

# The Gospel of John: Text and Topics

## *How To Use This Workbook*

This workbook on the Gospel of John has a mixture of textual and topical lessons.

- Approximately two thirds of the lessons, those with a red corner on the first page of the lesson, cover a portion of the text of the gospel. These lessons include a timeline to show the approximate time in the ministry of Jesus in which the events of the text belong. Each of these lessons also has a number of colorful symbols to the left of the lesson text that point out common topics that are found throughout John.
- The remaining third of the lessons have a green corner on the first page and cover topics or themes that are important in the gospel. You can match the topical lessons to instances of that topic throughout John by flipping through the workbook and finding where the symbol appears in the textual lessons.
- All lessons contain a summary of key points and several questions from the lesson. The questions in red are research questions and require a little more digging in the Bible or using a concordance or computer search tool (many free tools are available online). Many of the answers to the research questions can be found in the "Other Reading" section below them.

Whenever a Bible reference appears in a lesson, if it does not have a book name included you may assume that it is from the Gospel of John. When parallel passages about the same event from different gospels are cited, two parallel vertical lines ( || ) are used.

The short quotations from the text that make up part of the title for each lesson are taken from the New American Standard Bible.

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My prayer is that this workbook may help you understand Christ more fully and serve Him more completely.

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# The Purpose of John: Producing Belief

## "That You May Believe" (11:15; 20:31)

### Main Points:

#### Belief >>

- John wrote the gospel in order to produce faith.
- Jesus used miraculous signs and unparalleled teaching to bring men to belief.
- Some men refused to believe despite overwhelming evidence.

John told us exactly why he wrote the gospel: so that readers could believe that Jesus is the Christ. John was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write in such a way that he kept his focus on what would help others believe.

### Statements of Purpose

Two verses near the end of the book make its purpose clear:

- [19:35-37](#) immediately follows the account of the death of Christ. John gave us his eyewitness testimony of Jesus' death and included Old Testament prophecies of it. [Psalm 34:20](#) may provide the words of the quote. Not only would God take care of the righteous in the time of the Psalmist, He would also see that the Messiah would fulfill this statement about having no broken bones. We also see a connection to [Exodus 12:46](#), which describes the Passover sacrifice. The passage speaks of not breaking any of the bones of the Passover lamb. Christ was given as a Passover sacrifice (1 Corinthians 5:7) to forgive sins and save His people from death. The fulfillment of these passages centuries after they had been written provided proof that Jesus was from God; only God could have caused that to have happened. That is a solid basis for belief. John also quoted from [Zechariah 12:10](#) to show that Jesus was the one who would be "pierced" in that prophecy.
- [20:30-31](#) says that John recorded some (only a small number) of the signs Jesus had performed so that his readers would believe that He is the Christ and have life. The miraculous signs, like the fulfilled prophecies, prove that Jesus came from God and that His teachings had God's approval. We will study these signs next.

### Reasons To Believe

#### • Miraculous Signs

Twice John's purpose, "that you may believe", is seen in recording the resurrection of Lazarus. Before going to Bethany, but after Lazarus had died, Jesus said He was glad that He and His disciples had not been present for the death because it would give His disciples an opportunity to believe (11:15). At Lazarus' grave, Jesus prayed aloud so that all those around Him could understand that God was hearing His prayer and demonstrating His approval of Jesus when Lazarus was raised from the dead (11:42). Later we read that many of the Jews believed in Jesus because of Lazarus (12:9-11).

In the next few chapters, which took place shortly before Jesus' arrest and crucifixion, John provided more miraculous signs that would cause belief in Him. Jesus predicted Judas' betrayal (without naming him publicly) in 13:18-19 so that the rest of the disciples could later believe in Him. They learned that Jesus not only was fulfilling prophecy but that He could also prophesy Himself. Jesus also predicted His return to His Father in 14:28-29, during the discourse before His arrest and crucifixion. His disciples would see that His knowledge could only have come from God and His teaching about His identity would be confirmed.

Consider what is said to the nobleman in 4:46-48. His son was sick at Capernaum as he went to Cana to see Jesus. Jesus lamented the fact that many had to see signs and wonders in order to believe. This man had a growing faith (4:49-53) and did not have to see the sign physically fulfilled before his eyes in order to believe Jesus. Jesus would tell Thomas in 20:24-29 that those who would believe without having to see for

themselves, as Thomas claimed he had needed, would be blessed. Thomas had the opportunity to see but many would not. We will not see Jesus in the flesh or see His miracles personally today, so we must accept the genuine testimony of those who did (19:35; 1 John 1:1-3).

Nicodemus understood that Jesus' signs confirmed His teaching (3:2), but Jesus' teaching itself was also a reason that men believed in Him.

### • Unparalleled Teaching

In 4:16-19, Jesus had shown the Samaritan woman at the well that He had miraculous knowledge. She called others to come and hear Him (4:28-30). The Samaritans in that village believed first on the basis of the woman's words, prompted by Jesus' supernatural knowledge, but then believed further when they had heard Jesus speak (4:39-42). Not only miraculous signs but the quality of Jesus' teaching caused them to believe.

In 16:25-30, the disciples believed Jesus words and understood that He knew all things.

Today we must accept Jesus' teaching and study it carefully. If we search the Scriptures honestly, we will come to understand that Jesus' teaching must be from God (7:14-18).

### Not All Men Believed

Even though Jesus' teaching was evidence for believing in Him, some men refused the evidence even as He spoke (7:19-26). Men then were capable of having compelling evidence “that you may believe” and refusing it. Men still are capable of that today. Jesus taught that those who had seen the signs bore the responsibility to believe in Him as a result of them – if they would not believe, they would be sinning and would remain in their sins (15:22-25). We can find many examples in John of men who had reason to believe but did not.

In 6:67-69, many of the disciples turned away from Christ after not getting the earthly king, the signs, or the food that they were after. They had seen abundant evidence in the Feeding of the Five Thousand (6:5-14) and had reason to believe that Jesus had walked on water (6:16-25), but they were blinded by their own desires (6:26). Peter and the other apostles believed Jesus and continued to follow Him because they knew that Jesus was from God and that He spoke the truth. They were willing to trust Him completely. We need to face the challenges in our life with faith, still following Jesus when we do not get everything that we want. John gives us the opportunity to have a belief like Peter's.

In 10:24-26, Jesus told some of the Jews that they did not believe in Him because they were not His sheep. They did not accept His works, which bore testimony for Him. John gives us the testimony we need to believe. In a short while the men who were not His sheep were attempting to stone Him, and He told them to believe Him because of His works before slipping away from them (10:37-39).

A faith which is not sufficient to save is seen in 12:42-43, in which some leaders “believed in Him” but refused to stand up for Him because of what it would cost them among other men. They had evidence and acknowledged it, but they refused to love the truth enough to suffer for it. We must not be like that.

### Christians Help To Bring Belief Today

Christians today also provide evidence to the world that Jesus came from God. Christ prayed in 17:20-23 for His future disciples as well as the ones He had taught personally. He said that if they were united in truth as He was with His Father, many in the world would believe that He had come from God. This unity among Christians would complement the teaching done by Christians. We must live with unity in mind!

We will begin studying the text of John and read the great passage about Jesus as the Word in the next lesson.

## **Questions**

After Jesus had spoken with the woman at the well in John 4, many of the Samaritans believed in Him as the Savior of the world. What did they say in 4:42 had caused them to believe in Him?

What did the man who had been born blind need to know in order to believe in the Son of God (9:35-38)?

In 1 John 5:13, what did John tell his readers that they could know once they had believed in the Son of God?

In Exodus 4:1-5, what did the LORD enable Moses to do so that the Israelites would believe that God had appeared to him?

Consider the point made above about Christ's having no bones broken, like the Passover lamb (John 19:36, alluding to Exodus 12:46). Where in the New Testament is Christ explicitly called our Passover sacrifice? (Hint: Use a concordance and look for "Passover" in Paul's epistles.)

In John 6:28-30, many of the people who had been at the Feeding of the Five Thousand came to Capernaum. Jesus told them to believe in Him. They asked for a sign so that they could believe, but they did not get what they had requested. What was the problem with their request? Look in other verses in Chapter 6.

## **Other Readings**

John 15:22-25; Mark 15:32; 1 Corinthians 5:7-8

# John 1:1-18

## "The Word Became Flesh" (1:14)



### Main Points:

- Jesus Christ, the Word, was and is fully divine.
- God followed His plan in sending John the Baptist and then Jesus.
- Grace and truth, which are greater than the Law, came through Christ.

The Gospel of John begins with a burst of light – the light that reveals the Messiah whom the whole Old Testament anticipated.

### 1:1-3 The Eternity of Christ

#### Deity

John's gospel begins by telling us of the divine nature of Christ. He was there “in the beginning”. Not only was He in existence before the universe came into being, but He had created all things in it. Knowing those facts helps us to understand that He was and is God. He has always existed and always will. By saying that the Word was both “with God” and “God” John teaches clearly that the Father and the Son are distinct but are equal in nature. Some try to say that 1:1 says that Christ was “a god” instead of “God”. That is wrong for several reasons. First, it does not fit the rules of grammar for the New Testament's original language, Greek. Secondly, the entire gospel makes the deity (Godhood) of Christ a theme. Some people get so involved in trying to justify a poor translation of 1:1 that they miss the point of the whole book! Finally, the context of this section and the entire gospel show that an eternal, unique, creative being was sent to earth, and that confirms this simple statement of the deity of Christ.

Christ's deity is confirmed in Colossians 1:15-20. Jesus is there presented as the Creator of all things, as John 1:3 states. Why this is particularly important is because Colossians 1:15 is often used by the those who deny the deity of Christ to claim that Jesus is a created being and thus not God. Their error is to think that “firstborn” necessarily means that someone was created at a certain time (in Exodus 4:22, Moses gave God's declaration to Pharaoh about Israel His firstborn, though they were not the first nation created but one specially chosen; see also Psalm 89:26-27). The Colossians passage also teaches that Jesus was the exact “image” of the Father.

Other passages in John's writings reinforce the truths about Jesus' eternity or divine nature found here. In 1 John 1:1-2, John starts in a strikingly similar way, emphasizing Jesus as the Word, as being eternal, and as being with God. In John 17:5, Jesus speaks of His close relationship with God and having been with God before the creation of the world.

### 1:4-13 The Light and His Witness

#### Light

Jesus means so much because He alone gives spiritual light to man. The light was in Him, not reflected from somewhere else. Most men will not accept that light, but that does not diminish the work of Jesus and those who proclaim Him. Note that 5:26 says He has that light in Himself; the light was not given to Him as it would have been to an ordinary man,



even one of the apostles who had received and could transmit spiritual gifts.

### **Life**

Jesus also gives life to men, and 1 John 5:11-12 illustrates that the life is in Him; again this is not something mere men could say of themselves. All who come to Him can share in that life. John (not the apostle and author, but the one known as John the Baptist) was given a special commission by God to proclaim Jesus as the light, which is the subject of the next part of the text. He bore witness of Jesus. Malachi 3:1 had prophesied John's role in announcing the Lord's coming. Isaiah 49:6 had promised that the Servant, Jesus in prophecy, would bring light not only to the Jews but to the whole world. No wonder that 1 John 2:8 said that the true light was shining.

### **Witness**

### **World**

Though Jesus had made the world (Hebrews 1:2), most of the world rejected Him then and still does. Though the Jewish nation had been specially prepared by God to bring Him into the world, most of the Jews rejected Him. The rejection by the Jews (but not the Gentiles) of Antioch of Pisidia in Acts 13:46 illustrates this. Rejecting light brings judgment. Those of every nation who accept and obey Jesus become God's children. Their being His children does not depend upon their biological parents (as the Jews' special status did), but upon God's will. 1 John 3:1-2 combines the ideas of being God's children and being rejected by the world. See also Romans 8:15; Galatians 3:26; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23.

### **1:14-18      God in the Flesh**

### **Glorify**

It is astounding to think that the all-powerful God who had existed eternally, had divine glory, and was responsible for the creation of all things could become one of us and live as a human being, but that is exactly what happened. John pointed men to Him and declared His divine nature. To those who looked beyond outward appearances, Jesus revealed divine truth and showed divine favor. Men who followed Him learned that He was greater than Moses and the Law. (John makes the same basic point about the Law that Paul did in Romans and Galatians, but in a different way.) Jesus did not only speak truth, He was the truth. Though a man, He taught men who God was, and only He could do so. Note that the truth's coming through Christ would be confirmed when Jesus established Himself as the way, the truth, and the life in 14:6.

### **Law**

Colossians 2:9-10 makes the point that Jesus was fully God though in a body on earth.

Hebrews 2:14-18 shows us that He lived and suffered in a body in order to defeat the devil and rescue us. That was how it had to be, as painful as it was for Him.

The very fact that John says no one has seen God while affirming both Jesus' deity and fleshly body shows that He is speaking of something deeper than physical sight. Moses saw some of God's glory in Exodus 33:20, but John in 1 John 4:12 could still rightly say that no man had seen God. Jesus has seen the Father (John 6:46), and He has told us what we can understand of the Father.

### **Father**

In the next lesson we will see what John said about Jesus and how some of the first men to follow Jesus came to learn from Him.

## **Questions**

What is Jesus called in Revelation 19:13 that is similar to what He is called in John 1:1-2?

Consider John 3:19. Why do so many who are in darkness fail to understand Jesus, the light of the world?

[From previous page] (1:4-5)?

What was John's purpose regarding the Christ (1:6-7)? What did he say about the Christ in 1:15, and what did His statement there imply?

What did Jesus give to all who believed in Him (1:12-13)?

What is shown to be higher than the Law of Moses in 1:17? What does this imply about Jesus Christ?

Which other book of the Bible starts as John does? What similarities can you see between the subject of that book's first verse and the beginning of John?

Find some other passages in which “only begotten” (the phrase may vary by translation) is used. What does it mean in those passages?

### ***Other Readings***

John 17:5; Genesis 1:1-2; Malachi 3:1; Colossians 1:15-20; 1 John 1:1-2



# John 1:19-51

## "Behold, the Lamb of God" (1:29, 36)



### Main Points:

- The coming of Jesus Christ fulfilled prophecy.
- Jesus is superior to all others.
- Christians must invite others to "come and see" about Jesus.

Here the story of Jesus' life begins in earnest, beginning with John's testimony. We also see examples of people who brought others to Jesus in this chapter, something Christians must still be trying to do today.

### 1:19-27 John's Mission of Preparation

John the Baptist had been mentioned as far back as 1:6. Here his role would be discussed more thoroughly. When questioned, he immediately told the priests and Levites that he was not the Christ, showing humility. Acts 13:25 restates his proper denial, but Luke 3:15 shows how easy it might have been for him to try to usurp the title. He also denied being Elijah or the Prophet. John was like Elijah, but was not him in a literal sense, which was apparently what the priests and Levites were asking. Note that Jesus would ask a similar question about who He really was in Matthew 16:13; Mark 8:27; Luke 9:18.

#### Deity

#### Baptism

John did claim to fulfill Isaiah 40:3 in preparing the way for the LORD (also in Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4). Indirectly, he was testifying to Christ's deity and identity as the LORD. John told his listeners that he was baptizing because another who was greater was coming (John's baptism would reveal God's Son). We see who that someone was in the next section.

### 1:28-34 John's Identification of Jesus

#### World

#### Spirit

#### Witness

Jesus came to John while he was working beyond the Jordan River. John immediately announced that Jesus would take away the sin of the world as the Lamb of God, that He was greater than John (as in 1:27), and that He had existed before John. 1 John 2:2 says that Jesus is the propitiation for the sins of the world. The concern with the whole world shows Jesus' universal importance. Also, John said that Jesus had existed before him; though John was physically older, Jesus had existed forever (as in 1:1-3).

John's baptism had been part of God's plan for revealing the Christ, but it seems that John had not always known that his relative Jesus was the Christ. The Holy Spirit had appeared at Christ's baptism (Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22), and Christ would baptize in the Holy Spirit. John's witnessing of the Holy Spirit's descent upon Jesus was part of what allowed him to bear witness to Jesus as the Son of God.

By calling Jesus the Son of God (which would be repeated in Nathanael's confession in 1:49), John pointed to Jesus' special relationship with God the Father.

### 1:35-42 John's Disciples, Andrew and Peter, Follow Jesus

John's statements about Jesus were received with interest by some of John's own disciples.

Andrew was one of the two who left and followed Jesus, the Lamb of God. This apparently happened before Jesus had called Peter, Andrew, James, and John (the writer of the gospel) away from fishing in Matthew 4:18. Jesus is mentioned as the Lamb of God in passages such as Exodus 12:3; Isaiah 53:7; 1 Peter 1:19; Revelation 5:6.

Jesus spoke to them for some time after telling them to “come and see” where He was staying (compare Philip in 1:46). Andrew told his brother Simon that he had found the Messiah, or Christ, and brought him to Jesus. Jesus gave him a new name, Cephas (Peter is the Greek name that corresponded to the Aramaic Cephas).

### 1:43-51 Jesus and Nathanael

The process of having one follower bring another continued with Philip. Jesus told Philip to follow Him and Philip quickly invited Nathanael. Despite a discouraging response (21:2 tells us that Nathanael was from Cana, another city in Galilee), Philip invited Nathanael to “come and see” about Him. Philip would later attempt to bring Greeks to see Jesus in 12:21-23. Nathanael did come and see, and Jesus showed that He knew his previous activities (sitting under a fig tree) and his heart (guileless, probably in the sense of being candid and blunt).

**King**

**Belief>>**

What He said to Nathanael in 1:47-49 reflected miraculous knowledge. Nathanael immediately proclaimed Jesus the King of Israel and Son of God. Nathanael was brought to belief by Jesus' knowledge of him, but Jesus promised that he would see greater things.

#### • The Triple Testimony of Law, Prophecy, and Miracles

**Law**

Notice that Jesus used several different and important lines of evidence to show who He was in these verses. Philip referred to the testimony of the Old Testament **Law** as seen in fulfilled **prophecy**. Jesus showed **miraculous** knowledge of Nathanael's character and activities. These three elements are important in proving that Jesus is the Son of God.

Jesus told Nathanael that he would also see angels ascending and descending upon Him. That resembled Jacob's vision in Genesis 28:11-15.

In our next lesson we will study Jesus' changing water into wine and His cleansing the temple in Chapter 2.

## Questions

In Matthew 11:10-15, Jesus said that John was Elijah. In what sense was Jesus speaking, and in what sense were John and his questioners speaking in 1:21?

What did Paul explain about John's baptism to some disciples at Ephesus in Acts 19:1-5?

What do we learn about John's belief in Jesus' superiority in the account of His baptism in Matthew 3:13-17?

In 1:41-42, John translates the Hebrew or Aramaic terms “Messiah” and “Cephas” into Greek. What might this indicate about the first people to read the Gospel of John?

Compare Philip's invitation to Nathanael in 1:45 with Andrew's invitation to Peter in 1:41. Philip described Jesus with different words, but was what he said about Jesus different than what Andrew had said?

In 1:21, John the Baptist denied being “the Prophet”. The priests and Levites were probably thinking of what Moses had said in Deuteronomy 18:15-19. To whom did that prophecy refer?  
How can you know for sure? (That is, where is reference to it found in the New Testament?)

Where in Acts 1-2 do we find out how Jesus baptized men in the Holy Spirit?

***Other Readings***

Matthew 3:13-17; Acts 13:23-25; 19:1-5

# John 2

## "This Beginning of His Signs" (2:11)



### Main Points:

- Miracles should cause men to believe in Jesus.
- Jesus used miracles to verify His identity and validate His message.
- Jesus was given all authority upon the earth.

In Chapter 1 John had recognized Jesus and a few disciples had begun to follow Him. Chapter 2 shows Jesus acting in an increasingly public way.

### 2:1-12 The First Miracle

Shortly after the events of Chapter 1, Mary, Jesus, and His disciples attended a wedding in Cana. Weddings were much longer celebrations then than now, stretching out over days. The hosts ran out of wine.

When Mary had told Jesus this, He said that His hour had not yet come (see 7:6-8, 30; 8:20; later uses of the phrase show that His hour had come). That may sound like a refusal to us, but it was not and Mary did not take it that way. He was not going to broadcast His abilities for everyone to see. The help that He gave was less conspicuous, known to the servants but not to the master of the feast. He turned the water in the stone containers into wine. Because of this miraculous sign, Jesus' disciples believed in Him. Though the miracle did not draw a tremendous amount of attention to itself as it was being done, it manifested His glory to those who had observed it.

**Belief>>**

**Glorify**

Many signs are given throughout the gospel of John to show that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (20:30-31). These signs are in addition to the occasions when Jesus showed a knowledge that could have only come from God (4:16-19; 11:11-14) and the other allusions to His miracles (2:23; 6:2; 11:47). While Jesus' extraordinary abilities had been mentioned before, John counted this as the first sign.

Jesus was not in any way condoning drunkenness by making wine. While the same Greek word for wine is sometimes used negatively in the New Testament (Ephesians 5:18; 1 Timothy 3:8; Titus 2:3, Revelation 14:8; 17:2; 18:3), it is also used positively (1 Timothy 5:23 about Timothy's health) and in illustrations (Matthew 9:17; Mark 2:22; Luke 5:37-38). We can be sure that Jesus did not make something that would cause men harm (Romans 14:21) and we cannot use this as an excuse to drink the powerful alcoholic beverages of today.

### 2:13-22 Jesus and the Temple

After ending a description of Jesus' time in Galilee, John moved to His celebration of the Passover. Observing the Passover had been commanded in Deuteronomy 16:16 and elsewhere, and we see Jesus' observing it or noting its coming here and in 6:4; 11:55; and possibly 5:1.

### Jesus Cleanses the Temple

#### Father

Jesus drove out those who sold animals for sacrifice and exchanged money in the temple (not in the building itself but in the courts around it, which was bad enough). Some writers of that time tell us of abuses in the sale of sacrificial animals there, but even aside from that we can see how inappropriate conducting such business in the temple courts was. It would have been a distraction to true worshipers. Churches today should take note. Jesus claimed that the temple was His Father's house, and He took upon Himself the job of cleansing it. The cleansing prompted the disciples to think of Psalm 69:9 regarding zeal for the house of God.

### Jesus Prophesies His Resurrection

#### Signs

The Jews (possibly some of those benefiting from the trade at the temple) asked Him for a sign that would confirm His right to do such things. Jesus' sign was that He would raise the "temple" after three days. At that time the physical temple had been undergoing renovations for forty-six years, starting under Herod the Great, and would continue being renovated until shortly before its destruction in the Jewish Revolt (AD 70). Jesus was prophesying of His death and the resurrection of His body on the third day. It was the ultimate sign that He had the authority to cleanse His Father's house. Other signs would also be mentioned in 2:23 at that same Passover.

This misunderstood statement would be thrown back at Jesus at His trial and on the cross (Matthew 26:61; 27:40). His disciples would understand Him properly after the resurrection. Colossians 2:9, which speaks of the fullness of deity in Christ, also shows how deity "dwelled" in His body, making the temple analogy appropriate.

### 2:23-25 Many Believe at Passover

#### Belief>>

Many people believed in Jesus at the Passover after having seen His signs. We see Jesus' actions' becoming increasingly public knowledge in these first two chapters.

#### Deity

Jesus knew all men, and knew them more completely than any man could. While that is not an explicit reference to His being God the Son, that Jesus knew all of what was within all men is strong evidence for His deity. It fits with 1:1 and many other statements that indicate that He was God in the flesh. Another example of Jesus' complete knowledge is 6:64, which shows that Jesus knew which disciples were not fully committed to Him.

Our next lesson is a study about the miracles that Jesus performed and what they should teach us.

### ***Did Jesus Cleanse the Temple More than Once?***

The cleansing of the temple here in John was probably at a different Passover than the cleansing mentioned in Matthew 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-17; Luke 19:45-46. The other gospels have Him cleansing the temple just days before His crucifixion, but John has it in the second chapter of the gospel with events that occurred early in His ministry. John 2:23 says that many people believed in Him during the Passover feast because they were seeing His signs, but at the final Passover festival at which He was killed, His crucifixion occurred before the Passover itself had really begun. Jesus likely cleansed the temple once at the beginning of His period of public teaching (John) and then again three years later at the end of the period (Matthew, Mark, and Luke).

## ***Questions***

In which cities do we see Jesus with His mother and His disciples in 2:1, 12?  
Where did He travel in 2:13?

According to 20:30-31, what should people believe because Jesus has performed signs such as turning water into wine?

What did Jesus use to drive out those who sold the animals and exchanged money by the temple (2:15)?

What did Jesus call the temple in 2:16?

How was Jesus' response to the Jews' request for a sign in 2:18-21 similar to His response to the Pharisees and Sadducees regarding a sign in Matthew 16:1-4?

Read Psalm 69. How was the Psalmist's situation similar to or different from Jesus' situation at the cleansing of the temple in 2:13-17 (see Psalm 69:9)?

What else in Psalm 69 accurately predicts something about Jesus' life?

Using a Bible dictionary or perhaps a commentary on John, try to find out how much longer the temple renovations mentioned in 2:20 would last (assuming that the events in the chapter occurred around AD 28).

## ***Other Readings***

Psalm 69:5-12; Matthew 21:12-14; 26:59-61



# Miracles in John

## "The Glory of God" (11:40)

### Main Points:

#### **Miracle**

- Jesus' miraculous works extended well beyond the seven we study here.
- Jesus' miracles are one reason to believe in Him.
- Jesus' miracles demonstrated a unique mastery over everything on earth.

We begin this lesson on miracles just after reading of the first miracle in Cana (2:1-11) in the previous lesson. This lesson will help us to see why Jesus did miracles and what they prove.

There will also be a lesson on Jesus' signs near the end of our study so that we can look at all of the signs in more detail. We will see that there were many more supernatural displays of Jesus' power and authority than just the well-known miracles that we are discussing today.

Not many of the miracles are recorded elsewhere. Only the Feeding of the Five Thousand and Walking on the Water (6:1-21; Matthew 14:13-33; Mark 6:33-52; Luke 9:10-17) and Jesus' resurrection (20:6-9; Matthew 28:2-6; Mark 16:4-6; Luke 24:1-7) are mentioned in any gospels other than John's.

### More Than the Seven

Sometimes people speak of the Gospel of John as being built around seven miracles. John tells us of many more miraculous events than that. The list of seven does not usually include the most important one of all, Christ's resurrection, or the catch of fish that came after it (21:1-11). It does not usually include all of the instances of healing the sick, such as the one that John mentions in passing in 6:2. It does not usually include the miraculous knowledge that He displayed with Nathanael and the Samaritan woman at the well or His knowledge of Lazarus' death (1:48-50; 4:16-19; 11:6-15).

John himself also tells us repeatedly that many other things could have been added to His account (20:30-31; 21:25). We should not forget that John tells us that what he has recorded for us is enough.

### The Seven

#### • Turning Water into Wine (2:1-11)

When Jesus turned water into wine at the wedding feast in Cana, He did more than help the hosts avoid embarrassment. He demonstrated His glory. No man who was not approved by God could have done it, and for that reason His disciples believed in Him there. Miraculous signs had the purpose of causing belief.

#### • Healing the Nobleman's Son (4:46-54)

The second miracle also had connections to Cana. Jesus was there when a nobleman or royal official came to Him. Though the man's son was near death in Capernaum, Jesus healed the son from a distance in Cana. When the nobleman had returned and found that his son had gotten better, he and his household believed in Jesus.

#### • Healing the Lame Man at Bethesda (5:1-9)

Jesus was at a feast when He saw a man who had been lame for thirty-eight years. The man was lying at a pool called Bethesda in Jerusalem. Jesus healed him, and the healing was so immediate and complete that he could suddenly walk and carry his pallet or mat. This led (perhaps immediately) to an exchange with the Jews in which Jesus demonstrated that the signs He had done (5:36), along with the witness of the Father, the

Old Testament, and John, who had baptized Him, showed that He was speaking the truth. Jesus had the power of judgment (5:21-29).

- **Feeding the Five Thousand (6:1-14)**

Jesus saw a great crowd coming to Him near the Sea of Galilee. From five loaves of bread and two fish He made enough food to feed thousands.

- **Walking on the Water (6:16-21)**

After His disciples had already rowed several miles across the Sea of Galilee, Jesus came to them by walking on the water. Jesus exhorted them not to be afraid; they needed to trust His power.

- **Healing the Man Born Blind (9:1-7)**

Jesus healed a man who had been born blind by making clay from the dirt and having the man wash at the pool of Siloam. Jesus did not meet him again immediately after he had been healed. The man came to understand that Jesus was a prophet (9:17), was not a sinner (9:25), and was from God (9:33). When the man learned who Jesus was, he believed in Him and worshiped Him (9:38). Jesus' statement about being the light of the world in 9:5 came in reference to the man blind from birth.

- **Raising Lazarus from the Dead (11:33-45)**

Jesus came to the home of His friend Lazarus four days after he had died. Jesus prayed to God and called to Lazarus, who came out of the tomb. Jesus had done this so that those who were watching would believe, and many of the Jews did believe as a result. That had been His purpose from the beginning (11:15). Even His enemies had to admit that it was a miracle (11:47).

### **Things Said in the Accounts of the Miracles That Indicate Their Purpose**

We see repeatedly that Jesus' miracles caused belief:

- His disciples (2:11) and the nobleman's household (4:53) believed as a result, even though both groups had shown evidence of some faith in Him before (as in 4:50).
- The feeding of the five thousand men convinced witnesses that Jesus had a message from God (6:14).
- The man who had been blind at birth believed and worshiped Him (9:38).
- Many of the Jews believed in Him because they had seen Lazarus after he had been raised (11:45; 12:10-11).

One of Jesus' claims of deity (5:17) came in the context of the controversy over healing on the Sabbath. His miracle verified His claim.

However, we also must understand that miracles did not force people to believe.

- The crowd that sought Jesus after the Feeding of the Five Thousand was not sincere in its interest in Him (6:26, 66).
- Jesus' healing the lame man on the Sabbath led some Jews to seek to kill Him (5:10-18).
- Some Jewish authorities questioned, reviled, and then ostracized the man who had been born blind (9:18-34).
- The Pharisees and others reacted to the signs (which they admitted to have been real) by planning to kill Jesus and those associated with Him (11:46-53; 12:10-11).

Our next lesson (3:1-36) begins with Nicodemus' acknowledgment that Jesus had come from God because of the miraculous works He had done. The miracles were serving their purpose. Jesus would then teach more about who He was and what men must do to be part of His kingdom.

## **Questions**

Did the nobleman have some belief in Jesus before believing in 4:53? How can we know this?

After healing the man at Bethesda, what did Jesus say bore witness to Him in 5:36?

With whom did the crowd at the Feeding of the Five Thousand identify Jesus in 6:14? Were they correct?

What did the man who had been blind since birth conclude about Jesus in 9:30-33?

What does Hebrews 2:1-4 tell us was the purpose of signs and miracles? What does the passage tell us to be careful to do?

Find an instance in which Jesus spoke of judgment against certain cities because they had seen miracles but did not repent. (Hint: Look in Matthew.)

Read Matthew 13:53-58, Mark 6:1-6, or Luke 10:13-16. What circumstances in those accounts made Jesus decide not to perform miracles? What does that say about the purpose of miracles?

## **Other Readings**

Matthew 11:20-23; Hebrews 2:1-4

# John 3

## "Born of Water and the Spirit" (3:5)



### Main Points:

- All men need to be born again to be in Christ's kingdom.
- God's love would be seen in His sacrificing His Son for the world.
- The Father had given all things into Jesus' hand.

In this chapter we see Jesus teaching Nicodemus, a leading Pharisee, about entering the kingdom of God and God's great love in sending Him, His Son, into the world. We also see John's humble testimony of Jesus' greater part in God's plan and how eternal life would be found only in Him.

### 3:1-8 Nicodemus and Being Born Again

Nicodemus was a ruler and a Pharisee. That he came to see Jesus at night suggests that he did not want it known that he was saying the things to Jesus that he was. He began by acknowledging Jesus' divine approval. The signs were the reason that he knew that God approved; no one could have done those signs without teaching the truth. The man born blind would affirm that in 9:33 and Peter would confirm it on Pentecost in Acts 2:22.

#### Signs

Jesus spoke of being born again, saying it was absolutely essential to see or enter the kingdom of God. Note that 1 Peter 1:23 shows that Christians are born through the seed of the word of God. Nicodemus at first understood (or misunderstood) this literally. Physical birth a second time was impossible; Jesus was speaking of a spiritual birth.

#### King

#### Life

#### Baptism

Some try to argue that the being "born of water" in 3:5 is not baptism. We will study why it does refer to baptism in the next lesson.

In 3:8, Jesus seems to be saying that a Christian will not be one who is easily identifiable physically, but observers will see the effects of a life led by the Holy Spirit. Today, Christians do not necessarily look different than others, but their lives should bear witness to the difference between them and those of the world.

### 3:9-13 The Witness of Heavenly Things

Nicodemus still did not understand what Jesus had said. Jesus expected more of him in his position as one of the leaders of the people who, as a Pharisee, would have been considered quite careful about the Law. Jesus spoke of the witness He was bearing with another. The other witness was not John the Baptist because the kinds of things Jesus was discussing were not mentioned by John. Jesus referred to the Father as the one with whom He was bearing witness. If Nicodemus had failed to grasp the truth about the earthly things that had been discussed to that point, he would not understand the greater heavenly things. Jesus also said that He had descended from Heaven, which explained how He had personally witnessed heavenly things. It was probably also a reference to His deity.

#### Witness

### 3:14-17 Jesus Was Sent To Die and To Save

**Belief>>**

Even at this early stage Jesus knew of His purpose: dying for all men. He would be lifted up, that is, on a cross, in order to give eternal life to all who would believe. Moses had raised the bronze serpent and all who had looked to it would live (Numbers 21:8-9); all who look to Jesus today will also live, but Jesus offers eternal, not physical, life.

**Father**

**World**

God's primary purpose in sending Jesus was to save the world (Luke 9:56). The reason God the Father did this was because He loved the world. Any father who cares about his children will see how poignant these statements are. We cannot fathom how painful sending His Son must have been for the Father.

**Life**

Jesus' saying that He had come to save and not to judge did not imply that Jesus would never judge anyone, as 5:22 will make clear (see also 2 Corinthians 5:10). Those who refuse God's salvation will be judged, but it will not be a lack of love from the Father or the Son that leads to their condemnation. Those who respond to God's love will have eternal life.

### 3:18-21 Judgment for Not Loving the Light

**Judge**

**Light**

While Jesus' purpose at that time was not to judge man in the sense of condemning Him, there would be a judgment. Those who would not believe in Him as God's unique Son, the Christ, would be judged. They would be judged because they loved what was wrong more than what was right. When men do not want their deeds known (loving darkness), it is usually because what they are doing is wrong and they know it. One who is acting in a righteous way is confident enough to let his deeds be known. Evil men would reject Jesus the true Light (1:9-11) in His life on earth, and evil men still reject Him today.

The word for “only begotten” in Greek often means just “only”. It is used in an ordinary way to describe a member of a family in Luke 7:12; 8:42; 9:38. Isaac is described by it (though he was not Abraham's only son physically) in Hebrews 11:17. The word is also used in a special way of Jesus here and in 1:14-18 as well as 1 John 4:9.

### 3:22-30 John Reiterates His Role

#### • Jesus Baptizes More

**Baptism**

Jesus returned to Judea (though where He had been is not explicitly stated). He was spending time with His disciples and baptizing people. John the Baptist was well-known for baptizing those who accepted his call to repentance. John's disciples said that Jesus was baptizing more people than John.

#### • John Must Decrease

John responded to his disciples' statement by not only acknowledging the fact but stating that it had to be so. John was not the Christ – Jesus was, and that was divinely determined – but John could rejoice about Jesus and accept that his role, which was connected to announcing Christ's coming, was diminishing.

**Witness**

**Spirit**

**Father**

**Belief>>**

**Life**

### 3:31-36 Jesus Is Above All and Has All

John spoke of Jesus as being from Heaven. Jesus bore witness of the heavenly things that He had seen. God did not limit the Holy Spirit's testimony or revelation to Jesus; He had it all.

God the Father did not limit His Son's authority; Jesus had it all. Because of those facts, we can know that believing and obeying (most recent translations have “obey” in 3:36) Jesus is essential for eternal life. 1 John 5:10-12 shows with 3:36 that having the Son allows us to have life and not having Him means we do not have life.



Note that being above all and having all things did not mean that Jesus never had to submit to His Father, because 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 illustrates His submission to the Father. Even though Jesus was bearing witness of heavenly things, many people did not accept His witness testimony, as Christ had also told Nicodemus in 3:11.

In our next lesson we will study the role that baptism plays in John and elsewhere in the New Testament.

### ***Could Only Those Approved by God Do Miracles?***

We have no clear Biblical example of signs performed by any person who was not approved by God. The Bible does speak of “signs” and “wonders” performed by people opposed to the truth (Pharaoh's magicians in Exodus 7:11; Matthew 24:24; 2 Thessalonians 2:9; Revelation 13:13-14), but there is no concrete indication that these were really miraculous. If they had been truly miraculous, how could Christ's word have been initially confirmed (Acts 8:6, 13; Hebrews 2:3-4)?

## ***Questions***

What would Nicodemus do regarding Jesus in 7:50-52?  
What would Nicodemus do for Him in 19:39-42?

Jesus said that Moses had lifted up the serpent in the wilderness and that was a sign of how He would be lifted up (3:14; see Numbers 21:4-9). What were the similarities between the two events?

According to 3:17, what was the primary reason that God had sent Jesus into the world?

Why did Jesus say that someone who does the truth will come to the light (3:19-21)?

John humbly spoke of having a lower place than Jesus in 3:28-30. How had John described Jesus in 1:15?

Jesus is called the “only begotten” Son of God in 3:16-18. Where else in John has the same term been used? Use a concordance or cross-references if necessary.

Though Jesus' primary purpose was not to judge the world, did that mean He could not have any role in judging it? How does this relate to 12:47-48?

Can you find any other passages about Jesus' role in judging in John? Using a concordance or cross-references will help.

## ***Other Reading***

1 John 5:10-12



# Baptism in John

## "Born of Water" (3:5)

### Main Points:

#### **Baptism**

- John speaks of three different baptisms in his gospel.
- Baptism in the Holy Spirit was rare and different than baptism in water.
- The necessity of baptism in water is established in John 3.

In the previous lesson we studied Jesus' being baptized by John. The New Testament uses "baptism" and related words for a number of different baptisms. This lesson discusses the references to baptism within John and what they mean. We will first study the uses of the term in the entire New Testament.

### Baptism in the Bible

#### • John's Baptism

The baptism with which John the Baptist baptized His followers is mentioned in Mark 1:4-5 and other passages. Jesus' question about whether John's baptism was from Heaven or from men is found in Mark 11:30 and parallel passages. Luke 7:29-30 records that John's baptism was accepted by the common people but rejected by many of the religious elite.

#### • Baptism in Water (What Jesus Commanded)

The baptism that Jesus taught His disciples to use is commanded in many places in the New Testament. In Matthew 28:19, Jesus issued the command to baptize all nations in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In Acts 2:38-41, the Jews at Pentecost were commanded to be baptized in Jesus' name for forgiveness; the name and the purpose (receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit) were different than in John's baptism for repentance (Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:3; Acts 13:24; 19:4), though both promised the remission of sins (Acts 22:16). Galatians 3:27 says that as many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

#### • Baptism with the Holy Spirit

John the Baptist said that Jesus would baptize men with the Holy Spirit in Matthew 3:11. In Acts 1:4-5, Jesus told the apostles before His ascension that they would be baptized that way shortly, which clearly pointed to Pentecost in Acts 2:1-4. Also, Acts 10:44-46; 11:15-16 identify the baptism that Cornelius and his friends experienced before being baptized in water with what had happened on Pentecost in Acts 2:4.

#### • Baptism with Fire

This is mentioned in Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16 along with the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

#### • Other Baptisms

Selected other references to other "baptisms" include: Mark 10:38-39 (the disciples would share in Jesus' painful experiences); Luke 12:50 (Jesus had a baptism to undergo); 1 Corinthians 10:2 (the Israelites were baptized into Moses in the Red Sea).

### Places in Which Baptism Is Mentioned in John

#### 1:25-33 John's Baptizing Would Reveal the Son

The manifestation of the Spirit when Jesus was baptized identified Him as the one who would baptize with the Spirit.

#### 3:3-5 All Must Be Born Again of Water and the Spirit

Some try to argue that the being "born of water" in 3:5 is not baptism in water. That argument has several serious problems.

First, Jesus' baptism in water is discussed in similar terms elsewhere in the Bible. Romans 6:4 ties baptism to

“newness of life”. That fits with being born again. In Acts 2:38, baptized believers are promised the gift of the Spirit, which matches being born of the Spirit in John 3:6-8.

Also, Jesus is not speaking of water as the agent of physical birth in John 3:5. Water and the Spirit are connected with one preposition, which argues for their being considered together (being born of water and the Spirit at the same time, not having been born of water years before being born of the Spirit). To say a person had to be physically born by “water” to enter the kingdom would be unnecessary. When John 3:5 is compared to Ephesians 5:26 (“washing of water with the word”) or Titus 3:5 (“the washing of regeneration”), the connection that all three passages have to being baptized in water should be clearly seen.

### **3:22-26 Jesus Baptizes and John's Role Diminishes**

Jesus was spending time with His disciples and baptizing people, the latter being something that John was well-known for doing. John's disciples implied that Jesus was baptizing more than John.

Was Jesus baptizing them with John's baptism? No, He was baptizing in His own name, that is, by His authority. Later, Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38 would speak of baptism in Jesus' name. In Matthew 3:14-15 John was stunned that Jesus would think it fitting to be baptized by him instead of the other way around; why would Jesus then baptize in John's name? Also, Jesus taught with authority, His own authority, which amazed the multitudes (Matthew 7:28-29; Mark 1:22; Luke 4:32). Would it be plausible for Him to have baptized by someone else's authority? When encountering “disciples” only baptized with John's baptism, Paul told them that John's baptism was to lead them to believe in Jesus (Acts 19:1-5). These are reasons to believe that Jesus baptized in His own name, not using John's baptism, even at that early point in His teaching.

