real love will make the ultimate sacrifice for others, as Jesus was about to do the next day. (PBC)

This verse is a generally accepted truth, an axiom. By citing it, Jesus reminds us of the even stronger position he took in Jn 10:11,15, 17. Rather than denying the universal atonement, this verse reinforces it. Jesus laid down his life for his friends and his enemies. Remember 1 Jn 2:2; 3:16. Here, though, he wants to apply the axiom especially to his disciples. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

15:14-15 These verses are the only verses in which Jesus called his disciples his friends. The use of the word is very specialized. It is the usage of Ex 33:11 and James 2:23. Christ's friendship with his disciples is based on common faith in God's promises and obedience of God's commands. Our human friendships arise out of mutually shared interests. We are God's friends when we accept his unilaterally-declared friendship for us. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

Do we sing "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" with an awareness of the higher sense in which Jesus has made us his friends? Jesus has more to say about "friends" in v 15. The slave does not expect an explanation from his master. As our friend, Jesus is eager to keep us fully informed of God's purposes. We need not be omniscient, but we do need to know the fullness of Jesus' commission and ours. See Lenski and Kretzmann on this verse, and cf. Jn 1:18. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

15:14 *friends* – *philos* – It is like a brotherly love (Philadelphia) that goes deeper than that of any other friendship. He has brought us into full fellowship with him. Note that fellowship is – *koino* - a *partnership*, that involves *participation*. They are not just spectators from a distance but are full partners.

Here, in verses 14-15, is the only place in which Jesus called His disciples His friends, but in a very specific sense. Exodus 33:11 speaks of the friendly way in which God spoke to Moses. James 2:23 informs us that Abraham was called (and known as) God's friend because Abraham believed God. Here in John 15:14 Jesus states that His disciples are His friends because He lays down His life for them (verse 13) and rejoices in their doing what He, true God, commands them. How different this is from the meaning which we usually put into the word "friend!" For us this word usually means a person who pleases us. Jesus uses it in a much higher sense. (Buls)

Friendship here is more than a best-buddies, pal-around-together notion. A friend has the best interest of another in mind and will do what is necessary for that person's benefit. The relationship is close and intimate, sharing confidences. Today friendship is often reduced to those who are useful (what have you done for me lately?) or to those who bring good feelings. For Jesus it is far more noble, based on trust, love, sacrifice, and unselfishness. What a Friend we have in Jesus! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

philous, "friends." The disciples were Jesus' friends in the deepest sense of the word. Whatever Jesus heard from the Father he passed on to them. The disciples were never to be slaves who blindly followed orders. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

if you do - The "if" here and the "if" in v 10 are the same. *ean* indicates that if whatever follows it is true, then the second part of the sentence will generally be the case. Here, the order of the clauses is reversed. We could paraphrase the verse in this way: "If you do what I command you, it will generally be the case that you are my friends." In the context of the vine discourse, Jesus is saying again that those

who are attached to him—his friends—will “do what [he] commands” (bear fruit). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

We do not become Christ’s friends through our obedience, but we obey Him because we cherish our relationship with Him. (TLSB)

15:15 *servants ... friends.* A servant is simply an agent, doing what his master commands and often not understanding his master’s purpose. But Jesus takes his friends into his confidence. (CSB)

But He is not yet finished with the word "friend" as applied to the disciples. "No longer do I call you slaves, because the slave does not know what his Master is doing." A slave is a mere instrument. He does what the Master says. That's all. The Master gives the slave no explanations. He merely expects obedience. (Buls)

By the way, the use of "know" is important. The word here means "to know on one's own." (Buls)

It seems presumptuous to think of being Jesus’ friends when we don’t even deserve to be His servants. Still, as His disciples, we serve Jesus and are rightly called His servants. Furthermore, He has taken us servants into His confidence as friends and revealed all the things He had heard from the Father. (PBC)

I have made known to you. From 16:12 we learn that though Jesus had let his disciples know as much as they were able to absorb of the Father’s plan, the revelation was not yet complete. The Spirit would make other things known in due course. (CSB)

He continues: "But you I have called friends because all things which I have heard from My Father, I have made known to you." Of course, Jesus does not mean that they are omniscient. But He does mean that He has plainly told them about His mission for their sake. He hides nothing.

Lenski: This embraces everything pertaining to his mission, that he was to be the light and the life of the world, to make the blind to see, to satisfy the hungry and the thirsty, to make the dead alive, that he is now giving his life for the world, is now returning to the Father, is coming again spiritually (Pentecost), and is returning at the last day to judge the world and to take his own to himself into the heavenly mansions.