### **4:1-3 Jesus' Baptizing Becomes Known**

Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John and thus became the object of the Pharisees' concern.

### **10:39-42 Jesus Goes Where John Had Been Baptizing**

This passage refers to the place in the wilderness at which Jesus was staying as the one at which John had baptized.

### **More about Baptism with the Holy Spirit**

The baptism with the Holy Spirit came as a promise from the Father (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4). The baptism with the Holy Spirit is only portrayed as being given through God, never through man.

In Acts 10:44-48; 11:15-18, Peter clearly considered the baptism with the Holy Spirit distinct from baptism in water and it was the second of the two that he commanded his listeners to receive (Acts 10:48). It was also the second, baptism in water, that was part of the words by which his listeners would be saved (Acts 11:14). This also shows the necessity of baptism in water for the remission of sins.

Our next lesson finds Jesus in Samaria speaking with the woman at the well.

## **Questions**

Why did John perform baptisms even though he was not the Christ (1:25-27, 30-31)?

Jesus uses the term “born again” in 3:3, 7. What phrase in Romans 6:3-4 expresses the same idea in different words?

Jesus describes being “born of water and the Spirit” in 3:5. How is the “washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit” in Titus 3:4-5 similar?

John baptized at the place he did because there was a large amount of water there (3:23). What does that tell you about the way in which he was baptizing people?

How does Acts 19:1-6 show the difference between John's baptism and Jesus' baptism?

Find the instances in the New Testament in which we can be sure baptism with the Holy Spirit occurred.

Is the baptism described in 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 the same as the baptism with the Holy Spirit in the verses you found in the previous question? Look at the context of 1 Corinthians 12.

### ***Other Readings***

Acts 19:1-6; Romans 6:3-4; Titus 3:4-5

# John 4:1-26

## "A Woman of Samaria" (4:7)



### Main Points:

- Jesus was willing to teach people that others would have ignored.
- Jesus worked to direct the conversation toward spiritual truths.
- Jesus not only spoke the truth but did so in a careful way.

After Jesus left Judea for Galilee, He met a woman who was unlike Him in almost every way possible. Many people would have been so pessimistic about the possibility of teaching her that they would not have tried, and her initial response to Jesus was not encouraging. In this lesson we see that Jesus did teach her and in the next lesson we will see the success that He had.

### 4:1-4 Jesus Leaves Judea for Galilee

Jesus had unsettled many of the Jews earlier by cleansing the temple at Passover (2:13-21). The disciples of John the Baptist had already noted that Jesus was baptizing more people than their teacher; also, John had stated that Jesus would surpass him (3:26-30). The increasing attention Jesus was receiving was accompanied by increasing opposition from the Jewish leaders. His work of baptizing and teaching the people came to the attention of the Pharisees, so He left Judea for Galilee. In leaving Judea He went through Samaria, which leads us to the main event of the chapter.

### Baptism

Why did He leave Judea? Probably because His hour had not yet come (2:4), and Galilee would be less immediately dangerous for Him than Judea (though He would suffer an attempt on His life in Nazareth around this time in Luke 4:28-30, going north still gave Him more time before the ultimate conflict with the Jewish leadership in Jerusalem). He knew that He would die (2:19-21) and was not afraid to do so, but He had a purpose in waiting for the right time. When the time came, He went to Judea knowing His fate (Luke 9:51-53, and at that time the Samaritans would be less accommodating).

### 4:5-10 Jesus Introduces Living Water

Jesus entered Sychar, which may have been another name for Shechem. Upon reaching Sychar Jesus sat at His ancestor Jacob's well about noon ("the sixth hour" according to the Jewish way of reckoning time) or 6:00 PM (Roman). In other uses of time in John, the Jewish method of reckoning seems to have been used (1:39; 4:52-53; 19:14). He was tired. While Jesus was the Son of God, He was still affected by His physical body. The disciples had left to buy food when Jesus asked a Samaritan woman for water from the well.

Some travelers were unwilling to go through Samaria because of the inhabitants' incompletely Jewish background (2 Kings 17:24) and errant religious observances. Jesus was undeterred by their background but quite concerned about their actions. Instead of giving up on them He made an effort to help.

Jesus offered the woman living water and said that it was the gift of God. He also was

hinting at His own identity. Jeremiah 2:12-13; 17:13 refer to living water as the truth from God as opposed to the falsehood of other kinds of worship. Psalm 36:8-9 has a similar idea. Jesus would speak about providing living water again in 7:38. Isaiah 12:3 speaks of the time of the Messiah as one when men would “draw water from the springs of salvation” (start reading at 11:10 to understand the context). Zechariah 13:1 speaks of a fountain opened for cleansing in the time when the Messiah would be pierced (start at 12:10 for the context).

#### **4:11-15      Jesus Promises Eternal Life**

The woman answered His intriguing comment in a way that indicated that she was still thinking very literally. She said that someone would have to be greater than their ancestor Jacob to give that kind of water. For a people who felt excluded because of their heritage, a connection to Jacob was very important. Of course, Jesus was greater, but she needed to understand the meaning of His statement first.

#### **Life**

Prompted by the woman's response, Jesus spoke further of the living water that would spring up to eternal life. He contrasted it to physical water by saying that His water would bring everlasting life. In 6:35, He would connect this water to the bread of life, which meant believing in Him.

Despite Jesus' efforts, the woman still seemed to be thinking literally at that point. Jesus would continue with patience to lead her into thinking of spiritual things. We must sometimes do the same thing when we speak about the Bible to others.

#### **4:16-19      Jesus Demonstrates Miraculous Knowledge**

#### **Miracle**

Jesus then revealed a miraculous knowledge about the woman's marital situation. This forced her to understand the spiritual nature of the conversation. She realized that He was a prophet. People would later have the same realization when Jesus had fed the five thousand (6:14) or spoken out during the Feast of Tabernacles (7:37-40).

Note that people of low morality existed then. People who act that way today are not part of a new phenomenon. "Modern" immorality is really old unfaithfulness in different costume. As we read the following verses we will see that even someone whose personal life was a mess could still try to defend her neglected religious system (4:20)!

Today we cannot display miraculous knowledge (see also 4:29) as Jesus did with this woman. Christians must know the revealed truth of God's word thoroughly and use it alone to convict men of their sins and their need for a Savior. The New Testament contains important examples of people who did change their lives when they had learned God's will.

#### **4:20-24      Jesus Commands Men To Worship in Spirit and Truth**

Though the woman acknowledged that Jesus had a message from God, she still had an argument for Him. Where to worship was a question that divided the Jews and the Samaritans. The Samaritan temple had been built perhaps 360 years before, destroyed by John Hyrcanus long before Christ's birth, and would be rebuilt after AD 135; that temple building would last several hundred more years. Even today there are several hundred Samaritans in two enclaves in central Israel.

Notice that Jesus did not shy away from telling her the truth: the Jews were the ones through whom salvation would come. Her practices were not correct. He said it gently, but He made it known, and so must Christians speak with those who follow false systems of religion.

Jesus, in speaking with this woman who was not of pure Israelite ancestry, made the point in words and action that His message was not just for the Jews but for all people. Those who



## **Father**

followed His message would not be limited to one place for worship, but would worship and spread His message all over the world. Jesus told the woman of a time when men would worship the Father in spirit and in truth, fulfilling His desire. If we want to be right with God, we must have both the right attitude and the right basis for our practice. Neither one alone is acceptable, though many people seem satisfied to have only one of the two.

### **4:25-26 Jesus Reveals That He Is the Messiah**

The Samaritan woman held onto a Messianic hope as the Jews did. Perhaps she had already begun to wonder if this man was the Messiah. She said the Messiah would reveal all things, and then Jesus revealed His identity as the Messiah to her.

We will finish studying about the Samaritans and then read about Jesus' healing of the nobleman's son in the next lesson.

### ***Is There a Contradiction between 4:6 and Acts 7:16?***

4:6 says that Jacob bought the parcel of land in Shechem and Acts 7:16 says that Abraham bought it. Jacob definitely bought it (Genesis 33:18-19; Joshua 24:32). We have no record of Abraham's buying it, though he had been there (Genesis 12:6). Some believe that Jacob purchased more land, that there is a textual error, or that Acts records by inspiration an inaccurate statement by Stephen. It seems most likely to me that both bought the land at different times. Over 120 years may have passed between the events, and the likelihood of having the purchase of a wandering outsider remembered correctly for all of that time seems low.

## **Questions**

What had the Pharisees learned that caused Jesus to leave Judea for Galilee (4:1-3)?

What do the Samaritan woman's response in 4:9 and the Jews' question in 8:48 show about the level to which relations between Jews and Samaritans had sunk?

Read 7:37-39. What did Jesus say was necessary to have rivers of living water within oneself?

In what other part of John have we seen an example of Jesus' miraculous knowledge?

In order to worship “in spirit and in truth,” we must know the spirit of truth. What did John tell us about discerning “the spirit of truth and the spirit of error” in 1 John 4:4-6?

Find a passage in the Old Testament which would contradict the Samaritan woman's belief that the Samaritans were truly God's chosen ones or that the worship at Mount Gerizim was in harmony with God's will.

Find another place in John in which Jesus revealed that He was the Messiah (“Christ” or a term that showed who He was, such as “Son of God”, could be used instead).

## **Other Reading**

Acts 11:1-21



# John 4:27-54

## "White for Harvest" (4:35)



### Main Points:

- Jesus' disciples need to work to bring others to God.
- The Samaritans responded to the teaching of Jesus.
- The nobleman's faith in Jesus grew through the healing of his son.

We resume studying the account of Jesus and the Samaritan woman. In our previous lesson we have seen:

- how Jesus had worked with her until she had understood the spiritual importance of their conversation,
- how He had gently stood for the truth despite her objection,
- and how He had revealed His identity as the Messiah to her.

In this lesson we will see how Jesus taught the people that the woman had brought to Him and we will study a miracle of healing that Jesus performed in Galilee.

### 4:27-30 The Disciples Come and the Samaritan Woman Leaves

At the time that Jesus had revealed His identity to the woman the disciples were returning. Perhaps the implication is that they were not surprised that He had spoken with a Samaritan, which would have been unusual enough for many Jews, but that He had spoken with a woman, which would have probably been rare in Jewish (and possibly Samaritan) society. The disciples did not ask Him about it further.

The woman left behind her water pot, which is interesting because it had been hard to get her to think of anything but literal water at first (4:11-12, 15). She went to the city and asked many people to come with her and see about Jesus. In this way, she was like Andrew and Philip in 1:40-51, though her statements were much less certain than theirs. A number of people did come from the city, but while they were coming Jesus had time for His disciples to speak with Him.

### 4:31-38 Jesus Sees a Harvest of Souls

#### Father

The disciples tried to get Jesus to eat something after the trip that had made Him weary (4:6). He said that He had food to eat, because doing the Father's will was food to Him. The disciples took His words too literally at first, much as the Samaritan woman had. Jesus wanted to do God's will first and foremost (see 6:38). Do we have that same desire? Would we rather teach God's word than have a meal on time? Would we be true to God's word if it cost us many meals — or even our lives? Compare Job 23:12; 1 Corinthians 4:9-11. Not only did Jesus feed on doing God's will, He fed on completing God's work. We will see that in His prayer in 17:4 and His dying words upon the cross in 19:30.

As Jesus spoke of His "food" of doing God's will, He began to teach the disciples about the process of gathering the harvest of lost souls. He was providing an example of the plentiful harvest available, especially by gaining it among the Samaritans, whom many Jews would

have considered hopeless. Jesus said the reaping was already occurring.

Jesus also spoke of a harvest in Matthew 9:37; Luke 10:2. May we see that harvest and work diligently to bring it in!

Who were the sowers and the reapers? In 4:38 the disciples themselves are said to be reaping. They might not have been doing much to teach the lost at that instant, but they soon would be. Luke 10:1-2 describes the instructions at the beginning of such a trip with language about the harvest and Luke 10:17 describes the positive spiritual results. If the disciples would reap where another had sown (4:37), most likely it was Jesus who was doing the sowing.

Note that the workers could be working on the same team toward the same end even if they were not physically together, as is shown in 1 Corinthians 3:5-7.

#### **4:39-45 Samaritans Believe in the Savior**

The Samaritans who believed are said to have done so twice. They had believed when they had heard the initial reports but then believed more fully when they heard Jesus at length.

**Belief>>**

**World**

They came to believe in Him by hearing His teaching. They believed that Jesus was the Savior of the world (4:42; see 1 John 4:14). From a group that might have been considered unteachable Jesus touched many. Not all Samaritans would always have the same attitude (Luke 9:52-53), but Jesus' love for them shines bright in this account.

Jesus also went into Galilee at this time. In Matthew 13:57; Mark 6:4; Luke 4:24, Jesus was rejected by the Galileans at Nazareth, but here He does not seem to have been explicitly rejected in Galilee. The Matthew and Mark accounts seem to have happened much later in His ministry, but the Luke account (with attempted murder) would have happened around this time in John. Many of the Galileans received Him because of what He had done at the feast in John 2:23.

#### **4:46-54 Jesus Heals the Nobleman's Son**

Jesus returned to the site of His first sign, turning water into wine (2:1-11). A nobleman or royal official came from Capernaum to Cana to ask Jesus to come and heal his son. The man's walking all that way to see Jesus shows that he must have had some idea of Jesus' power.

**Signs**

The healing of the nobleman's son was the second sign (compare 2:11). It came after Jesus seemed to chide His listeners for requiring signs and wonders before believing (compare 20:29), which might have been similar to His statement to His mother that His hour had not come in 2:4. Paul would speak of the Jews' desire for signs in 1 Corinthians 1:22-23. It was good and necessary for Jesus and His designated followers to have given signs, but when men had refused to accept the evidence about who Jesus was, asking for more signs was not going to help.

Note that Jesus did not go to Capernaum. By healing the son from a distance, Jesus showed that He had greater power and allowed the nobleman to display more faith. We also see that while Jesus healed a son, He as a Son would not be saved from the death He needed to suffer.

**Miracle**

**Belief>>**

The nobleman believed and left for home. He had shown that he would believe without the signs and wonders that he could immediately see. When he was met by his slaves on the way with good news, he also believed more strongly. The healing caused a growing belief. The nobleman came to believe in Jesus fully by seeing the fulfillment of His sign. The purpose of Jesus' miracles was to cause belief, and this miracle caused belief in this man and his family.

In our next lesson we will study the healing of a lame man and the claims Jesus made.

## ***Questions***

What surprised the disciples when they had returned to Jesus in 4:27?

What did the Samaritan woman tell her neighbors that caused them to come to hear Jesus (4:29, 39)?

Many believed because of the words of the woman at the well (4:39), but what caused many more to believe (4:41-42)?

Why did the Galileans receive Jesus in 4:45?

What did Jesus criticize many people for needing to see to believe (4:48)?

Did the nobleman have to see those things to believe (4:49-50)?

Which people or groups of people do we find preaching to the Samaritans a few years later in Acts 8?

Where else do we read of Jesus' making a statement similar to “a prophet has no honor in His own country” (4:44)?

## ***Other Reading***

Luke 4:22-30

## ***Parallels in Other Gospels***

Other gospels also mention Jesus' time in Galilee (4:43-45), but they record other events. See Matthew 4:12-17; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:14-15.

# John 5:1-23

## "I Myself Am Working" (5:17)



### Main Points:

- Jesus' healing went beyond anything man could do unaided.
- Jesus' healing on the Sabbath provoked anger.
- Jesus demonstrated divine approval of His Sabbath healing and all He did.

The trip to Samaria and Galilee in the last chapter probably was near the end of Jesus' first year of public teaching. Having come back to Judea, Jesus' healing a lame man on the Sabbath would provoke opposition. In the course of the debate, Jesus would demonstrate that He was equal with God and had the right to execute judgment.

### 5:1-9 Healing the Lame Man on the Sabbath at Bethesda

Jesus had gone to Jerusalem for a feast, possibly the Passover after the one at which He had cleansed the temple (2:13-23). Bethesda was a pool with five porticoes in Jerusalem. It may be the upper pool mentioned in 2 Kings 18:17; Isaiah 7:3 (preceding the prophecy of the virgin birth); 36:2.

The part about the healing of the waters is textually uncertain; it may be a later addition. While there can be no doubt that many sick people were waiting for the water to move and thought it would heal them, that does not prove that an angel performed that miracle regularly. An angel's performing a miracle that did not seem to demonstrate anything about God's revelation would be unique in the New Testament. Jesus' miracle certainly did confirm God's word and it led to the discussion about the Sabbath and His deity. Notice that the text never calls the man lame but it is a necessary inference or conclusion from 5:7.

**Miracle** Healing the lame man was the third miracle. There could be no doubt about the healing or the reality of the affliction. People who have not used their legs for decades do not have them suddenly start functioning normally by natural means. This man not only started walking but did so convincingly, carrying his bed as he went. Around this time Jesus would heal the paralytic who had been lowered through the roof (Matthew 9:2-7 and parallels), giving him the same instruction to walk. Here the controversy was about the Sabbath, but the controversy with healing the paralytic was about the forgiveness of sins. This kind of healing would be seen again in Acts 3:1-10; 4:22 when a man over forty who had been congenitally unable to walk would be healed by Jesus' apostles.

### 5:10-16 The Controversy about the Sabbath Begins

The Jews told the man that it was against the Law to carry his bed, though the Law was silent about carrying anything like that on the Sabbath; Jeremiah 17:21-22 spoke of not carrying a load out of one's house, but a bedroll or something similar would not seem to qualify as a load. Nehemiah 13:15-19 certainly disapproved of carrying a load as part of one's customary work or trade, but that was not the case with this man.

The man said that the one who had healed him had told him to carry it. That should have

alerted the Jews to the fact that they were dealing with an authority greater than their own, but it did not. The man could not tell them the name of the one who had healed him because Jesus had slipped away. Jesus would return, which might have been necessary for the miracle to have had the desired effect of causing belief.

Jesus found the man later at the temple and told him not to sin because the results of sin were worse than the problem with his legs had been. Why the man told the Jews that Jesus was the name of the man who had healed him is not revealed. The Jews persecuted Jesus for healing on the Sabbath, though God's approval was evident.

### **5:17-23      Working as One with the Father**

Jesus' actions on the Sabbath had already angered some of the Jews; He then made an astounding claim. He was not just saying that He was working because He was imitating God, but He was working as God was because of His unique relationship with God as His Father. Note that He would also speak about doing the works of the Father to His disciples in 9:4 before healing the man born blind. The Jews sought to kill Jesus for breaking the Sabbath and claiming equality with God the Father (compare 10:30-33).

**Attempt**

Consider what is said about Jesus in Philippians 2:5-7. He is fully God but He was also completely humble. Here the claim, no matter how humbly made, brought the Jews to anger. They understood what He was saying!

**Father**

Jesus claimed to be doing what He was seeing His Father doing (compare 12:49) and to have received the right to judge from the Father; He also said He deserved honor as the Father did. Statements that would illustrate the relationship more closely are hard to imagine.

Jesus claimed equality with the Father by saying that He was working as His Father was working. The Jews did not miss the meaning of the words — they were ready to stone Him for blasphemy — and Jesus did not deny the charge when faced with the loss of His life for it.

**Judge**

All judgment has been given by the Father to the Son. Subsequent verses show that believing the Son brings eternal life because life is in the Son. Proof for this claim would be seen in what He did for Lazarus (11:43-44) and His own resurrection. He also said that His Father's giving Him judgment was part of His being honored in the same way the Father was honored,

**Deity**

another probable claim of deity. To fail to honor the Son is to fail to honor the Father (1 John 2:23, which comes right after mentioning antichrist twice), which shows the falsehood of those who believe that Christianity is merely one of many paths to God. Jesus said that it was not, and He knew the truth!

As John the Baptist had said in 3:35-36, Jesus had all things (all authority, here and in Matthew 28:18) and acting according to His words was the key to eternal life.

Note that Jesus continued the point in the next lesson (5:24-47) by describing the eternal life He would give and the judgment He would render.

## **Questions**

What did Jesus ask the man by the pool who had been afflicted for thirty-eight years (5:6)?

Read 7:19-24. What did Jesus compare with healing on the Sabbath in these verses?

When the Jews told the man who had been lame that he should not carry his bed, what was his response (5:10-11)?

When the Jews wanted to kill Jesus for claiming equality with God (5:18), what did Jesus say in His response (5:19-23)? Summarize His answer.

According to 5:23, what would a person who refused to honor Jesus as the Son also be doing?

Can you find another instance of Jesus' healing someone on the Sabbath?

The man Jesus healed by the Pool of Bethesda showed that he was completely healed by carrying his bed. Peter and John would heal a beggar who had been lame from birth in Acts 3. What did that man do that showed he was completely and miraculously healed?

### ***Other Reading***

Acts 3:1-16



# John 5:24-47

## "The Witness Which I Have" (5:36)



### Main Points:

- Jesus could give eternal life because He had life in Himself.
- Jesus cited four other witnesses to His Heavenly origin.
- To believe the Scriptures was and is to believe Jesus.

We continue studying the debate that occurred after Jesus had healed a lame man on the Sabbath. The Jews were angry about the supposed violation of the Sabbath, but became more angry and tried to kill Him when He claimed to be the Son of God and equal with God (5:18). Instead of backing away from His statements, Jesus continued to claim to be one with the Father, with the right to give life, to judge, and to receive honor.

In the second half of this chapter Jesus would continue to teach about resurrection and to defend His statements about Himself by appealing to four witnesses. He would also expose and criticize the lack of faith of that generation.

This entire lesson is like an essay in why men should believe: Jesus will give eternal life to those that believe (5:24-25); the witnesses of John the Baptist, His works, the Father, and the Scriptures were abundant and should cause honest people to believe (5:31-40); and Moses' writings had the purpose of causing belief in Him (5:45-47).

### 5:24-30 Resurrection for All and Just Judgment

Following Jesus' astounding statements about working with the Father (5:17-19), giving life (5:21), and executing judgment (5:22-23), Jesus combined them to show that through Him believers will pass into eternal life. Those who believe and obey can be saved eternally only through Him (3:16; 6:40). Who else could have made that claim truthfully and competently? Jesus would also confirm His words with His own resurrection.

For Jesus to have had life in Himself (not that Jesus had been less than eternal before it had been granted by the Father – Jesus had the ability to give life to others, which may be what is meant) and authority to execute judgment as the Son of Man points to His deity.

Jesus continued describing the resurrections available to men. These two important facts come out in what He said: all will be judged by Jesus (physical death is not the end) and there will be a verdict of eternal life or eternal death. The Father has given the Son “life in Himself” and the authority to judge. The judgment will be based on the Father's will.

Through Jesus believers will participate in the resurrection of life instead of the resurrection of judgment. There is no room here for other saviors, for neutral judgments, for universalism, or for the annihilation of the wicked. Salvation comes only through Jesus.

Notice that the hour had come for the dead to hear Jesus' voice. That could not mean the literal hour, because the crucifixion was probably about two years away. But in having Jesus present the time had come generally and the events were in motion. Though 5:24 speaks of spiritual death, passing “out of death into life,” 5:25 probably refers to the physically dead; afterwards the text speaks of physical death with a reference to tombs (5:28).

Life

Deity

Father

Judge

Life

Consider that a similar phrase about “the hour” had been used with the Samaritan woman at the well in 4:23, with the same condition: worship at a proper place was still necessary at that moment, but soon the place of worship would be immaterial. As He had at the well in Sychar, Jesus also stated that His highest priority was to do God's will (4:34; see also 6:38). Acts 10:42 calls Jesus “the judge of the living and the dead” and 17:31 speaks of His judging the world. His authority over all (except the Father) is complete.

### **5:31-40      Many Witnesses to Jesus**

Jesus was who He was without any external testimony, but He was willing to offer more evidence of His identity. As opposed to 8:14, in which Jesus asserted that His total knowledge made His testimony trustworthy, here He seemed to be satisfying anyone who might have questioned His statements' validity.

#### **Witness**

Jesus had a fourfold witness to His identity (John the Baptist, works, the Father, and the Scripture) but men were generally unwilling to accept it.

Jesus had just said that His righteous judgment was based on His Father's will. In Verse 32, Jesus spoke of a witness with testimony of unsurpassed value. He was speaking of the Father. Jesus would again bring up the issue of His Father's testimony in 8:18, also before a hostile audience.

How could God prove that the word given to men in the natural world was supernatural? We will find some answers in the following verses.

#### **• John (33-35)**

John was a witness to Jesus and spoke the truth, but Jesus had greater witnesses than John. John was accepted by many of the people for a time. 1:29-33 contains a good statement of John's witness.

John's witness, though, would have been less persuasive if not for the fact that his words had come from God. The testimony He had given about Jesus' baptism ultimately came from what God had signified to him. 2 Peter 1:19 also refers to prophecy as a light for finding the truth, and John certainly served as a prophetic light.

#### **• Jesus' Works (36)**

One greater witness was the series of works that Jesus had done. Jesus had a miraculous testimony in what He did; John did not have miracles but was correct in what he had said (10:41). People understood that John's message was from God; how much more persuasive should Jesus' performance of miraculous works from the Father have been! Nicodemus had understood this (3:2). Jesus Himself used this to verify His identity as the Christ (10:25) and to convict those who had rejected Him of their responsibility for their actions (15:24).

#### **• The Father (37-38)**

Several other verses speak of how the Father has not been seen, including 1:18; 1 John 4:12. Matthew 3:17; 17:5 show how God was heard (though not seen) testifying of Jesus.

#### **Father**

Not only had the Father given the Son works as a testimony of who He was, the Father Himself had testified who He was. The Father chose to make His approval known through what Jesus said and did. God did not choose to make a giant public display of divine power in the way that some people might have expected. God chose to reveal the truth through His Son's life and word.

When people rejected Jesus they rejected God's word. To deny Jesus is in effect to deny God's word. In Numbers 20:12, God told Moses that he had not believed Him when he struck the rock instead of speaking to it. Of course, Moses had not made a conscious rejection of his belief in God, but he had shown by his actions that his belief was not what it should have been. Someone could say today that he believes God's word while not obeying Jesus, but his statement would be incorrect.

#### • The Old Testament (39-40)

The problem was not that Jesus' listeners did not examine the Scriptures. They did. It was not that they were not looking in the right place for guidance. They were. The problem was that they were unwilling to accept the testimony of the Old Testament Scriptures regarding Christ. Philip had been convinced that the Scriptures prophesied of Jesus (1:45). The Berean Jews studied the Scriptures carefully and came to the conclusion that Paul's statements about Jesus were correct in Acts 17:11. We must do the same if we are to have life. In Luke 16:29, Abraham indicated to the rich man in torment that his brothers had what they needed, the writings of Moses and the prophets, to believe the truth and avoid eternal punishment.

#### 5:41-47      **Glory Only in Receiving God's Word**

**Glorify**

Jesus did not receive glory from men; He did not mean that men should not glorify Him, but that His glory was not derived from men. He then said that His listeners did not love God, perhaps contrasting their lack of love for God with their love of glory from men (compare

**Father**

12:42-43). Jesus came in His Father's name, with His authority, but men rejected Jesus because they did not love God. They would not accept Jesus by God's authority, but they would accept a man who would give them a false but pleasing message by his own authority. The Old Testament Scriptures served as a witness to Jesus, and those who had studied them should have been quick to believe (5:39). Jesus' listeners would have said that they honored Moses, but the main point of Moses' writings was to prepare them for the Messiah, whom they would soon reject! Moses had written of the Messiah in Genesis 3:15; Deuteronomy 18:15-19; and other passages. The Law served as a foundation for belief in the Messiah. Note that Paul would use a similar line of argument when presenting his defenses against the Jewish attacks upon him (Acts 22:1-5; 26:6-7, 22-23).

Professing Christians could do the same thing today as Jesus' listeners did back then. They could say that they believed in Jesus while denying Him by teaching the opposite of what He said. They would be studying the right thing but not benefiting by it because their hearts would not be willing to accept the truth.

In our next lesson we will study the judgment mentioned frequently in 5:24-30.

### **Questions**

Why does 5:27 say that the Father had given judgment to Jesus?

How does 5:28-29 answer those who teach that the wicked are destroyed after death and do not suffer for eternity?

Jesus spoke of four witnesses in 5:31-40. Which witness had Nicodemus mentioned in 3:1-2?

In 5:35, Jesus referred to John the Baptist as a lamp that gave light. What does 1:6-8 say about light and John?

In whom did Jesus say His opponents had set their hope in 5:45?

What would Jesus' opponents say about Moses and Jesus in 9:27-30?

How is the teaching about two destinations after death in 5:29 similar to that in the two parables and the scene of judgment in Matthew 25?

Compare 5:31 with John 8:14. How can we reconcile what Jesus said about bearing witness of Himself in these two passages? (Hint: In 5:31, would Jesus' testimony about Himself ever have been literally untrue or was He using the word in a different sense?)

### ***Other Reading***

John 8:13-18

# Judgment in John

## "My Judgment Is Just" (5:30)

### Main Points:

#### Judge

- Jesus' main purpose was to save, but He judged as His Father willed.
- Jesus judged even in His crucifixion.
- Jesus' purpose in judgment was to reverse the seeing and the blind.
- The Holy Spirit would convict men of judgment.

We study judgment at this point in our study of John because Jesus has given an important place to it in our last lesson (5:24-47; He was debating with the Jews after healing the man at the Pool of Bethesda). Far from recanting His statement of equality with God, He had asserted it again in His right to exercise judgment (5:22-30). Jesus and judgment had been mentioned earlier (3:17-19), but Chapter 5 affirms Jesus' role in judgment, and that teaching would be repeated and expanded in the rest of the gospel.

### Jesus' Main Purpose Was To Save, Not To Judge

Jesus' primary purpose was not to judge the world, but to save the world (3:17-19; compare Luke 9:52-56). That meant neither that men would be saved against their will nor that judgment would not occur. In fact, believing in Him was necessary to avoid a negative judgment. The judgment was that men, given the light, preferred darkness because they had done things that they did not want brought to light.

A similar statement is found in 12:47-48. There Jesus again said that He was not sent to judge but to save. Immediately, though, He made clear that His word would judge men and that those men who had rejected Him would receive a negative judgment on the last day. In each case, Jesus discussed what His primary purpose was not (judgment). My primary purpose as a parent is not to spank my children, but I may need to do so when they do not behave properly. God does not relish punishing evil men (Ezekiel 18:23; 33:11), but He must.

### Jesus' Judgment Is the Father's Judgment

Jesus would judge, even though it had not been His primary purpose. The Father had given Him judgment and all would honor Jesus as they did the Father (5:22-23).

Believing Jesus' words would bring a true life and Jesus had that life in Himself (5:24-27). As a result of that life, believers would have the resurrection of life, while those who did not believe would not (5:28-29). Jesus would be honored in judgment as the Father was because He sought the Father's will (5:30).

When Jesus was accused of making invalid testimony because it was about Himself, He not only showed that His total knowledge made it valid, but He showed that His judgment could be trusted because it would be identical with the Father's (8:13-16). Jesus would, in fact, judge, and His judgments would be based on words that had come directly from the Father (8:26-27).

### The Purpose of Judgment

Jesus came into the world to help those who did not see to see and cause those who saw to fail to see (9:39). What did that mean? Immediately after His statement, the Pharisees, who claimed to see, asked if they were blind; Jesus told them that because they claimed to see, their sin remained (9:40-41). The Pharisees had just persecuted someone for supporting the man who had miraculously restored his sight. The formerly blind man saw and understood who Jesus really was. Jesus gave a similar reason for telling parables to those who were seeing but did not see (Matthew 13:13-15). Before His birth, Mary had said that Jesus would cause things to be the opposite of the way they had been (Luke 1:52-53). Christians walk by faith, not by the "sight" of



human wisdom and judgment (2 Corinthians 5:7).

### **The Need for Fair Judgment**

There are several warnings in John that judgment must be fair. As Jesus taught at the Feast of Tabernacles, knowing that He was the target of some of the Jews, He urged His listeners to judge with righteous judgment (7:13, 19-20, 23-24). He warned them not to apply a double standard to Him regarding His healing on the Sabbath. The warning was largely ignored.

Nicodemus encouraged His fellow Council members to investigate Jesus fairly before condemning Him (7:50-52). He received an unpleasant response. The Jews who called for Jesus' death ignored justice and righteous judgment by forcing Jesus' trial to be conducted by the Romans because they, the Jews, had already decided on a sentence that only the Romans could execute (18:28-32). Pilate yielded to their wicked desires. Perverted judgment occurred often in John's account and it brought on the eternal judgment mentioned earlier.

### **Judgment in the Crucifixion**

As Jesus taught about His imminent death, God spoke and confirmed His words (12:27-30). He said that at His crucifixion judgment would come upon the world, and it would come upon Satan, the ruler of this world (12:31-32). Satan would be judged and cast out through Jesus' death. Even when it seemed that Jesus was suffering a fatal human judgment, He was in actuality trampling the one behind all of the world's evil, the devil. His victory over Satan would draw many men.

### **The Holy Spirit's Convicting Men of Judgment**

The Holy Spirit would come after Jesus had left the earth (16:7-12). He would convict men of sin because of their disbelief. He would convict them of righteousness because of Jesus' departure (perhaps because His word of righteousness would be delivered by the Spirit whom Jesus would send). The Spirit would also convict men of judgment because Satan had been judged. This could mean that men would see the evidence of Satan's defeat in the superior power present in Jesus' apostles through the Holy Spirit. That would convict men of the reality of eternal judgment and cause them to come to Christ. Casting out demons would be a powerful demonstration that Satan had been judged. That Christ would triumph over Satan in this way at His resurrection can be seen in Colossians 2:14-15; Hebrews 2:14-15.

In our next lesson we will study two powerful miracles that demonstrated the superiority of Jesus' power and teaching.

### **Questions**

Why would a person who had not believed in Jesus have already been judged (3:18-19)?

In 8:16, 27, why would Jesus' judgments be certain to be true?

Even as Jesus suffered the sentence of crucifixion from a human judge, who was really being judged (12:31)?

According to 16:8-11, the Holy Spirit would convict the world concerning judgment for what reason?

When Jesus told the people to make righteous judgments, what specific events did He mention (7:23-24)?

Compare 3:17 and 12:47 to 1 Corinthians 1:17. What was Paul's primary purpose in that passage?



[From previous page] What was His secondary purpose in 1 Corinthians 1:17?  
Did that mean that His secondary purpose was unimportant or unnecessary?

Compare 9:39 with Matthew 13:13-15. What did Matthew record Jesus as saying He did “because seeing they do not see”?

***Other Readings***

John 16:7-11; Matthew 13:10-17

# John 6:1-40

## "The Bread of Life" (6:35)



### Main Points:

- Jesus' feeding thousands demonstrated His authority.
- His walking on water also demonstrated His authority.
- Most people chose to be interested only in earthly things.

In Chapter 5, Jesus had angered the Jews in Jerusalem to the point that they were ready to kill Him. The rest of the chapter contains His explanation which, because He did not retract His statement, was unlikely to pacify them. Following that, 6:1 has Him going to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. He had evidently left Jerusalem and gone to Galilee to work there. His teaching would receive a response that was initially enthusiastic but ultimately shallow.

### 6:1-4 The Multitudes Follow after Signs Are Done

#### Miracle

Jesus healed the sick in 6:2, an example of a sign that was miraculous but not counted among the seven miracles in an earlier lesson. Jesus had gone to the mountain, apparently to teach, and His disciples were with Him as a crowd arrived. According to Matthew 14:10-13, Jesus had come to the place after hearing of John the Baptist's death. It was near Bethsaida (Luke 9:10).

### 6:5-13 Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

Jesus knew what He would do to feed the crowd but asked Philip anyway as a test. Philip said that two hundred days' wages would not be enough to give each of at least 5000 people (Matthew 14:21 seems to indicate that there were 5000 adult men) an appreciable amount. Jesus told Philip to give them something to eat (Matthew 14:16). The place was also desolate (Matthew 14:15), which might have made it hard to gather fruit for the crowd to eat. Andrew, who had brought his brother Simon Peter to Jesus in 1:40-42, noted there was a boy who had brought five loaves and two fish. Perhaps that would have been enough for a medium-sized family. The loaves and fish were almost certainly much smaller than what we would get at the grocery store; the word used here of the fish is in a diminutive form, probably meaning that the fish were small and used for flavoring, perhaps as a sort of relish.

#### Miracle

Jesus had the five thousand sit down on the grass (in groups, Mark 6:40). He gave thanks first and started distributing the bread and fish to the people. The remarkably understated way in which the miracle is presented may illustrate Jesus' lack of concern with putting on a show. His power was plain enough, but the key lesson would have been the necessity of listening to His teaching because of the authority that lay behind it. The miracle drew attention to and confirmed the teaching that Jesus was doing.

Jesus had them gather the leftover pieces so that nothing would be wasted. The leftover pieces were many times more than what had been originally used.

This miracle might remind us of God's provision of manna and meat for Israel in the wilderness (Exodus 16; Numbers 11). Jesus showed how He would give men what they

needed spiritually through a physical miracle.

The Feeding of the Five Thousand occurs in every gospel (Matthew 14:13-21 || Mark 6:33-44 || Luke 9:10-17), one of a few events before the crucifixion recorded in all four accounts.

### **6:14-21 Jesus Leaves the Crowd and Walks on the Sea**

#### **World**

#### **Signs**

#### **King**

#### **Miracle**

The crowd hailed Jesus as the Prophet who was to come into the world after having seen His signs (see also 7:40; Deuteronomy 18:15-19). They wanted Jesus to be king, whether He wanted to be or not. Perhaps they thought of what a military leader who could miraculously supply his own army with food could do against the Romans.

If Jesus' goal had been to be a physical king, He could have achieved it. He chose a different path. Jesus had the opportunity to be a worldly instead of a spiritual king and refused.

The disciples had started to cross the Sea of Galilee without Jesus. The evening had begun to fall before the Feeding of the Five Thousand (Mark 6:35), and so it seems that it must have been quite late when they were crossing the lake. The wind was strong enough that it proved difficult even for men who had worked on the lake (Matthew 14:24; Mark 6:48). Jesus came to them, walking on the water, when they were several miles away from their starting point, obliterating any non-miraculous explanation of what had happened.

Jesus apparently would have walked by (Mark 6:48), but the disciples needed Him. After He had come to them they were immediately at their destination. The account of Jesus' walking on water also occurs in Matthew 14:22-33 || Mark 6:45-52.

### **6:22-27 Jesus Tells His Listeners To Work for God**

The crowd that had wanted to crown Jesus the previous day came back to find that He was gone despite no obvious means of having left. When other boats came near, the people got into them to find Jesus. When they had found Him on the "other side of the sea," the real conversation began. From that point their apparent loyalty and interest would fade. Jesus had already known this and addressed them accordingly.

#### **Signs**

#### **Life**

Jesus told them that the real reason they were seeking Him was that they were interested in the food. While we have received little indication of their intent in the text previously, Jesus knew what was in man (2:25). He told the crowd that they had come for the food produced by the signs, not the signs themselves, and they would soon confirm His statement by asking for another sign, bringing up God's miraculous provision of food. The food the Father had sent Jesus to bring would endure to eternal life, like the water that would so endure in 4:14 with the Samaritan woman at the well. The Father had set His seal upon Jesus.

### **6:28-33 Jesus Tells His Listeners To Desire Spiritual Bread**

The first question the crowd asked was about doing the works of God. It seemed like a good question, but Jesus knew their hearts. They were not really interested in doing the works of God.

#### **Belief>>**

We begin to see the difference between believers and those who, despite the abundant evidence, did not believe as we read the conversation which begins in 6:29; this discussion comes to its sad fruition at the end of the chapter in the next lesson. It would take a few statements before their discontent with the truth would become obvious.

The crowd asked for a sign, but they had already received one of the most amazing signs imaginable in the Feeding of the Five Thousand! They helpfully suggested something like manna in the wilderness (citing Nehemiah 9:15-17 or Psalm 78:24), though there was no need for manna for those already in the Promised Land. They were in danger of complaining

about God's true bread as the Israelites had complained about manna (Numbers 11:4-6). 1 Corinthians 10:1-5 also refers to the Israelites' complaining about manna.

**Father**

**World**

The Father was giving the true bread from Heaven; the bread of God (Jesus) had come down out of Heaven to give life to the world. Moses was not directly responsible for the manna and the Law that had come from him was not God's ultimate message to man. The problem was that most of the people there would not accept that message, found in Jesus Christ.

### **6:34-40 Believing in the Bread of Life**

The crowd still said they wanted bread, but Jesus emphasized the spiritual aspect of the conversation (as He did for the Samaritan woman – compare 4:15 – though her outward attitude was far different).

**Life**

**"I Am"**

God's bread of life, Jesus, would give life to the world. Jesus said He was the bread of life in 6:35 and He would say it again in 6:48-51 in the next lesson. He said that He would satisfy all hunger and thirst; however, these people were still hungry in a way that Jesus was not going to satisfy. Some try to use Jesus' miracles as justification for making the church's mission to relieve all physical hunger. Those who think that using food to attract people to the church will result in real spiritual growth ought to consider what happened to this crowd later in the chapter.

#### **• Rebuking Unbelief**

Jesus then said that they did not believe despite having seen Him (and His signs). They had received an incredible privilege in witnessing His life but had missed the point of it.

#### **• Doing His Father's Will**

**Father**

**Life**

The Father's will was that many would come to Jesus, believe in Him, and stay with Him for eternal life. When Jesus said that all those given to Him would come and none would be cast out, He was not preaching unconditional election and perseverance (see 10:28-29). His conversation with these outwardly loyal but inwardly selfish people gives evidence that He was not. He was rebuking them for having everything necessary for belief and failing to believe. At the end of the conversation they would abandon any pretense of following Him. In doing the Father's will Jesus would do all that was necessary to keep any from being lost unnecessarily. He personally would raise any who had beheld Him (including hearing His word) and had believed on Him on the last day (Martha would know that regarding Lazarus in 11:24).