Compare John 1:18. We can know God and His revelation only through the incarnate Christ. (Buls)

Kretzmann: The only name that will now fit them is that of friends, for the Master has revealed to them the secrets of the Father, His essence and especially His counsel of love for the salvation of mankind. (Buls)

Servants do what they are commanded out of duty and obligation only (Lk 17:7–10). They have no standing in their master’s household. Jesus, however, is the master’s son. All the words he has “heard” from his Father he has made known to us. Jesus’ words confer on us a similar status with his Father because we have also heard the Father’s words. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

To share in such a way as to certify the truthfulness of the information. A slave expects and gets no more information than just what is needed to do a job. We are fully informed concerning God’s will and our role in carrying it out. Also, we are given all the resources needed to accomplish the task.

15:16 *I chose you ... bear fruit ... ask.*† Disciples normally chose the particular rabbi to whom they wanted to be attached, but it was not so with Jesus’ disciples. He chose them, and for a purpose—the bearing of fruit. We usually desire a strong prayer life in order that we may be fruitful, but here it is the other way around. Jesus enables us to bear fruit as a result of faith, and then the Father will hear our prayers. (CSB)

Does this verse speak of eternal election? The *Formula of Concord, S.D., Article XI, Election*, paragraph 12 reads: (Buls)

It is beyond all doubt that the true understanding or the right use of the teaching of God's eternal foreknowledge will in no way cause or support either impenitence or despair. So, too, Scripture presents this doctrine in no other way than to direct us thereby to the Word (Ephesians 1:13.14; 1 Corinthians 1:21.30.31), to admonish us to repent (2 Timothy 3:16), to urge us to godliness (Ephesians 1:15ff; John 15:16.17.3.4.10.12), to strengthen our faith and to assure us of our salvation (Ephesians 1:9.13.14; John 10:27-30; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-15). (Buls)

Evidently this passage means that election urges us to go, bear fruit and to pray. And, in verse 17, to love one another. (Buls)

Lenski: 'I did choose you' cannot refer to predestination but must refer to the choice of the disciples as the friends whom Jesus selected for himself. (Buls)

Bengel does not mention election here. However, Ylvisaker understands it differently: (Buls)

It is He who has made them what they now are as His friends. And this act in time points back to an election, which is represented in this passage, as well as generally in Scripture, as grounded upon the unmerited mercy of divine love for Christ's sake alone. . . All merit and worthiness (of man) are excluded. . . The Scriptural doctrine concerning election, which is as humiliating (he means 'humbling') as it is rich in comfort (Isaiah 43:21; Ephesians 1:4ff; Romans 8:28-30), is protected, as it were, in this similitude of the vine and the branches. . . We may not explain the salvation of those who remain as branches on the vine except in the free mercy of divine love, nor may we discover the cause of the rejection of the unfruitful branches except in their non-continuance upon the vine where they are exhorted to remain, because such continuance is rendered possible by virtue of the power that is graciously proffered. (Buls)

In other words, Ylvisaker sees election behind the whole chapter. (Buls)

Kretzmann: This choosing was done entirely by Christ. Everything that is done by the believers in faith is the result of the gracious election of Christ. (Buls)

The *Formula of Concord* does not deny that this passage speaks of election. Lenski does. Ylvisaker and Kretzmann plainly state that it does speak of election. If one agrees with Lenski he is forced to say that Jesus is speaking only of the disciples. That cannot be. He is surely speaking of Christians of all ages. Therefore, these *Notes* agree with the interpretation of Ylvisaker and Kretzmann. Everything that the Christian is and will do and be, originates not with himself but with His gracious Savior Who will bring to pass that which He wills. The Christian must lean heavily on that thought. Of ourselves we are totally inadequate. (Buls)

The fact that I am a Christian originates totally with Christ and He will see me through. Here Jesus introduces the items in the Christian's life of sanctification. He appointed and He will supply every need. In this verse Jesus calls attention to four items: (Buls)

4. Christians are chosen to go;
5. They are not inactive;
6. They bear fruit. Verses 1-5 remind us that Jesus is the cause of the fruit;
7. The fruit remains. It will continue even after the Christian dies.

See Revelation 14:13. Note that He calls it "your fruit" though He Himself supplies it. A high compliment and privilege. Christ has appointed the Christian to beseech the Father, concerning any need the Christian has, to grant such request in Jesus' name, which means by virtue of the fact that Jesus is the sole Mediator between the Father and the Christian. (Buls)

Review how the Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article XI, Election, paragraph 12, refers to v 16. The commentators disagree on whether this verse speaks of a temporal appointment or eternal election. The Formula of Concord does not deny that our whole text deals with election. Our Textual Notes disagree with Lenski on this point. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

In the Greek, *humeis* and *egō* are emphatic, stressing Christ's choosing of us. The items of the Christian life of sanctification are introduced by "appointed." The use of *hina* in this verse is more like an infinitive rather than signaling purpose. Jesus emphasizes four items in our appointment: (1) that we go; (2) that we bear fruit; (3) that the fruit be lasting; and (4) that prayers in accord with Jesus' name will be answered. As our friend, Jesus pledges himself as Mediator in all this. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

egō exeleamēn humas, "I chose you." This is emphatic! Jesus chose us; we did not choose him. This, however, is not simply a convenient (and proper) polemic against decision theology. It is a powerful Gospel statement. Anything to which we might presume is uncertain and burdensome, for what if we chose unwisely or chose something for which we were ill-equipped? But when Jesus chooses for a position or task or honor, we can be certain he will be our adequacy. Jesus not only chose the disciples, but he also appointed them. Again, the work of bearing the fruit (*karpon*) is not a burden. Bearing fruit is the mission of the Christian. This verse does not say that if you bear fruit, Jesus will give you whatever

you ask. The Father will aid his children in fruit-bearing. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

“Choose,” *exelazamēn*, comes from the same Greek root as “elect,” *eklektos*. Jesus has chosen us to be attached to him and to bear fruit. Though some will take this verse to mean that we can know our election on the basis of our works (fruit), Jesus intends to comfort us by these words. We are in him because he chose us. Because he has chosen us, we can be confident in prayer. All that we ask in Jesus’ name will be granted to us (see Ps 54:1; Ex 33:19; Num 6:23–27). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

God called them as believers; they depended on divine initiative, not human choice. (TLSB)

Jesus chooses us with a purpose. He expects us to bear fruit and has appointed us to do so – fruit that will last. What fruit will last more than to share Jesus’ love with others? What command of Jesus has more lasting results than His Great Commission to make disciples of all nations. (PBC)

choose – *eklegomai* To make an intentional choice and having various options to choose from. This puts the whole initiative on God. God comes to us, we don’t find him and salvation.

Appointed – To place in a position to accomplish a pre-determined goal.

Fruit – *karpos* – Fruit that can be plucked. Where there is a faith there will also be evidence of that faith in the form of spiritual fruit. (James 2:14-19) See also Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 5:9; and Hebrews 12:11.

15:17 Jesus focuses on love and self-sacrifice as the basis for this relationship among His disciples. (TLSB)

“These things” (NIV: “this”) goes back to v 12 and perhaps further. The repetition of v 17 emphasizes our need to be told again to love one another. How often we see that Jesus was right to be concerned that we keep loving each other. Jesus, the true vine, keeps loving us. When we branches remain connected to his “juice,” we can and shall remain in love for one another, and even learn to love our enemies, as Jesus did. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

entellomai, “I command you.” This is what Jesus tells his disciples to do—a very common theme, indeed (Jn 13:1, 35; 15:4; Rom 12:9; 1 Jn 3:16–18): love for others is love for Jesus. Practice a love that does not desire but gives. Sacrifice is the high watermark of love. God loved: he sent his Son. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

"This" goes back at least to verse 12. "Love" again is infinitival. (Buls)

Once more Jesus stresses the necessity of mutual love among Christians. The very fact that He stresses this so often indicates that even Christians are in danger *not* loving each other. This implies that they have a sinful flesh. We need not worry about whether or not Jesus loves us. But we do need to be concerned that we love each other. That can be done because He is the Vine. Mutual love among Christians is the highest form of fruit-bearing. If Christians don't love each other, how can they love their enemies? (Buls)

Jesus intends for his words to bear the fruit of love. In this context, Jesus is speaking in particular about the love that is shared between those who are in him, fellow branches on the vine. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

15:1–17 Christ is the true vine, and His disciples are the branches, vitally connected to Him and spontaneously bearing fruit under His purifying care. Christians must love one another as friends, not regard one another as enemies. By grace, God has dwelt among us in His Son (1:14) and has joined us together in a fellowship of self-giving love. • Hear the prayers of Your faithful people, who desire to do Your will, dear Lord. Amen. (TLSB)