Jesus would repeat this statement about raising men from the dead in 6:44, 54 and He would give proof of it by rising from the dead Himself (Acts 17:30-31).

## **Questions**

According to 6:11, how much of the bread and fish was given to each person?

What did the crowd want to do to Jesus in 6:15, after He had fed five thousand men?

What was the disciples' initial reaction to seeing someone (Jesus) walk on the water (6:19)?

What did Jesus tell them?

Why did Jesus say the crowd had followed Him (6:26)?

Who did Jesus say would raise those who had died while faithful “on the last day” (6:39-40)?

Where else in the gospels did the people acclaim Jesus as king without understanding what kind of king He really was?

6:29 contains Jesus' statement that believing in Him was what they should do to work the work of God. How is this similar to the expression Paul uses in 1 Thessalonians 1:3; 2 Thessalonians 1:11?

### ***Other Readings***

John 12:12-15; 1 Thessalonians 1:2-4; 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12

### ***Parallels in Other Gospels***

Jesus fed five thousand men (6:1-14) in Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17. Jesus' walking on the water (6:16-21) is also found in Matthew 14:22-33; Mark 6:45-52.

# John 6:41-71

## "A Difficult Statement" (6:60)



### Main Points:

- We need to respond to the call to come to Jesus.
- We need to “eat ... and drink” of Jesus, showing total commitment.
- We need to accept the words of Jesus as truth.

We continue studying the conversation Jesus had with those who appeared to be His disciples. Over the course of Chapter 6, these followers went from planning to force Him to be an earthly king (6:15) and asking about doing the works of God (6:28) to grumbling about Him (6:41) and withdrawing from Him (6:66). The true disciples still realized that Jesus had the truth; they would not leave Him.

D. R. Dungan, in his book, *Hermeneutics*, points out that the latter part of this chapter is a sequence of metaphors (252-258). Those who do not wish to understand the point of metaphors can turn figurative words into literal and confuse themselves. Similarly, people who do not want to understand literal words can twist them into figurative words to make them mean what they want. Neither approach is right. The listeners in this text chose to misunderstand Jesus' figurative language to justify their disobedience.

### 6:41-51 Jesus Is Superior to Manna

The sharp turn downward in the conversation is seen in the crowd's grumbling about Jesus' statement about being the bread out of Heaven (6:32-35). They started criticizing Him because they had known Him (at least they thought they had known Him), His family, and the place from which He had come (compare Mark 6:1-4, which probably happened around that time in Nazareth). Sometimes people disdain those they know; their vanity does not want to acknowledge that someone from similar beginnings might be far more successful than themselves. They also were inconsistent; Jesus' parentage was not an issue when He was producing food with His miracles, but it became one when they did not like what He was saying!

In the next chapter Jesus would say that people knew Him and where He was from, but Jesus' point there was to show that the doubters did not know His Father (7:28-29).

### Father

Jesus told them not to grumble. The Father teaches men and draws them to Jesus. Jesus was not excusing their fickleness by saying the Father had not made them believe, but demonstrating that they needed the right heart to be receptive to the truth.

Isaiah 54:11-13, about being taught of God, is quoted in 6:45 (compare Micah 4:2). The entire chapter describes God's neverending love toward an afflicted people who would never be forsaken. The Judah of Jesus' day would be forsaken in another generation for rejecting Him, but all of God's people would be taught of Him (Jeremiah 31:31-34). This shows that all of God's new covenant people would be members of His church and kingdom not by birth but by learning and conversion. Only Jesus had seen the Father and Jesus was from Him; He would bring the teaching from God.



In the introduction to the gospel (1:18) and His statement about the witnesses (5:37) Jesus had said that no one else had seen the Father. In 7:29, Jesus would say that He knew the Father, and in 8:19, we see that to know Jesus was to know the Father.

#### • Eternal Life vs. Physical

**Life**

**"I Am"**

**World**

Jesus also said that whoever believes in Him has eternal life (compare 3:16, 36). Jesus is the bread of life (continued from 6:35). Eating the bread of life means living forever.

The manna, which was like what His listeners had requested in 6:31-34, had not given the Israelites eternal life; in fact, almost all who were adults when it had started coming had died in the wilderness because of God's wrath. The life that manna had given was neither eternal nor permanently physical (see 6:58). Jesus offered a better "bread": He was giving His flesh as bread for the life of the world. To completely believe Jesus and live out that belief was to eat of Him, as the next section shows. It would not prevent physical death (indeed, the very words Jesus used hinted that He would die), but it would bring eternal life in a spiritual sense. Jesus had also been said to have descended from Heaven in 3:13.

#### 6:52-58 Eating Christ's Flesh and Blood

Division occurred, as it frequently would (7:43; 9:16; 10:19). Jesus did not want to bring division (Luke 12:51), but division is inevitable when some people do not love the truth. The Jews who had grumbled before Jesus' most recent statement then began to argue with each other. That Jesus was not speaking of cannibalism should have been obvious to those who wanted the truth. He did not retreat from His earlier statements when He continued to speak of eating His flesh and drinking His blood! He also said that such eating and drinking was absolutely necessary to have life. This was an exclusive claim to the truth. While the primary focus of this statement does not seem to be the Lord's Supper, the terminology is similar. John also wrote about God's abiding in us as we abide in Him in 1 John 3:24; 4:15-16.

**Life**

**Father**

Eating the bread of life is eating Christ, which means living forever. Jesus promised (as in 6:40, 44) to raise up the one who had eaten of Him on the last day, that is, at the final judgment. Not only is this eternal life, it is also described as abiding in Jesus and having Him abide in us. The Father had sent Jesus and Jesus lived because of Him. We can live because of Jesus.

#### 6:59-66 Many Disciples Depart

At least part of the conversation had happened around the synagogue at Capernaum, which might explain how the crowd was able to find Jesus (6:24). The listeners had found His sayings very difficult. Instead of backing away from His point, Jesus challenged them further. They would not really be His disciples if they would not accept the more difficult parts of His teaching. Jesus asked them how they would react if they were to see Him ascend above (which would happen in Mark 16:19; Acts 1:9).

**Spirit**

**Father**

While "spirit" is set in contrast with flesh in 6:63 and later Jesus' words are called "spirit", the life-giving power of Jesus' teaching obviously comes from the Holy Spirit and not human spirits. Only the Spirit gives life (compare 2 Corinthians 3:5-8). Jesus knew that some of His listeners would not believe, and they would confirm Jesus' words by deserting Him shortly. Jesus not only knew it would happen, He even knew who would do it. He also pointed out that the Father had granted men the ability to come to Him. Just because God gave them the ability did not mean that they would all automatically be

saved or that God would force some to be saved against their will. These people had been called disciples, but many forsook Him. While we will be sad when supposed disciples turn away today, we should know that it happened in His day and it could certainly happen now.

### **6:67-71      The Confession Made by the True Disciples**

After the false disciples had left, Jesus asked the twelve apostles if they were also going to leave. Peter spoke for them and said they were not. In eleven cases, the statement was correct. Jesus knew that Judas would betray Him. Judas would be “a devil.” This was a metaphor. Judas would certainly be led by the devil in 13:2, 27.

#### **Belief>>**

This lesson contains the end of the conversation in which those who did not truly believe turned away from Christ, but it also contains Peter's confession that Jesus was the Holy One

#### **Life**

of God who had the truth. Peter said that Jesus had the words of eternal life. He also confessed that Jesus was the Holy One of God (demons used the term in Mark 1:24 || Luke 4:34) and Martha would speak similarly in 11:27. Peter's words show Jesus' unique role.

In the next lesson we will study the topic of life in John's gospel. Jesus is life in many ways.

## **Questions**

What did Jesus say in 6:44 that He would do for all who would come to Him?

What had happened to almost all of the adult Israelites who had eaten the manna as it had begun to appear in the wilderness (6:49)?

What did Jesus say in 6:53 was necessary to have life?

What else did He promise to those who would do that (6:58)?

In 6:64, what had Jesus known from the beginning?

What did Peter confess about what Jesus had and who He was (6:68-69)?

Manna (6:31, 49) is only mentioned explicitly two other times in the New Testament. Hebrews 9:4 describes it as being in the ark of the covenant, which was in the tabernacle. What is the other place in the New Testament in which it is mentioned?

How is its use there similar to its use in John 6?

While anyone can understand how words about eating a person's flesh might be disturbing if taken literally, why would drinking blood be especially disturbing to someone who had read the Old Testament? Find passages to verify your answer.

## **Other Readings**

Genesis 9:1-6; Revelation 2:12-17

# Life in John

## "You May Have Life" (20:31)

### Main Points:

#### Life

- Jesus is the exclusive source of life.
- Jesus gave up His life so that men could have life.
- We must have an obedient faith to have life through Jesus.

Jesus describes Himself as the source of life, and that is seen in His claims:

- that only in Him is found life,
- that men must completely accept and obey Him to have life,
- that He enlightens those who will have life,
- that He gives life,
- and that He would give others life by sacrificing His own physical life.

We also learn of our responsibilities if we want to have that life: having faith in Him and doing good works in this world.

We have a very important reason for studying the topic of life at this point in John. Toward the end of Chapter 6 was the most extensive discussion of life in Christ in all of the gospel. In that chapter we see that Jesus would give the food for eternal life (6:27), that Jesus was the bread who would give life to the world (6:33-35), that believing in Him was necessary for eternal life (6:40, 47-48), that eating of Jesus, the living bread, was necessary to live forever (6:47-51, 54-58), and that Jesus' words would lead to eternal life (6:68-69). We also notice that He was not afraid to say these things when many people who had followed Him were leaving. Jesus unabashedly claimed to be life (14:6). The same verse shows His exclusive claim (no one could come to the Father without Him) and His unique role as a life-giver. Two of His miracles in John involved saving or restoring life: the son of a royal official, with the healing done from a distance (4:47-53), and raising Lazarus (11:41-44). Notice that His primary claims were not about physical life, though He had created the world (1:3-4, 10; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:2, 8-12).

### How Jesus Is Life

As we see how Jesus claimed to be life in 14:6, we should also note the kind of life He mentioned. When He told Nicodemus of the need to be born again (3:3-6), He obviously was not speaking of physical birth, as Nicodemus needed to see. When He said that only if one hates his life can he keep it (12:24-26), He was speaking of giving up the physical life in favor of the eternal, as He would do very shortly. Jesus' focus was on spiritual life, and ours should be there as well.

#### • Believing in Him Is Necessary for Eternal Life

Jesus taught quite clearly that believing in Him was necessary to have eternal life, and that belief was nothing without obedience (3:36). We only live because Jesus lives (14:19). It is only when we abide in Jesus, like a branch on a vine, that we can continue to live (15:5-6). Even Jesus' words are eternal life (6:68-69). When all of this is put together, we can see that Jesus was making an exclusive claim that salvation with its true spiritual life was available only in Him. There is no comfort for those who want many paths, many faiths, many truths, or many saviors; Jesus is what true faith requires, and the Father wants all believers to be raised by Him (6:40).

- **Jesus Is Food and Drink for Eternal Life**

Another picture John uses for how vital belief in Jesus is for eternal life (6:40) has to do with food and drink. Jesus told the crowd at Capernaum after the Feeding of the Five Thousand that they needed the food that would endure to eternal life instead of physical food (6:26-27). He called Himself the bread of life because of the absolute spiritual need people would have for Him (6:32-35). He told the increasingly disenchanted crowd that they needed to eat Him, the bread of life, in order to live forever (6:47-51, 54-58). They rejected the spiritual meal they needed when the physical meal they wanted was not provided. When you eat something, you make it a part of yourself, and so we must digest Jesus' words.

He also told the Samaritan woman at the well that He would provide living water (4:10-14) and later identified Himself with that water at the temple (7:37-38). Jesus is essential to spiritual life and we must allow Him to enter every "cell" of our souls!

- **Jesus Is the Light of Life**

Jesus' life serves as a light to each one of us. His life is called light in 1:4, and only through following Him can we truly "see" spiritually and live (8:12). We will do a lesson on light in John later.

- **Jesus Is the Giver of Life**

We have just seen how Jesus claimed to be living water (4:10-14) and spiritual food (6:27) as the bread of Heaven that all needed to eat (6:33-35, 54-58). When Jesus spoke of the judgment He was authorized to make and the two resurrections that would follow, He said that those who had followed Him would have a resurrection of eternal life (5:25-29). Jesus has such authority over life that no man can take away the life He has given the faithful (10:28-29), though, as John shows with the fickle crowd of Chapter 6, keeping that life requires continual obedience to Him. Eternal life would come through the knowledge of God that Jesus had come to declare (1:18; 17:1-3). However, this eternal life would require a great physical price to be paid by Jesus.

- **Jesus Sacrificed His Physical Life for Our Spiritual Life**

Following our last point, we see that the sacrifice of physical life was necessary for Jesus to secure spiritual life for each one who will believe and obey (3:14-16). He had said that it was His duty as the Good Shepherd to do that for His followers (10:10-11). He showed that He was choosing freely to do the things that would culminate in His crucifixion (10:17-18). He also demonstrated in Himself the greatest love, that of dying for a friend (15:12-13). He wants us to be His friends!

Peter thought he was ready to lay down his own life when he was not (13:37-38); are we busy strengthening ourselves to give our lives in whatever way Christ needs them?

## **What We Must Do To Have Life**

We have seen many ways in which Jesus is life and brings spiritual life to us, but what must we do in our physical lives to share in that eternal life? A few necessary things are mentioned in John.

- **Believe in Christ**

Having a true faith in Jesus will allow us to have eternal life and not experience God's wrath (3:36). Believers will pass from death to life (5:24) and be raised from the dead (6:40). Faith will cause us to live after physical death and never die spiritually (11:25-26). In 8:51-58, Jesus would connect His claim to keep believers from spiritual death with His eternal, divine existence.

- **Do Good Works**

To live in the resurrection of life, believers need to do good (5:25-29). Those who work to teach others gather

fruit for eternal life (4:35-36).

- **Be Born Again in Baptism**

In 3:3-8, Jesus spoke of being born again, born of water and the Spirit in baptism, as the birth of the life He had come to give.

The Gospel of John is written so that we "may have life" (20:30-31). We can have this life if we believe in Jesus and obey Him in all things.

In the next lesson in the text (7:1-24), Jesus begins to teach at the temple at the Feast of Tabernacles. He says publicly that some are trying to take away His life (7:19-20).

## **Questions**

Jesus claimed to be "the life" in 14:6. What else in the verse shows that this was an exclusive claim (that He was the only source of life)?

Who did Jesus say would raise up the believer on the "last day" (6:40)?

What kind of water did Jesus claim to be in 4:10-14; 7:37-38?  
What did that mean?

In His prayer to His Father in 17:2-3, what did Jesus say was eternal life?  
How did Jesus allow people to have the knowledge of God?

15:13 speaks of the greatest love, which Jesus demonstrated in His death. What does the previous verse demand of us?

When John speaks of Christ and life, He is usually speaking of spiritual life in Christ. Where in the New Testament can you read of Christ's role in creating physical life on earth? (Hint: Start in the beginning verses of John)

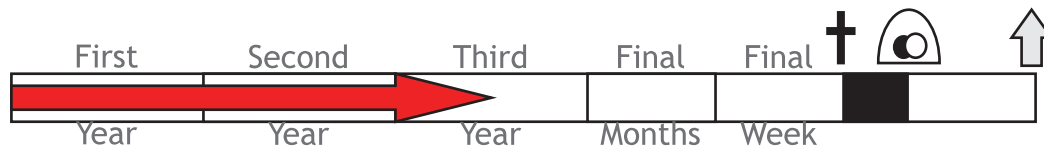
11:25-26 mentions dying twice. Which kind of death is meant the first time and which kind of death is meant the second time?

What does the context (To whom was Jesus speaking? When was He saying it?) add to the meaning of the passage?



# John 7:1-24

## "Seeking the Glory of the One Who Sent Him" (7:18)



### Main Points:

- Jesus picked His battles but was not afraid to challenge sinful leaders.
- Jesus taught only His Father's will.
- Jesus demonstrated His authority regarding the Law.

About six months after the events of the previous chapter (see the timeline above), Jesus went to the Feast of Tabernacles and taught more about His mission ([teaching the Father's will](#)), His destination ([crucifixion and glorification](#)), and His provision ([spiritual life for all who would obey](#)). In this first half of the chapter we will see that Jesus was speaking only God's truth, but that the people as a whole were disobeying God and rejecting His Son.

### 7:1-10 Jesus' Delayed Departure for the Feast

Jesus stayed in Galilee instead of Judea because many of the Jews wanted to kill Him. We read of Jesus' drawing unwanted attention as far back as 4:1-3, probably a year or more before. The attempt to kill Him in 5:18 was not isolated. In staying in Galilee Jesus was not running scared — He would go to Jerusalem soon afterward — instead, we can say that He was choosing the right time for the inevitable confrontation. He would say shortly that His time had not yet come; it was not yet the time for His self-sacrifice.

#### World

#### Belief>>

He was opposed by many in society (even most of His supposed disciples in 6:60-66 had turned away) and by His own family. The hostile world loved its own but could not love Jesus because He rebuked it. Jesus' own brothers did not believe at that time, even with their opportunities to see and hear Him. About a year before the events of this chapter they or others from Nazareth had even tried to take Him home for His mental health (Mark 3:20-21, 31-35). By Acts 1:14 (perhaps seven months after this chapter) they would believe in Him. Jesus said that the world could not hate His brothers (perhaps because they rejected Him; more likely, He was just making a general statement that they were acting like the rest of the world). 3:19 says that most men do not love the light, and 15:19 says the world would hate the ones whom Jesus had chosen out of the world. We can see Jesus' brothers as a sort of prime example of disbelief: those who should have known Him best and had been able to evaluate His claims most carefully instead seemed to either dismiss Him or treat Him with scorn. They were probably challenging Him to display the authority He claimed. They wanted Him, in some sense, to display His power to the world, though they doubted Him. Jesus was waiting for the right time.

Jesus told His brothers that He was not going with them to the feast. Some manuscripts add “yet” near the beginning of 7:8. Whether He said “yet” there or not, He said “yet” later in the verse and it is what He meant. The Feast of Tabernacles was one of the three annual festivals required of Israelite men (Exodus 23:14-17; Deuteronomy 16:16). Jesus would not go with His brothers. He would wait to attract attention until it needed to be attracted by His teaching. As noted above, Jesus said that His time had not fully come. He had said that in 2:4 and



would say it again days later in 7:30.

### **7:11-18 Teaching from God**

People were expecting Jesus to appear at the feast, as they would expect Him again at the fateful Passover when His time had come (11:55-57). This is not surprising when we consider the popular sentiment to make Him king after the Feeding of the Five Thousand (6:15). Some said He was good and some considered Him a false teacher, as we see here and in 7:40-43; 9:16; 10:19-21. He was a popular topic in guarded conversations. In 9:22; 12:42; 19:38 we see how the fear of retribution for speaking positively of Jesus or being identified with Jesus silenced many.

Jesus began teaching publicly in the middle of the seven-day feast (Leviticus 23:34-36). Some wondered how He knew so much without having been educated by a rabbinical school. In Matthew 13:54 || Mark 6:2; Luke 4:22 we see others who were astonished at Jesus but took offense instead of believing. In Acts 2:7 we see that the power given to Jesus' apostles through the Holy Spirit astonished Jews at Pentecost as well, and many of them believed the message.

Jesus had been taught how to read, and doubtless had spent great amounts of time studying the Old Testament, but that was not the true source of His message. He was not approved by the prominent rabbis, but by God. Jesus' teaching originated with the Father and not Himself. He had indicated this to Nicodemus in 3:10-12 and would also say this to other listeners in 8:28; 12:49; 14:10, 24. Because He received His teaching from the Father and would not alter it (and being one with Him, He had no reason to alter it), and because He did not want to promote His own opinions, He was speaking exactly what God wanted spoken, glorifying Him (8:49-50). That made Him the greatest teacher.

**Father**

**Glorify**

7:17 is not indicating that we will intuitively know whether teaching is correct. The desire to do God's will and investigate what is taught (Acts 17:11) allows us to know the truth. An unwillingness to obey will prevent us from fully understanding Jesus (5:39-40). 8:43-47 reinforces the point. 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 warns against judging by appearances instead of by the word of God.

### **7:19-24 The True Interpretation of the Law**

Jesus said that none of the Jews kept the Law. This probably is connected to and contrasted with the claim in 7:18 that He had no unrighteousness in Himself. Proof of their not keeping the Law was in their persecution of Him, the one who was fulfilling it. Other statements about the intent to kill Him are in 5:18; 10:31, 39; 11:53, and those are just the first ones. Jesus was persecuted (7:1) and hated (7:7) by many of His own people, who did not know God (7:28), thus providing evidence that His statement about their not keeping the Law was correct. Jesus asked the people why they were trying to kill Him after He had spoken of their unrighteousness. The crucifixion served as the final proof and culmination of their unrighteousness.

The "world" is used in a hostile sense but included many people who would not have considered themselves hostile to the truth. Christians must have an attitude toward the world in which they expect persecution (2 Timothy 3:12) and do not get attached to the things of this world (1 John 2:15-17). Christians also must love the people in the world. Jesus did that, but it is hard to do.

Back to the question in 7:19: Most of the people either did not know of a plot against Jesus or lied if they had known. The plot was still at least six months from bearing fruit and the

perpetrators may not have been expecting Jesus in that place and at that time. Still, Jesus was correct about their desire to kill Him.

### **Law**

Jesus noted that no one fully carried out the Law, but that He did and the healings He performed were acceptable according to the Law. He brought up Moses again. No one criticized Moses for giving the Law, which allowed circumcision on the Sabbath (Genesis 17:12; Leviticus 12:3). However, Jesus had done miracles that helped people and could only have come from God; because He had done them on the Sabbath (e.g., 5:5-16 at the Pool of Bethesda; Luke 4:31-35; 6:6-11), people were ready to kill Him! All of the Jews acknowledged the need to perform circumcision on the Sabbath to satisfy one command of the Law, but by healing people Jesus demonstrated that He was fulfilling the whole Law!

### **Judge**

True judgment was not to come through evaluating external appearances but by honestly handling the truth (see James 2:1). Jesus was calling on the people to realize that He was who He claimed to be (explained further in the rest of the chapter) and obey. In the next chapter (8:15-16) He would say that they judged according to the flesh, while He judged with a righteous judgment.

The next lesson completes the exchange found in this first part of the chapter.

## **Questions**

What did Jesus' brothers tell Him to do before the Feast of Tabernacles (7:3-4)?

Why did Jesus say the world hated Him (7:7)?

What does this say about our responsibility to the world today?

What attitude was required for someone to know whether Jesus' teaching had come from God (7:17)?

What did Jesus say was true of the one who was thinking only of the glory given to God (7:18)?

What was the crowd's reaction when Jesus said many of them (the Jews) were trying to kill him (7:19-20)?

Much of Chapter 7 occurred near the time of the Feast of Tabernacles (7:2) while the events of Chapter 6 happened around Passover (6:4). Leviticus 23 mentions both feasts. How much time would have elapsed between the two?

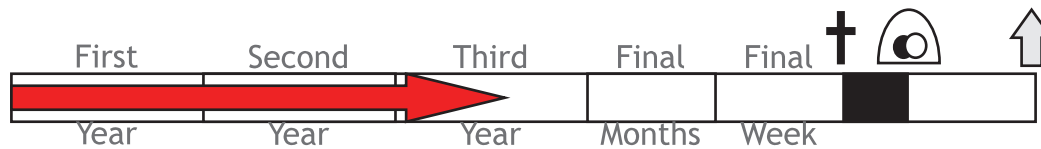
What other instances in the gospels do we have of people who said that Jesus had a demon or was insane?

## **Other Readings**

John 8:48-53; 10:19-21; Leviticus 23:33-44

# John 7:25-53

## "I Am from Him, and He Sent Me" (7:29)



### Main Points:

- Jesus knew God, though the people did not know Him.
- Jesus said He was going to a place where the people could not go.
- Many leaders refused to consider the evidence because they hated Jesus.

We see the differences between Jesus and those around Him in sharp relief:

- They thought they knew where He was from, but they did not truly know (7:26-27); He said they knew where He was from but there was far more to it than they knew (7:28-29).
- Some thought the origin of the Messiah would be a mystery (7:27); others correctly said He would come from Bethlehem but misapplied the knowledge (7:41-42, 52).
- Several times the leaders sought to seize Jesus (7:30-32, 44); Jesus not only kept them from taking Him but told them that they could not go where He was going (7:34-36).

This section of the chapter continues the events from the Feast of Tabernacles (or Booths).

The time was not right for the final confrontation with the Jewish leaders, but Jesus needed to teach when all of the faithful and able Jewish men would be gathered in Jerusalem. He had already said that His teaching had come from the Father (7:16-18). He had defended His miracles and shown that He knew about the plots against Him (7:19-24).

Jesus would emphatically, if indirectly, establish His identity (7:28-29), His destiny (7:33-34), and the life-giving truth of His teaching (7:37-39). The leaders of the people would reject these truths and all common sense and decency in their attempts to rid the world of Him.

### 7:25-32 Confusion about Jesus as Christ

Jesus claimed to be from God and know Him while His listeners did not know Him (none of His listeners knew God as He did).

The people were divided about Jesus. Some knew that His life was in danger (7:25; whether these speakers were different than those in 7:20 is not stated). Some said that He could not have been the Christ because no one would know from where the Christ would have come, but their belief was incorrect. In Matthew 13:55 || Mark 6:3; Luke 4:22 people had taken offense at Jesus because they knew His family and thought they knew His origins. In 5:43; 8:26 we see that Jesus had been sent by the Father with authority from Him.

These people knew neither Jesus' origin nor His destination, He knew both and verified it, and yet they were acting like they had the right to judge Him! The signs were proof enough that Jesus' word on the matter should have been authoritative.

Jesus said that they could know where He was from, but they were missing the knowledge of who had sent Him. Jesus said that the Jews (at least most of the ones to whom He was speaking) did not know the Father. Jesus' statement that He knew God (while they did not) and was from God caused them to want to seize Him. It was probably also an allusion to His Deity. Certainly that was how His opponents reacted.

**Father**

**Deity**

### **Attempt**

7:29-32 may indicate that Jesus' life was in danger when His opponents, including the Pharisees, were trying to seize Him after He had said that He was from the Father.

### **Belief>>**

Many in the crowd were convinced by His signs and said so during the feast after He had claimed to know the Father and to have been sent by Him. Matthew 11:27 makes the point that Jesus could know and help others to know the Father because the Father had sent Him.

### **Signs**

Many people rightly asked if the Christ would do more signs than Jesus, apparently drawing the correct conclusion that He was the Christ. This was similar to Nicodemus in 3:2. The Pharisees could not countenance such a belief's spreading among the people; though it was supported by the facts, it seemed blasphemous to them. Their attempt in 7:32 to seize Him may be a continuation of the effort in 7:30. His claim in 7:19 that men were trying to kill Him was certainly true. That "His hour had not yet come" would be repeated in 8:20.

### **7:33-36 Jesus' Going Where Others Could Not**

Jesus said that He would only be present a little while longer, consistent with 13:33; 16:16. The Jewish leaders' efforts to destroy Him would fail, of course, because Jesus said that He was going back to the Father. Eventually they would seize Him and cause Him to be killed, but that was not the end as far as Jesus was concerned.

Some of the Jewish people wondered what Jesus meant. Some even thought He might go to the Jews scattered across that part of the world (the Dispersion or Diaspora) and teach "the Greeks" (consider Isaiah 11:12). Here "the Greeks" could possibly mean Greek-speaking Jews who were not native to Palestine, but its use in 12:20 and many other passages points to the Gentiles. These people could not have realized how much that Jesus' disciples would do to teach the truth to Greek-speaking Jews and Gentiles, often in synagogues in cities throughout the Roman world.

### **7:37-39 The Offer of the Holy Spirit**

On the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles Jesus publicly said that thirsty men needed to come to Him and drink. Those who believed in Him would have living water flowing out of them. This is similar to what He had told the Samaritan woman at the well in 4:14 and those who had sought Him after the Feeding of the Five Thousand in 6:35.

Jesus' words about life-giving water in the New Covenant are similar to Isaiah 12:3-5; 44:3; 55:1, 5. In the first and last Isaiah references, the knowledge would be repeated among the nations (compare 7:35). That call would also be made to all who would hear in Revelation 22:17.

### **Spirit**

### **Belief>>**

The living water that would flow out of believers in Jesus was a reference to the Holy Spirit, who would be given to believers after Jesus' glorification (it would be after His death and resurrection). Even without miraculous gifts, the Holy Spirit brings life to men when the word He has brought is taught and obeyed.

### **Glorify**

### **7:40-44 Division over Jesus as Christ**

Some people in the crowd believed that Jesus was the Prophet, probably thinking of Deuteronomy 18:15-19 (see 1:21; 6:14). Some thought He was the Christ. Both were correct! Others did not think He could be the Christ because He had come from Galilee. They correctly cited Micah 5:2, which named Bethlehem as the Christ's birthplace, but they did not realize that Jesus had fulfilled the passage (Matthew 2:4-6). If they had checked a little more, they might have understood that Jesus had lived in Galilee (which fulfilled Isaiah 9:1-2, as Matthew 4:12-16 shows) but had been born in Bethlehem, as Micah had predicted.



How many people today have a partial knowledge of Christ and the church based on “facts” related incorrectly or incompletely by others? Many of those people reject the truth without ever checking it out for themselves! As in 7:12, a division occurred among the crowd. Another attempt on His life may be implied in 7:43-46 with the division in the multitude and the Pharisees' sending a detachment to seize Him. God did not allow Jesus' enemies to seize Him at that time.

### **7:45-53      The Pharisees' Errors**

In this section we see how the Pharisees and other leaders (the rulers and the chief priests) were disregarding all truth and reason in their quest to stop Jesus.

#### **• The Officers' Astonishment**

The officers had not fulfilled their commission (7:32) to seize Jesus. They had not seized Him because of the power of His words. Matthew 7:28-29; Luke 4:31-36 are other examples of people who were taken aback in a positive way by Jesus' message.

#### **• The Pharisees' Arrogance**

The Pharisees, unsurprisingly, were displeased that Jesus was not in their custody. They accused the officers of being led astray. By extension, they accused many who were not of their exclusive group of having done the same thing, saying that no Pharisee or ruler had believed. 1 Corinthians 1:20-25 describes the frequent rejection of the truth by those who are considered wise on earth. Unfaithful Christians can reject the truth in a similar way.

#### **Law**

While the Pharisees expressed contempt for the common people's knowledge of the Law, they were about to condemn a perfectly innocent man in complete opposition to the Law!

#### **• Nicodemus's Fairness**

#### **Judge**

One Pharisee, a “teacher of Israel” (3:1, 10), did believe something true about Jesus: Nicodemus. He asked the chief priests and Pharisees to make an honest and fair judgment (Deuteronomy 1:16-17), but they were not interested in that. This is one of the perverted judgments men made in opposition to Jesus' words in 7:24; by doing so, men caused the death of the only truly good and just man to have ever lived. The Pharisees responded to a simple plea for fairness and justice with what was probably an insult about being from Galilee, like the man that they had been trying to seize. Nicodemus's actions regarding Jesus' body in 19:39 probably would show a growing willingness to defy his unrighteous peers. The Pharisees also claimed that no prophet had come from Galilee. Isaiah 9:1-2 and its application to 7:41-43 should have told them otherwise; also, Jonah was from that general area and Elijah, Elisha, and Nahum might have been. The Pharisees often were extremely careful to follow the Old Testament rules about such things as tithing garden herbs, but they could be much less careful about the word of God when it suited them.

## **Questions**

In 7:28, Jesus said that His listeners knew where He was from; whom did He say they did not know?

In 7:38, Jesus promised living water to those who would believe in Him. Who else in John had already received a similar promise?

In 7:40, some said Jesus was the Prophet (compare Deuteronomy 18:15-19). In 7:41, others said Jesus was the Christ. Who was right?

In 7:42, some correctly cited Micah 5:2 as proof that the Messiah or Christ would be born in Bethlehem. Why did they not then believe in Jesus?

In 7:48-49, the Pharisees implied that none of those who were knowledgeable had believed. What does 12:42-43 tell us about the belief of people like that later?

Some of Jesus' listeners would not believe in Him because He had come from Galilee. Which Old Testament passage had predicted Jesus' work in Galilee? (Hint: You can search the text for "Galilee" or the names of the tribes that had possessed that part of Israel in the Old Testament.)

Where else in the New Testament had people who did not have faith in Jesus correctly cited Micah 5:2 as predicting that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem?

### ***Other Readings***

Micah 5:1-5; Matthew 4:12-16



# The Law in John

## "To Fulfill the Word That Is Written in Their Law" (15:25)

TOPICAL

### Main Points:

#### Law

- Jesus brought a new system of living that was greater than the Law.
- Jesus had been prophesied in the Law.
- The people did not truly obey the Law but Jesus fulfilled it.
- The people's failure to obey the Law caused Jesus' persecution and death.

We study the topic of the Law in John because we have just studied the Pharisees' attitude toward God's law in 7:49-51 and will soon study a question about the Law and the woman caught in adultery in 8:1-11. Jesus not only fulfilled the Law, He obeyed it when all others did not. He came to bring something greater than the Law of Moses.

Romans and Galatians demonstrate that all forms of law will fail to save men because all men except Jesus have violated or will violate some law, including the Law of Moses in the Old Testament. Law itself cannot forgive. What Jesus came to bring through His sacrifice of Himself was true forgiveness. While that is not the main point of this lesson, it will be helpful to keep in mind during our study.

### Comparing the Gospel to the Law (Jesus' Grace Is Greater than the Law of Moses)

In the very beginning of the gospel John makes the point that Jesus was greater than Moses and His covenant was superior to the Law that Moses had received from God (1:17). This was a tremendous claim to make. Later in this lesson we will see how many of the leaders under the Old Covenant had trouble with that concept, though their problems were not of the intellect but of the will. Jesus could not have claimed to be "the truth" (14:6) if His words had not been superior to Moses'.

### Fulfilling Prophecies in the Law

The Law had also prophesied Jesus' coming. Philip told Nathanael that Jesus had been prophesied in the Law by Moses (1:45; most translations indicate that Philip was speaking of the Law and the prophetic writings as two separate parts of the Old Testament).

Jesus Himself also claimed that the Law prophesied of Him. In 5:39-40, He called the Scriptures (definitely including the Law) as one of four witnesses to His identity. He followed that by saying that truly believing Moses would cause a person to believe in Him because Moses had written of Him (5:45-47).

Not only in general but in specific ways had the Law prophesied of Christ. In 15:24-25, Jesus said the prophecy in the Law about hating God's servant without a cause was specifically fulfilled in Him; either Psalm 35:19 or 65:4 would fit as the prophecy.

Notice above that Jesus used "the Law" to refer to the Old Testament as a whole and not just the Five Books of Moses. In 10:33-38, Jesus cited the use of judges as "gods" in Psalm 82:6 (again part of "your Law") to show how reasonable it was to call Him the Son of God (proving His deity) when His divine origin and works verified His claim. In 12:34, the people said that they understood that the Christ was to remain forever from the Law (perhaps Psalm 89:36-37).

### Failing To Obey the Law

The greatest problem under the Law was that it did not forgive sin (Hebrews 10:1-4). All men sin (Romans 3:23 and much of the first section of that book). This was illustrated in 7:19-23, in which Jesus said that no one carried out the Law.

Only He had perfectly obeyed the Law, but He was being condemned as a transgressor by those who had

broken the Law; they condemned Jesus, who fulfilled the Law, for doing good by healing a man on the Sabbath. The further irony was that they would “work” on the Sabbath to obey the Law of Moses (Genesis 17:12; Leviticus 12:3), but they would condemn Jesus' greater display of divine power on the Sabbath as sinful. Christ was showing both that they were not obeying the Law and that something greater than the Law had appeared, yet they were treating that greater person very poorly. Matthew 5:17; 8:14-17 show how Jesus came to fulfill the Law and that part of that fulfillment was found in His healing people.

In 8:5-7, the account of the woman caught in adultery, the scribes and the Pharisees demanded to know if Jesus would act according to the Law (Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22). Jesus did obey the Law, but what those men were doing in bringing the woman before Him was not right according to the Law. Far from ignoring the Law because of a love of mercy, Jesus pointed out that His antagonists' actions had also been contrary to the Law. The ones to whom society had looked as examples of piety were shown to be in sin along with the “multitudes” they despised.

We will see more about the Pharisees' attitude toward the common people and their failure not only to obey the Law but to understand the point of the Law in the next section.

### **Failing To Understand the Law**

After Jesus' statements at the Feast of Tabernacles (Chapter 7), the chief priests and Pharisees tried to have Him arrested.

In 7:47-52, the Pharisees said that the multitude did not know the Law and was accursed. Nicodemus appealed to the principles of the Law to get Jesus a fair hearing, but he was overruled by people who made an incorrect and irrelevant point about prophets. The irony was that the Pharisees would soon blatantly violate every principle of the justice of the Law while criticizing others for not knowing it!

The Pharisees would later put the man born blind out of the synagogue because he rightly defended Jesus (9:28-31). As they were claiming to be Moses' disciples they were acting unjustly according to the Law that had come through Him!

This trend continued with the Jewish leaders who observed a probably unnecessary scruple against going into a pagan building as they asked for a verdict and sentence before the trial had begun (18:28-32). They also demanded the death penalty according to their law despite ignoring the most basic principles of justice found in the Law (19:7).

Jesus had satisfied the legal requirements of their law by providing two witnesses to His identity: the Father and Himself (8:14-18). That was not enough for men who did not obey nor even really understand the whole point of the Law of Moses, but it should be enough for every one of us.

The next lesson contains the account of the woman caught in adultery. Jesus was confronted with a question about the Law at that event.

### **Questions**

Jesus said that when His opponents did not believe Him that they were also refusing to believe someone else (5:45-47). Who was that?

What did Jesus say men had done with the Law that Moses had given them (7:19)?

In 7:47-52, what did the Pharisees say the common people did not know?  
To what did Nicodemus appeal in an attempt to get Jesus a fair hearing?

In 15:24-25, what did Jesus say the Law had prophesied about Him?

The Pharisees claimed to be Moses' disciples as they persecuted the righteous (9:28-31). If they had been Moses' disciples, what would their attitude toward the Law have been?

Philip told Nathanael in 1:45 that Moses had written of Jesus. Can you find a passage from the first five books of the Old Testament that would fit the description?

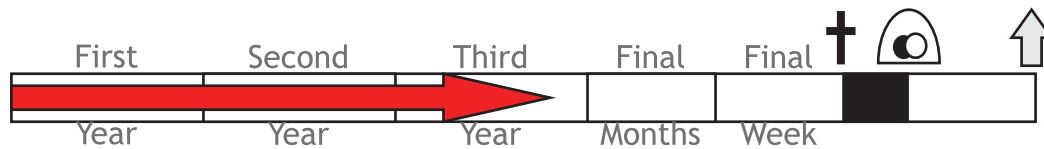
In 1:17, John states that grace and truth in their fullest measure came through Jesus, not Moses. Can you find other passages that show that Christ's New Covenant is superior to the Law that was given through Moses?

### ***Other Readings***

Deuteronomy 18:15-19; 2 Corinthians 3:7-10

# John 8:1-24

## "The Light of Life" (8:12)



### Main Points:

- Jesus upheld the Law and showed mercy to the adulterous woman.
- Jesus could bear witness to Himself because His knowledge was complete.
- The people did not know the Father and they could not go where Jesus was going.

In this section Jesus would continue to demonstrate from Chapter 7 that:

- He had absolute agreement with the Father (7:16-17, 28-29; 8:18-19);
- His listeners could not go where He was going (7:33-36; 8:21-23); and
- He was the exclusive source of life and truth (7:37-38; 8:24).

### 8:1-11 The Woman Caught in Adultery

While near Jerusalem, the scribes and the Pharisees brought a test case to Jesus, probably caring much less about the woman's fate than accomplishing their goal of getting rid of Jesus. They were not looking to accuse the woman so much as to accuse Him.

Jesus asked them about their own sin. This may have been prompted by their bringing only half of the pair who were caught in the act of adultery. The accusers left, probably with the older ones' taking the lead in knowing that they were guilty.

#### Law

Stoning adulterers was part of the Law. Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22 could apply, although John does not tell us whether the woman (or the absent man) was married. Another part of the Law is Deuteronomy 17:6-7, which describes how witnesses were to be the first to put a person to death. Here the witnesses seem to have been complicit in setting up a situation that compromised their ability to serve as witnesses. Without proper witnesses, execution would not have only been unmerciful but probably illegal.

Jesus had the knowledge necessary to verify the sin, but He did not execute judgment. His statements about not condemning her and sinning no more may have indicated that He was forgiving her. If so, that also indicated His deity. Jesus was not merely saying that her sin did not matter, but showing her that she needed to take advantage of an opportunity to live righteously.

### 8:12-18 Jesus' Complete Witness Testimony

Jesus showed that His knowledge was complete in this section; in the next section He would show that the knowledge of Him was essential and sufficient for eternal life. He argued that

#### Witness

He was competent to bear witness of Himself because His knowledge of where He had come from and where He was going was complete, and also because the Father bore Him witness.

#### • The Light of the World

#### Light

#### "I Am"

Jesus is the light of the world. He had said so earlier in 1:4, 9; 3:19 and would again in 12:35-36. That was not and is not an insubstantial claim. Following the "light of the world" (see the topical study on the "I am" statements) will bring the light of life instead of darkness. Who

could claim to be the exclusive source of light (knowledge) and life except for the Son of God? In this Jesus seems to claim deity. Today we can still know everything we need to know through the study of His word.

#### • Knowing Himself Perfectly

When the Pharisees claimed that Jesus' witness was not valid because He was the only one testifying, they opened a can of worms for themselves. He had already convincingly answered that kind of objection with the multiple witnesses of 5:31-40. They also showed that they were ignoring the signs that established His authority. They also may have been intentionally confusing the definitions of "valid" and "true". Their objection may not even have been very relevant to Jesus' claim to be the light of the world.

Jesus responded by taking on the challenge and probably going beyond what His opponents had conceived. Human witnesses are imperfect (not all details are seen, memories fade and change, inducements to change the memory can be given), but Jesus was claiming a perfect and authoritative witness testimony (7:28). This was breathtaking. He had absolute knowledge and was not limited to the flesh as His opponents were.

Jesus was not judging at that time. 12:47-48; Luke 12:14 are examples of the judging that Jesus had not come to do. Note that 3:17-18 shows that the Son was not making a permanent judgment then, but that the outcomes for believers and unbelievers would be clear. 5:21-25 indicates that the Son would participate in the judgment, but it was not occurring as Jesus spoke. 9:39 indicates that the Son would be involved in judgment eventually.

**Father**

**Law**

**Judge**

The Father had borne witness of Christ. If anyone wanted to quibble about having one witness, they needed to consider the Father's witness. The principle that more than one (human) witness was needed to be certain of the verdict was in the Law; Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15 required more than one witness. The two witnesses, the Father and the Son, were completely unified as one because Jesus' judgment would be identical to the Father's (8:50). Jesus had already demonstrated His mastery of all things, but any who wanted multiple witnesses could have had them. See also Matthew 18:16.

#### 8:19-24 Dying in Sins without Christ

Referencing the Father as a witness brought a new question. Perhaps in a mocking reference to the virgin birth, His opponents asked Him about His Father (see also 8:41). If they meant an earthly father, they could have been trying to discredit Him by calling Him illegitimate.

**Father**

**Deity**

Perhaps they had a less vicious purpose. Either way, Jesus dramatically answered their question by saying that to know Him was to know the Father. It was another staggering statement that pointed to His deity. He would say the same thing to Philip in 14:7-11, and evidently not only His opponents but at least some of His disciples would still have a hard time grasping what He was saying. Though He had said things that had probably enraged many of His listeners, there was no attempt to kill Him at that moment because it was not the right time (as in 2:4; 7:30).

**Life**

After discussing His Father, He turned to telling the people of the importance of accepting His testimony. They would not be able to follow Him (7:34); here Jesus specifically attributes that to their dying in their sin. Later He would tell the apostles that they could not go where He was going at that time (13:33). Jesus said that He was from above, and those who did not believe that "I am (He)" would die in their sins. A mere man does not have the right to claim that everyone who does not agree with him on every single thing is wrong (Romans 14:1-15:7), but the Son of God does. We must agree on the things revealed in His word.



In light of the statements made about Jesus' unlimited truth and power and His being the exclusive source of life, it is strange that so many people who profess to be Christians can pick apart the Scriptures as if He could not have delivered His message clearly enough to be understood. ("We can't know exactly what was intended ..." "We cannot agree about the Bible ...") We can know and agree because our Savior wants us to and has made it possible.

### **World**

Jesus was not from this world, but He spoke the truth of God to this world. We will start the next lesson with His discussion of the truth.

### ***Does John 7:53-8:11 Belong in the Bible?***

Many people question whether the part of the text that speaks of the woman caught in adultery is authentic. Some of the best early manuscripts (such as Sinaiticus and Vaticanus) exclude the passage, but Jerome and Augustine are among those who defended it around the same time as those early manuscripts were copied. Another writer made reference to it even earlier.

No doctrine is affected significantly by its omission. Some could twist the passage to justify refusing to rebuke or correct someone who has sinned, saying, "We all make mistakes," or offering a similar excuse. Our own past sins should help us to be merciful but they should not prevent us from trying to help others out of sin. The proper understanding of this passage is in the main lesson.

This writer believes that the passage does belong in the Bible. The likelihood of someone's fabricating a part of John's gospel, which had been established very early, and somehow causing the text to be changed with an unusual story within a relatively short time is low. The possibility that God would have allowed a large corrupt chunk of text to be accepted almost without question from the fifth century to the seventeenth seems even lower.

### ***Questions***

What purpose did the scribes and Pharisees have for bringing the woman to Jesus at the temple (8:6)?

Why did Jesus claim that His bearing witness of Himself was valid (8:14)?

Who else was bearing witness and judging along with Jesus (8:16-18)?

Whom did Jesus say His listeners would know if they would learn to know Him (8:19)?

Why did Jesus say that His listeners would not be able to follow Him to the place where He was going (8:21, 24)?

Jesus listed another witness of Himself in 8:16-18. What other witnesses had Jesus also listed in 5:31-40?

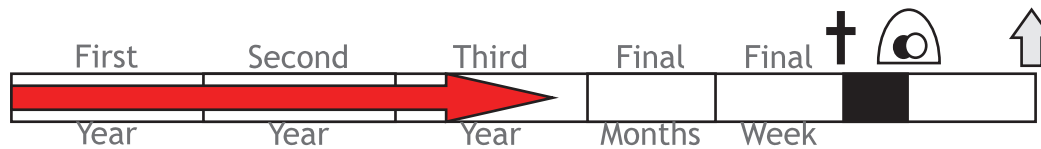
Deuteronomy 17:2-7 describes the procedure in which a person convicted of a crime was to be executed. This does not seem to have been followed in the case of the adulterous woman. Where in the New Testament do we see an execution carried out in this way though the verdict and sentence were illegitimate?

### ***Other Reading***

Deuteronomy 17:2-7

# John 8:25-59

## "The Truth Shall Make You Free" (8:32)



### Main Points:

- Jesus was the only one who could bring true freedom.
- Only those who were honest and faithful could receive it.
- Jesus claimed deity and would establish His claim with His sacrifice.

In the exchange that had started earlier in the chapter, Jesus had shown that He was the light of the world (8:12), that He had complete knowledge (8:14), that He was exactly like the Father (8:19), and that belief in Him was essential for life (8:24). He would complete the lesson by showing His identity (8:25-30) and that He was bringing true freedom (8:37-46), which most of the Jews, God's chosen people, were rejecting (8:47-51). The climax comes at the end of the chapter where He identified Himself as God (8:52-59).

The question of who Jesus was came to Him just after He had said, "I am He" (8:24). "He" is not in the original Greek. Jesus said, "I am." By including both subject and verb in His answer — when a pronoun was a subject it did not have to be explicitly stated in Greek — He made the "I am" emphatic. We can read the rest of the chapter as an elaboration and intensification of that claim (especially 8:28, 58).

### 8:25-30 Jesus' Identity

Jesus did not answer the question of who He was directly, but said that His message about Himself and His Father had been consistent. Not only had light, witness, and exclusive salvation been part of His message, but also the revelation of His deity.

#### • Approved by the Father

**Father** Jesus spoke only what He had heard from the Father (3:32; 5:19, 30). He was not of the world but He was speaking the Father's truth to the world. He did not name the Father as He spoke here, but the Father was the one who had sent Him.

**World** Jesus had many things to judge concerning them (compare 8:15-16). In the previous lesson we saw that Jesus did not judge while on earth, but His judgment would come later.

**Judge**

#### • Verified by Crucifixion

Jesus said that His listeners would know that His claims were true when He had been lifted up or crucified (3:14-15; 12:32). Some people at the crucifixion did realize that Jesus had been right, though how much they understood varied. The Roman centurion called Him the Son of God and the crowd's mood changed dramatically after seeing His death (Luke 23:46-48; Mark 15:39). Many who had participated in that lifting up responded to that Savior's gospel call in Acts 2:22-23, 37.

**Belief>>** Though the Father would have to let Jesus die, Jesus never sinned against Him. As Jesus was claiming to have been sent by Him and prophesying of His crucifixion, many believed.

In 8:28, Jesus said "I am" for the second of three times (8:24, 58). While the first two are not

as plain as the third, all three point to His deity, identifying Him as God. That some Jews believed in Him as He was making such a claim shows how powerful His evidence was (see also 7:31; 10:42; 11:45).

### **8:31-36      Freedom from Sin's Slavery**

Jesus told the Jews who had believed that they needed to follow Him completely (abiding in His word) to be His disciples. He also said that following Him was the way to know the truth and be free. When we combine this with 8:24 we see the exclusive nature of His claim.

It is possible that the openly unbelieving leaders of the Jews were the antagonists here, but they are not specifically mentioned. It is possible that, as in Chapter 6, the purported disciples were the ones to whom Jesus was giving the hard truth and who rejected Him here even more harshly than in that chapter.

Some answered Jesus by saying that they had never been anything but free. They were either willfully ignorant or mistaking what they wanted to be true for what was true. Politically they were in subjection to the Romans at that moment. However, that was not the kind of slavery that Jesus had come to destroy.

The people were slaves to sin. The devil would not be providing for them – they would not enjoy the consequences of their sin (neither will the devil enjoy his eternal sentence). Jesus provides the true freedom from sin's slavery if we obey. This did not mean that everyone Jesus addressed was leading an obviously immoral life; Paul seems to refer to His state under the Law as slavery and death despite his devout observance of the Law in Romans 7:7-11, 14. Only by being a completely dedicated disciple of Jesus can we be free today.

Paul told his readers that they could not remain under the Law and be free (Romans 8:2; Galatians 4:21,29-31; 5:1). False teachers promise freedom to their listeners while in they are themselves in slavery (2 Peter 2:18-19).

### **8:37-46      The True Children of Abraham**

His listeners had claimed to be Abraham's children in 8:33 (compare Jesus' statement about being Abraham's descendant in Matthew 3:9; see also Galatians 3:7). Physically they were, but spiritually they were not. Some of them were trying to kill Jesus because they would not obey His word.

#### **• Not Killing Those Who Speak the Truth**

Perhaps the remarks about Abraham in 8:39, 41 implied that Jesus was illegitimate (see 8:19). Jesus challenged His listeners to be like Abraham instead of trying to kill Him (7:19, 25). They were acting like the devil. For a person to reject Jesus was to give evidence that the devil was really his father. Satan is the father of lies and those who love them.

**Father**

If they had loved the Father, they would have loved the Son (1 John 5:1). They could not hear because they did not want to hear (7:17). You may have known people who were perfectly capable of understanding something but refused to consider or even acknowledge it because it did not fit what they wanted to believe. Many of the Jews disbelieved in Jesus despite His sinlessness because He told them the truth when it was not what they wanted to hear. Such people will not find the truth.

**Belief>>**

### **8:47-51      Confusing God's Word with a Demon's**

Hearing the words of God is also mentioned in 1 John 4:6. Those who would not listen to God's word were not of God. Jesus' listeners proved that they were not of God by saying that

Jesus was a Samaritan (an insult and ironic, because He had tried to teach the "hated" Samaritans) and had a demon (7:20; 10:20). It is very serious when the work of the devil is confused with the work of God (consider the unpardonable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit in Mark 3:28-30 and parallel passages). Here the accusers were close to being guilty of the charge they had made against Jesus, because He had already said that their father was the devil.

**Father**

**Life**

Jesus honored the Father and sought His glory. He was not seeking to fulfill His own desires (7:18). Obeying Jesus keeps men from seeing death (5:24; 11:26). If we want life we will need to put Jesus' commands above our own desires and even our own lives.

### **8:52-59      Jesus' Eternal Existence**

The Jews continued to accuse Jesus of having a demon. The signs were one thing that should have told them otherwise. They thought His using Abraham (8:39-41) as a reference was nonsensical. Jesus would make a much more bold statement.

**Father**

**Glorify**

#### **• Knowing God Truly**

The Father glorified Jesus (Jesus did not glorify Himself; see also 17:1; Acts 3:13) and Jesus knew Him (7:28-29). Jesus was claiming a full knowledge of the Father and saying that those who did not accept His words could not know God. For Jesus to have denied this knowledge would have been a lie and would have lowered Him to the level of His accusers.

#### **• Existing before Abraham**

Jesus started with a statement about Abraham's rejoicing to have seen His day. It is possible that He was referring to Abraham's participating in the things that would allow the Christ to come into the world (consider Hebrews 11:13), but most translations take the position that He meant that Abraham, after His death, was happy to see Jesus' coming. This would fit with Abraham's appearance in the account of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31).

**Deity**

Jesus' claim to have existed before Abraham caused His enemies to prepare to stone Him. His stating that "I AM" before Abraham had existed was a claim to have deity and to be Jehovah or YHWH (8:58). To have said "I am" when the grammar would usually demand "I was", "I had been", or "I have been" points to the emphasis placed by Jesus upon those words. "I AM" would have been incredibly significant to anyone who knew about the revelation of God's name in Exodus 3:13-15. This might have been especially emphatic after two less overt "I am" statements in 8:24, 28. Jesus' hiding from the attempted assassination was probably miraculous (compare Luke 4:30).

## **Questions**

What did Jesus say His listeners would know when they had lifted Him up, that is, crucified Him (8:28)?

What did Jesus say was keeping the Jews from being free (8:34)?

Why did Jesus say that His listeners wanted to kill Him (8:37)?

Why did He say that they could not understand what He was saying (8:43)?

What did Jesus promise to the one who would keep His word (8:51)?

In 8:57-58, Jesus showed that He had existed before Abraham had been born. What did he show about Abraham in 8:56?

Where in the first six chapters of Romans does Paul speak of being slaves of sin and then set free? (Hint: Use a concordance or computer word search for one of the underlined terms above.)

Jesus refers to His eternal existence with “I am” in 8:58. This is a rather clear reference to God's calling Himself “I AM” in the Old Testament. Where does the Old Testament refer to God in that way?

### ***Other Reading***

Exodus 3:13-15



# The Deity of Christ in John

## "My Lord and My God!" (20:28)

### Main Points:

#### Deity

- John states the deity of Christ plainly.
- John records Christ's saying things only God could honestly say.
- John shows men reacting to Jesus' claims as they would have to a claim of deity.

The deity of Christ is one of the main themes of John, and a theme that is presented perhaps most fully in John. Other passages (such as Hebrews 1) are very important for this subject and are discussed later in the lesson. Because the deity of Christ is a theme found throughout John, this lesson will largely go through the gospel in order. This is not necessarily an exhaustive study of the deity of Christ; you might find a few things Jesus said or did in John that involve His deity but are not in this lesson.

One reason we study this topic here is that Chapter 8 ended with a Christ's claim to be the I AM, which would be Jehovah (Hebrew יהוה, YHWH, also translated Yahweh). While similar statements with "I am" had been made in 8:24, 28, 8:57-59 makes no sense grammatically without Jesus' claiming to be the I AM. Chapter 9 also ends with the formerly blind man offering worship to Jesus. While some people bowed before others in the Bible without worshiping them, 9:35-38 accompanies a statement of faith and is meant as worship (the man believed in the Son, not a statement usually made of anyone other than God, the object of faith).

The deity of Christ is not a subject on which we can afford to be wrong. To say that one is God when he is not is blasphemy, and vice versa. Would you really expect to be saved if you did not know who was God?

John proclaimed Christ's deity systematically throughout the gospel.

### 1:1-4 ("The Word was God", "In the beginning with God", "All things came ... by Him")

Here Jesus is plainly called God. Some try to argue that it really says "a god," but not only is their grammatical case weak, and not only does such an interpretation run counter to the thrust of the whole book, but it also does not make sense in the context of the passage. Jesus made everything, He has life, He was there at the beginning ... He is God!

### 1:14-15 ("Glory of as the only begotten from the Father", "He existed before me")

Jesus also had a unique relationship to the Father and was full of His glory. This statement could not be applied to anyone else.

### 1:18 ("Only begotten God [or Son]")

Jesus is in the bosom of the Father and is the only one who can properly explain Him.

### 2:24-25 ("He knew all men", "He Himself knew what was in man")

The implication here is not that Jesus was an exceptionally good judge of character or even just a man with a special gift from God, but that He knew everything possible about man because He had made man.

### 5:17-18 ("My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working")

Jesus was not claiming that He happened to be doing something that God was also doing in a greater way. He claimed to be one with God. His opponents knew what He meant and wanted to kill Him. Jesus' response to their anger was not to deny His statement or claim that He had been misunderstood, but to elaborate on His initial words, as the next passages show.

### **5:21-23 ("He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father")**

Jesus could give life to men. He had already restored the health of a man who had been lame for a long time (5:5-9). Closely tied to the ability to give life was the ability to render judgment. Jesus was given judgment so that men would honor Him as they honored God the Father. Who else but God the Son is worthy to receive the Father's honor?

### **5:26-27 ("Life in Himself", "Authority to execute judgment")**

Jesus has life in Himself. No one of us can claim that. This fits with the self-existence of God. Jesus can give life to those who are judged righteous, and that is God's prerogative.

### **7:28-30 ("I know Him; because I am from Him, and He sent Me")**

Jesus did not claim a merely exceptional knowledge of God; His divine origin was the issue. His claim was dramatic enough that people were ready to kill Him as if for blasphemy. They understood His incredible claim.

### **8:18-20 ("If you knew Me, you would know My Father also")**

To know Jesus is to know the Father, as in 14:7-11. While Christians should reflect Christ's glory, none can claim identity with Christ as Christ was doing with the Father. 8:20 probably indicates that this was a statement that could have caused an attempt on His life but did not because God restrained Christ's opponents.

### **8:23-24 ("I am not of this world", "Unless you believe that I am He")**

Jesus also claimed to be from above, but what makes this claim even stronger is His claim that He was the only one in whom people should believe. This passage is one of three "I am" statements in the chapter along with 8:28, 58; the last statement (see the beginning of the lesson) is the strongest.

### **10:30-39 ("I and the Father are one", "in the Father")**

Jesus claimed to be one with the Father. The Jews were ready to kill Him, understanding that He had made Himself out to be God. Jesus' answer quoted Psalm 82:6, but it was not a denial, as seen in the fact that the Jews tried to kill Him again after He had repeated His claim. Instead of saying that He was just a god like the judges in the psalm, He made the point that if merely human judges could be called gods, it was far more appropriate for Him, who was one with the Father, to be called God.

### **12:37-42 ("Because he saw His glory")**

Isaiah 53:1; 6:9-10 are quoted here. Not only is this useful to show that Jesus said Isaiah had one author, but it also is useful to show Jesus' nature. Who is the "Him" of 12:42? Jesus, obviously. Who is the "Him" of 12:41? Again, Jesus. Isaiah saw the LORD's (Jehovah's) glory in Isaiah 6:1-5 and the rest of the chapter (LORD is not used in 6:1 but in 6:3, 5). John says He saw Jesus' glory. Is there a contradiction? No, because Jesus is Jehovah and thus must be God. Comparing the quotation in Hebrews 1:10-12 with its source, Psalm 102, also shows that the things said of Jehovah alone are also said of Jesus.

### **19:6-7 ("He ought to die because He made Himself out to be the Son of God")**

Why did the Jews think Jesus deserved death? Not because He claimed to be a child of God in a way that anyone could be nor because He claimed to be a "god" in a limited sense, but because He claimed to be God. They asked for His death and Pilate was afraid. The Jews understood what Jesus was saying.

### **20:28-29 ("My Lord and my God!")**

When Thomas said, "My Lord and my God," he was not taking God's name in vain, nor was he referring to

two different entities. Jesus was both!

### **Notes from a Few Passages outside John:**

#### **Hebrews 1:8-14**

The quotations are from Psalm 45:6-7 [Hebrews 1:8-9]; 102:25-27 [10-12]; 110:1 [13]. Jesus is called God in the first quotation, and then there is more. Some people believe that Jesus is the archangel Michael and “a god”, but the next two quotations contradict those beliefs. The Psalm 102 quotation is about the LORD. Jesus is called Jehovah! The final quotation shows that Jesus is better than the angels; it was also used in Matthew 22:41-46 to demonstrate that Jesus was more than just a human king, like David.

#### **Philippians 2:5-7**

This is not just saying that Jesus resembled God in some way; Jesus had the same nature as God. It supports His deity. He then took on the form of a servant. He is still fully God.

In the next lesson (Chapter 9), Jesus will receive worship, as only God should, after healing a man blind since birth.

### **Questions**

What does 1:1-3 say about Jesus at the beginning of time?

What did Jesus say He was doing after healing the lame man (5:17)?  
How did the Jews interpret this statement (5:18)?

What did the Jews say Jesus had been doing when He had said, “I and My Father are one” (10:30-33)?

Who is said to have seen Jesus' glory in 12:41?

What did the Jews say the penalty should have been for claiming to be God (19:7)?

Jesus received worship from the formerly blind man in 9:35-38. What other instances of His receiving worship can you find in the Bible?

In Hebrews 1:8, 10-12, the writer applies Psalm 102:25-27 to Jesus. To whom is Psalm 102 addressed (see 102:1-2, 12-15, 24-28)?

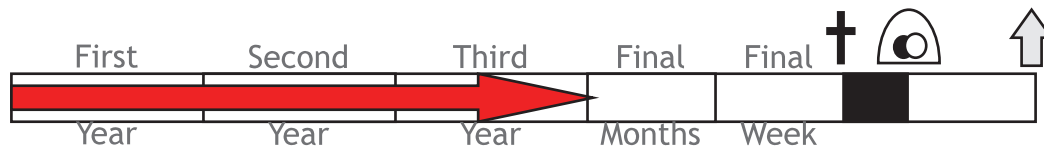
What does this say about who Jesus is?

### **Other Readings**

Hebrews 1; Revelation 5:8-14

# John 9

## "That Those Who Do Not See May See" (9:39)



### Main Points:

- Jesus came to provide light in a spiritual sense.
- Men sometimes choose to ignore the truth no matter how obvious.
- Jesus is worthy of worship.

As we continue the section of John (approximately Chapters 3-10) in which arguments and discussion are used to display the truth of the gospel amidst opposition, we come to this healing and the controversy that followed. The chapter begins with a miracle and reaches its climax at the end with the meaning of the miracle demonstrated in the worship by the formerly blind man. The blind man was able to see in two ways in which he had not been able to see before.

### 9:1-7 God Is Glorified by the Healing of a Blind Man

The disciples asked whether the man was blind because of his sin or his parents'. The fact that he had been born blind should have eliminated the first option, and Jesus eliminated the second. Not everything is perfect in this world (compare Romans 8:19-21), and physical imperfection does not prove that the sufferer has sinned. Jesus used this blindness to demonstrate His power, as He would in raising Lazarus after speaking similar words in 11:4. Perhaps He also wanted to correct His disciples' concept of the consequences of sin.

#### Miracle

#### "I Am"

#### Light

Jesus healed the man who had been born blind by having him wash in the pool of Siloam. Jesus said He was the light of the world, as He had said in 8:12; He demonstrated that He was the light of the world by the healing. Jesus worked while He had the opportunity (see also 11:9; 12:35) and expected His disciples to do so as well.

Jesus healed the blind often (Matthew 9:27; 12:22; 15:30; 20:30-31; Mark 8:22; Luke 7:21). Why Jesus chose to make the clay this time we do not know. The miracle had an immediate effect on the man even though he had to go to the pool to do the washing (compare Naaman in 2 Kings 5:14); here Jesus' sending the man to the pool had the effect of having the discussions about the man (which may have helped him believe) take place without Jesus' presence.

### 9:8-12 His Neighbors Ask about His Healing

The man's neighbors and those who knew where he had begged were divided over whether this seeing man was really the man they had known. Perhaps some were reluctant to acknowledge what had happened in the same way that the Pharisees would be unwilling to acknowledge the healing later. The man affirmed who he was and told them how he had been healed. He knew the name of the healer, but Jesus (which was the same as Joshua) was probably a common name, and the man also did not know where Jesus was.

### **9:13-17      The Pharisees Debate His Healing**

The occurrence of this miracle on the Sabbath elevated it to an issue that demanded a response from the leaders of the people, as the healing at another pool, Bethesda, had earlier (5:9-18; note Jesus' statement in 7:21-24). The man told the Pharisees what had happened when they asked.

#### **Signs**

Some of the Pharisees were convinced that someone who did not follow their traditions could not be right. Others correctly said that a sinner could not do a sign such as healing a blind man (echoed in 9:33; see also 3:2). They were divided because some would not recognize their human opinions and traditions for what they were. That was not the only time a division for that reason would occur (7:43; 10:19)!

The formerly blind man was then willing to call Jesus a prophet (4:19; 6:14), which may have been because of things he had heard Him say. That Jesus was approved by God and that He had been given gifts by God was true beyond any reasonable doubt.

### **9:18-23      The Man's Parents Evade the Question**

The Jews (their leaders or an influential group among them) even called in the parents to make sure the man had really been born blind. They were willing to inconvenience or even intimidate others to discredit Jesus (7:13; 12:42; 19:38). The parents confirmed their son's identity and blindness but said no more because of the threat of expulsion from the synagogue. If your son had been healed of blindness, would you not have wanted to know who had done it? If they had not known who had done it, would these parents have been afraid of being put out of the synagogue for saying so?

### **9:24-34      The Pharisees Question and Remove Him**

When the Jews called the man to testify again (imagine being put on trial for being cured of blindness!), they started out with something like an oath. Joshua had said this to Achan to get him to confess the crime that God had already shown he had committed (Joshua 7:19). Here it was an effort to keep someone from confessing the good thing that God the Son had already done! The man would not call Jesus a sinner and said again that Jesus had healed him.

His interrogators asked him again, perhaps to try to badger him into saying something different. The man asked, probably sarcastically, if they wanted to become Jesus' disciples, too. He was probably disgusted with their unfair behavior. He knew Jesus was more godly than those men!

The *de facto* trial judges uttered what in their opinion was a severe insult, calling the man Jesus' disciple. They then claimed to be disciples of Moses because of their love for the Law. They did not act like Moses (compare Jesus' response to "Abraham's children" in 8:39-40)! The judges also claimed not to know from where Jesus had come (compare 7:26-29; 8:14); even if they did not know the place of His birth, they knew what He had done and should have known that only someone from God could have done those things. The man answered sarcastically, marveling that these men were ignoring his newfound sight. He reasoned that the healer could only have come from God. He restated the principle found in Psalm 66:18; Proverbs 15:29 (in John, see 9:16; 3:2; 7:31).

The judges' behavior became uglier when intimidation had failed. They said he was born in sins (contradicting the truth of 9:2) and threw him out of the synagogue (a fate his parents had tried to avoid), which would have hampered his ability to worship. The formerly blind man needed help in this situation and he would receive it.



## 9:35-41 Responses to Jesus' Power

Jesus heard what had happened. When He arrived the man and some Pharisees were present.

### • The Blind Man's Belief

**Belief>>**

The formerly blind man believed when he had “seen” Jesus' power and had understood who He was. Jesus' method of revealing His identity was like that of 4:26. The man could not have known Jesus by sight, but He was ready to believe. He wanted to worship Jesus and Jesus accepted the worship. Even if someone were to argue that bowing down was not necessarily worship, “believing in” the Son of Man shows that worship was offered.

**Deity**

**Belief>>**

### • The Pharisees' Willful Blindness

**Light**

**Judge**

The Jews did not believe what had happened first until asking the man's parents (9:16-18), and they did not believe in Jesus after having heard everything. Some chose to be blind rather than to see. Jesus' judgment would reverse the seeing and the blind. Jesus does not keep people from believing, but many have an attitude toward the truth that prevents belief. The Pharisees claimed to see, to understand the Law, and to honor the Law, which made their hypocrisy all the more deadly. In Romans 2:17-24, Paul criticized Jews who claimed to be pious but were sinful. The truly blind have no sin (15:22-25), but it is a blessing to see truly. The formerly blind man could now see both physically and spiritually. The Jews who claimed spiritual superiority were blind to Christ's identity and the value of His teaching.

This event may be reflected in statements in the next two chapters. Some said that Jesus was not demon-possessed because He could heal the blind (10:21). Some wondered if Jesus could have prevented Lazarus's death (11:37) — they would see Him do much more!

## Questions

Why did Jesus say He had to use His opportunities to work the works of God immediately (9:4-5)?

What assumption did the Pharisees make about the Law which prevented them from acknowledging the truth about what Jesus had done (9:16)?

What did the blind man's parents say that was true (9:20-21)?

What did they say that was likely not true?

What did the Jews who were interrogating the formerly blind man say about him when he did not answer the questions in the way that they had wanted (9:34)?

Why did Jesus say He had come into the world (9:39)?

Find at least two instances of Jesus' healing someone of a physical disease on the Sabbath. Record any reaction by the leaders of the Jews to His healing in each case.

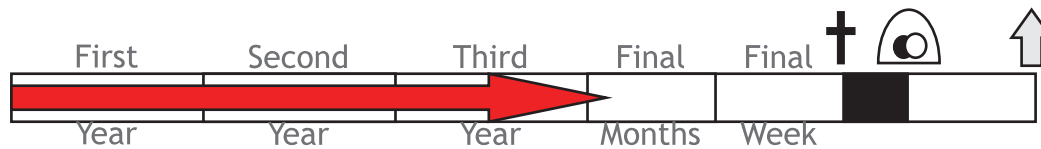
Where else do we read about Jesus' accepting worship (9:37-38) during His life on earth?

## Other Readings

Matthew 14:22-33; Luke 6:6-11

# John 10:1-21

## "The Good Shepherd" (10:11, 14)



### Main Points:

- The true shepherd was the only door for the sheep.
- The true sheep would know the true shepherd.
- Jesus would give His life voluntarily for His own sheep.

Most of the text in this lesson is based upon a picture, an extended metaphor, of Jesus as the Good Shepherd of the sheep. This picture is repeated throughout the Bible in the Old Testament and the New. What follows is a partial list of the references to Christ as a shepherd and guardian.

- Psalm 23 calls the LORD a shepherd who leads His sheep in the right way and comforts them with His rod and staff; compare that with what Jesus the Lamb does in Revelation 7:17.
- In a chapter filled with prophecy of the Messiah, Jesus was compared to a shepherd in Isaiah 40:9-11. Note that the passage describes the LORD as doing what Jesus would do.
- Ezekiel 34:21-24 provides a picture of Judah's corrupt leaders and portrays the Messiah as David the true shepherd. The rest of the chapter does not fit Judah's history since that time, but it does fit the church's.
- Zechariah 13:7 ("strike the shepherd") was fulfilled in Matthew 26:31 || Mark 14:27 regarding the crucifixion.
- In the conclusion of Hebrews (13:20-21), Jesus is called the great shepherd of the sheep. When Jesus was claiming to be the Good Shepherd, He was claiming to be all of the things above: the Messiah; David's heir; the leader of God's people; and the agent of the LORD.

### 10:1-6 Jesus the True Shepherd

Jesus began with a picture which illustrated what He would say about Himself in the next section. The shepherd of a flock enters the sheepfold by the door. Anyone who does otherwise is not someone with the sheep's best interests at heart.

True sheep will also not respond to anyone but the shepherd. Even though Jesus' listeners did not understand the illustration at this point, we can understand what it means. A true shepherd will do things the right way and true sheep will recognize and follow the truth. 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 shows us that Satan will try to have those who serve him appear like the Shepherd's servants. Will we recognize the true teaching of Jesus when we hear it from men? We must if we want to be faithful. Jesus would make further application of these things in the next sections.

### 10:7-13 Thieves Destroy But Christ Gives Life

"I Am"

Jesus said He was the door of the sheepfold (compare Ephesians 2:18). Sometimes the shepherd would sleep in the only opening of the enclosure that served as a sheepfold. He would sleep there to protect the sheep; none of the sheep would get out and none of the

predators would get in. By using this illustration Jesus was making an exclusive claim to the truth. He is not a guide on one of many paths. He is the path (14:6). He is the only Savior. Others who claim to be the way of salvation are not, unless Jesus was incorrect. Those who teach that Jesus was one of many good teachers are contradicting Him. Jesus made the exclusive nature of His claims very clear, as He had in many of His “I am” statements. He also claimed to have everything a person would need for salvation. He not only is the only way to salvation, He also is sufficient for salvation.

**Life**

Others would claim to have the truth but would really be there to destroy the sheep. By coming in the wrong way (not speaking the truth) they would show that they were there for the wrong reason. The Good Shepherd brought life to others by laying down His own. The contrast is important: Jesus came to bring life instead of kill and He came to die for the sheep instead of exploiting them as the false teachers would.

**"I Am"**

Jesus also said He was the Good Shepherd (see the references in the Introduction and Ezekiel 37:24). Someone who was not dedicated to the sheep would not protect them if the situation became too dangerous (Zechariah 11:16-17). Jesus would face the ultimate danger, give Himself up, and yet rise from the dead to protect His sheep forever. The Father would approve of Him and His sheep would know and love Him. We must make sure we are being the sheep that we should be today!

#### **10:14-21 Jesus Would Lay Down His Life**

In the last part of our reading we see another prediction that Jesus would give His life as a sacrifice for His followers.

##### **• One Flock**

**Father**

The Father knew Jesus and Jesus knew Him as deeply as possible, and the Father loved Jesus because of His laying down His life for His sheep (see John 15:13).

Jesus would also bring in other sheep from another fold: the Gentiles. Some had already wondered if He would teach the Gentiles (7:35); He would not do so personally but He would send His disciples to bring them into the one fold of the one church (Ephesians 2:13-16; 3:4-7).

**Life**

Jesus laid down His own life for His sheep voluntarily. He had the power within Himself (1:4; 4:10-14; 5:21; 15:5-6) to give His life and take it back again (see Isaiah 53:12). Jesus had life within Himself (5:26).

##### **• Division Among Listeners**

Some tried to dismiss Jesus as demon-possessed and insane (7:12; 8:48), but others countered the charge by pointing out His miraculous signs, which demons could not have performed. This was not the first time division had occurred because of Jesus (7:43; 9:16; Luke 12:52-53), nor would it be the last. The last statement made in Jesus' defense (10:21) probably referred to Jesus' healing the man born blind in 9:6-7.

This conversation prepares us for the comments in 10:26-29 in which the leaders would demand an unambiguous statement from Jesus regarding whether He was the Christ, and He would explain that they were not His sheep. He would then claim oneness with the Father, which would bring a violent reaction.

## **Questions**

What did Jesus say about the man who did not enter the sheepfold by the door (10:1)?  
How could someone show himself to be like that man today?

What would the sheep do after entering through Jesus as the door (10:9)?

Why would a hired hand flee at the sign of danger while the shepherd would not (10:11-13)?

Why did Jesus say the Father loved Him (10:17)?  
What did Jesus have power to do with His life (10:18)?

When some of the Jews claimed that Jesus was demon-possessed and insane, how did others show that their charge was false (10:20-21)?

Look through 1 Peter. By either scanning the book or using a concordance or computer word search, can you find two references to shepherds that fit Christ?

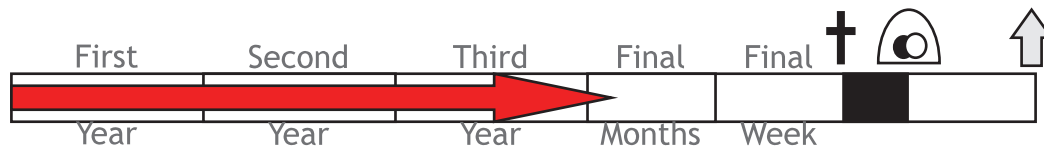
Read some of the other “I am” statements in John (6:35, 45-51; 8:12; 11:25-27; 14:6-7; 15:1-6). Explain how some of these show that Christ was making an exclusive claim to be the Savior, as in saying, “I am the door” (10:7-10).

## **Other Readings**

John 15:1-6; 1 Peter 2:21-25

# John 10:22-42

## "I and the Father Are One" (10:30)



### Main Points:

- Jesus clearly claimed to be Christ and God, but men would not accept Him.
- Jesus was completely one with the Father, which showed His deity.
- His works verified His claim to be the Son of God.

This section begins with men trying to make Jesus state His claims about being the Messiah more directly. Jesus told them that the problem was not that He had been too vague but that they did not want to accept what He had said. He then made stunning statements that demonstrated that He was not only Christ but also God.

### 10:22-28 Jesus' Works Bear Him Witness

Jesus was surrounded in the temple by the Jews. Solomon's Portico was a covered walkway on the east side of the temple. Peter and John and the lame man would be there (Acts 3:11) and the church would be active there (Acts 5:12).

The Feast of the Dedication had started after Judas Maccabeus had cleansed the temple in 164 BC following its defilement by Antiochus IV of the Seleucid Empire. It is not mentioned anywhere else in the Bible; today it is connected with Hanukkah.

The Jews asked Jesus to be more plain in declaring whether He was the Messiah. Jesus had not made a public declaration in so many words, and there was a good reason: if He had suddenly appeared on earth, made a huge announcement, and done a spectacular miracle, would His coming to earth have been missing something important? The prophets had said He was to have no attractive appearance (Isaiah 53:2) and to be despised (Psalm 22:6; Isaiah 53:3) and rejected (Psalm 118:22). John had already said that the world was not to know Him (1:10-11). He would appear in a lowly way, even as king (Zechariah 9:9). Jesus would not say publicly that He was the Messiah directly until later, though others had said that about Him (Matthew 16:15-16, 20) and He had told others privately (4:25-26).

Yet the Jews and everyone else around had received more than enough information to understand that He was the Christ (compare 1:41; 7:41). He had shown that He was from God. His quotation of Isaiah 61:1-2 in Luke 4:18-19 was clearly Messianic. Matthew 11:1-6 and the quotation from Isaiah 35:5 show that He was doing the things the Messiah would do. They said they wanted to know, but the real problem was one of the will, not the intellect. Jesus did works in His Father's name. Nicodemus had readily acknowledged the testimony His works had provided Him (3:2). Earlier Jesus had said that the works and the Father were two of four who were bearing witness of Him (5:36-38), but the problem there as here was that the people did not want to believe. Jesus would explain their problem to them further.

**Father**

### • Eternal Life for His Sheep

Jesus' teaching was not difficult to understand. To see that He had come from God with an



inspired message was not difficult. His works had clearly validated His claims.

### **Belief>>**

Some Jews had not believed despite Jesus' works because they were not of His sheep. This harkens back to the Good Shepherd teaching in 10:11-16. Here "sheep" seems to designate believers in Christ. Christ had not introduced the church yet, and they were not required to have been baptized at that time, but those who would be honest enough to evaluate Christ's words and signs properly would believe in Him, and then they would truly be His sheep.

### **Life**

No one can take away eternal life from those who belong to Christ. No man can force another to disobey Christ. Men would certainly try by persecuting the apostles and killing them and other martyrs, but no man can break the relationship that another has with Christ.

Often this teaching is abused by people who claim that we cannot remove ourselves from fellowship with Christ (that apostasy or falling away is impossible). That is not the point.

- First, "no one" is not always meant to exclude the self. Was 16:22 ("No one takes your joy away from you") meant to indicate that the disciples had no choice but to be joyous? "No one can enter the strong man's house ..." in Mark 3:27 becomes ridiculous if taken so that even the strong man could not enter his own house unless he had bound himself.
- More importantly, 1 John 3:6-10 ("No one who abides in Him sins", "No one who is born of God practices sin") illustrates that these statements are to be taken with the assumption that the people in those verses are making an effort to live faithfully.
- 6:66 shows that those who had become disciples were capable of leaving Him. Jesus had said in 6:37 that all that the Father had given Him would come to Him and He would not cast them out. Many left of their own accord. 17:11-12; 18:8-9 also show that the betrayal by Judas did not invalidate the statement that Jesus had not lost any that the Father had given to Him.
- Passages such as 15:4-6; Colossians 1:21-23; Hebrews 2:1-4; 3:5-6; 4:1-7; 6:4-6; 10:28-29; 12:25 show that our eternal salvation is a conditional promise, requiring our continued obedience.

### **10:29-33 Oneness with the Father**

No one could take away people from the Father or Jesus, who are one in keeping the faithful. God has complete unity.

#### **• Things Given by the Father**

### **Father**

### **Deity**

Jesus claimed to be one with His Father. This claim and His refusal to back off of the claim when pressed help to establish His deity. Claiming oneness with the Father brought accusations of blasphemy and an attempted assassination, as it had in 5:17-18. His listeners understood His claim and prepared to stone Him, even near the temple. Others had probably tried to kill Him there before (8:20, 59).

#### **• Works from the Father**

As they were preparing to kill Him, Jesus asked which of the works given Him by the Father had provoked their murderous hatred. The Jews who opposed Jesus denied any work of the Father had been involved, but that He was committing blasphemy in claiming to be God. He would have been blaspheming had He been incorrect, but instead He was verifying His claim.

### **10:34-42 His Works Show Oneness with the Father**

Understanding Jesus' response is crucial here. He was not trying to evade the charge with a complicated equivocation of words. It would not have been honest or true. Instead, He made

His claim even stronger.

- **Jesus Is Greater than Old Testament "gods"**

**Law**

In 10:34, Jesus quoted from Psalm 82:6 when defending His statements about being the Son of God. He showed from the Law that human judges were called “gods”. Compare Romans 13:1, which states that civil government is ordained by God. These judges or rulers had the awesome responsibility of administering the word of God, though Psalm 82 shows that they had failed. Jesus argued that if those fallible men could be called “gods” <elohim in Hebrew>, then He, whom the Father had sent and who was verified by His works, could surely be called the “Son of God”. Instead of abandoning His claim to deity, He affirmed it.

- **Jesus in the Father and the Father in Him**

The works Jesus did were key. They validated His claim; God would not have granted Him the ability to perform them if He had been a blasphemous liar.

**Belief>>**

Jesus wanted men to believe in Him because He did the works of His Father. The Father had sanctified Jesus and sent Him into the world. Men needed to understand that the Father was in Jesus and Jesus was in the Father. This picture also appears in 14:11; 17:21.

**World**

**Baptism**

**Belief>>**

**Signs**

The Jews were unconvinced. They still tried to kill Jesus (see 7:30, 44). The time of His sacrifice was coming, but it had not come yet. After escaping, Jesus went where John had been baptizing (1:28). Some believed when they saw Jesus fulfilling what John had predicted. John had not done signs but he had spoken the truth about Jesus. The leaders seem to have been implacably opposed to Jesus, but Jesus was gathering more “sheep” in other places.

In the next lesson we will see Jesus return to Judah on the occasion of Lazarus's death.

## Questions

Jesus said that the Jews had not believed that He was the Christ when He had told them and shown them the truth. Why had they not believed (10:25-26)?

Who had given Jesus His sheep (10:29)?

Why did the Jews say they were preparing to stone Jesus (10:32-33)?

In 10:34, Jesus quoted Psalm 82:6. Which people were described as “gods” in that psalm? Had their actions been just?

What did Jesus say that His accusers should use to decide whether His claims were true (10:25, 37-38)?

Some of the Jews demanded that Jesus tell them plainly whether He was the Christ in 10:25. Can you find the passage earlier in John in which Jesus had told someone that plainly? (Hint: He was speaking to a woman.)

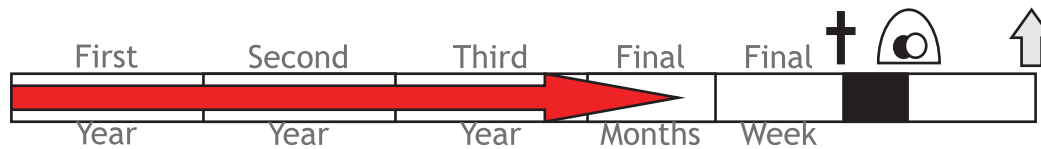
Which points from Jesus' teaching about the vine and the branches in 15:1-8 shows that people can fall away after having been saved?

## Other Readings

John 4:25-29; 15:1-11; Psalm 82

# John 11:1-45

## "The Resurrection and the Life" (11:25)



### Main Points:

- Jesus acted in order to bring belief.
- Jesus showed a deep concern for others.
- Jesus' complete control over physical life pointed to His giving spiritual life.

In this section we see a powerful miracle, raising Lazarus from the dead, but there are many other important points in the text. We learn about the resurrection. We see the emotion and humanity of Jesus. We will also see in later lessons the effect that Jesus' raising Lazarus from the dead had upon other people.

### 11:1-6 Jesus Knows the Purpose of Lazarus' Sickness

Lazarus is only mentioned here through 12:17 in the New Testament. Martha is also mentioned in Luke 10:38-42; that was the occasion when she was too intent on serving others physically and not intent enough on listening to what was important spiritually. Mary is also mentioned in Luke 10, and will be featured in 12:1-8, when she would wipe Jesus' feet with her hair. 12:1-8 is probably parallel to Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9. It shares some similarities with Luke 7:36-50, but the differences in the setting and people involved could indicate that it is a different event in which another woman wiped Jesus' feet with her hair. We will study the accounts more closely in the lesson on 11:46-12:11.

#### **Glorify**

Lazarus was ill, and when Jesus was told of it (He probably already knew) He stayed two days longer where He was across the Jordan (10:40). He did that because the ultimate result of His delay would be to bring life, glorify Him in His role, and exhibit the truth of His message. The short-term effect of the illness was physical death for Lazarus, but the long-term effects would be belief and spiritual life for many.

### 11:7-16 Jesus Knows That Lazarus Is Dead

#### **Miracle**

Jesus decided to return to Judea again because He knew that Lazarus had died (He used similar language in Matthew 9:24). Jesus had a miraculous knowledge of the time of Lazarus's death. He went to Lazarus because He had an opportunity to bring others to belief.

#### • The Threats in Judea

When Jesus wanted to return to Judea, the disciples were surprised because many people in Judea had wanted to kill Him. The disciples allude to an attempt to stone Jesus (10:31-39) in 11:7-8. Thomas even expected that they would die if they were to follow Jesus.

#### **Light**

Jesus told His disciples to walk in the light while they had the light; His crucifixion was probably only a few months away. He was still willing to go to Judea because He had work to do as the light of the world (9:4; 12:35).

### • The Purpose: Instilling Belief

Jesus made clear in advance that He would raise Lazarus. When He had spoken about sleeping and the disciples had misunderstood Him, He spoke more plainly.

#### Belief>>

Jesus said that His raising Lazarus would help the disciples believe. That is exactly what would happen (11:45). Of course, the disciples and others had believed before this had happened; Thomas thought he might be following Jesus to his death and Martha would express her belief in Him very well (11:21-27), but they all would believe more fully as a result of what they would see. Jesus could be glad that He was not present before Lazarus had died because the disciples' belief would grow as a result of seeing Lazarus resurrected.

### 11:17-27 Those Who Believe Will Have Life

Jesus had stayed two days (11:6) after having heard of Lazarus's sickness. If the message had left Bethany a day or two before Lazarus's death, Jesus had waited two days, and the trip took about two days in each direction, a period of time of four days since His death is reasonable. Many people had come to comfort Mary and Martha. Martha went to Jesus when she heard that He was approaching, but Mary stayed behind.

### • Lazarus Would Be Raised

Martha expressed confidence that Jesus could have healed Lazarus. She was not bitter and she still believed in His power, though her answers to Jesus indicate that she was not asking Him directly to raise her brother. She understood, as the formerly blind man had in 9:31, that God would hear the righteous and one like Jesus would receive what He had asked.

#### "I Am"

#### Life

#### World

Jesus said that Lazarus would rise again. Martha already understood about the ultimate resurrection from the dead at the time of judgment (Jesus had already taught about this in 3:36; 5:21-29; 6:39-44). Jesus said to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life" (see also 14:6; 1 John 1:1-2; 5:10-11). Those who believe shall live spiritually for eternity (11:25-26). Eternal life is what is promised to all of the righteous, but Lazarus would be a recipient of physical life as well in order to cause others to believe.

Martha believed that God had sent Jesus into the world. She also confessed Him to be the Christ and the Son of God. Peter had also done so (6:68-69; Matthew 16:16).

### 11:28-37 Jesus Is Troubled

Here we see Jesus moved by human sorrow. God is not unfeeling. Even in this case, when Jesus had known that He would raise Lazarus (11:11-15), He felt the grief of others keenly. No wonder He is our perfect Savior!

Jesus also wept over Jerusalem shortly before His arrest and crucifixion (Luke 19:41).

### • Mary's Submission

Martha had secretly told Mary of Jesus' arrival, and Mary went to Him where He had met Martha. Mary fell before Him, echoing Martha's words of 11:21. She, too, had faith in Him but did not seem to expect a resurrection at that time. Jesus was deeply moved by her weeping and the weeping of all who had come with her.

After asking where Lazarus's body had been laid, Jesus wept.

### • A Question about Jesus' Ability To Keep Someone Alive

Mary and Martha's fellow mourners saw that Jesus had loved Lazarus. Some wondered whether Jesus, the worker of miracles, could have kept Lazarus from dying. They wondered,



but Mary and Martha knew. Jesus would do much more than they had probably even dreamed possible (Ephesians 3:20).

### **11:38-45 Jesus Prays and Raises Lazarus**

When Jesus asked for the tomb to be opened, Martha offered the practical if perhaps indelicate remark that after four days of decay the odor would be offensive. She obviously was not expecting a resurrection. Jesus told her to believe and said that she would see the glory of God. God was glorified by Lazarus's resurrection (11:4).

**Glorify**

**Belief>>**

Jesus prayed aloud to let others hear and be brought to belief by what would happen next. He would say something similar about the voice from Heaven in 12:30.

**Father**

**Miracle**

The Father heard Jesus' prayer regarding Lazarus. Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead after four days. We see that the resurrection of Lazarus caused and confirmed belief. Lazarus was still wrapped for burial as he came out. Jesus did not forget to tell others to free Him, as He had reminded others to feed Jairus's daughter in Mark 5:43 || Luke 8:55.

**Belief>>**

Many of the Jews who had seen what had happened believed at the resurrection of Lazarus (compare 2:23; 10:42). Jesus' actions had achieved their intended result. Jesus' remaining miracle in John would be His own greater resurrection, and those who did not approve of this miracle (see the next lesson) would plot His death.

Jesus would be in a burial wrapping Himself (19:40; 20:7) and then have a stone rolled away from a tomb in the rock (Matthew 27:60), probably just a few months later, and would demonstrate that He truly is the resurrection and the life.

## **Questions**

How could Jesus say that Lazarus's sickness would not be unto, or result in, death when He knew that Lazarus would shortly die (11:4)?

What was Thomas expecting to happen as a result of going to Lazarus (11:16)?

What did Martha confess about Jesus in 11:27?

What are examples of things that deeply moved Jesus or made Him weep (11:33-38)?

Why did Jesus say He was praying to the Father aloud in 11:41-42?

Martha had already learned from Jesus that all would be resurrected at the last day. Can you find where Jesus had already taught something about the resurrection in John?

Where else in the gospels do we read of Jesus' raising the dead?

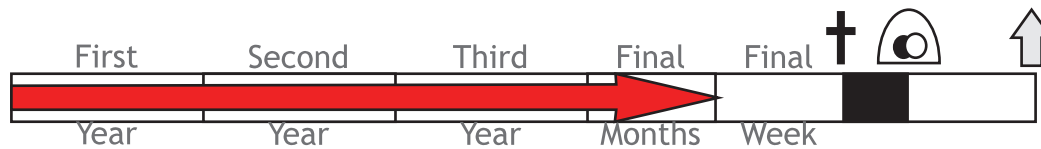
## **Other Readings**

John 5:24-29; Luke 8:41-56



# John 11:46-12:11

## "They Planned Together To Kill Him" (11:53)



### Main Points:

- The high priest unwittingly predicted Jesus' death.
- Mary prepared Jesus for His upcoming burial.
- The evidence for Jesus that Lazarus provided made some want to kill him.

This section forms a bridge between the resurrection of Lazarus and the final week before the crucifixion.

### 11:46-53 A Council Decides Jesus Must Die

#### Signs

#### Belief>>

While many of the Jews had seen and believed after Lazarus's resurrection, some told the Pharisees what had happened. The chief priests and Pharisees gathered to determine what to do. Even the chief priests and the Pharisees admitted that Jesus had done many signs. The chief priests and Pharisees thought "all" would believe if they were to see the evidence of the signs. Perhaps they would have been surprised at how many, like them, would choose not to believe even when faced with overwhelming evidence. The chief priests and Pharisees feared that the Romans would punish the Jewish people if Jesus were to gain a popular following.

#### • Caiaphas's Callousness

Caiaphas seemed to start by insulting the others. He suggested that Jesus should die and solve the problem that threatened the Jewish people. To see Jesus as the problem was completely wrong, as was deciding to kill Him.

The high priest should have been holy, but Caiaphas prophesied ironically of Jesus' death (18:14), which he would help to cause (18:24, 28; Matthew 26:57-66). His unwitting prophecy was not extensive enough; Jesus's death would not only rescue the Jewish nation, but also bring salvation to the whole world (10:16; Isaiah 49:6). The rejection of Jesus did not solve the problem with the Romans but actually brought the eventual destruction of the Jewish nation by the Romans.

#### Attempt

The chief priests and the Pharisees planned to seize and kill Jesus. They had made their ungodly decision, and the time of carrying it out was not far away.

### 11:54-57 Jesus Moves Away from Judea

Jesus again changed His traveling habits, as in 4:1-3; 7:1; 10:40, heading to a place called Ephraim. The time of the Passover was close. Jesus would not shy away from His death at the right time, but that time had not quite come.

The final conflict between Jesus and His persecutors was drawing near. Some of the Jews were already purifying themselves in Jerusalem before the feast. Many wondered where Jesus was (as in 7:11 at the Feast of Tabernacles); the chief priests and Pharisees would certainly have liked to know for another, more deadly, reason.

## 12:1-11 Lazarus' Presence Causes Belief

It was six days before the Passover when Jesus came to Bethany. Bethany was close to Jerusalem (11:18; Mark 11:1; Luke 19:29); the crowding in Jerusalem for the feast probably made staying there convenient. Martha was serving, as in Luke 10:38-42, but this time apparently did not let that get in the way of listening to Jesus' teaching. Lazarus, who had been dead a short time before, was also there.

### • Mary's Anointing

Mary anointed Jesus with an expensive perfume (11:2). Her wiping Jesus' feet, soon to be pierced, with her hair showed love and humility.

### • Judas' Greedy Complaint

Judas wanted the money that the perfume had cost, approximately a year's wages, to have been put into the money box that he kept. Not coincidentally, Judas was embezzling the money that he was keeping for the apostles (13:29).

Jesus realized that the expensive perfume had an important purpose. He took the gift for what it was and saw the beauty in it. The poor would need to be helped at other times, but the gift Mary was giving was uniquely and perfectly suited for its time.

Sometimes Christians criticize any significant expenditure that the congregation makes or even one that another individual makes. They should keep this example in mind.

### • The Plot against Lazarus

Eventually the curious crowd learned where Jesus was and came to see Him and Lazarus.

**Belief>>**

Many people believed after Lazarus had been raised from the dead, so the chief priests also wanted to kill Lazarus.

### ***Which Accounts Are Parallel to John 12:1-8?***

Is this anointing at Bethany (12:1-8) the same event as Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; Luke 7:36-50? Matthew and Mark also record the anointing as occurring in Bethany shortly before the Passover. The anointing in Luke seemed to happen earlier. In Luke, the woman who anointed Jesus had been publicly known as a sinner, and nothing like that is said about Mary in the information we have. It is true that there are similarities between Luke and John. In each account there was a man named Simon (a common name) and the woman anointed the feet and wiped them with her hair (though that does not exclude the possibility that Mary anointed both His head and His feet). The differences in Luke, though, seem to outweigh the similarities. On the whole, this writer tends to think John's account is parallel to Matthew's and Mark's, and that Luke recorded an earlier event. Study carefully for yourself!

## ***Questions***

What did the chief priests and Pharisees fear would happen if Jesus' signs and teachings were not stopped (11:48)?

Caiaphas, the high priest, unwittingly prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation of Israel. What other fact about the significance of Jesus' death does John add to his words (11:51-52)?

Why were many of the Jews who lived outside of Jerusalem arriving there in 11:55?

What was Judas's objection to Mary's use of expensive perfume to anoint Jesus (12:5)?

Why did Jesus say that Mary was justified (12:7-8)?

Why did the chief priests want to kill Lazarus as well as Jesus (12:10-11)?

Caiaphas's being the high priest “that year” (11:49) seems to imply that God's intention that the high priest serve for life was being disregarded and that the priesthood had become a political tool. Can you find Old Testament passages that imply that the high priest was expected to serve for life?

Can you find any other places in the gospels or Acts in which people acknowledged that Jesus or His followers were performing miraculous signs but still refused to believe?

### ***Other Readings***

Exodus 29:29-30; Acts 4:13-17; Hebrews 7:23-24

### ***Parallels in Other Gospels***

For the discussion of which passages are parallel to Jesus' anointing at Bethany in 12:2-8, please see the box above the Questions section.

# The Attempts on Jesus' Life in John

## "Seeking All the More To Kill Him" (5:18)

TOPICAL

### Main Points:

#### **Attempt**

- Jesus did not shy away from deadly situations.
- Jesus was in control of His life and He did not give it until He chose.
- The reaction of His listeners shows that they understood His claim to deity.

The threats against Jesus' life started no later than the second year of His public teaching and culminated about two years later in His death. In this lesson, we will see that He did not lay down His life until His hour had come.

### Why Men Wanted To Kill Him (The Teaching That Brought the Attempts)

When we study the attempts that men made on Jesus' life, it helps to understand the specific triggers that set off the assassination attempts. We could do the same with some of the attempts that men would make on His apostles' lives later. Acts 4:1-2 shows that the teaching about the resurrection enraged the Sadducees and Acts 22:19-22 shows that the proclamation of the gospel to the Gentiles incited the mob around the temple when Paul was making his defense. Those teachings were the key issues for the apostles' antagonists. When we study why men wanted to kill Jesus, one claim that He was making stands out.

#### • The Specific Subjects

- In 5:17-18, the Jews understood Jesus to be claiming equality with God and thus deity, and the supposed blasphemy along with the supposed Sabbath-breaking raised their murderous ire.
- In 7:30, it seems the claim that He had been sent by God, and perhaps the claim that they did not know God, made them want to seize Him.
- In 7:43-46, the abortive attempt on His life may have come from Jesus' call to come to Him and drink at the Feast of Tabernacles (7:37-38) or His claim to be the Christ generally.
- In 8:58-59, there had been many points of disagreement, but the "I am" claim that involved having existed before Abraham was the trigger.
- In 10:30-33, 37-39, Jesus' claim to be God (to be one with the Father) was the key reason for the attempted stoning. Jesus then added more about being in the Father and the Father's being in Him, after which the assassination attempt was renewed.
- In 19:4-7, the Jews claimed that Jesus ought to die according to the Law because He had claimed to be the Son of God.

Of course, the claims about deity, divine origin, and being the Messiah are closely connected. If you miss that set of claims about His identity, you have missed one of the main points of the gospel!

#### • Affirmations That He Was Claiming Deity

When we look at those claims, it should be clear to us that Christ was meaning to claim deity and His listeners understood exactly what He was claiming. People who want to deny the deity of Christ try to explain away these statements. Keep in mind that the people who were there listening to Him with no cultural or language barrier understood Him clearly. Keep in mind that Jesus made the claim repeatedly after having seen the consequences of making it. Keep in mind that Jesus had every reason to back off of the claim if untrue. He was not claiming to be sent from God in an abstract sense. He was not claiming to be a lesser, but still exalted, being. He claimed to be God the Son and He confirmed it through His words and actions!

- **His Teaching about Who He Was Was Not the Only Reason**

Of course, Jesus' opponents could have been motivated by other factors, too, such as pride and greed. After He had healed the man with the withered hand in Mark 3:6-7, the Pharisees were ready to kill Him; they had tried to trap Him but their plan had backfired! It would be hard to imagine that such an embarrassment, deserved as it was, did not factor into their intentions. In Mark 11:17-18, anger was directed at Him over the cleansing of the temple. In Luke 20:17-20, the ones who were rightly accused of misleading the nation in the Parable of the Wicked Vineyard Keepers wanted to kill Him for speaking against them. Jesus' teachings and His actions, which were consistent with His teachings, were at the root of the conflict in every case.

- **Jesus' Control of His Life (He Would Not Let Them Act at the Wrong Time)**

We also see from these examples that Jesus was in control, even though other people were trying to kill Him! If a group of people were trying to kill someone who was not resisting them, you would think that the would-be killers had control, but Jesus demonstrated His power by thwarting the plans of His enemies.

- **The Times Before His Hour Had Come**

The Gospel of John can be divided into two parts: before “His hour had come” and after. The first part covers roughly the first eleven chapters. Jesus kept Himself from being killed before the proper time in several ways: Sometimes Jesus left a dangerous situation in ways that were almost certainly miraculous. In John 8:59, Jesus hid Himself and left the temple. Lynch mobs usually do not lose their victims! Luke 4:30 describes a similar escape from the deadly mob in Nazareth.

Sometimes we are not given an explanation of what He did to prevent His enemies from harming Him; the New Testament just says that He was not seized because it was not the right time. In 7:30, at the Feast of Tabernacles, the Jews did not seize Him because His hour had not yet come. In 8:20, shortly before they would try to kill Him again, Jesus' hour still had not come.

In 12:23; 13:1, we learn that the hour had come. From that point Jesus did not evade the attempts on His life.

- **The Voluntary Nature of His Sacrifice**

What we can see from these examples is that Jesus was in control. He chose when to keep others from taking His life and when to give His life as a sacrifice. Jesus was not a victim of circumstance but someone who voluntarily gave Himself for us, which makes His sacrifice all the greater.

In 18:10-11, we see that Jesus refused Peter's misdirected efforts to rescue Him or go down fighting. Luke 22:51 records how He healed Malchus's ear. Jesus had the power to destroy every evil person involved, but He did not use it. He chose to die because He knew that it needed to be done.

In 19:28-30, we see that He knew when His task was finished and stayed in control until the very end. His life was not taken so much as given.

This is closely tied to the next point about how Jesus faced the attempts that were being made to kill Him.

### **Jesus' Bravery in Facing the Attempts To Kill Him**

Earlier we discussed the times when Jesus left the scene when others threatened to kill Him. There were times when Jesus stayed away from those who were plotting against Him; He was more safe outside Jerusalem (7:1; 10:40; 11:54). However, He was not afraid to go into the belly of the beast when it was necessary and right.

- **He Went Sometimes Even When Threatened**

In 11:7-10, Jesus went to Judea (Bethany, very close to Jerusalem) shortly after an attempt to stone Him (10:39). He was not afraid, though the situation was so bad that Thomas expected that they would die with Him while in Judea (11:16).



In 11:51-53, 57, He returned to Jerusalem for the fateful Passover at which His determined persecutors would see their plan come to fruition. He went willingly and bravely.

### • The Malice of His Antagonists

In 18:29-32, the predictions Jesus had made were shown to have been coming true (see 12:32-33). Jesus knew the death determined for Him was a horrible one, but He went to it anyway. We also see that those who were biased against Him had no regard for justice.

In 19:14-16, we see Jews professing loyalty to Caesar as their only king, which would have been preposterous at any other time. That showed the depth of their malice. Jesus knew their hatred and went anyway.

### How This Should Affect Us

We have seen the kind of teachings that brought the attempts on Jesus' life, the control of the situation that Jesus had and used to give Himself willingly, and the bravery of Jesus when facing persecution and death. The last two in particular show how worthy He is to be our Savior.

In 21:18-22, Jesus told all His disciples to follow Him, even if it meant suffering in some of the extreme ways that He had. Not all will suffer that way, but all will suffer (2 Timothy 3:12). Are you ready? Peter asked about this subject in 13:36-38, but he was not ready; he would be ready later and follow his Master in glorifying God, as shown in 2 Peter 1:13-14. May we be willing to imitate His latter example.

Having completed this topical study we will plunge back into the text as the time of the successful attempt on His life draws near.

### Questions

What did Jesus say about Himself that led to the Jews' attempts to kill Him in 5:17-18; 10:30-39?

Why did the Jews tell Pilate that Jesus deserved to die in 19:4-7?

What does Jesus' response to Peter's cutting off the servant's ear in 18:10-11 show us about Jesus' willingness to sacrifice Himself?

What did Thomas think about what would happen when Jesus returned to Judea after the death of Lazarus (11:7-16)?

The Jews who had come to Pilate made two responses when he asked what the charge was against Jesus in 18:29-31. What do they show about their attitudes toward justice and toward Jesus?

The Jewish people as a whole rejected Jesus, the king whom God had sent for them. Where in the Old Testament had the Jews rejected God as their king?

Can you find four verses in John in which Jesus speaks of laying down His life for others?

(Hints: 1. I found three in one chapter and one in another chapter.

2. Use a concordance and look for "lay" and "life" in John.

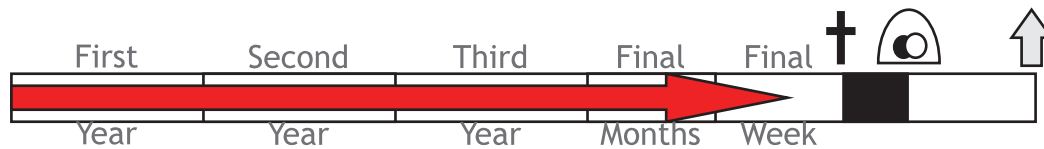
3. Do not count Peter's offering to lay down his life for Jesus in 13:37-38.)

### Other Readings

John 15:9-14; 1 Samuel 8:1-9; Mark 3:6-7; 11:17-18; Luke 4:23-30; 20:17-20

# John 12:12-50

## "If It Dies, It Bears Much Fruit" (12:24)



### Main Points:

- Jesus was acclaimed by the multitudes.
- Jesus' imminent death would lead to His glorification.
- Most refused to believe that Jesus was who He claimed to be.
- To hear and believe in Jesus was to hear and believe in the Father.

This section spends much time on Jesus' death (about five days away) and frequently uses Old Testament passages. It is here that Jesus said that "the hour has come" (12:23). After the Triumphal Entry, most of the verses deal with Jesus' coming death and the failure of many people (especially the leaders) to respond to His message properly.

### 12:12-19 The People Acclaim Jesus as King

The Triumphal Entry is also recorded in Matthew 21:1-11 || Mark 11:1-11 || Luke 19:29-40. Jesus' entry as a peaceable king showed the nature of His kingdom.

#### King

In 12:9-11, the people had been very interested in Jesus and Lazarus. When Jesus was seen coming to Jerusalem for the feast, a large crowd came out to meet Him and give Him great praise. Other gospel accounts mention the people's spreading their coats as part of the carpet for the conquering King of Peace.

#### • Fulfilled Prophecy

They shouted, "Hosanna," which was a cry for someone to save them quickly. Salvation had come up in John several times before (3:17; 4:22, 42; 5:34; 10:9) and would be mentioned again in 12:47. They were acclaiming Jesus as a savior, though their understanding of how He would save was probably lacking. They were using words like those in Psalm 118:25-26 in praising Jesus as He entered Jerusalem triumphantly. Notice that they called Him the King of Israel.

Zechariah 9:9 (the donkey's colt) is clearly referenced in 12:14-15. The disciples would only understand this prophecy later (12:16). Jesus was not a dictator bent on His own glory (Zechariah 9:10 prophesies His speaking of peace) though His kingship was and is absolute.

#### • More Meaning Later

#### Glorify

After Jesus had been glorified, the disciples understood more about how prophecy had been fulfilled in their actions with Him. These prophecies were far too precise to have admitted of merely a general fulfillment. Jesus acted as He did knowing that He was fulfilling Scripture and His disciples realized more of the importance of His actions as they grew. We can learn more about the significance of Jesus' actions as we study.

#### Signs

#### Witness

The people went to see Jesus because they had heard about the sign of raising Lazarus. Those who had seen Jesus raise Lazarus bore witness of Him. Jesus' power and works were widely proclaimed. That, of course, did not please the Pharisees, who said that the world had gone

## World

after Jesus (compare their concerns in 11:47-48). Jesus' works were widely known among the Jews before the crucifixion. That would be very important when Christians would start preaching about Him at Pentecost in Acts 2.

### 12:20-25 The Hour Has Come

Jesus knew better than the people. Far from that Passover feast's becoming a popular earthly coronation for Him, it was the time of His glorification through complete self-sacrifice.

#### • The Greeks May Not See Jesus Yet

Some Greeks were at Passover to worship. The text does not say that they were proselytes; even if they were not, they were obviously interested in the one true God. One wonders what the Jews who had speculated that Jesus might preach to the Greeks in 7:35 would have thought. Even at this point, interest in Jesus was not limited to the Jews.

However, Jesus could not meet with the Greeks that Philip and Andrew (two who were good at bringing others to Jesus, 1:40-48) were wanting to bring to Him. Jesus did not have time because of the extreme circumstances facing Him. The Greek-speaking peoples of the Gentile world would certainly have an opportunity to hear God's word after Jesus' crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension.

## Glorify

The time had come for Jesus to be glorified; Passover was near, and with it the crucifixion. Crucifixion would hardly be glorious except for what was accomplished in Jesus through it.

## Life

Jesus taught that only the one who hated His life in this world could keep it eternally, and

## World

Jesus would illustrate His willingness to be a sacrifice shortly. Jesus would bring life to many by dying Himself. Are we willing to give our lives so that others may live?

### 12:26-33 The Father Glorifies Jesus

The "let him follow Me" statement follows Jesus' words about His coming death. Are we willing to follow Him there (compare 14:3; 17:24)? The Father will honor those who serve His Son.

#### • The Purpose of the Hour

Jesus was troubled as the hour for His glorification through self-sacrifice was approaching, but knew that He had a reason for enduring what He would soon experience. He asked the Father to glorify the Father's name. The Father dramatically answered Jesus' request for His name to be glorified with His utterance from Heaven and promised further glorification. He had also spoken at Jesus' baptism (Matthew 3:17) and the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:5).

## Glorify

## Father

The people who were listening, the ones for whom Jesus had said what He did, thought it was thunder or an angel's voice. The Father's voice served to verify what Jesus was saying and doing, as Christ's praying aloud to the Father in 11:42 at Lazarus' tomb had helped listeners believe that He had been sent by the Father.

#### • The Judgment of the World

Jesus said that judgment was upon the world. He obviously was not speaking of the final judgment, but the results of His crucifixion and resurrection. Jesus' sacrifice would bring judgment, "casting out," on the devil. Jesus would later say that the Holy Spirit would convict men of judgment because of the judgment on the devil (16:11). Think about Jesus' casting out Satan in relation to His binding the strong man in Matthew 12:28-29, disarming the rulers and authorities in Colossians 2:13-15, and rendering the devil powerless in

## Judge

## World

Hebrews 2:14-15. We must not assume that the devil's defeat keeps him from doing anything today; he still is out to tempt and destroy men.

Jesus would draw men from all nations to Himself, as had been prophesied (11:51-52; Isaiah 49:5-6; Revelation 5:8-10). In this statement was also a prediction of the crucifixion (see 18:31-32). Jesus not only knew that He would die, but that He would die in a horrible way (see also 3:14). No wonder He was troubled (see Luke 12:50).

### **12:34-43    The Failure To Believe**

The people were still confused about what Jesus was saying, though the following verses make clear that their confusion was not due to an innocent inability to comprehend, but a refusal to understand all of God's truth.

#### **• The People Misunderstand**

##### **Law**

The people understood that the “Son of Man” (12:23, 34) was the Christ and would be lifted up, and that Jesus was speaking about Himself. They were not acknowledging that Jesus was the Christ. They told Jesus that they had heard from the Law (consider Psalm 89:36-37) that the Christ would remain forever; they did not see how He could claim to be the Christ and yet be “lifted up” to die.

Many other passages deal with the eternal reign of the Messiah (Isaiah 9:7; Ezekiel 37:25; Daniel 2:44; 7:14, 27; Micah 4:7). If you had lived in Jesus' day and misunderstood the nature of the Messiah's reign in His kingdom, thinking it was earthly, you would not have understood how His dying would fulfill the prophecies. If you misunderstand the nature of His kingdom today, as so many do, you will look toward the future for the kingdom and miss its presence today (Mark 9:1; Colossians 1:13-14).

##### **Light**

Jesus told the multitude to walk while there was light so that they would be sons of light. Light (the topic of the next lesson) had already come up many times (1:9; 8:12; 9:5; 11:10). They could have had the light if they had wanted it. We all need to be children of light (Luke 16:8; Ephesians 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:5; 1 John 2:9-11) today. Some of the crowd seems to have been hostile to Him.

#### **• Isaiah's Prophecy Is Fulfilled**

##### **Belief>>**

##### **Signs**

Two quotations from Isaiah had shown what would happen among the unbelieving Jews about 700 years in advance. Some refused to believe despite having seen many signs that clearly affirmed Jesus' claims; the people's disbelief had been predicted in Isaiah 53:1 and their hardening in Isaiah 6:9-10. God had known that Jesus would be rejected by the people. Note that if at least two different men had written the various parts of Isaiah Jesus did not mention it. If Jesus said Isaiah wrote both Chapters 6 and 53, we can believe that only one man wrote the book. To have a second writer called Deutero-Isaiah (or many more Isaiah writers) is to cast doubt on Jesus' knowledge.

##### **Deity**

The reference to Isaiah 6:9-10, Isaiah's vision, combined with the statement that Isaiah saw Jesus' glory at that time is significant because Isaiah was seeing the glory of the LORD in 6:1-5. Jesus is described as the LORD, as are the Father and the Holy Spirit.

#### **• The Leaders Show Cowardice**

##### **Belief>>**

Some of the rulers had a weak belief in Jesus: they would not confess Him due to the expulsion from the synagogue it would bring (see 5:44; 9:34). Nicodemus (3:1-2; 7:50-52; 19:38-39) also hid his belief initially, but he seemed to display real faith as he grew.



## 12:44-50     Unbelief Leads to Judgment

Jesus here showed His claim to identity with the Father and the authority of His words.

### Father

#### • Seeing Jesus Is Seeing the Father

Jesus said that the one who believed and beheld Him believed and beheld the Father (14:9).

### Deity

That statement supports His claim to deity. He had come so that no one would have to remain in darkness because He was the light of the world (see also 9:5).

### Light

#### • Jesus' Words Will Judge

### Judge

Jesus' words have absolute authority to judge. They will judge those who hear but do not obey His sayings. In 3:17; 8:15, Jesus had also said He was not judging, but He spoke of judging people in 8:26; 9:39. There is no contradiction if we understand that Jesus was not exercising judgment on those who rejected Him while He was on earth, but there would be judgment upon those who would fail to obey His words later (5:22-29; Acts 10:42). Jesus spoke exactly what the Father had wanted and His commandment was eternal life (see 6:63, 68). If we follow the Father's words given through Jesus, we will have eternal life.

Our next lesson will be a topical study on light. We will study that subject next because of Jesus' frequent references to it in this chapter and earlier chapters.

## Questions

What did the people who had seen Lazarus do while Jesus was entering Jerusalem on the colt (12:17-18)?

What example did Jesus use to illustrate how His dying could bring life to many people (12:24)?

Why did Jesus say that the Father had spoken from Heaven to glorify His name in 12:28-30?

What did Jesus say about how He would die (12:32-33)?

Did His listeners understand that it was a reference to His death (12:34)?

Many of the rulers believed in Jesus but would not confess Him. Why not (12:42-43)?

How did Jesus express the closeness of His relationship with the Father (12:44-45)?

Jesus said those who loved their lives (being too attached to physical life) would lose them and those who hated their lives (being willing to give them up) would keep them (12:25). Find at least one other passage with a similar lesson.

Satan is called “the ruler of this world” in 12:31. In what other passages is Satan called something similar?

## Other Readings

Matthew 10:37-39; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4

## Parallels in Other Gospels

Jesus' entry into Jerusalem (12:12-19) is also found in Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-44.



# Light in John

## "The Light Shines in the Darkness" (1:5)

### Main Points:

#### Light

- Jesus is the only true light in the world.
- Our righteousness will determine our attitude toward Jesus as the light.
- Our opportunity to respond to Jesus as the light is limited.

We study the topic of Jesus as light at this point because He has taught about light frequently in Chapters 8-12.

### Jesus Is the All-sufficient and Only Light

**1:4-9; 8:12; 9:3-7; 12:46**

Throughout Jesus' life on earth He claimed to be the only light that men needed or that men ever could have to help them be right with God. The beginning of John's gospel shows that Jesus' life was the light of men and that Jesus enlightened every man (1:4-9). Other men like John the Baptist revealed some of God's will and helped others learn from Jesus (5:35), but only Jesus is the true light. Jesus claimed to be the light of the world and said that He would keep those who followed Him from walking in darkness (8:12). No one needs to be in darkness today because of Jesus' light (12:46). While Jesus was in the world, His healing men and doing God's work was proof that He was the spiritual light of the world (9:3-7).

John would write more about God's light in his other books. In 1 John 1:5-7, we read that God is light and if we are obeying Him by walking in the light, Jesus' blood will cleanse us from sin. There is no contradiction between saying God is light and Jesus is the true light because of the deity of Christ, which John emphasizes. In 1 John 2:8-11, John says that the true light (Christ) is already shining and we must love our brothers to be walking in that light. In Revelation 21:23-24, we see that the Christ the Lamb is light to the faithful in the eternal kingdom, and in Revelation 22:5, there is no more night there. Christ was not just light while He walked the earth; His light continues to guide Christians today and He will continue to be light throughout eternity.

### Our Righteousness Determines Our Attitude toward the Light

**1:5; 3:19-21; 9:39-41**

In 3:19-21, we learn that one who is righteous welcomes the true light. This does not mean that we have to already be sinless to obey Christ, but that we must love the truth and be willing to be examined if we want to become and remain His followers. The righteous person is not afraid to have his work examined because he has done what God wants him to do. On the other hand, those who do what is wrong do not want to have their actions exposed for all to see. Most men will not love the light because their actions have not been right and they are unwilling to repent and make them right. In the world around us we see how many sinful and shameful things are usually done where no one can see them (1 Thessalonians 5:6-8). In 1:5, John shows that the darkness of this world did not understand the light (some translations have "overcome" or a similar word; both meanings are true). 1:9-11 goes on to show that the world as a whole did not appreciate the true light, Jesus, when He was on the earth. The world's basic attitude has not changed toward Christ and His true servants since then (2 Timothy 3:12). John also showed that Jesus dealt with people, even religiously observant people, whose attitudes blinded them to their own sin (9:39-41). It is possible to let sinful habits harden us to the truth and cause us to walk in darkness while, because of our outward actions, we think that we are walking in the light. If we examine the Bible with a truly open and honest attitude, we will understand the truth about ourselves.

## **Our Opportunity To Use the Light Is Limited**

### **11:9-10; 12:35-36**

As Jesus' time to give Himself as a sacrifice drew near, He emphasized to His apostles how they needed to use the light while it was available. Before raising Lazarus, He explained to His disciples why He was returning to hostile territory in Judea (11:8-10); He used the picture of walking in the light. He needed to accomplish His goal of showing people the true light of His glory and give them reason to believe while He had the opportunity. In the final days before His crucifixion, He told the crowd that they needed to believe in Him, the light, while they had the light (12:35-36).

We are fortunate to have the light of Jesus' words recorded in John and the rest of the New Testament. We must resolve to reflect that light to others (Matthew 5:14-16; compare Mark 4:21-22; Luke 8:16-17; Luke 11:33-36) and emulate Jesus in doing good "as long as it is day," that is, while we have the opportunity (9:4).

Next we will study Chapter 13, in which Jesus ate with His apostles. He would hold out the light to Judas even at that hour, but Judas loved the darkness.

## **Questions**

What is described as the "light of men" in 1:4?

Why do the majority of men in the world reject the light and love the darkness (3:19-21)?

According to 8:12; 12:46, what do we need to do because Jesus is the light of the world?

How did Jesus' healing the man who had been born blind demonstrate that He was the light of the world (9:3-7)?

Why did Jesus say that the Pharisees' sin remained when discussing spiritual sight and blindness with them (9:39-41)?

What did Jesus say those who wanted to be "sons of light" needed to do (12:35-36)?

Being "sons of light" was discussed in the previous question (12:35-36). Can you find passages in other books of the Bible that use that term or a similar one?

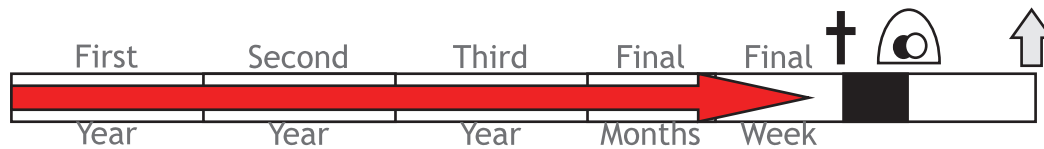
Christ is the true light, but we should reflect that light to others. What passages can you find that speak of how Christians are to be lights in the world?

## **Other Readings**

Ephesians 5:8-14; Philippians 2:14-16; Revelation 21:23-22:5

# John 13

## "He Knew the One Who Was Betraying Him" (13:11)



### Main Points:

- Jesus taught that serving others was mandatory for every Christian.
- Jesus knew the identity of His betrayer and confirmed His foreknowledge.
- Jesus taught that loving others was mandatory for every Christian.

The beginning and the end of this chapter contain instructions to serve and love one another. Between those instructions is the revelation of Judas as the one who would spurn such service and love from God Himself. Peter would also fail, not understanding what truly following Jesus meant, but he would fail without the evil intentions that Judas had.

### 13:1-4 Jesus Knows the Hour Has Come

We now come to the final events before the arrest and crucifixion, though the next few hours leading up to the arrest will take another five chapters. Jesus would no longer take measures to postpone His death. Jesus was resolved to do right and Judas was only one of many resolved to do wrong (though Judas would be sorry too late, Matthew 27:3-4).

#### World

Jesus knew that He was about to depart this world. Jesus knew that the Father had given all things into His hands at the time of the Last Supper and that He would be returning to the

#### Father

Father. John had earlier mentioned the Father's giving all to Jesus (3:35) and sending Him (8:42) and would mention those things again in his record of the rest of the night's events (16:28; 17:2). Instead of lamenting His fate or lashing out at others, Jesus chose to spend His last free hours teaching others by serving them. What would you do if you had only a few hours to live?

### 13:5-11 Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet

Jesus wore a towel, probably as a slave would have. Wiping others' feet was likely one of the lowliest things a slave would do. The Creator of the universe was taking the role of a slave, even before the one who was betraying Him! Why He did so becomes more clear in the following verses. His actions resembled Mary's anointing His feet and wiping them with her hair (12:3).

#### • Peter's Opposite Reactions

Peter, probably feeling that the action was inappropriate (compare John the Baptist in Matthew 3:14), asked Jesus what He was doing. When Jesus said that he would understand later, Peter said he would not let Him wash his feet. When told it was necessary in order to belong to Jesus, Peter wanted his hands and head washed as well. He was bouncing between extremes, seeming to act impulsively.

#### • Jesus Knows of the Betrayal

The lesson Jesus was teaching was about serving others. Extra physical washing was not the

point.

Jesus then made the first observation in this chapter about His betrayal (He had known who would betray Him "from the beginning", 6:64-71). He would even wash the feet – a menial task – of the one who would betray Him in a few hours. While serving others was the main point of the action, Jesus also used the subject of cleanliness to prophesy the spiritual uncleanness of Judas. By prophesying His betrayal He demonstrated His divine knowledge and His willingness to die for others.

### **13:12-17 Jesus Commands Service to Others**

Jesus told them that He had shown them how to serve others (Matthew 20:26-28; Luke 22:27). If the Son of God would do a slave's work in service to others, how can we pretend to be above serving our fellow Christian? Jesus gave us a binding example. We will only be blessed if we follow it (Matthew 10:24; Luke 6:40; Romans 12:10). He would refer to this teaching again later that night in 15:20.

### **13:18-21 Jesus Explicitly Predicts His Betrayal**

**Belief>>**

Jesus' announcement of the coming betrayal is also found in Matthew 26:21-23 || Mark 14:18-21 || Luke 22:21-23. Jesus predicted His own betrayal so that the disciples might further believe in Him. He used the words of Psalm 41:9 to describe how one of His closest companions, an apostle, would betray Him. The treachery by a friend made the betrayal all the more horrifying.

Jesus would repeat later that night that His prediction of upcoming events would help them believe (14:29; 16:4).

**Father**

He said that to receive Him was to receive the Father (13:20; see Matthew 10:40; 25:31-46; Luke 10:16). That could not be said casually. Those words signified the unity of the Father and Son. Jesus claimed to be the ambassador from God to earth and claimed that He would act through His disciples.

Jesus was troubled when He spoke of the betrayal. Jesus was troubled at Lazarus's tomb (11:33). He was troubled in Jerusalem as the hour of His affliction drew near (12:27).

Because Jesus has successfully given Himself as the sacrifice, risen from the dead, and ascended to the Father, we need not be troubled anymore (14:1, 27)!

### **13:22-30 Jesus Reveals Judas' Treachery**

The disciples had no idea who would betray Jesus. A prophecy of something that had been generally suspected would not have had much value, but the disciples had no idea about this.

#### **• Peter and John Ask Jesus about the Traitor**

The disciple who was leaning against Jesus is almost certainly John here and in Chapters 19-21. Peter wanted John to ask who the betrayer was. Jesus told John that it would be the one to whom He would give a morsel after dipping it (dipping foods in a mixture of bitter herbs was part of the Passover meal). Jesus gave it to Judas. Sharing food with someone can indicate fellowship (compare 1 Corinthians 5:11); how galling it was for Judas to share a meal as if he were a true friend and then leave to betray Jesus!

According to the other gospels, Jesus gave the instructions for observing the Lord's Supper at this meal. Christians have spiritual fellowship with each other in taking the Lord's Supper and it involves sharing bread (1 Corinthians 10:16-17). The picture of Judas' pretending to accept but actually rejecting fellowship with Jesus is striking (Luke 22:19-21).

- **Judas Leaves**

Judas took the morsel and then acted on the devil's plan. Satan had put the betrayal into Judas's heart (13:2) and then entered him (Luke 22:3 shows that this was not the only time that had happened). Satan's influence did not remove Judas's free will. Jesus did not want Judas to sin, but once he had resolved to commit the sin that would lead to the crucifixion, Jesus told him to do it quickly. Some thought Judas was just buying something for the feast because he carried the money (12:4-8) or giving something to the poor. Judas left.

### **13:31-35 Jesus Commands Love**

#### **Glorify**

After Judas had left, Jesus began to instruct the rest about what would be happening in the next twenty-four hours. He was about to give Himself as a sacrifice on the cross. God was glorified in what Jesus was doing and would glorify Him in return quickly (see 12:23). Jesus also told the apostles that they would not be going with Him when He left, though they did not understand this.

The new commandment of brotherly love in 13:34 would be repeated in 15:12-17 and echoed later in Ephesians 5:2; 1 John 2:7-8. The identification of true disciples by their love for each other in 13:35 would be stated in another way in 1 John 4:20-21. While loving one's neighbor as oneself is as old as Leviticus 19:18, Jesus' sacrifice brought a new dimension to the commandment. We still need to love and stand out in the world for our love today.

### **13:36-38 Peter Cannot Follow Jesus**

Peter had already said something that sounded right but was not quite right in 13:6-9; he would do it again here.

- **Peter Professes His Loyalty**

After again (13:33) being told that he could not follow Jesus – this time that he could not yet do so, Peter said that he would. Whether or not Peter knew that Jesus was speaking of His imminent death, Peter made clear that he thought he was ready to die for Jesus' sake.

- **Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial**

Peter said that he was ready to lay down his life for Jesus, but Jesus told him that he would deny Him (13:36-38; Matthew 26:34 || Mark 14:30 || Luke 22:34). Peter would deny Jesus three times (18:17, 25-27) and he would seem to equivocate when Jesus asked him if he loved Him after the resurrection, but Jesus knew that Peter would become strong and eventually die for Him when the situation demanded it (21:15-19). He would grow to be like his Lord. We must do the same.

In the next lesson we will see Jesus and the apostles on the way to the garden; it is the start of several lessons on the teaching that Jesus was doing in those last few hours.

## **Questions**

How was Jesus dressed when He began to wash His disciples' feet (13:4-5)?

What did Jesus demonstrate by predicting Judas' betrayal (13:10-11, 18-19, 21-27)?



If one were to receive Jesus' messenger, whom would he also be receiving (13:20)?

If one were to receive Jesus, whom would he also be receiving?

How did Jesus indicate exactly which disciple would betray Him (13:25-26)?

How did this illustrate the depth of Judas' hypocrisy?

What is to be the identifying characteristic of Jesus' disciples according to 13:34-35?

Can you think of any other incidents in the Bible in which either someone was betrayed by another who was eating with him or someone's refusal to eat with others threatened their fellowship?

Jesus has been glorified through suffering. Can you find Bible passages that show that all Christians will be glorified if they suffer on earth?

### ***Other Readings***

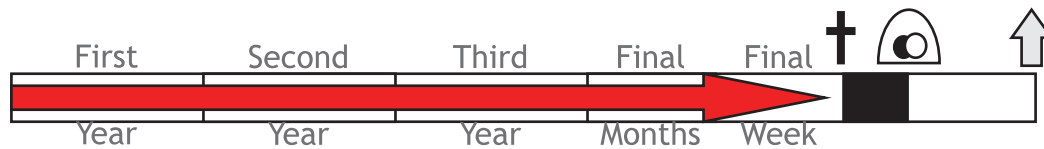
2 Samuel 13:28-29; Romans 8:17; 2 Corinthians 4:17; Galatians 2:11-14

### ***Parallels in Other Gospels***

Jesus' announcement of the coming betrayal (13:21-26) is also found in Matthew 26:21-23; Mark 14:18-21; Luke 22:21-23. Jesus' prediction of Peter's denials (13:38) is also found in Matthew 26:34; Mark 14:30; Luke 22:34.

# John 14

## "I Go To Prepare a Place for You" (14:2)



### Main Points:

- Jesus would prepare a place for those who would follow His way.
- Jesus and the Father would be together again.
- The Holy Spirit would teach the apostles what they would need to know.

In this section Jesus begins the period of teaching which spans the time from the Last Supper to the arrest at Gethsemane (18:1). This teaching is often called the Farewell Discourse (Chapters 14-17), and the prayer in Chapter 17 is often called the High Priestly Prayer.

### 14:1-6 Jesus Goes To Prepare a Home

Though Jesus had just told the disciples that they could not yet go where He was going (13:36-38), He immediately told them about a place He was preparing for them for a later time.

#### • Do Not Be Troubled

As the time of His assassination drew near, Jesus told the apostles not to be troubled when being troubled might have seemed the only logical human reaction. They did not have to be troubled because Jesus was preparing a place for them and He would come back for them (14:18; 12:26; 17:24). The same things are still true for us! He would repeat His admonition not to be troubled in 14:27; 16:22.

#### • The Only Way to God

Jesus said that they knew the way He was going, even though they could not follow Him at that time and Peter had indicated that He did not understand where Jesus was going.

"I Am"

Father

Thomas seems not to have understood what was being said. Jesus said that He was (and is) the way, the truth, and the life. Following Jesus is the only way to come to and dwell with the Father. In this statement Jesus made a clearly exclusive claim (compare 8:19). He rejected all other religions and He even showed that the divinely-approved religion of another dispensation (that is, observing the Law of Moses) was no longer sufficient in the light of His truth. If wrong, His words would be deluded or unthinkably arrogant. Yet His signs showed that He was telling the truth.

Life

We also see that Jesus was (and is) the life. He is the way to life.

Jesus was (and is) also the sole source of truth. Many people say things like, "I'm sure that God wouldn't condemn people who ...," or, "God must make allowances for ...," without any evidence from God's word. If Jesus or His apostles have not said it, we should not presumptuously assume we know the truth on the matter.

### 14:7-14 Knowing Jesus Is Knowing the Father

After saying that He was the only way to the Father, Jesus made the claim even more far-

## Father

reaching. To know Jesus is to know the Father and to see Jesus is to see the Father (compare 12:44-45; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3). Christ is in the Father and the Father is in Christ; 1 John 2:22 says to deny Christ is to deny the Father.

Philip apparently did not understand what Jesus had meant. He wanted to see the Father, but had not understood how he had seen Him in Jesus.

### • Each in the Other

## Belief>>

Jesus reiterated that anyone who had known Him would have also known the Father. His words were the Father's words and His works were the Father's works (5:19; 7:16; 8:28; 12:49). Jesus said that believing in the Father, in Him, and that each was in the other would allow them to do greater works (14:1). It was in that way (the Father's being in Jesus) that Jesus had performed signs that had come from the Father. The works had proven that the Father was in Jesus; even if someone had not not believed the words of Jesus, the signs should have been conclusive proof (5:36; 10:38).

### • God Is Glorified by Fulfilling Men's Requests

## Glorify

The Father was glorified in Jesus. God would be glorified when Jesus fulfilled requests made in His (Jesus') name (14:13-14; see also 15:7, 16; 16:23-24) The text speaks of the certainty of receiving our request when we ask the Father in Jesus' name; 1 John 3:22 speaks of receiving all. Other passages about being confident in the fulfillment of our requests include 1 John 5:14-15; Matthew 7:7-11; Matthew 21:21-22 || Mark 11:23-24; Luke 11:9-13; James 1:5-8. Remember that prayer is not a magic wand to give us whatever we want. God gives us what we ask or, in the case of requests that are misguided due to our lack of knowledge, He gives us something better.

## Father

## Spirit

### 14:15-18 The Father Would Send the Spirit

The Father would send the Holy Spirit in Jesus' name when He had asked for Him (14:26-27; 15:26; 16:7). Jesus said that the Helper, the Holy Spirit, would be with them and in them.

The Holy Spirit would stay forever; in the New Testament we have the result of His inspiring the chosen servants of God almost 2000 years ago. With the New Testament Jesus has kept us from being “orphans” without His physical presence.

## World

The world as a whole cannot receive the Spirit because it does not know Him. 1 Corinthians 2:14 also shows that those whose minds are set only on this world will not understand spiritual truth. Even many people who claim to have the Spirit in a miraculous way today show that they really do not because they do not agree with what God decreed through the Spirit in the Bible. Their inability to do true miracles today confirms this.

### • Love Is Obedience

Jesus required that those who would truly love Him keep His commandments (15:10, 14; 1 John 5:1-3). Obeying Him is a necessary part of loving Him. In earthly relationships we understand that to disobey a legitimate request from someone in authority is not love at all. A wife cannot persist in disobeying her husband in any legitimate area of his authority and truly claim to love him (Ephesians 5:22-24). Why is it that so many think that God, who has infinite wisdom and complete authority, can be loved without being obeyed?

### 14:19-24 Loving Jesus Is Keeping the Word

Jesus spoke to the apostles about the time after His resurrection and ascension to Heaven.

### Life

The apostles would live spiritually only because He always lives. Christians today also live spiritually only because He is the life.

### Father

If we love Him and He is our life, we must be willing to obey Him. The Father loves those who love Jesus and those who disobey Jesus' words are disobeying the Father's. 13:17; 1 John 2:5-6 also connect loving Jesus to obeying Jesus. When we do that we can be in Jesus who is in the Father and has the Father in Himself (10:38).

Not only the Holy Spirit but also the Father and the Son dwell in one who is faithful. This is important because many people today have an incorrect idea about what it means for the Holy Spirit to dwell in a person (the next lesson is about the Holy Spirit in John).

#### • Jesus Would Be Disclosed to His Followers

### World

Jesus would not disclose Himself to the world but to those who loved and obeyed Him. Today many people know about Jesus without knowing Jesus because they are not willing to make His word a part of their lives. He would speak of the disciples' seeing Him again in 16:16 as well.

#### 14:25-31 Preparing Disciples for His Departure

### Belief>>

Jesus said that predicting His departure would help them believe once they had seen His words fulfilled. He had said something similar in 13:18-19 about predicting the betrayal and would say more about the purpose of His words in 16:4.

#### • Leaving Them Guidance

The time that Jesus had to spend with His disciples on earth was growing very short. God had made provision for their guidance after Jesus' death. The Helper, the Holy Spirit, would teach the apostles and help them remember what Jesus had said (14:26). What God has inspired to be recorded as Scripture is the only direct guidance He has promised us today, so we need to use the Bible carefully.

#### • Leaving Them Peace

### World

Jesus gave a peace that was far better than the world's peace. It is far more important to be at peace with God than with any man, and this peace is far more lasting. No man can interfere with our peace with God (10:28-29). Philippians 4:6-7 describes how this peace should affect us.

#### • Leaving for the Father

### Father

The guidance was necessary because Jesus was leaving, and His leaving did not nullify their peace. They needed to rejoice because Jesus was going to the Father, whom He loved. The Father was greater than Jesus in terms of His role, but Jesus was no less God. An analogy is seen in marriage: a husband has a greater role than his wife regarding authority, but the two share the same nature. Philippians 2:6-7 shows that Jesus was and is fully divine but took a role of submission and service. We should be thankful for it!

### World

Jesus could not say much more because of the lateness of the hour in terms of His arrest and crucifixion. Satan was the ruler of the world but the world would know that Jesus had loved the Father after Jesus' sacrifice.

Jesus and His disciples changed locations at that time. The confrontation was very close.

The next lesson is about the Holy Spirit, who is mentioned four times in Chapters 14-16.

## ***Questions***

What did Jesus claim was impossible to have without Him (14:6)?

In what way did Jesus say His followers had seen the Father (14:7-9)?

Why would the world be unable to receive the Holy Spirit (14:17)?

What did Jesus say was necessary for one who truly loved Him to do (14:15, 21-24)?

How would the Helper, the Holy Spirit, help the apostles in their preaching and teaching after Jesus' resurrection and ascension (15:26)?

Can you find another instance in which Jesus is called something similar to the “way” to life or righteousness as He is in 14:6? Look at the other “I am” statements in John.

How many instances can you find in the New Testament of the promise that we will have our requests in prayer fulfilled, as in 14:13-14?

## ***Other Readings***

John 10:1-10; 1 John 2:4-6, 20-24; 3:21-24



# The Holy Spirit in John

## "The Spirit of Truth ... from the Father" (15:26)

### Main Points:

#### Spirit

- The baptism in the Holy Spirit only came through Jesus.
- Only those who loved the truth would receive the Holy Spirit.
- The Spirit would testify about the truth to those to whom He had been given.

We are studying the Holy Spirit in this lesson because we have reached the part of the gospel of John that mentions Him most frequently. In Chapters 14-16, the Holy Spirit, called the “Helper” or “Comforter”, is described as the one whom the Father would send to the apostles to help them teach the full truth about Jesus after His departure from the earth. We will study what John says about the Holy Spirit in four specific areas and add other relevant teachings from the rest of the New Testament.

### Baptism in the Holy Spirit (1:32-33)

At the beginning of the gospel John the Baptist spoke of having seen the Holy Spirit descend upon Jesus (Matthew 3:16 || Mark 1:10 || Luke 3:22). This sign at His baptism signified that Jesus would be the one who would baptize others in or with the Holy Spirit (1:32-33).

While Jesus did not baptize others with the Holy Spirit while on the earth, He caused the apostles to be baptized with the Holy Spirit after His ascension (Acts 1:5; 2:1-4). Cornelius and those with Him were also baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:47; 11:16). While Jesus was not physically present for those events, He was responsible for the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

Baptism in water still has connections to the Holy Spirit today. The apostles were to baptize in water in the Spirit's name (Matthew 28:19), and that baptism is still in effect today. We are also baptized in water by the Spirit into one body (1 Corinthians 12:12-13).

### Born of the Holy Spirit (3:5-8)

While being born of the Spirit is connected to baptism (see the previous paragraph), it is a baptism available to all and not limited to a few recipients, such as the apostles who were baptized with the Holy Spirit. Only a few people (see the previous references to Acts 1-2 and 10-11) are ever described in the Bible as being baptized with the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, being born of the Holy Spirit is something that happened to many more people. Nicodemus was told by Jesus that being born of the Spirit was necessary for entering the kingdom (3:5-8). In that passage he was also told to be born of water, connecting baptism in water to being born of the Spirit and being a spiritual instead of a fleshly person.

Titus 3:4-5 also connects baptism in water (“washing of regeneration”) to a spiritual birth (“renewal by the Holy Spirit”). 1 John 3:9-10 shows us that we must not let sin be continual in our lives if we want to remain born of God. Romans 8:5-9 shows that if we are living according to the Spirit we must keep our minds on spiritual instead of fleshly things.

### Receiving the Holy Spirit (7:37-39; 14:16-17; 20:22)

Three times in John Jesus spoke of receiving the Holy Spirit. At the Feast of Booths Jesus said that those who believed in Him would have rivers of water flowing from them, which was connected to receiving the Spirit (7:37-39). The Spirit would only come after Jesus' glorification.

Shortly before that time of glorification, Jesus told His apostles that the world could not receive the Holy Spirit, whom they would receive (14:16-17). The world would not know the Holy Spirit, but the apostles

would have Him abiding with and in them. After the resurrection, Jesus breathed on His disciples and told them to receive the Holy Spirit (20:22).

After the ascension, the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). Cornelius and his companions received the Spirit (Acts 10:47). Peter and John helped the Samaritan Christians that Philip had taught receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-15). Paul helped disciples in Ephesus receive the Spirit after having been baptized (Acts 19:1-6). We read in the New Testament that those who were baptized with the Holy Spirit received the Spirit (Acts 2:1-4; 10:47, cited previously), but others were also able to receive the Holy Spirit with the help of an apostle.

### **The Testimony to the Truth by the Holy Spirit (3:34; 14:26; 15:26; 16:7-15)**

John frequently mentions the importance of the Holy Spirit in testifying to the truth. Jesus spoke the truth from God because He had a limitless supply of the Holy Spirit (3:34). In Jesus' teaching to His apostles between the Last Supper and His arrest (Chapters 14-16) He repeatedly mentioned the Spirit's role in testifying to the truth. The Father would send the Spirit, a Comforter or Helper, in Jesus' name and He would teach the apostles what they would need to know, causing them to remember what Jesus had said (14:26). The Spirit would be sent from the Father to testify about Jesus (15:26). The Spirit would convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (16:7-11); Jesus would no longer be on earth but the Spirit would give evidence through the apostles' miracles and message that what Jesus said had been true, that men were wrong to reject Him, and that they needed to repent before judgment. Peter's sermon in Acts 2 is an excellent example of the Holy Spirit's working through the apostles to do exactly that. The Spirit would even teach the disciples more things from Jesus that they had not been ready to learn while He had been on earth (16:12-15).

The apostles and those who had learned from them recorded what the Spirit had taught them so that future generations could also have the truth of God. The apostles' writings form the New Testament. In that way the Holy Spirit teaches us today through the written word. In 1 Corinthians 2:7-14, Paul showed the Corinthians that the Holy Spirit had revealed the truth which the apostles were teaching to those who were interested in spiritual truth. We must also study the revelations given through the Holy Spirit to find the truth today.

In the next lesson we will continue the teaching that Jesus was giving to His apostles. He would teach them about their relationships with Himself, with each other, and to the world.

### **Questions**

What did John the Baptist say about having seen the Holy Spirit descend as a dove out of Heaven (1:32-33)?

What did Jesus tell Nicodemus a person could not do unless he had been born of water and the Spirit (3:5-6)?

Why had the Spirit not been given before Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, while He was teaching (7:37-39)?

What would the Holy Spirit do to help the apostles in their teaching (14:26)?

Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would not speak something different than He had spoken, but would speak only what Jesus had wanted Him to speak (16:12-15). How was this like what Jesus Himself had said about Himself in 7:16-18; 12:49-50?

Use a concordance or a computer Bible search program to see where the New Testament mentions the Spirit and baptism in the same verse. In what ways is the Spirit involved in baptism today?

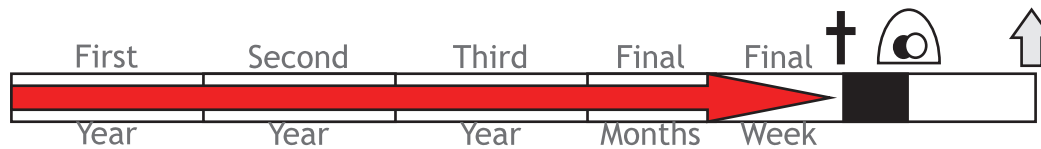
The phrase “born of the Spirit” is used in Christ's teaching Nicodemus in 3:5-8. Can you find examples of phrases like it (“born according to the Spirit” or “born of God”, for instance) in the New Testament?

### ***Other Readings***

Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Titus 3:4-7; 1 John 3:9-10

# John 15:1-16:4

## "Abide in My Love" (15:9)



### Main Points:

- Following Jesus' commandments is necessary to be in Him.
- Disciples must love each other because they all love Jesus.
- The world would hate Jesus' disciples because the world would not know Him.

In the first chapter (14) of the discourse, Jesus had explained that He was leaving, that He was one with the Father, and that the Holy Spirit as well as the Father and the Son would abide with the one who believed in Him. In the last section of this discourse (our last lesson on the discourse is 16:5-33), Jesus would explain more about what the Holy Spirit would do, how He (Jesus) would be taken from them, and how He would help them in prayer. Many of those themes, which are woven throughout the discourse, are also found in this section. These themes are emphasized in this section: the need to follow Jesus' commandments to remain in Him; the need for disciples to love each other to show that they all love Jesus; and the hatred of the world toward Jesus' disciples, based on its ignorance of their Master.

### 15:1-8 Jesus the Vine

#### "I Am"

In 15:1-8, Jesus called Himself the true vine. This was an extended figure of speech. John does not contain parables as such, but figures like this one (compare 10:7-18) are close to them. Like parables, the point is usually very simple, which makes them useful for teaching.

#### • Barren Branches Are Removed

#### Father

First, the Father tends the branches of Jesus the vine. One result of this tending is that branches are pruned after having borne fruit. This does not hurt the branch, but it enables it to bear more. God prepares Christians to bear more fruit in their lives.

Tending the branches involves removing those that are not productive. They were part of the vine, but they had failed to produce and so were removed instead of wasting resources that could be used for the other branches.

We should also notice another claim to exclusivity here. Jesus implied that He was the true vine and the only vine.

#### • We Must Abide in Him

#### Life

A branch must be part of the vine to have life. We must be in Jesus to have life, and Jesus makes clear that we must obey Him to be in Him. That is part of being clean through His word (compare 17:17). If we do not abide, that is, do not obey, we will be cut off and burned. We must continue to obey to be saved.

We must understand the teaching that our salvation depends on our continued obedience (including seeking forgiveness when we have sinned). There are many other passages which show that it is possible to fall away from the faith and be lost though previously saved (Galatians 5:1-4; Colossians 1:23; 2 Thessalonians 3:5; Hebrews 2:1; 3:12-19; 4:1-2; 6:4-6;

10:26-29). With this word picture it is hard to sidestep the implications. The figure of branches' being burned for not abiding in Jesus is clear. This passage is helpful for examining the doctrine of "once saved, always saved", also known as the perseverance of the saints.

The promise of receiving the objects of our requests in 15:7 is repeated in 1 John 3:22 (see also John 14:13; 16:23). It is conditioned upon our continued obedience.

**Father**

**Glorify**

The Father is glorified when Jesus' disciples bear much fruit. Bearing fruit is the job of all Christians. It is not optional but a result of our abiding in Christ. Not all fruit-bearing is converting others (12:24; Matthew 3:7-10; 7:15-20; Luke 13:6-9; Romans 7:4; Colossians 1:10), but we should not ignore the importance of working to bear fruit in that way (Matthew 13:23; Colossians 1:6).

### **15:9-12      We Must Obey To Abide in His Love**

**Father**

The Father has acted to increase our fruit for His glory and our own spiritual benefit. Jesus loves us as the Father does Him. He continues the teaching from the vine passage by telling us explicitly to keep His commandments to abide in His love.

Jesus loved us enough to die for us even when we were sinners, but if we are going to live a life that reflects that love and is pleasing to Him, we must continue to obey His commandments (14:15, 21).

#### **• His Joy May Be in Us**

Jesus demands our obedience not to dominate us or push us around, but because it is right and best for us. Both He and we will have a complete joy when we obey Him. The "that your joy may be full" of 15:9-11 matches 1 John 1:3-4; see also 16:24; 17:13.

#### **• We Must Love One Another**

The commandment Jesus mentioned explicitly was to love each other (13:34; 1 John 3:11; 4:21). This leads into the next section of the text in which Jesus shows how He expects us to do for each other what He has already done more completely for us (13:12-15).

### **15:13-17      Jesus Laid Down His Life for Us**

**Life**

The greatest love a man can have is to lay down his life for his friends. The willingness to lay down one's life for another is also seen in 10:11, 15; Romans 5:7-8; Ephesians 5:2; 1 John 3:16. That is precisely what Jesus would do within a day.

#### **• We Are His Friends**

While Jesus died for all men (2 Corinthians 5:14-15), those who would benefit from His death would be those who had obeyed Him. We cannot live a life of disobedience, before or after conversion, and expect to be saved. We are His servants, but He has treated us as friends by having told us what He heard from His Father. What the Father told Him to speak is recorded for us in the gospels and the other books of the New Testament by the apostles and those who had learned from them.

#### **• He Chose Us**

**Father**

Jesus made known what He had heard from the Father and what we ask of the Father in Jesus' name we will receive. He chose us. This choosing does not mean that each Christian is individually selected today in the same way that the apostles were and it does not mean His choice of us has nothing to do with obedience (Romans 11:2-8; 1 Peter 2:7-10). His choice



also does not prevent us from ever being unfaithful (6:70; 13:18; 2 Peter 1:8-11). In order to be His chosen followers, we must abide in Him, bear fruit, and love all of His followers.

### **15:18-25    The World Would Hate Jesus' Followers**

Becoming a Christian is not the way to win popularity contests. Being Christ certainly was not.

#### **• The World Hated Jesus**

##### **World**

The world hated Jesus, as would be indisputably proven by His imminent crucifixion. He had told the world the truth from God and the men of the world had no excuse for their disobedience (9:39-41; James 4:17).

#### **• The World Would Persecute His Disciples**

As the world had hated Jesus, so it would hate those who had been chosen and were like Him, His disciples. The world's hating those who do right is also found in 1 John 3:1, 13 (see also 3:16; 17:14; Matthew 10:22; 24:9). However, Jesus said that those who were honest enough to obey Him would also obey those who taught His word in truth.

Many Christians and many churches ignore the meaning of Jesus' words here. Too many make friendship with the world their chief goal.

#### **• The World Hated the Father**

##### **Father**

The reason that the world had hated Jesus was that it did not know the Father and thus hated Him and His followers. Hating Jesus showed a hatred for the Father (1 John 2:23). When Jesus had shown them their sin, most men reacted with hatred for Him, thus hating the Father also.

##### **Law**

The prophecy of unjust hatred toward Jesus came from the Law; the quotation could have come from either Psalm 35:19 or 69:4.

##### **Spirit**

##### **Father**

##### **Witness**

### **15:26-27    The Spirit Would Testify**

The Holy Spirit would come from the Father to bear witness of Jesus (15:26; compare 14:16-17, 26). The apostles would bear witness of Jesus because they had been with Him from the beginning. Even though Jesus had been persecuted and His disciples would also be, the Holy Spirit would publish and protect Jesus' words and give the hostile world another chance to turn and be saved. The Holy Spirit would work through the apostles (Acts 1:8; 4:33; 5:32; 10:39; 1 John 1:1-2), and we must take the words that He has given and make them known today!

### **16:1-4    The World Would Kill the Apostles**

Having shown the apostles their duty, Jesus spoke of how they would be persecuted. His intent was that they would be ready for their tests and not stumble. Matthew 26:31 made clear that some would stumble, as prophesied, but not because of any lack of preparation on Christ's part.

#### **• Avoiding Temptation**

The apostles would be ostracized by their countrymen by being expelled from the synagogues (9:22, 34). That would happen quite often in Acts (in all three of Paul's journeys in Chapters 13-19 persecution arose from synagogues; Paul had persecuted Christians himself before his

conversion). Even worshipers in the synagogues, who gathered to study God's word, would not necessarily have the right heart and the willingness to change. They thought that they knew God, but without obedience to all of His message they did not have true knowledge (compare 1 Corinthians 2:6-8). Christians today who consistently disobey any part of God's law put themselves in the same position.

- **Strengthening Their Faith**

Jesus was telling the apostles these things to strengthen them for their future trials. When those trials would occur, they would remember that Jesus had predicted them ahead of time and have their faith made stronger.

In the next lesson we will review the "I am" statements of Jesus because the final "I am" statement has appeared in the text for this lesson (15:1, 5).

## ***Questions***

When Jesus spoke of being the vine, what did He say would happen to those who did not abide in Him (15:6)?

What must we do to abide in Jesus' love (15:9-10)?

Why did Jesus call His disciples friends instead of slaves in 15:13-15?

What did Jesus say the world would do to His disciples that the world had also done to Him (15:19-20)?

The Holy Spirit and the apostles would bear witness of Jesus. What had the apostles done that would allow them to bear witness (15:26-27)?

Jesus spoke of abiding in His believers if they were abiding in His love (14:23; 15:9-12). 1 John mentions things that are related to abiding in love in several places. Use a concordance or scan the text of 1 John 2-4 to find verses that mention both of the words "abide" and "love". What can we learn that is related to abiding in love in those chapters?

In 16:2, Jesus told the apostles that they would be outcasts from the synagogue. Find at least three examples in Acts where the apostles and others were persecuted as a result of their teaching in the synagogues.

## ***Other Readings***

1 John 3:14-17; 4:12-16; Acts 17:1-14; 2 Peter 1:5-11

# The "I Am" Statements in John

## "I Am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life" (14:6)

### Main Points:

#### "I Am"

- Jesus' "I am" statements showed He was all that men would need for spiritual life.
- Those statements also showed that He was the only Savior, excluding all others.
- They also implied His oneness with the Father and His deity.

We study the times when Jesus said, "I am ..." in this lesson because we have just finished the final one in the Gospel of John (15:1, 5). In looking at the "I am" statements of Jesus we want to note three things in particular: sufficiency, exclusivity, and deity. These three themes will overlap often in our study.

### Sufficiency: Jesus Is All We Need for True Life

Frequently Jesus would show through the "I am" statements that He alone was and is all that is necessary for spiritual sustenance. As the bread of life, He is all anyone ever needs to keep from being hungry and thirsty, and eating that bread of life causes men to live forever (6:35, 48-51). As the light of the world, He is all that is required to keep men in the light and out of spiritual darkness (8:12). As the door of the sheep, He provides the way to salvation and spiritual food (10:7-9; Ephesians 2:18 speaks of giving access to the Father). As the resurrection and the life, He prevents spiritual death for those who believe in Him (11:25-26; compare 1 John 5:11-12; Colossians 3:4). As the vine, He provides all of the nourishment to the branches; without Him they would wither (15:1-6). Also, what more could be needed than Jesus who is the way, the truth, and the life (14:6)?

Other passages also show that Jesus is all we need for spiritual life. Colossians 2:1-3 tells us that all of the "treasures of wisdom and knowledge" are in Christ. 2 Peter 1:2-3 tells us that everything we need to live a godly life is available through Christ. He is all we need.

Keep in mind the ways people have ignored or abused the sufficiency of Christ and His word, preserved in the New Testament. Shortly after the beginning of the church the Gnostics added Greek philosophy to the New Testament and claimed one could not be truly knowledgeable without their extra teaching (see 1 Timothy 6:20). This error is also committed today. Roman Catholicism teaches that church tradition, not the Bible alone, is authoritative. Many Protestants proclaim the supremacy of Scripture, but often violate the claim by subjecting the Scriptures to the decrees of councils and conventions, determining what the Bible means by voting. The Jehovah's Witnesses use their own translation (the New World Translation) to cover their Scriptural errors. The Latter Day Saints add a testament, The Book of Mormon, to the Bible. Followers of charismatic groups often expect some miraculous, personal revelation that Jesus never mentioned. Many self-proclaimed Christians of all stripes add modernism, spiritualism, socialism, or any number of other human philosophies to the Bible. Most of those people would not deny the truth of any of Jesus' "I am" statements, but they end up betraying their own lack of faith in Jesus by looking for other guides. Any time we add to or ignore Jesus' teaching we have betrayed the claim that He is all we need for life.

### Exclusivity: Jesus Is the Only Savior

Many of Jesus' "I am" statements show that He alone was and is the Savior of the entire world. Having more than one door for the sheepfold would not have fit His illustration, and He specifically called others who promised spiritual life thieves and robbers (10:7-9). As the Good Shepherd, He would bring other sheep (Gentiles) into the fold with the faithful Jews; He is the world's Savior (10:16). Claiming not just to point the way, teach the truth, or live the life, but claiming to be the way, the truth, and the life also shows that Jesus

considered no other path to life to exist (14:6).

Even in some of the other “I am” statements Jesus' exclusive role is implied. To be “the” bread of life and light of the world does not leave room for others. It would not make sense for more than one person to be “the” resurrection and “the” life. There are no other vines to which branches that are not faithful to Christ may attach themselves.

Muslims consider Jesus a prophet, but not the equal of Mohammed; they would deny that He is God the Son. Baha'is consider Jesus one of many prophets leading up to the final one. Many people, denying Jesus' exclusivity in a less formal way, look for other social or political “saviors” or look to themselves when they feel the need for something that Jesus did not authorize. Many others want to follow Jesus while believing that every other religion is also at least sort of right, but they will not find that idea in the words of Christ!

### **Deity: Jesus Is One with the Father and Is God**

Several of the “I am” statements point to Jesus' being not just an exceptional teacher and not just a prophet, but the Son of God. For the sacrifice of Himself to be effective as the Good Shepherd, more than a mere man's life was needed (10:11-16; Hebrews 10:4-5). Being the resurrection and the life is not a claim a mortal man could make, nor would it fit in the mouth of any created being (11:25-27; 14:6).

There are a few other “I am” statements in John. Jesus made three in Chapter 8. In 8:24, 28, Jesus was speaking about the need to believe “that I am He” or how they would know “that I am He” – “He” is not included in the text but is included by the translators to give their sense of what He was saying. At the end of the chapter (8:58), Jesus said that “before Abraham was, I am”. Grammatically, this would not make sense; the verb tenses would be confused. Jesus was not confused. He was claiming to be “I AM,” another name for the LORD or Jehovah (Exodus 3:14). He claimed deity, and those who were listening to Him were ready to kill Him for blasphemy. It would have been blasphemy had He been incorrect! In addition to all the “I am” statements in which Jesus compared Himself to something, He also stated that He is “I AM.”

We would not expect non-Christian groups to accept the deity of Jesus, but some Christian groups deny it as well. They err in doing so. A further test for us, though, is whether we act in a way that shows that we really believe that Christ is God. If we do, we will obey Him in all things and truly put Him first in all that we do. If we do not live that kind of life, we will in effect be denying the deity of Christ by our actions. Let us worship Him in every way and show that we believe that He alone is all we need for spiritual life.

Next week we will finish Chapter 16 as Jesus finishes His discourse and the disciples strengthen their faith near their time of testing.

### **Questions**

Jesus called Himself the bread of life. What “bread” did He say He would give for the life of the world (6:51)?

Look at the context of Jesus' statement about being the light of the world in 9:5. What was He doing at that time because He was the light of the world?

Jesus called Himself the door of the sheep, the faithful followers of God. How would the sheep respond to those who did not come through the door (10:8-10)?

What question did Thomas ask just before Jesus claimed to be the way, the truth, and the life (14:5-6)? How did Jesus answer the question?

What did Jesus say was necessary for a person (branch) to bear fruit for God in 15:4-6?

The phrase “I am the LORD” or something very close to it occurs about 160 times in the Old Testament, including 15 times in Leviticus 19, where it often was appended to a command God had given. What does stating, “I am the LORD,” show when it is used like that?

John records other “I am” statements from the Lord in Revelation 1:17-18; 22:13, 16. What did Jesus call Himself in 22:13, 16 and what does it mean?

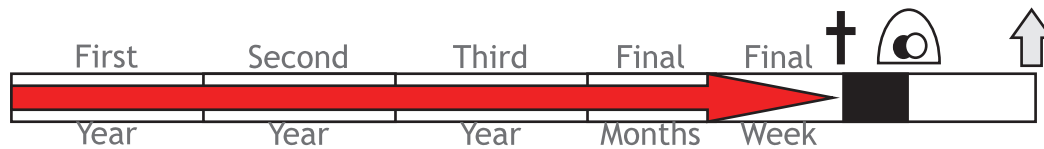
### ***Other Readings***

Exodus 3:13-15; Leviticus 19:9-18; Revelation 1:8, 17-18; 22:13-16



# John 16:5-33

## "I Am Going to Him Who Sent Me" (16:5)



### Main Points:

- Jesus would send the Spirit to convict the world and guide the apostles into truth.
- The disciples would sorrow over Jesus' departure, but He would be with them again.
- After Jesus had left, the disciples would make requests to the Father in Jesus' name.

In this third and final section of teaching on the night that He would be arrested, Jesus referred frequently to the fact that He was leaving. Because He was leaving, Jesus would send the Holy Spirit to help His disciples and He would have them make requests in His name to the Father. As in the first section, John records some questions and comments from the apostles as Jesus was teaching.

### 16:5-11 Jesus Is Going Away To Send the Spirit

The disciples had asked before where He was going (14:2-6), but Jesus had answered that they knew the way He was going. They were sad that He was going away, but Jesus pointed out that it was beneficial for them for Him to go because He would send the Holy Spirit.

#### • Convicting the World

#### Spirit

The Holy Spirit would convict the world of **sin**, **righteousness**, and **judgment**, and guide the apostles into all truth (see also 14:16-17, 26; 15:26). Look carefully at these three things of which the Spirit would convict the world.

#### Belief>>

One of the roles of the Holy Spirit was to convict the world of **sin** because it did not believe in Jesus (16:9). The world had sinned in rejecting Jesus and they would soon complete that rejection by crucifying Him. Jesus would ascend from the earth and the Spirit would play a central role in convicting those responsible of their sin in His death. In Acts 2:22-23, 36-38, Peter showed His listeners that they had rejected and crucified the Messiah whom they had claimed to faithfully await. Those who repented and were baptized would receive the gift of the Spirit.

The Spirit would also convict the world of **righteousness** because Jesus was going to the Father and would not be seen on earth (16:10). Jesus' perfect earthly life full of life-giving, heavenly teaching was nearly over. The Spirit would help the apostles teach and preserve the truth after Jesus had ascended. That truth and the signs the Spirit would enable the apostles to do (Acts 3:12-16) would convince many around the world that Jesus had been correct and that they needed to follow and serve Him, even though Jesus was no longer physically on the earth.

#### Judge

#### World

The Holy Spirit would convict the hostile world of **judgment** when the hostile ruler of the world, Satan, had been judged (16:11). The resurrection of Christ was the first of many signs that Satan had been defeated (12:31-32; Genesis 3:15; Matthew 12:25-28 || Mark 3:25-27 || Luke 11:14-20; Colossians 2:13-15; Hebrews 2:14-15). The apostles would do miracles through the Holy Spirit that would demonstrate the superiority of Christ to the powers of evil

(Acts 5:16; 19:12). Casting out demons would demonstrate that Satan's powers were limited and that he would ultimately be judged and punished eternally (Revelation 20:10-14).

### **16:12-15 The Spirit Would Guide Them into All Truth**

**Glorify**

The apostles were not ready for everything that Jesus wanted to tell them at that point (compare 1 Corinthians 3:1-3). The Holy Spirit would guide them into all truth when He had come. The Spirit would glorify Jesus by taking His truth and disclosing it to His apostles.

**Father**

Jesus had all things (like the truth) that the Father had.

### **16:16-24 The Apostles Would See Jesus**

Jesus would not be seen by His disciples for a little while (7:33; 13:33; 14:19). They would also “see” Jesus again a little while later. This confused His disciples. Jesus did not directly answer the questions they were asking among themselves.

#### **• Sorrow First**

**World**

The disciples would weep but the hostile world would rejoice over Jesus' crucifixion. The disciples' sorrow was compared to the anguish of childbirth. The pain would be intense, but the product of that sorrowful event would be intensely joyful. Jesus' resurrection would relieve their sorrow and give them a joy that no one could take away. The resurrection would lead to the establishment of the church as God's kingdom on earth.

#### **• Asking and Receiving**

**Father**

The disciples would not be asking Jesus questions at that later time (they would not be asking Him questions after He had ascended), but there was another whom they would ask for things. The disciples could ask the Father for anything and He would give it to them in Jesus' name (see 14:13; 15:16). They would have a full joy as a result (15:11; 17:13). Perhaps this full joy was connected to the joy that no one could take away from them at Jesus' resurrection. Jesus would elaborate on how they would ask in His name in the next section.

### **16:25-28 The Disciples Would Ask in Jesus' Name**

**Father**

Jesus had spoken before in figures (and parables, but John does not record them), but that would change. Perhaps some examples of His figures would have been what He had said about the living water in 4:14-15; 7:37-39. Jesus would speak plainly of the Father and go to the Father, and the Father would love Jesus' servants. Because Jesus was going to the Father, and His disciples had loved Jesus and believed in Him, the Father would do what the disciples would ask in Jesus' name.

### **16:29-33 The Apostles Believe That Jesus Has Come from God**

**Belief>>**

The disciples regarded this as more plain than the things that Jesus had said previously. His answers had convinced them further of His truth. Here, at the end of the discourse, the disciples clearly believed that Jesus knew all things and had come from God (16:27-31), which was something Jesus had just told them that they needed to believe.

#### **• The Hour Has Come**

Jesus knew that the disciples still had some problems to overcome, and that would be shown to be true in no more than a few hours. Jesus prophesied that they would be scattered very soon (Matthew 26:31); it was so soon He spoke of the hour as having come (compare 4:23;

5:25; 12:23, 31). Jesus would be left alone by men and would have only His Father to stand by Him – but for a while He would even be "forsaken" by His Father (Matthew 27:46 || Mark 15:34).

- **Jesus Has Overcome All**

#### **Father**

The Father would not leave Jesus alone when the apostles had fled from Him (16:32). Jesus spoke of having overcome the world in 16:33. His overcoming had not been completed yet, but it was sure and would come soon. In 1 John 4:4-5, John would tell his readers that they had overcome the false prophets (forces of the devil) because they were from God; in 1 John 5:4-5, John would show them that because they had believed that Jesus is the Son of God

#### **World**

they had the victory that had overcome the world (Romans 8:37; Colossians 1:20). Jesus had overcome the world despite His upcoming crucifixion and the tribulation His apostles would have in the world (16:33).

Jesus had spoken of leaving the world and having overcome the world in this lesson. Our next lesson will be a topical study of "the world" in the Gospel of John.

## **Questions**

Why did Jesus say that it was to His apostles' advantage that He leave them (16:7)?

Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would convict the world of judgment because Satan would have been judged (16:11). How did the apostles' casting out unclean spirits, as in Acts 5:14-16, demonstrate power over Satan?

How would the world react to Jesus' departure (16:20)?

How would the disciples need to ask for things from the Father after Jesus had ascended to Him (16:23-26)?

What did Jesus say would happen to His apostles shortly (16:32-33)?

Who would still be with Him?

Can you find a New Testament passage that shows that Jesus' ability to cast out demons proved that He had a power greater than the devil's?

Jesus said that He had overcome the world in 16:33. Using a concordance or computer search tool, find at least two instances in John's writings in which Jesus' disciples (like us) are said to have overcome.

## **Other Readings**

Genesis 3:15; Matthew 12:22-29; Acts 5:14-16; Revelation 2:8-11

# The World in John

## "That the World Might Be Saved through Him" (3:17)

### Main Points:

#### World

- Jesus came to save the world and brought light and life to it.
- The world did not know Jesus and responded to Him by hating Him.
- Jesus overcame the world and now reigns as King.

When we study the use of the word “world” by John, we need to understand the senses in which it is used. When Jesus was about to leave the world to go to the Father (13:1) or when John closes his gospel by saying he supposed the world could not contain a record of everything Jesus had done (21:25), the literal earth is in view. More often, though, John wants us to think of the people on earth when he speaks of the world. Sometimes John uses the term to refer to part of the world that is hostile to the truth; most of the men in the world will not do what is right, so the majority of the world's men, who only care about the things of this earth, stand for the whole and are contrasted with God and His spiritually-minded followers. We study the theme of the world in John at this point because Jesus had repeatedly taught about the world in Chapter 16, the end of His discourse before the arrest and crucifixion. Even with the forces of evil gathering to kill Him, Jesus said He had overcome the world (16:33). He had also said that the world would rejoice at His crucifixion (16:20-21) and that the Spirit, whom He would send, would convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (16:8-11). We will look at John's teaching about the world in its various senses in this lesson.

### Jesus' Mission to the World

Jesus was sent into this world by His Father and returned to Him when His mission was complete (16:28). The Father sent Him because of His love for mankind (3:16). We will begin by looking at Jesus' nature and His purpose in coming to the earth.

#### • Jesus Was Not of This World

Jesus made clear that He had not come from this world, nor did He share the opinions and values of the majority of the world. He told His listeners that He had been sent by His Father and that He was from above as they were from below (8:23-26; compare 3:31). Both Jesus and those who followed Him would be recognized as being different from the world and thus hated instead of loved (15:18-19; 17:14-16). He told Pilate that His kingdom was not to be an earthly kingdom, but a spiritual kingdom for all who would listen to the truth (18:36-37). Most of the world will only listen to worldly people (1 John 4:4-5), but Jesus came into this world to create a different people for God's glory (1 Peter 2:9). Christians are from this world physically, but they will not be “of this world” because they will live their lives to a higher standard.

#### • Jesus Came To Take Away the Sin of the World and Save It

John the Baptist announced that Jesus would take away the sin of the world (1:29). To save the world was the loving purpose that the Father had in sending His Son (3:16-17). Jesus died on the cross as the atoning sacrifice for the whole world's sins (1 John 2:2). The Samaritans understood that Jesus was the Savior (4:42). John wrote this gospel and other letters to testify that Jesus was and is the Savior of the world (1 John 4:14). Christians must not forget that they serve under Jesus for the same purposes. Many churches act as if their main purposes were to relieve the world's physical needs and make people feel good. The main goal of the church needs to be to help people obey Christ to be forgiven of their sins and thus saved.



- **Jesus Brought Light to the World**

As one sent from God the Father to the world, Jesus brought the light of divine wisdom into the world (1:9). He claimed to be the light of the world (9:5), sent so that those who would believe in Him would not stay in the darkness of spiritual ignorance (12:46). His light would let those who had been blind spiritually see the truth (9:39), of which the man born blind provided a figurative example. The light that He had brought to lead people out of spiritual darkness would also bring life (8:12), which leads us to our next point.

- **Jesus Brought Life to the World**

Jesus identified Himself as the bread of God that gives life to the world (6:33). He said that anyone who would eat of Him would live forever, and that He was giving His flesh for the life of the world (6:51). Only through the sacrifice of Himself could He complete the mission for which His Father had sent Him; He knew that long before His time of His crucifixion.

### **The World's Reaction: Ignoring and Hating Jesus**

Jesus was not of this world and came to bring salvation, light, and life to this world. How did and do the majority of men react?

- **Temporary Signs of Interest**

Jesus' brothers did not believe in Him at time of the events of 7:4-7, but they challenged Him to present Himself to the world at the Feast of Tabernacles. Jesus knew that the world would ultimately hate Him because of His rebuking them. While many of His signs caused large numbers of people to marvel and want to see more, the Pharisees' statement that "the world" had gone after Him (12:19) was inaccurate. Only those who would believe and accept all of the truth would really follow Jesus. As Matthew 7:13-14 illustrated, that would be a tiny minority.

- **The Majority Did Not Accept Him and Hated Him**

Even though Jesus had been involved in the world's creation, most of the men in the world did not recognize Him as their Creator (1:10). Most men did not know God the Father (17:25) and thus would not know His Son (14:7-9). The world would also fail to receive the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus would send and who would cause the record of Jesus' life to be published and preserved (14:17). As children of God (those who follow Christ's example and live as God instructs them to live), Christians will also not be known by the world (1 John 3:1).

Not only would the world ignore or fail to regard Jesus, it would actually hate Him. It would even rejoice at His departure (16:19-20). The world hated Jesus and would hate His followers as well (15:18-19). It would hate all of those who were not "of" it (17:14). We should not be surprised when this happens (1 John 3:13). Many people want to be Christians while being friends of the world, but that cannot be (James 4:4). Christians must not let the world determine their doctrines, their standards, or their lifestyles.

### **Satan Ruled the World and Influenced Its Reaction to Jesus**

The reason why the world was so hostile to Christ is because of Satan's influence upon it. Throughout the world's existence, the devil has poisoned men's minds against God and His servants by encouraging self-interest and lust. He has deceived the world (Revelation 12:9). Satan was called the ruler of the world as Jesus spoke of his attempts to destroy Him (14:30-31). Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection caused Satan, the ruler of the world, to be judged (16:11).

- **Jesus Has Overcome the World and Reigns over It**

Jesus could say that He had overcome the world even as His cross was hours away (16:33). The forces of evil



can be overcome by faithful Christians because they are from God and they have greater spiritual power than the world (1 John 4:4-5). Faith overcomes the world today (1 John 5:4-5). Satan is not idle. While his destruction is assured, he still has power over much of the world today (1 John 5:19).

### • Jesus and Judging the World

Several times Jesus said that He was not judging the world. 3:17 says that God did not send Him to judge the world. In 12:46-47, Jesus said that He did not judge the one who disobeyed Him because He had come to save men. Yet Jesus did speak of judgment. 9:39 says that judgment was a reason for His coming into the world. 12:31 says judgment would come upon the world as a result of His sacrifice. 16:8-11 speaks of how the Holy Spirit would convict the world of judgment because Satan had been judged.

Several passages show how to resolve the difficulty. 3:17-19 shows that Jesus' purpose in coming to the world was to bring salvation instead of destruction, yet those who rejected His light showed that they were evil and their judgment was clear. 12:46-48 shows that Jesus would not judge men personally on earth, but that His word would be the basis of men's judgment. Jesus was not on earth to bring a destruction at that time, but those who have refused to obey Him will be judged eternally.

Jesus has overcome the world, and all who are faithful will overcome it with Him (Revelation 2:7, 11; 3:5, 12).

In our next lesson, we will study Jesus' prayer to His Father before His arrest.

## Questions

Why did so many men reject Jesus, who was the light of the world, according to 3:19?

Jesus spoke of Himself as the living bread (6:48-51). For what purpose did Jesus say He was giving His flesh as this bread?

What did Jesus tell His Jewish listeners that they needed to do to stop being “of this world” and “from below” (8:23-24)?

How does the one who hates his life in this world resemble a grain of wheat (12:24-25)?

What did Jesus tell His apostles in 15:19 that He had done for them that had to do with their being “not of the world” and hated by the world?

Our next lesson has to do with Jesus' prayer in Chapter 17. List the things that Jesus mentioned in that prayer about the world.

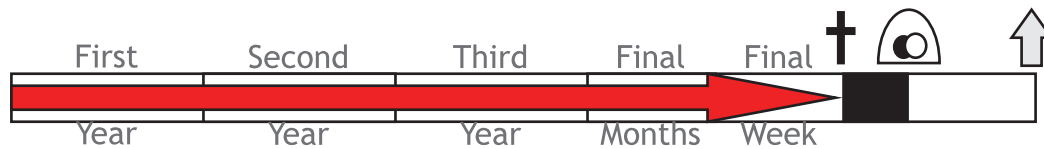
Jesus has overcome the world (16:33), and the New Testament speaks of Christians who overcome the forces of evil as well. Can you find some passages that speak of Christians' overcoming evil?

## Other Readings

John 17; 1 John 2:12-17

# John 17

## "Keep Them from the Evil One" (17:15)



### Main Points:

- Jesus was completing His mission and would soon return to the Father.
- Jesus had shown the apostles that He had taught them truth from the Father.
- Jesus prayed for the unity of the apostles and all those who would follow.

This chapter consists of Jesus' prayer to the Father. Even in the shadow of the cross, of which He was well aware, Jesus' main concern was not Himself but His followers. He prayed for His Father to keep His apostles and He prayed for the unity of all believers. His prayer considered His own work as practically complete and reached forward to bless all Christians throughout all time.

### 17:1-5 The Completion of His Mission

Jesus knew that the hour of His crucifixion was very near. Sometimes He spoke of it and the events around it as already complete because they were so close.

#### Glorify

Jesus asked the Father to glorify Him (12:23; 13:32) so that He could glorify the Father. The Father had given Him all authority.

#### • Giving Eternal Life

#### Life

Jesus had and has all authority (3:35; Daniel 7:14; Matthew 28:18; 1 Corinthians 15:25-27). Jesus had used the authority that the Father had given Him to make it possible for men to have eternal life. Eternal life is knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ. If we truly know God (and thus obey God), we will be with Him for eternity. The Bible sometimes speaks of eternal life as something future (Matthew 25:46; Luke 18:30), but the phrase can also be used, in a slightly different sense, to refer to something that can be with us now (1 John 3:15; 5:13).

#### • Glorifying the Father

#### Father

#### Glorify

Jesus had completed the work that the Father had given Him (4:34; 5:36). By revealing the truth about God and His will and preparing the disciples to propagate the truth given by the Holy Spirit, He had fulfilled His role. In doing this, Jesus had glorified His Father and would be glorified by Him. After the final acts of crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, He would be ready to return to the Father and share the heavenly glory that He had shared with Him before His arrival on the earth (1:1-2; Colossians 1:17).

### 17:6-10 Jesus' Entrusting the Word to His Apostles

#### World

Jesus repeatedly noted that His disciples were in the world but not of the world. He would now speak of those men the Father had given Him out of the world. Jesus had given His disciples His Father's word (8:28; 12:49; 14:10). What they would do with that word would be key to their fulfilling their mission.

### • Keeping the Word

The disciples had started keeping Jesus' word and they had truly believed what Jesus had taught them, though the events of that night would show how much room to grow remained (16:29-32). Despite their missteps and immaturity, we must not disregard or downplay their genuine obedience to God's word; Jesus did not.

### • Knowing That It Is from God

**Belief>>**

**Glorify**

The apostles believed that Jesus had received everything from the Father and Jesus had instructed the apostles so that they would believe that the Father had sent Him. Jesus prayed for their protection through much of this prayer. Jesus was glorified in His apostles (17:10) because of their faith and obedience.

### 17:11-19 God's Keeping the Apostles Who Are in the World

**Father**

The Father had given Jesus men, the apostles, and Jesus asked the Father to keep them in His name because Jesus was not going to be in the world much longer. Jesus had kept them all of them except Judas, and even Judas' departure was not Jesus' fault – in fact, it was the fulfillment of Scripture (Acts 1:15-22 shows that it fulfilled Psalm 109). The Father would keep the apostles in three ways.

### • Unifying Them

Jesus stressed the need for unity among His disciples. Repeatedly (17:11, 21, 23) He would show that the unity among disciples needed to be like the oneness between Himself and His Father (compare 5:17; 10:30) – the highest standard imaginable! We will not be one in all of the senses that the Father and the Son are one, but we must work to be as unified in the truth as we possibly can be.

### • Protecting Them from Temptation

Jesus also asked His Father to keep His disciples from Satan. He did not ask for them to be taken out of the world or for them never to have to deal with Satan again. He asked for His Father to help them. They would face severe temptation and be hated by the world in which they lived, but God would supply them with the strength they would need if they would continue to try to obey Him (1 John 5:18).

### • Sanctifying Them

**Father**

Jesus asked the Father to sanctify His disciples. The Father would sanctify the disciples by His word. To sanctify something is to set it apart or make it holy. Jesus had even sanctified Himself for His disciples' sake. That does not imply that Jesus was unholy or sinful before, but it does show that Jesus had a special purpose for which He had set Himself apart. The Father had sanctified Jesus and sent Him into the world (10:36). Christ became sanctification for us (1 Corinthians 1:30) and through Him we are sanctified today (1 Corinthians 1:2; 6:11; Ephesians 5:26; Hebrews 2:10-11; 10:10; 13:12).

### 17:20-24 Jesus' Praying for All Believers

Christ's prayer was not just for the apostles or the believers who had been with Him. He prayed for all who would believe through the apostles' word. The apostles' work included recording Christ's life and teachings in the New Testament; thus all those “who believe in Me” includes every Christian. Jesus wanted every believer to have unity and to be with Him.

- **Unity**

**Belief>>** Jesus prayed for the unity of future believers so that the world would believe that the Father had sent Him (10:16; Galatians 3:28). The Father would unify believers. Every believer must work for unity. Unity shows the world that those who claim to be Christ's really live as He would have them live. Real unity is not ignoring important differences, nor is it excusing disobedience among Christians. Real unity is based on obedience to God and love for other men. Fellowship with other men is based on a common fellowship with God (1 John 1:3-7).

**Father**

- **Being With God and Jesus**

**Father**

Not only would Jesus dwell in believers and God in Jesus when believers had unity, the Father would bring believers to an eternal home with Him and His Son. God provides a home for all who are faithful to Him (14:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:17).

- **Glory**

**Glorify**

Jesus' disciples had received glory from Him and would see His glory. These promises are also made to Christians today. As the Father had loved Jesus from before the world existed, those who are faithful on earth may live with Him in love forever after the world is no more.

### **17:25-26 Loving and Knowing God**

**Father**

Jesus closed His prayer by noting that He had made known the Father to a world that did not know Him (15:21; 16:3). Those who listen to Christ know God (7:29; 8:55; 10:15). By declaring the truth about God, Jesus made it possible for God's love to dwell in men today.

Our next lesson will be about the one addressed in this prayer, the Father, who would do and is still doing what Jesus asked in this prayer.

## **Questions**

What did Jesus say about the work that God had given Him to do on earth (17:4)?

Which important truths did Jesus say that He had taught His disciples (17:7-8)?

Why did Jesus say that the world had hated His disciples (17:14)?

What did Jesus call “truth” in 17:17?

What would the truth do for His disciples?

What would cause the world to believe that the Father had sent Jesus (17:20-23)?

Use a concordance to look up the references to eternal life in John (looking under “eternal” should work). What does John say we should be doing now to prepare for eternal life? Find at least three references.

Use a concordance to look up the references to “sanctify” and related words in the New Testament. Find at least two examples of passages that speak of Christ's sanctifying Christians or the church.

## **Other Readings**

John 4:34-38; 6:26-27; Ephesians 5:25-27

# The Father in John

## "I Am in the Father and the Father Is in Me" (14:10)

### Main Points:

#### Father

- The Father worked in many ways to help Jesus in His work on earth.
- The Father and Jesus were and are one in a unique way.
- Jesus had come from the Father and often spoke of returning to Him.

Quite often the text simply refers to “God” when the Father is meant. Though Jesus was fully divine while on earth, when people thought about what God was doing or had said, they were usually thinking of something that fit the Father's role. While Jesus repeatedly claimed deity (see that topical lesson), He did not proclaim it on every occasion.

The closeness of the Father and the Son and the Son's strict obedience to the Father are repeatedly emphasized in John. In this lesson we want to look at what the Father did for His Son and what the Son did for Him. There are an amazing number of these actions. We will also look more briefly at the oneness of the Father and the Son and how Jesus had come from Him and would return to Him. We would not know God as Father without Jesus!

The Father is emphasized so much in John and throughout the New Testament that we will only cover a small fraction of what could be said. Keep the above points in mind as you study.

### The Father's Actions

Here is a list of some of the things the Father did in John, the things done for Him, and the things He does for Christians.

#### • Loving

The Father showed the supreme love for the world in sending Jesus to the earth (3:16-17). He knows and loves His Son Jesus (10:15-18), and Jesus in turn loves those who obey Him as the Father has loved Him for His obedience (15:9-10). The Father abides with and loves the people who love and obey His Son (14:20-24).

#### • Sending

The Father sent His Son to the earth (20:21), as above. We learn that Jesus was sent in the Father's name (5:43-45), sent with specific commandments (12:49-50), and sent so that others might live (6:57).

The Father would also send the Holy Spirit (14:16-17), who would proceed from Him (15:26), and would be sent in Jesus' name (14:26).

#### • Giving

The Father gave many things to Jesus. He gave all things into Jesus' hands (13:3), and gave the Holy Spirit (3:34-36). He gave Jesus life in Himself (5:26-30). He gave Jesus all authority (17:1-2) and works that would bear witness to His true identity (5:36-38). He furnished men who would carry out Jesus' instructions (17:9-13).

The Father also gave Jesus to men as the true spiritual bread from Heaven (6:32-33). Jesus gave the Father's word to His apostles (17:6-8), and the Father gladly gives faithful men what they request in Jesus' name (16:23).

#### • Glorifying

The Father glorified His Son (8:54-55), even audibly on one occasion (12:26-30). Jesus also glorified His Father (8:49-50). Christians are commanded to abide in Christ and bear fruit, which glorifies God (15:8).

#### • Witnessing

The Father sent Jesus and was bearing witness of Him (8:18). Also, by setting His seal on Jesus, the Father



was testifying that Jesus and His message were approved by Him (6:27).

- **Teaching**

The Father did His teaching through Jesus. Jesus spoke to men what the Father had taught Him (8:25-29). What Jesus taught was not His own opinions, but what the Father had told Him to say (7:16-17). Jesus declared the Father to men (1:16-18). Both Father and Son are involved being “taught of God” (6:44-46). Shortly before His arrest, Jesus said that He would teach His apostles plainly about the Father (16:25-28).

- **Bringing**

The Father brought men to Jesus (17:24). He gave men to Jesus and they came to Him (6:37-40). No one would come to Jesus without the Father's involvement (6:65).

- **Sanctifying**

The Father sanctified Jesus and was in Him (10:36-38). Here “sanctification” does not mean cleansing Jesus from sin, because He had none; however, Jesus was set apart for a special purpose. Jesus asked His Father to sanctify His apostles, and God's word was how they would be sanctified (17:17-18). Jesus sanctified His Father's house, the temple, by cleansing it of those who had defiled it by making it a place of merchandise (2:15-17).

- **Unifying**

Jesus prayed to His Father that His disciples throughout all time should be unified and thus prove to the world the genuineness of their discipleship (17:20-23). Jesus prayed that to the Father because the Father would cause it to happen.

- **Protecting**

Jesus also prayed that the Father would protect His disciples, but by that He meant protecting them from evil and not always protecting them from any suffering (17:14-16). Suffering was and is expected for those who, like their Master Jesus, are not “of this world”.

- **Working**

The Father was working and Jesus was working with Him as one (5:17-24). We should keep this in mind as we look at the work that Jesus was doing and see how it relates to the Father. The works that Jesus did were in His Father's name (10:25). Doing those works was so vital to Him that it was like food to Him (4:31-34). Just before the arrest and crucifixion, Jesus had finished the work His Father had given Him to do (17:3-5).

- **Tending**

In the figure of the vine and the branches, Jesus showed that the Father would tend the vines who were in Him and prune them so that they could bear more fruit (15:1-2). The Father arranges the lives of Christians so that they may have the best opportunities to bear fruit for Him.

- **Listening**

As Jesus prayed before Lazarus' tomb, He made clear that the Father was listening to what He was asking, and that He had always been doing so (11:41-42). The Father listens to us today when we pray in Jesus' name (16:23-24).

### **The Father's Oneness with the Son**

Jesus repeatedly spoke of His oneness with His Father. In addition to some of the passages mentioned above (5:17-24; 8:19; 14:7-9), Jesus also claimed to be one with the Father in a way that led some to try to kill Him for blasphemy (10:29-32). It would have been blasphemy had His signs not verified His claim! Jesus also said that to receive one of His servants was to receive Him and, by extension, His Father (13:20). Jesus also taught that the Father dwelled in Him and was in Him (14:10-13). This incredible oneness goes beyond mere agreement or unity – it shows the deity of Christ.

At the same time, Jesus said the Father was greater than He (14:28). Though they were one, Jesus had a role that required His submission to the Father's will (4:34; Matthew 6:9-10; 26:42). We can understand this better when we consider an analogy: a husband and wife are one (Genesis 2:24) and of the same nature, but the two

are distinct with distinct roles and a wife must submit to her husband (Ephesians 5:22-24; 1 Peter 3:1-7).

### **Jesus' Coming from the Father and Returning to Him**

Jesus said that He was from above and that He was not of this world (8:23). He made clear that He had come from the Father (8:38-42) and that the Father had sent Him (12:49; 14:24). He would also make clear that He would return. Early in the gospel Jesus said that He would go back to Him (7:33-34). Shortly before His arrest and crucifixion, He spoke of returning to the Father (16:10, 16-17). Even after His resurrection, He said that He would ascend to His Father (20:17).

From what we have studied in this lesson it should be clear that the Father was not remote or detached from the work of His Son, but was working in many ways for Him and working as one with Him. His love for His Son and for Christians is boundless. Christians should respond by working for Him so that they may have Him abiding in them now (14:23) and rejoice for all eternity with their loving Father. To reject Christ's teaching is to reject the Father (2 John 9).

In the next lesson we will study the arrest and the first trials of Jesus in 18:1-27. Jesus submitted to those indignities and injustices because it was the Father's will for Him to do so.

### **Questions**

To what did Jesus compare His love for His disciples in 15:9-10?

What did Jesus use as the model for His disciples' love for each other in 15:12?

In addition to loving, the Father is portrayed as giving many things in the Gospel of John. What did John show Him giving in 17:1-13?

The Father and Jesus worked as one (5:17-18). Shortly before His crucifixion, what could Jesus say about the work the Father had given Him to do (17:4)?

How did Jesus describe His oneness with the Father in 14:10-11?

What did Jesus say the Holy Spirit would do after He had returned to the Father (16:8-10)?

Look at the text of Chapter 8. What things are mentioned there that we must do to prove that God is truly our Father?

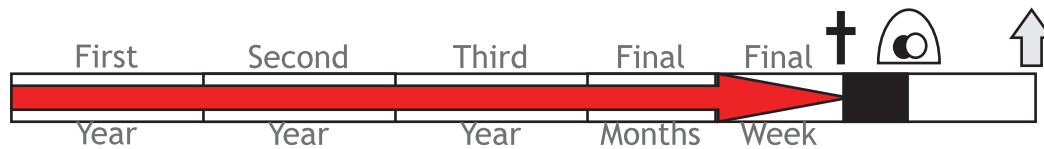
John would write many more things about the Father in his other epistles. What lessons can we learn about the Father in 1 John 2?

### **Other Readings**

John 8:37-49; 17:13; 1 John 2; 2 John 9; Matthew 6:1-18

# John 18:1-27

## "The Cup Which the Father Has Given Me" (18:11)



### Main Points:

- Jesus was in control at the time of His arrest and He gave Himself willingly.
- Jesus spoke plainly at His trial but did not sin when He was abused.
- Peter's misguided zeal soon gave way to cowardice.

Having prayed to His Father in Chapter 17, Jesus was ready to face His arrest. Jesus faced the failure of His friends and the malice of His enemies. He was not overcome by those difficulties. When He spoke, He spoke the truth simply. Peter first displayed misguided bravery in cutting off the ear of one who had come to arrest Jesus, but then displayed cowardice to the servants who questioned him about his association with Jesus.

### 18:1-3 Judas Arrives for Jesus' Arrest

Jesus went with His apostles to a garden. Other gospels identify it as Gethsemane and locate it at the Mount of Olives. Jesus' actions were similar in some ways to David's in the same area in 2 Samuel 15:23, when he left Jerusalem by crossing the Kidron as his son Absalom was betraying him. The Son of David was not escaping trouble but going to meet the death that He needed to suffer. Judas knew that Jesus often went to that garden and had taken troops to finish the betrayal by having Him arrested there.

### 18:4-11 Jesus Does Not Resist Arrest

Jesus did not fight the arrest when it had come. He displayed control over the situation and thus demonstrated that He was sacrificing Himself willingly.

#### • The Guard Draws Back

Jesus went to the troops that would arrest Him and asked them whom they were seeking. He knew, of course (Matthew 26:45), but asking them would illustrate the difference between Himself and them.

When He told them that He was the one for whom they were seeking by saying "I am *He*," they fell back. "He" does not occur in the Greek and is supplied by translators; Jesus literally said, "I am." The soldiers might have drawn back because of His words, particularly those about the I AM. Jesus had said, "I am *He*," in 8:24, 28, 58; 13:19; the phrase also occurs in Mark 13:6 || Luke 21:8.

**Deity**

#### • Jesus Has Not Lost One

Jesus told the soldiers to let the others go. He allowed Himself to be taken. He even addressed Judas as "friend" and told Him to do as He had planned (Matthew 26:50). As John has shown us (13:27), Jesus was not endorsing the plan but allowing wicked men to do what was necessary to have the crucifixion happen. He demonstrated love not only in what He did but also in how He treated the wicked as they were abusing Him.

He fulfilled the Scripture (6:39) by not losing any of His disciples – except the one who chose to rebel against Him, as had been prophesied (17:12). Here the reference in the word that was being fulfilled may not be to a certain phrase in a certain verse so much as something Jesus had said Himself. In this passage and at the Last Supper the sense of not “losing” them seems to be both physical and spiritual – the true disciples would continue with Him and be faithful (even though they would temporarily fail a moment later).

- **Jesus Refuses Peter's Attempt To Defend Him**

Peter reacted to the arrest by attacking one of the people at the scene, a servant of the high priest. Such an act would have been suicide except for Jesus' intervention (and Jesus did not intervene in the way anyone had expected). Peter was not likely aiming for only the ear.

There was no lack of bravery in Peter, but he had a lack of knowledge of Jesus' will and, at that time, a lack of faith.

Jesus, knowing that He had to suffer the punishment and be arrested unjustly, healed the servant, whose name was Malchus (Luke 22:51). The “cup” of punishment had been ordained by the Father (Matthew 26:42). Note that Malchus's miraculous healing is not recorded by John, though Peter's use of the sword is. After it had happened, Jesus not only rebuked Peter, but further demonstrated His control by rebuking the troops, which by arresting Him at night was reflecting the cowardice of the Jewish leaders who had ordered them to do so (Matthew 26:55-56 || Mark 14:48-49 || Luke 22:52).

### **18:12-18     Going to the High Priest**

As Jesus' series of trials were beginning, so were Peter's series of denials.

- **Jesus Is Arrested**

Those who were involved in Jesus' arrest took him to Annas, who had been the high priest (Luke 3:2; Acts 4:6) and exercised power through or with his son-in-law, Caiaphas, who was the high priest. The occupant of the office of high priest changed much more frequently than in the Old Testament pattern, in which the death of the old high priest brought a new high priest. Caiaphas had issued the cynical and ungodly advice about having Jesus killed rather than having Him disrupt relations with the Romans (11:47-53); now he would get his wish.

- **Peter Denies Jesus Once**

Peter and another disciple (almost certainly John, as in 19:26-27; 20:3-8; 21:7, 20-24) followed the events at some distance. The other disciple, who was known to the high priest, brought Peter in.

Peter was asked by the female slave at the door if he was a disciple of Christ. He said no, denying Christ the **first** time. He stood with the slaves of the high priest and the officers, which probably included many people who had been involved in Jesus' arrest. Perhaps that made his temptation all the worse. If we harmonize the denials and assume that there were only three distinct denials (perhaps involving multiple accusers), the slave girl might have also said that he had been with Jesus. Notice that the man who had just stood up to an armed guard was frightened into a denial by a slave girl!

### **18:19-27     The High Priest Questions Jesus**

The high priest's question about Jesus' disciples and doctrine led to abuse by an officer. As Jesus was suffering for the truth, Peter, in far less danger, was still denying it.

### • Jesus Says His Teaching Has Been Public

The high priest's interest in Jesus' disciples and teaching might have been to discover a threat to their relationship with the Romans as well as to find incriminating evidence. Jesus responded in a way appropriate for a trial; it was the court's job to hear evidence and not just to attempt to extract all of the information from the accused. That was especially important to note when the court had brought Him to trial before even formulating the charges! Jesus had spoken openly to the world, not trying to hide His message (7:14, 26; 8:2). He did not object to being tried, but He wanted it done properly. Unfortunately, propriety had been discarded by Jesus' enemies long before.

## World

### • Jesus Is Struck

Perhaps the guard thought the question disrespectful. He struck Jesus, even though He had done nothing wrong. Jesus had responded quite reasonably to a wicked man (though a priest!) who was not following God or His law. Jesus asked the guard, as He had the high priest, to justify what he was doing.

Jesus was sent to Caiaphas. The trial before Caiaphas seems to be the focus of the other three gospels, which say little about the trial before Annas, but John shows us how both occurred.

### • Peter Denies Jesus Further

At that time Peter continued to be near the fire. He was accused of being a disciple again. He denied it a **second** time. A relative of the high priest's servant accused him of having been in the garden with Jesus. He denied it for a **third** time. The crowing of a rooster signified that Peter had fulfilled Jesus' prophecy with his sin (13:37-38).

The other three gospels portray the last denial as having come from someone who identified Peter as speaking as a Galilean, but there is no reason that the accusations that led to the denials could not have come from multiple people who were saying multiple things.

It is easy to criticize Peter for denying Christ, but if we are sometimes unwilling to stand up and speak about Christ when we fear others' reactions, could we really claim to be better?

The next lesson will cover Jesus' appearance before Pilate and the issuing of the death sentence.

## Questions

Judas guessed where Jesus would be and Jesus certainly knew where Judas and the mob with Him would be (18:2-4). What does this indicate about Jesus' attitude toward His arrest and crucifixion?

Why did Jesus tell the soldiers and officers who had come to arrest Him to let His disciples go (18:8-9)?

What reason did Jesus give Peter for not attacking those who were trying to arrest Him (18:11)?

How did Simon Peter get into the courtyard of the high priest while Jesus was on trial (18:15-16)?

What did Jesus claim about the manner in which He had taught (18:20-21)?

What would be a good reason for Him to want others to testify about His teaching?



Compare John's account of Peter's denials with the other gospels' (Matthew 26:69-75; Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:54-62). What kinds of things were said that provoked Peter to deny Christ? Note that more than one person may have made the same charge or that different writers may have phrased similar remarks in different ways.

Compare Jesus' experience at His trial in 18:19-23 with Paul's in Acts 23:1-5. What similarities can you find between what happened to them?  
What differences can you find?

### ***Other Readings***

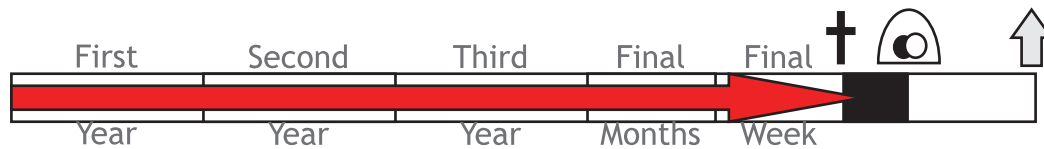
Matthew 26:69-75; Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:54-62; Acts 23:1-5

### ***Parallels in Other Gospels***

The events in the Garden of Gethsemane (18:1-11) are also found in Matthew 26:36-56; Mark 14:32-52; Luke 22:39-53. Jesus before the high priest and the Council and Peter's denials (18:12-27) are also found in Matthew 26:57-75; Mark 14:53-72; Luke 22:54-71.

# John 18:28-19:16

## "I Find No Guilt in Him" (18:38; 19:4, 6)



### Main Points:

- Pilate knew that Jesus had done nothing worthy of death.
- Jesus spoke the simple truth and those who loved truth would listen.
- Pilate was coerced to allow Jesus' crucifixion by the Jews.

We continue studying the trials of Jesus and see how they led to the crucifixion, which will come in the next section of our text. Jesus continued to exhibit self-control, which was necessary to prove His willingness to give Himself freely as a sacrifice.

### 18:28-32 The Jews Seek Crucifixion

The Jewish leaders took Jesus away from the site of the trials they had conducted to the Roman authorities. They knew what they wanted from the Romans and were prepared to do anything to get it.

#### • Pilate Gets a Vague Charge

In a stunning example of hypocrisy, some of the Jews refused to go into the Praetorium, apparently because they thought being in a pagan building would render them unclean before Passover (there seems to be no Scriptural prohibition of this), all the while pushing for the death of an innocent man! They may have remained ceremonially clean, but the more important moral cleanliness was completely lacking. When Pilate asked for a charge, they replied that they would not have brought Him had He not been guilty, a circular response.

#### • Jesus' Words Are Fulfilled

Law

Judge

Signs

Pilate, lacking a charge, told the Jews to handle the matter, and that is when the heart of the issue became clear. The Jews would not formally try Jesus under their Law because they lacked the authority to execute Him (18:31).

The Jews thus fulfilled what Jesus had signified His death would be (18:32; compare 12:32-33). They would use the Roman method of crucifixion to destroy the enemy that they were envying (Matthew 27:18 || Mark 15:10).

### 18:33-38 Pilate Questions Jesus

Pilate's difficulty was obvious. He proceeded to question his prisoner, but he would not get the kind of answers that he was expecting, nor any answer that would make the resolution to his problem more palatable.

#### • Jesus the Spiritual King

Pilate began by asking Jesus simply if He was the king of the Jews, as the Jews claimed He had said. Jesus was called a king by Nathanael in 1:49, by the wise men in Matthew 2:2, and by the crowd at the Triumphal Entry in 12:13 || Luke 19:37-38, but He is never recorded to

have claimed it for Himself publicly before this time in the gospels. Jesus asked why Pilate was asking. Pilate said that he was not a Jew, probably implying that he would not have asked had the Jews not acted against Jesus.

**King**

**World**

**Belief>>**

Jesus then answered Pilate's question. He was a king, and the King of the Jews, but not a worldly king. His kingdom was not of this world and His servants would not do what soldiers in the world would usually do. Jesus' purpose in coming into the world was to bear witness to the truth, and thus to allow people to believe the truth. John also pointed out in other places that those who loved the truth would listen to Jesus (8:47; 1 John 4:6).

Note that what Jesus says here about being a king and teaching the truth is source of the “good confession” that Timothy had made, according to 1 Timothy 6:12-13.

#### • Pilate Pronounces Him Innocent

Though Jesus had clearly claimed to be king, Pilate understood that He was not the kind of king who was plotting to overthrow him and the civil government. He pronounced Jesus innocent for the **first** time.

Before doing so, Pilate asked Him what truth was. He evidently was not expecting an answer, because the truth (14:6) had been right next to him.

#### 18:39-40 Choosing Barabbas over Jesus

Pilate wanted to release Jesus (Acts 3:13), and evidently thought that the Jews would prefer Jesus to Barabbas, a robber as well as a rebel and a murderer (Luke 23:19; Acts 3:14).

Perhaps Pilate miscalculated the crowd's desires; more likely the hatred for Jesus was so great that no one would have been less likely to have been released.

Barabbas deserved to die, but Jesus took his place. In that way all of us today are like Barabbas: Jesus died in our place (2 Corinthians 5:21).

#### 19:1-7 Pilate Fails To Placate the Jews

Pilate's first attempt to release Jesus had failed. Other attempts would fail as well. Pilate would affirm Jesus' innocence twice more.

#### • Jesus Is Beaten

Pilate had not been able to release Jesus, so he scourged Jesus. Scourging was a severe beating that could cause life-threatening injuries by itself. This fulfilled some of Jesus' prophecy in Matthew 20:19 || Mark 10:34 || Luke 18:33. Perhaps this was done to try to move the crowd to pity or to satisfy their blood lust, but it would still fail.

#### • Jesus Is Mocked

The soldiers made a crown of thorns (probably with much longer thorns than those on our garden roses) and dressed Him in a purple robe. Jesus was mockingly adorned as a king, though He truly was the greatest king. The soldiers, who probably thought that calling a condemned man the King of the Jews was hilarious, struck Him, as one had during the trial before Annas (18:22). Jesus had more power than those soldiers could have ever imagined, but He restrained Himself and did not misuse it against them.

**King**

#### • Pilate Proclaims His Innocence

Pilate brought Jesus before the crowd and proclaimed His innocence a **second** time. The sight of Jesus badly beaten and in ridiculous clothing did not satisfy the crowd. Pilate said for a

third time that Jesus had no fault, even as he told the Jews to crucify Jesus themselves.

- **The Jews Still Demand Death**

**Deity**

**Law**

The Jews present specified that they wanted Jesus to be crucified. They indicated that Jesus' claim to be the Son of God amounted to blasphemy, which shows that Jesus was claiming deity. The Jews said that Jesus deserved to die for committing blasphemy "according to" their Law. That was not the first time they had accused Jesus of that, nor the first time His life had been in danger as a result (10:33). Blasphemy was punishable by death under the Law (see Leviticus 24:16), but their charge of blasphemy was not true, for Jesus had verified His claim with His signs. It was the Jews who were really refusing to follow the Law.

### **19:8-11 Pilate Questions Jesus Further**

Even the claim that Jesus was the Son of God frightened Pilate. He questioned Jesus again, but Jesus did not directly answer the charge.

- **Jesus Answers Little**

When Pilate asked Jesus where He had come from, Jesus did not answer (Isaiah 53:7). Perhaps Jesus had already given him the most important answer in 18:36-37. He had come into the world from another place, a spiritual place, as was fitting for the king of a spiritual kingdom.

- **The Greater Sin Was Not Pilate's**

Pilate pointed out that he had the authority to crucify Jesus. Pilate did not want to use it, but he would soon be coerced into using it wrongly to please the Jews. Jesus pointed out that governmental authority comes from God (Romans 13:1-2; 1 Peter 2:13-14). The Jewish leaders were pushing Pilate into abusing his authority by condemning an innocent man. Their sin was greater than Pilate's.

### **19:12-16 Pilate Yields to the Jews' Desire**

Pilate still sought to release Jesus, but the crowd was intent on getting their way and was overcoming his unwillingness to have Jesus executed. The original blasphemy charge had all but disappeared and a dubious political charge had taken its place.

- **The Jews Threaten Pilate's Position**

**Judge**

The Jews told Pilate he would be disloyal to Caesar if he were to let Jesus go. Preventing rebellion was one of a governor's primary tasks, and the Jews were willing to gain leverage on Pilate by threatening his position. Pilate's record as governor probably made keeping his position (and his life) uncertain if more disturbances were to take place. Pilate went to the judgment seat (though he will one day stand before Jesus' judgment seat; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

- **The Jews Reject the True King**

**King**

Pilate gave the Jews another chance to accept Jesus as King. They refused, asking for Jesus to be crucified. After that, they made a statement that at any other time would have been inconceivable to most Jews. They claimed that Caesar was their only king. Their claim, made as they tried to kill Jesus, was another rejection of God as their king (1 Samuel 8:6-7).

Since the subject of Jesus as king was prominent in the Jews' accusations of Jesus (in the

other gospels) and in Pilate's discussions with Jesus and the Jews, we will study the topic of Jesus the King and His kingdom in the next lesson.

## ***Questions***

Why did the Jewish leaders not enter into the Praetorium (“hall of judgment”, KJV) even though they wanted to see the Roman governor (18:28)?

What did Jesus tell Pilate His purpose had been in coming to the earth (18:37)?

What did Pilate do to Jesus after the Jews had chosen Barabbas for release instead of Him (19:1)?

What made Pilate more afraid of crucifying Jesus in 19:8?

What did the Jews imply they would accuse Pilate of doing if he were to release Jesus (19:12)?

Jesus was scourged in 19:1. Who else in the New Testament was said to be scourged? Use a concordance to find at least two answers.

What point did Jesus make to Pilate in 19:11 that would also be made by Paul in Romans 13:1-2?

## ***Other Readings***

1 Samuel 8:6-7; Matthew 10:17; Mark 10:34; Romans 13:1-2

## ***Parallels in Other Gospels***

Jesus' appearance before Pilate (18:28-40) is also found in Matthew 27:1-26; Mark 15:1-15; Luke 23:1-24. Pilate's sentencing of Jesus (19:1-16) is also found in Matthew 27:26-30; Mark 15:15-20; Luke 23:24.



# The King and His Kingdom in John

## "I Am a King" (18:37)

### Main Points:

#### King

- Jesus could have been a worldly king but refused.
- Jesus never denied His spiritual kingship.
- Jesus made clear that His kingdom was spiritual instead of physical.

Much of the last lesson dealt with the Jews' accusation to Pilate that Jesus was a king and with Pilate's conversation with Christ about it. In this topical lesson we look at Jesus the King and the kind of kingdom that He has established.

### Jesus as King

When we read John, we see that Jesus had the title of king attached to Him from the beginning to the end of His period of public teaching. He did not deny the title.

Jesus did not often refer to His kingship explicitly, but He did tell Pilate directly that He was a king with a kingdom (18:36-37). Others recognized Jesus as king, and He did not disagree with them. Nathanael, upon realizing that Jesus had a supernatural knowledge of where he had been, proclaimed Him the king of Israel and Son of God (1:49). The crowd at the Triumphal Entry hailed Him as king days before His crucifixion, and as they did Jesus fulfilled the royal prophecy of Zechariah 9:9 (12:12-15).

Elsewhere in John we see Jesus called a king by those who did not believe in Him. Some of His enemies were unknowingly and ironically correct in what they called Him. The soldiers who abused Him also mocked Him by dressing Him up as a king and bowing down to Him (19:3). The Jews told Pilate that Jesus had claimed to be a king and thus was a threat to Roman control of the region (19:12). Pilate had heard what Jesus had said about being a king and knew that He was not a rebel but still called Him the King of the Jews, though it annoyed the Jews (19:19-21). Those who had been present at the Feeding of the Five Thousand misunderstood Jesus' mission. They were ready to make Him king by force, but they did not understand what kind of king He would be and Jesus did not fulfill their worldly desires (6:15).

We also see Jesus acclaimed as king elsewhere in the Bible. Before Jesus' birth, the angel Gabriel told Mary that He would reign over a kingdom that had no end (Luke 1:33). 1 Timothy 6:13-16 calls Christ the King of Kings, another way of saying that He is the greatest king. Hebrews 1:8 recognizes Jesus as God the Son and says that He rules as king with righteousness. Revelation 1:5 teaches that Christ is superior to all earthly kings; that theme will be repeated in many ways throughout that book written by John. Revelation 17:14; 19:16 also call Him the King of Kings. Even the rioters of Thessalonica understood that Paul had taught that Jesus was a king (Acts 17:1-7).

Many prophecies foretold Jesus' kingship as well. Psalm 2 spoke of the king to come, and this psalm was applied to Jesus in Acts 4:25-26 and elsewhere. Psalm 89:26-27 also prophesied that the Father would make the Son higher than the kings of the earth. Isaiah 9:6-7 spoke of His eternal kingdom. Jeremiah 23:5-6 spoke of the righteous Branch from David who would reign as king.

In addition to what is said about Jesus as king in the Bible, the fact that He could speak authoritatively of the kingdom of God as His kingdom adds to the evidence that He was and is the King of Kings in the kingdom of God. We will study that kingdom next.

### The Nature of His Kingdom

Jesus taught Nicodemus that entering the kingdom of God required being born again (3:3-5). Being born of

water (baptism; see Titus 3:5) and the Holy Spirit are required, and they fit a spiritual, not a physical, kingdom. This is confirmed by Jesus' own words before Pilate in 18:33-37. Jesus did not want His servants to fight as those of physical kingdoms would. His servants were to wage spiritual warfare to win souls. Other Bible passages also speak of the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom. Colossians 1:13 says that Christians are transferred into Christ's kingdom from the domain of darkness when they are converted. Matthew 16:28 speaks of Christ's coming "in His kingdom" within the lifetime of those to whom He spoke. Luke 22:29-30 teaches that the Father has granted Christ a kingdom. Revelation 1:6; 5:9-10 show that Christ has made a kingdom composed of Christians, His followers. Matthew 13:41 refers to Christ's kingdom in the Parable of the Tares. Ephesians 5:5 discusses the kingdom that belongs to Christ in a future sense when it says that no immoral or greedy person has an inheritance in Christ's kingdom. 2 Peter 1:11 also refers to Christ's eternal kingdom.

Prophecy also demonstrates the nature of Christ's kingdom. Zechariah 9:9 shows that Jesus would be a peaceful king. Jeremiah prophesied that Coniah, also called Jehoiachin, would not have any descendants ruling on David's throne in Judah (22:28-30). In the next chapter he foretold the coming of a king from David (23:5-6). These prophecies make sense together when we realize that Christ, a descendant of David and Coniah, fulfilled both by being a spiritual king and by never ruling as a physical king in Jerusalem. A spiritual king also fits the eternal nature of the kingdom, which had been taught in Isaiah 9:6-7; Daniel 2:44.

Jesus is the greatest King and His spiritual kingdom is open to all who will obey Him. What could be better than to become an active part of that kingdom by becoming a Christian and serving Him faithfully?

We will see Jesus the King on a cross and in a tomb in the next lesson.

## **Questions**

Nathanael called Jesus the Son of God and the King of Israel after Jesus had demonstrated a miraculous knowledge of where he had been. How did Jesus respond to Nathanael's statement (1:48-51)?

What did the crowd call Jesus after the Feeding of the Five Thousand (6:14-15)?  
What kind of king were they expecting Jesus to be?

When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey's foal (12:14-16) He fulfilled Zechariah 9:9. How does that prophecy describe the coming king?

What did Jesus tell Pilate would be true of all servants in His kingdom (18:36-37)?

To whom did the Jews claim allegiance instead of Jesus the King (19:12-15)?

Nathanael's statement in 1:49 shows that He thought of Jesus as greater than an ordinary king. Find examples of passages that show that Jesus is the greatest king, the King of Kings.

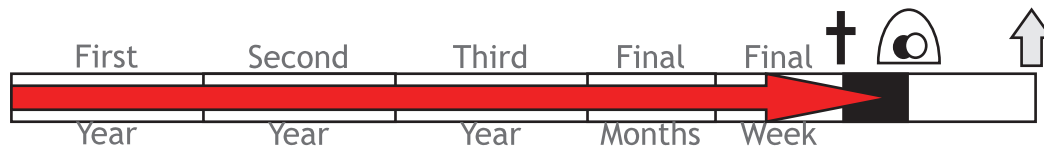
Christ speaks of "His kingdom" before Pilate in 18:36-37. Can you find other passages in which the kingdom of God is said to belong to Christ? (Hint: Use a concordance or Bible search tool to scan New Testament verses that use the word "kingdom".)

## **Other Readings**

Zechariah 9:9-11; Matthew 16:28; Colossians 1:13-14; 1 Timothy 6:13-16

# John 19:17-42

## "They Crucified Him" (19:18)



### Main Points:

- Jesus had been deserted or mistreated by almost everyone.
- Jesus suffered everything necessary to be the perfect sacrifice.
- Jesus was dead and was buried by people who did not expect Him to rise.

In this section of the gospel we see the crucifixion, death, and burial of Jesus Christ.

### 19:17-24 Jesus Is Crucified

After Pilate had yielded to the mob, Jesus was taken and crucified by the Romans. At Golgotha the Roman soldiers crucified Him between two criminals. In that way many of His words about His death by crucifixion (3:14-15; 8:28; 12:32) were fulfilled. Golgotha was outside the city (Hebrews 13:12-13).

The crucifixion (19:18-24) is also found in Matthew 27:35-37 || Mark 15:24-27 || Luke 23:33-38.

#### • The Ironic Title

**King**

Pilate made a sign that identified Jesus as the King of the Jews. He did not know how correct he was. It was in three languages and easily visible from the city. The Jews objected to Jesus' being described as king on the cross, but their objection was ignored. While they could have applied pressure to Pilate regarding potential rebellions because of his past misdeeds (19:12), getting Pilate's Roman superiors upset about his wording on a sign was unlikely.

#### • The Soldiers Gamble for His Clothes

The prophecy about casting lots for Christ's clothing (19:23-24) is from Psalm 22:18. It seems cruel and callous to us to gamble for a dying man's clothes, but to the soldiers it was probably just part of their everyday work. They unintentionally fulfilled the prophecy. One centurion, not necessarily one of the gamblers, would later understand that this condemned man was not a criminal (Matthew 27:54 || Mark 15:39 || Luke 23:47).

### 19:25-27 Jesus Provides for Mary

A few women stood near the cross as Jesus died, including His mother and the disciple whom He loved, almost certainly John. Jesus gave His disciple the charge to take care of His mother. We read nothing of Joseph (who might have been dead) and Mary might have been getting older. Perhaps Jesus wanted her with someone who believed in Him instead of with His unbelieving brothers. We do not know all of the reasons, but the disciple accepted the responsibility. Mary Magdalene was also there.

### 19:28-30 Jesus Dies

Jesus' death and burial (19:28-42) are also found in Matthew 27:46-60 || Mark 15:34-46 ||

Luke 23:46-53.

Jesus' statement about being thirsty on the cross resulted in the fulfillment of Psalm 69:21. Jesus had refused the gall (which might have dulled the pain) earlier (Matthew 27:34 || Mark 15:23 || Luke 23:36); it seems that He had to suffer a certain amount of extreme physical pain without anything to soften it. Having suffered sufficiently, He took a drink, said, "It is finished!", and died.

Note that in 17:4 He had already fulfilled the work that God had given Him in all ways other than this.

Merely human words and thoughts cannot do justice to the picture painted in the inspired text. We have the beauty of God's boundless love shining through the ugliness of the undeserved and brutal death that was necessary to atone for sin.

### **19:31-37 Jesus' Death Is Confirmed**

With Passover coming very soon (it was already late afternoon), the Jews wanted the bodies off of the crosses. We might wonder where the punctiliousness and concern for the Law was when Jesus was being arrested, accused, tried, and executed. Deuteronomy 21:22-23 commanded the burial of those executed "on the tree" on the same day in order to keep from defiling the land; that might have been on the Jewish leaders' minds immediately before Passover.

#### **• No Bones Broken**

The prophecy that Christ would not suffer a broken bone could have come from either Exodus 12:46 or, more likely, Psalm 34:19-20. The soldiers broke the legs of the first man, but did not need to break Christ's because He was already dead. Keep in mind that these were men who would have known the state of death well and would not have recoiled from those who were almost dead.

The Passover was coming, but the real Passover (1 Corinthians 5:7) had already been offered.

#### **• Blood from His Side**

The piercing of Christ was a fulfillment of Zechariah 12:10 (see also Psalm 22:16-17). The flow of blood and water was evidence of a deep wound. Christ's body was thoroughly dead and the soldiers' actions had proven it. Revelation 1:7 notes that those who had pierced Jesus would see Him coming in judgment.

#### **• The Eyewitness Account**

**Witness** John gave his personal testimony. John himself saw proof of the death of Christ and expected his readers to accept his eyewitness account so that all may believe in Him. This is the theme **Belief>>** of the book, restated at the recording of one of the central events of Biblical and world history.

### **19:38-42 Joseph and Nicodemus Prepare the Body**

Joseph of Arimathea had been a secret disciple, but he probably became more public with his belief by caring for Jesus' body after His death. Perhaps he risked ceremonial uncleanness (Numbers 19:11-16) for Passover in order to act with honor toward a friend and teacher.

Nicodemus (3:1-9; 7:50) also helped, bringing a tremendous amount of spices. Note that in the quantity of spices they used and in the wrapping of the body they showed that they were fully expecting Jesus to remain dead.

A new tomb that belonged to Joseph was in the garden (Matthew 27:60). Note that this fulfilled the words of Isaiah 53:9, because Joseph was a rich man (Matthew 27:57). They put Jesus there because Passover was near (they might have needed to cleanse themselves before evening). Joseph would not have forgotten where they had laid Him.

In our next lesson we will see the importance of witnesses to the gospel account. The lesson after that contains the event that would provide something for those who had seen these things to bear witness about: the resurrection of Christ!

## ***Questions***

Why were the Jews upset with the inscription Pilate had made for Jesus' cross (19:19-21)?

Who was standing near Jesus as He died, after so many had deserted Him (19:25-26)?

What did Jesus know had happened before saying He was thirsty (19:28-30)?

What does 19:31 tell you about the time of the week and time of the day at which Jesus died?

What purpose did John have in relating his personal eyewitness account of Jesus' death (19:32-37) as well as in writing the entire book?

What do we read elsewhere about the positions of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus? What might they have been giving up when they took care of His body?

Read Numbers 19:11-16. What did the laws of cleanliness require after touching a dead body? How might this have affected Joseph and Nicodemus?

## ***Other Readings***

Numbers 19:11-16; Psalm 22:18; 69:21; Mark 15:33-34, 42-46

## ***Parallels in Other Gospels***

Jesus' crucifixion (19:17-30) is also found in Matthew 27:31-50; Mark 15:20-37; Luke 23:26-46. His burial (19:31-42) is also found in Matthew 27:57-61; Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23:50-53.



# Witness in John

## "He Who Has Seen Has Testified" (19:35)

### Main Points:

#### Witness

- Jesus bore witness of heavenly truths from God.
- Jesus could testify about Himself because He had complete knowledge.
- Others testified that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, so that we could believe.

Whenever anyone wants to determine whether something is true, evidence must be considered. In law, a trial without evidence from witnesses would be a farce (and that is exactly what the trials of Jesus became). John wrote that he had recorded Jesus' life "that you may believe" that He was the Christ (20:31). In our previous lesson, John provided his personal testimony regarding the death of Christ on the cross (19:34-35; see also 21:24). John did not expect us to believe without evidence. God has never expected men to believe the truth without evidence. In this lesson we will look at the evidence from witnesses for what we must believe about God and Christ. First, we will study the truth about heavenly things to which Jesus bore witness. We will then study the witness testimony about who Jesus was: the Messiah and the Son of God.

### Jesus' Witness Testimony of Heavenly Things

In 3:11-12, Jesus told Nicodemus that He was speaking of heavenly things. Only Jesus, who had come from Heaven, could tell men so much about the things of God. Jesus related the heavenly things that He had seen and heard (3:31-34). In 18:37-38, Jesus told Pilate that He had come to the earth to testify to the truth; this truth, which included Jesus' role as king, was spiritual truth that had come from Heaven. Isaiah 55:3-5 prophesied that Jesus would be a witness to God's truth throughout the world. Revelation 1:5; 3:14 show that Jesus was a faithful witness regarding these things.

#### • Jesus' Ability To Bear Witness of Himself

Even when others could not legally bear witness of themselves because of their own human limitations, Jesus' testimony about Himself was valid because of His complete knowledge. He said this to the Pharisees in 8:13-18, and then, in case the validity of His testimony was still in question, appealed to the witness the Father was bearing of Him. Jesus provided testimony about Himself as well as about heavenly things, but He also graciously left other sources of evidence about who He was. Other men recorded evidence about His life on earth so that we could believe in the divine truth that He had taught. We will consider more of these witnesses to Jesus in the next point.

### Witnesses to Jesus' Identity

John shows us many examples of those who could provide trustworthy information about who Jesus was. John does it himself regarding the piercing of Jesus' side on the cross in 19:34-35; he also testifies about everything in the gospel, which is centered upon Jesus, in 21:24-25.

The gospel also presents other important witnesses. It begins with John the Baptist, who was a witness for Jesus as Jesus began His teaching (1:6-9, 15). God had given John the Baptist a revelation regarding how to recognize the Son of God, who would baptize in the Holy Spirit (1:32-34). The apostles would receive the testimony of the Holy Spirit and testify about Jesus after His resurrection and ascension (15:26-27). A multitude of people spoke about the amazing power from God that Jesus had displayed; in 12:17-19 they testified about Him after He had raised Lazarus.

Jesus gave many witnesses to His identity in 5:31-39. He did not expect anyone to accept His words without

evidence. He demonstrated in 8:13-18 that His own testimony was true, but in Chapter 5 He had shown that it was valid because He had divine witnesses to His identity (5:31-32). John the Baptist had served as another witness (5:33-35; Luke 20:6 shows his credibility with the people). The works that Jesus had done were works that no man could do without God and they verified His divine origin (5:36). The Father, who had given Jesus the works to do, served as another witness (5:37-38). Finally, the Scriptures had prophesied of Jesus and served as a witness that should have been accepted (5:39-40). All of these witnesses proved beyond a doubt that Jesus was correct in what He was claiming: that He was equal with God (5:17-18); that He was giving eternal life (5:24); and that He had come in His Father's name (5:43).

In John's other books, the idea of witness is also key. In 1 John 1:1-3, John spoke of the many different ways Jesus had been shown to them, including hearing, seeing, and touching. Another sense of the word is used in Revelation. Antipas was a witness or a martyr who had been killed in Pergamos (Revelation 2:13). Other Christians were pictured as having given their lives as witnesses or martyrs in Revelation 17:6.

Witnesses are also important in Acts. Jesus told His apostles before ascending that they would be His witnesses throughout the earth (1:8). The eleven apostles selected another man who would serve as a witness of Jesus' resurrection (1:22). Peter and the apostles proclaimed to the crowds that they were witnesses of His resurrection (2:32; 3:15). They also told the Council that they were witnesses to the death and exaltation of Christ, whom the Council had helped to put to death (5:30-32)! Peter's message to Cornelius was centered on witnessing Christ's life, death, and resurrection (10:37-42). Paul's message in the synagogue of Antioch of Pisidia was that they could know that God had fulfilled His promises through eyewitness testimony about Christ (13:30-33). Paul served as a witness after having seen Christ (22:15; 26:16). Sometimes people today think of "witnessing" as telling others how they feel about Jesus, but that is not like the testimony that the eyewitnesses to Jesus proclaimed.

In our next lesson we will study the empty tomb. It is a key piece of evidence for the resurrection of Christ, which was a frequent topic of the witnesses in this lesson.

## **Questions**

What was the goal of John the Baptist's witness testimony of Jesus (1:6-7)?

According to 3:31-34, how can we know that Jesus' testimony about heavenly things is true?

When the Pharisees accused Jesus of giving untrue testimony because it was about Himself, why did Jesus say His self-testimony was trustworthy (8:13-14)?

Who would ensure that the apostles' witness testimony of Jesus would be accurate and complete (15:26-27)?

Read 19:34-35; 21:24-25. Why was it important that John had been a witness of the things about which he had written?

What role did witnesses play in Jesus' trials in Matthew 26 and Mark 14?

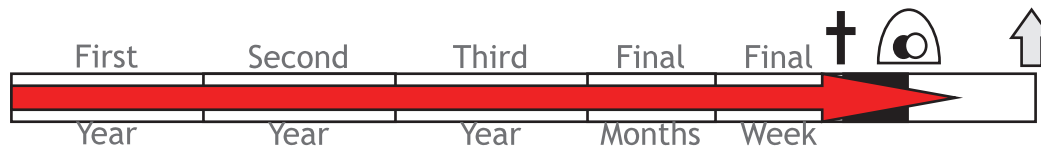
In Revelation 2:13; 17:6, translations use either "witness" or "martyr" to describe Christians who had died for their faith. Either translation is legitimate. How are the two terms similar in English?

## **Other Readings**

John 5:31-40; 8:13-18; Matthew 26:59-66

# John 20:1-18

## "He Must Rise Again from the Dead" (20:9)



### Main Points:

- Mary Magdalene saw the empty tomb but did not understand what it meant.
- The disciple with Peter came into the empty tomb and believed.
- Jesus appeared to Mary and told her that He would ascend to the Father.

As Chapter 19 ended, we read John's personal testimony that Jesus was dead as well as the account of the preparation of His body and its placement in a tomb. The Passover Sabbath is left without comment. Sunday morning dawned and our attention returns to the tomb, but it was open and Jesus was not in it!

**Miracle** The resurrection was a miracle in a class by itself. On it rests the future of the world. Because Jesus has risen from the dead, all men can know that His claims to be the Son of God and to give eternal life are true. We must live according to the words of the resurrected one!

### 20:1-2 Mary Magdalene Finds the Empty Tomb

The women also came to the tomb in Matthew 28:1-8 || Mark 16:1-8 || Luke 24:1-9. Those accounts in the other gospels have more detail. Harmonizing the accounts reveals that Mary Magdalene and two other women arrived at the tomb and left to tell the disciples, after which at least Mary returned to the tomb.

When Mary saw the empty tomb, she got Peter and the disciple whom Jesus loved (19:26-35 seems to indicate that it was John) and told them that Jesus' body was gone and she did not know where it was. Neither she nor the apostles were expecting Jesus' sudden resurrection.

### 20:3-10 Peter and John Go to the Tomb

Peter and John went to the tomb and confirmed what Mary Magdalene had said. Those two disciples saw even more.

#### • The Graveclothes Have Been Set Aside

Peter and John ran to the tomb. John ran faster and got there first. John saw the linen sheets in which the body had been wrapped (11:44; 19:40) laid aside; the manner in which they lay showed that this was not the work of grave robbers.

Peter went further than John and entered the tomb once there. Even if he risked being unclean for the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Isaiah 65:4; Luke 11:44), what had happened at the tomb was far more important.

#### • John Believes

**Belief>>** John believed at the empty tomb. He had already loved Jesus and believed in Him, but the belief had become much deeper. He believed that Jesus had risen from the dead, which he had not understood before.

In 20:9, the text refers to the Scripture that said the Christ would rise from the dead, perhaps Psalm 16:8-11 (see its use seven weeks later in Acts 2:25-32). Paul referred to that passage and Isaiah 55:3 at Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:34-35). The fulfillment of prophecy combines with the empty tomb to provide tremendous testimony for the reality of the resurrection.

### **20:11-18 Mary Magdalene Sees Jesus**

Mary Magdalene was twice asked why she was weeping, once by the angels and once by the resurrected Christ. She would finally be convinced of Jesus' resurrection by seeing Him.

#### **• Seeing Two Angels**

As Mary was weeping outside the tomb, she looked in and saw two angels where Jesus body had lain. They asked her why she was weeping, and she said it was because she did not know where Jesus' body had been taken. She would soon find out!

#### **• Not Clinging To Jesus**

Jesus was standing nearby, but Mary did not recognize Him. Whether this was for a natural reason (weeping too much to see or think clearly) or another, as those on the road to Emmaus would be prevented from recognizing Him (Luke 24:16), John does not say. Jesus asked her the question she had heard before and added one about whom she was seeking. Her answer was much the same as before, except that she assumed the speaker could have been the one who had moved the body. She would be willing to care for the body if others would not. Jesus addressed her directly. Mary turned, addressed Him as Teacher, and evidently embraced Him. She understood and believed.

**Father**

Jesus warned her not to cling to Him physically, because He would not be there physically much longer. Jesus would ascend to the Father (14:1-3; 16:28). He needed her to tell His disciples that He was risen and that He would soon ascend to God. Note that He called the disciples “brothers” (compare Romans 8:29; Hebrews 2:11-12, from Psalm 22:22). Mary told the disciples both that she had seen the Lord and what He had said to her.

Some people try to deny the resurrection, but doing so does not make sense. Even when skeptics claim that the story is fictional, the implausibility of their theories is telling. The historicity of Jesus is too well attested to believe that He is fictional. Claiming the disciples stole His body does not fit with their timidity during His arrest nor with their boldness in preaching Christ under persecution later. Claiming that the Roman executioners botched the execution and that Jesus recovered while shut inside a rock tomb is unbelievable. To deny the resurrection, the testimony of all those who were there must be denied – both the eyewitness accounts of disciples and other men as well as the silent testimony of the enemies who were highly motivated to disprove the resurrection. The empty tomb has an abundance of solid evidence of the best kind. To deny a historical event with this much evidence would be irresponsible.

In our next lesson (20:19-31) we will study Jesus' appearances to His apostles and find out more about John's purpose in writing the gospel.

## **Questions**

What was Mary Magdalene's reaction when she saw that the stone had been rolled away from the tomb (20:1-2)?

What did the disciple whom Jesus loved do when he had entered the tomb with the empty wrappings and the cloth that had been around His head (20:6-8)?

What had the Scriptures prophesied about Jesus that His disciples did not understand, even at the time of His crucifixion (20:9)?

What did Mary offer to do for the “gardener” when He asked her why she was weeping (20:15)?

What reason did Jesus give Mary Magdalene for not clinging to Him (20:17)?

Psalm 16:8-11 is one Old Testament passage that prophesied Jesus' resurrection from the dead. Where was this passage quoted in the New Testament (two locations)?

The angels and Jesus both asked Mary Magdalene the same question (20:12-15). What do you think they wanted her to understand after asking the question?

Can you think of any other examples in the Bible of God's asking a person the same question more than once?

## **Other Readings**

1 Kings 19:9-18; Mark 16:1-11; Acts 2:25-31

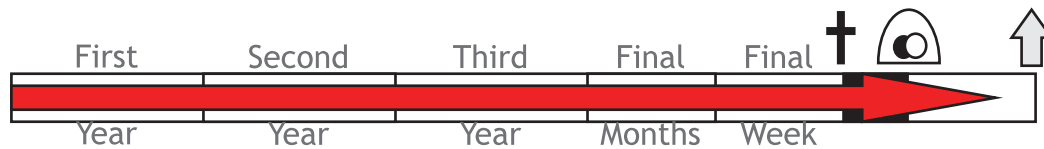
## **Parallels in Other Gospels**

The women's discovery of the empty tomb (20:1-2) is also described in Matthew 28:1-7; Mark 16:1-5; Luke 24:1-2. Jesus' appearance to Mary Magdalene (20:11-17) is also recorded in Mark 16:9.



# John 20:19-31

## "Be Not Unbelieving, But Believing" (20:27)



### Main Points:

- Jesus appeared to His disciples to prepare them for the Spirit and send them out.
- Thomas believed when he saw Jesus, but should have believed earlier.
- Only some of Jesus' miracles have been recorded, but they are enough for belief.

In this section of the text, Jesus visited more of His disciples after the resurrection and gave them instructions. John also reveals much of the purpose of the gospel.

### 20:19-23 Jesus Shows Himself to His Disciples

Jesus' appearances to the secluded disciples (20:19-29) are also found in Mark 16:14 and possibly Luke 24:33-43. After making an appearance to Mary Magdalene and perhaps others, like Peter (1 Corinthians 15:5) and the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35), Jesus appeared to a large group of disciples.

#### • Bringing Peace

The disciples were keeping the doors shut because they were afraid of further persecution as Jesus' followers. Jesus came and stood in their midst, which possibly indicates that He had not come in through the doors but appeared miraculously. Jesus wished them peace. A group of people whose leader had been executed a few days before and who were still under the threat of persecution would have needed peace; the peace Jesus came to bring them was not the end of all persecution but the knowledge that His promises were sure and that He had a plan for them. Mark 16:14 also shows us that Jesus rebuked them for not believing more quickly once they had received the evidence of His resurrection. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Savior's hands and side, which were physical evidence of the crucifixion.

#### • Sending Them Out

**Father**

Jesus again wished them peace and then told them of their mission. The Father had sent Jesus, and Jesus would send His disciples out after His ascension. They would need to spread the message of His death and resurrection around the world.

#### • Receiving the Spirit

**Spirit**

After having said He would send them into the world, Jesus helped to provide what they would need to successfully spread His message around the world. Jesus breathed on the disciples so that they could receive the Holy Spirit. The Greek word for "spirit" is also used for "breath" or "wind" (as in 3:8). Jesus may have been using one meaning of the word (*breath*) to impress the meaning of the event (the promise of sending the *Spirit*) on their minds.

Immediately after speaking about the Spirit, Jesus turned to the topic of forgiving sins. The apostles (except for Thomas, who was not present) were told that if they were to forgive a

person's sins, those sins would have been forgiven by God (note the perfect passive tense of the latter verbs). The same was true of the sins that they would retain and not forgive. That promise is similar to those in Matthew 16:19; 18:18-19. Especially in the latter reference, God was not giving them power to legislate for Him or use divine authority at their whim; instead, they would be assured of acting in accordance with God when they were following His word. They were proclaiming a divine message, and they were forgiving sins by declaring God's plan for pardoning man.

### **20:24-29 Thomas' Doubt Is Overcome**

Thomas had not been with the rest when they had seen Jesus the first time. He refused to believe based on their testimony. This was a problem because the apostles' testimony would be the basis upon which all men in the future would be expected to believe in Christ.

#### **• Thomas' Confession**

Thomas had said that he would not believe unless he were to actually see and touch the wounds of Christ. Eight days later (perhaps the next Sunday), Thomas was with the disciples with the doors shut when Jesus came again. Jesus wished them peace again and proceeded to offer Thomas the opportunity to do what he had requested: see and touch the wounds so that he would believe. We do not read of Thomas' actually touching Jesus, but the result was the same. Thomas confessed that Jesus was both his Lord and his God, and Jesus did not deny it, but affirmed it. Thomas not only believed that Jesus had been resurrected, he also called Jesus God.

**Deity**

#### **• The Need To Believe without Seeing**

Jesus accepted what Thomas had said, but He also offered a mild rebuke. Thomas had believed as a result of seeing the resurrected Christ, but all must believe on the basis of the evidence that is available to them, and people who would come after Thomas would not see Jesus personally. The apostles' eyewitness testimony was vital to establish the truth for future generations (1 John 1:1), but all of the people who would come after the apostles would need to rely upon the testimony of others (1 Peter 1:8-9). Many people today expect God to give them some sort of personal message, vision, or experience in order for them to believe. God has given us a perfect message through His apostles in the New Testament, and we are responsible for believing and obeying that message (Luke 16:27-31; 1 Corinthians 13:8-11).

**Belief>>**

### **20:30-31 Some Miracles Have Been Recorded for Our Faith**

Jesus' miracles were recorded so that we might believe and have life in His name (3:14-16; 5:24). Many other signs had been given by Jesus while on earth, but these were and are sufficient for belief. As Jesus had shown Thomas, the testimony of the apostles would be reason enough to have faith. John had written so that we might know the truth and have life; compare this to 1 John 5:13, which John had written so that we might know that we have life.

**Signs**

**Belief>>**

Our next lesson will study the signs given to us in John's gospel so that we may believe.

## **Questions**

Why did the disciples have the doors shut on that Sunday evening, the day of the resurrection, when Jesus

[From previous page] came (20:19)?

What was the attitude of the disciples when they had seen the evidence that Jesus had really risen from the dead (20:20)?

What did Thomas demand to do before he would believe in Christ's resurrection (20:25)?

What did Thomas confess about Jesus in his few short words in 20:28?

What did John tell his readers about the signs that he had not recorded in his gospel (20:30-31)?

Jesus mentions peace three different times in this short reading (20:19, 21, 26). How did Jesus make that peace for us (Colossians 1:19-20)?

What had Jesus said about peace in the discourse in Chapters 14-16?

In 20:23, Jesus spoke of forgiving others' sin by preaching God's message of forgiveness to them. Usually when the Bible speaks of one person's forgiving another, it refers to one who has been offended excusing the person who had committed the offense. Find at least two examples of that use of the word in the New Testament.

### ***Other Readings***

John 14:27; Matthew 18:18-19; 2 Corinthians 2:7-10; Colossians 1:19-20

### ***Parallels in Other Gospels***

Jesus' appearance to the disciples without Thomas (20:19-25) is also found in Luke 24:36-48. His appearance to the disciples with Thomas (20:26-29) is also found in Mark 16:14-18.

# Signs in John

## "Many Believed in His Name, Observing His Signs" (2:23)

TOPICAL

### Main Points:

#### Signs

- Jesus performed many more signs than John has recorded.
- Jesus' signs confirmed His identity and the truth of His teachings.
- Some wrongly asked for a sign after not believing the evidence they had.

At the beginning of this series of lessons we studied Jesus' miracles. In that lesson we mainly considered the seven most prominent miracles before Jesus' arrest and crucifixion, from Jesus' turning the water into wine, the "first sign" (2:11), to the resurrection of Lazarus (11:41-44). Now that we approach the end of the series, we are going to look again at the signs that confirmed Jesus' identity and His message.

In the text of the previous lesson (20:19-31) John had shown that readers could learn from the signs that Jesus is the Christ and they could have life through Him (20:30-31). We study the signs more closely now.

### Many More Signs

In our earlier lesson on miracles, we noted that the seven miracles studied there did not include everything miraculous that Jesus had done. That list did not include the miraculous knowledge that He displayed of Nathanael, the Samaritan woman at the well, or Lazarus's death (1:48-50; 4:16-19; 11:6-15). That list did not include the resurrection, which we have studied in Chapter 20. It did not include the catch of fish in 21:3-6. It did not include the healing that Jesus had performed in 6:2.

Jesus had performed even more signs than those. The account of people's believing His "signs" at the first Passover recorded (2:23) indicates that He had performed signs other than turning the water into wine at Cana. Nicodemus also referred to "signs" when he had come to Jesus at night (3:2). The crowd at the Feast of Tabernacles (7:31) and the even the hostile Pharisees of 11:47 said that He had done many signs.

Other statements by Jesus provided signs that He knew what would happen in a supernatural way. In 12:32-33, Jesus signified that He would be killed by crucifixion; the Jews' demand that the Romans perform the execution, ensuring that the method would be crucifixion, fulfilled what His words had signified (18:31-32). Jesus also signified the manner of Peter's death in 21:18-19.

John did not even record everything miraculous about the events he did record; he described Peter's cutting off the high priest's slave's ear (18:10-11), but not Jesus' healing it (Luke 22:50-51).

John himself told his readers that there were many signs left unrecorded, but that he had provided enough for honest readers to have faith (20:30-31).

### What the Signs Prove

Those who honestly examined Jesus' signs or the accounts of them learned more about who He was and the truth of His teaching. His disciples believed in Him after the first sign of turning water into wine (2:11), and many others believed in Him at Passover because of His signs (2:23). Nicodemus understood that Jesus was a teacher from God because of His signs (3:2). Those who had seen Jesus feed five thousand men said correctly that He was the Prophet God had promised (6:14; see Deuteronomy 18:15-19). Many in the crowd at the Feast of Tabernacles believed in Him because of His signs, saying that He must have been the Christ (7:31). Some people opposed the unbelieving Pharisees because they knew that a sinful man could not have been performing the signs that Jesus was (9:16). Combining all of the above incidents, we see that people rightly believed as a result of His signs that Jesus was a teacher from God, the prophet God had promised, the Christ, and a righteous man. His signs demonstrated that His claims were true.

## Reactions to the Signs

In the previous paragraph we saw that many people reacted to Jesus' signs by believing in Him. Even Nicodemus, who still had much to learn in 3:1-21, knew that Jesus was from God and wanted to learn more from Him. Even when people had only heard about His signs from others, they went to Him to learn more (12:17-18).

Not everyone had a positive reaction. All the Pharisees could see after Jesus had healed the man born blind was that the healing violated their idea of what keeping the Sabbath meant; the fact that a miraculous sign had occurred did not cause them to reexamine their thinking, though others could discern that the sign had shown that God approved of Jesus (9:13-16). All that the Pharisees in 11:47-48 could see was that Jesus (indirectly) threatened the order of the nation; they acknowledged that He had performed many signs but failed to follow that acknowledgment by listening to His teaching. Shortly before the arrest and crucifixion, we read that many of those who had seen Him perform many signs still did not believe in Him, fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy (12:34-41; Isaiah 53:1; 6:10).

## Asking for a Sign

Not everyone believed as a result of the signs, and some people showed an attitude of disbelief in asking to see a sign. Even those who had seen the sign of feeding five thousand men asked for more signs for the wrong reason (6:26-31). Jesus correctly said that they had come to Him looking for more food rather than the knowledge of the truth. They left without either (6:66).

Jesus lamented the fact that some people would refuse to believe without seeing signs and wonders (4:48, though He would do a sign for a man who believed and sought His help immediately after that). Jesus also made the point to Thomas that those who would believe would need to accept the testimony of those who had seen things like the signs and not demand to see new signs themselves (20:29).

When the Jews asked to Jesus to show a sign to prove that He had the right to cleanse the temple, He gave them the sign of His resurrection, though they did not understand it (2:18-21).

At this point in our study of the gospel, we have read the record of many signs. There should be no doubt that Jesus is the Son of God and that the message He has given us is true. It remains for us to accept the truth of the signs (and what those signs indicate about Jesus) and obey Christ completely. In the next lesson we will read the last part of the text (21:1-25), which includes His messages to His disciples before His ascension.

## Questions

Jesus said that many people would not believe without seeing signs and wonders. How did the nobleman who had come on behalf of his son show that he was different (4:48-54)?

Why did Jesus say those who had seen the Feeding of the Five Thousand had followed Him?  
How did they quickly prove Him correct (6:26-31)?

What reason did John give for the disbelief of many people who had seen Jesus' signs (12:37-40, quoting Isaiah 6:10)?

In Acts 2:22, what did Peter say had been shown to His listeners by the miracles, wonders, and signs in Jesus' life?

What did the Christians who were praying together in Acts 4:23-31 say about the signs and wonders that were



[*From previous page*] occurring among them?

Jesus gave a sign about Peter's death in 21:18-19. Where in the Bible do we get partial confirmation that Jesus was correct?

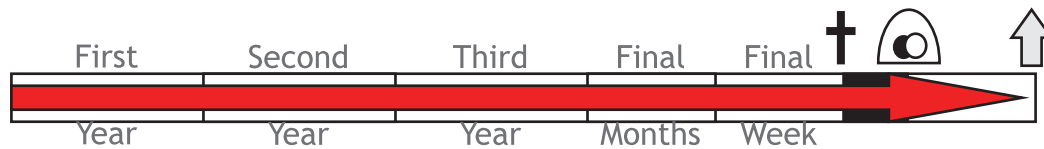
In what other places in the gospels can we find men demanding a sign from Jesus and showing an evil heart by doing so?

### ***Other Readings***

John 6:24-31; 12:37-43; Matthew 12:38-42; 2 Peter 1:14

# John 21

## "Manifested to the Disciples" (21:14)



### Main Points:

- Jesus appeared to His disciples as they were fishing on the Sea of Galilee.
- Jesus challenged Peter to love Him completely.
- All that has been written is a small part of what Jesus did on earth.

In the previous section of the text, Jesus appeared to His disciples and proved beyond any doubt that He had risen from the dead. In the topical lesson about signs, we saw that Jesus' signs demonstrated that He was the Son of God and His teaching was true. In this section, Jesus gives the final lesson in John's gospel to His disciples after His resurrection. Jesus challenged His disciples to consider what loving Him really meant and how necessary a complete love was to truly obey Him.

### 21:1-8 Jesus Finds Some Disciples Fishing

The events of this chapter occurred in a different location, Galilee. An appearance in Galilee (21:1-23) is also recorded in Matthew 28:16-20; there is an allusion to it in Matthew 28:7-10. At the beginning of the chapter, seven of Jesus' disciples went fishing.

#### • The Catch of Fish

The disciples had been fishing during the night without catching anything. At least three of them, Peter, James, and John, had worked as fishermen before following Jesus (Matthew 4:18-22 || Mark 1:16-20 || Luke 5:1-11), which would have made their failure to catch fish more unusual. Jesus was on the beach at daybreak and asked if they had caught anything. They did not know it was Jesus, which was similar to Mary Magdalene's failure to recognize Him in 20:14. When they answered that they had not, Jesus told them to put their nets on the other side. They caught too many fish to lift their nets up. The catch of fish was a miracle. It was not a natural occurrence, and very much like something that had happened to them before (Luke 5:1-11), which led one of the disciples (almost certainly John) to realize who it was on the shore.

#### Miracle

#### • Peter Swims to Shore

Upon hearing that it was Jesus, Peter put on his outer garment (probably a cloak or robe; he might have worn just a tunic for work) and started swimming for shore. This may show Peter's impulsiveness. The other disciples stayed in the boat to come to Jesus.

### 21:9-14 The Disciples Join Jesus on the Shore

Jesus had prepared a fire on the shore. Peter brought in the net with 153 fish. Jesus told them to bring some of the fish that they had caught for their breakfast. Eating with Jesus was part of their experience with Him that would allow them to testify about Him effectively (Acts 10:41). As Jesus distributed the bread and the fish, they may well have thought of other times

by that lake in which Jesus had divided far fewer fish among far bigger crowds (6:5-13 || Matthew 14:15-21 || Mark 6:35-44 || Luke 9:12-17; see also Matthew 15:32-39 || Mark 8:1-10). The people by that sea who had wanted to force Him to be king (6:15) ultimately had rejected Him (6:66), and their countrymen had killed Him, but He had become the true king. John counts this as the third appearance of Jesus to His disciples. The first two appearances to all or almost all of them are in 20:19-29. John was not counting appearances to individuals or small groups, such as Mary Magdalene or the two who were walking to Emmaus (20:14-18; Luke 24:13-35).

### **21:15-19 Jesus Asks Peter If He Loves Him**

Jesus asked Peter three times if he loved Him. Jesus would show Peter shortly how much truly loving Him would require of him.

#### **• Peter Must Tend Christ's Sheep**

The first two times Jesus asked if Peter loved Him, Jesus used the Greek word *agapao*, which signified the highest form of love. Peter responded each time that he loved Jesus, but he used the weaker word *phileo*, which could be used for a love that friends have. Peter was not answering Jesus in the way he needed to answer Him. The third time Jesus used Peter's weaker verb, perhaps causing Peter to think about whether he really loved Jesus even in the lesser way that he had claimed. Many have thought that Jesus' three questions corresponded to Peter's three denials while Jesus was on trial (18:15-27).

Each time Jesus responded to Peter's answer by telling him to take care of His sheep. Peter would later do that and teach others how to tend the flock as well (1 Peter 5:1-4). Jesus remains the Chief Shepherd (Hebrews 13:20), but has others serve as shepherds under Him.

#### **• Peter's Death Is Predicted**

##### **Signs**

##### **Glorify**

Peter would not only need to take care of the sheep, but to die for his faith as well. Jesus signified how Peter would die at a later time. Jesus implied that Peter would also be crucified. Peter's eventual martyrdom would glorify God. Jesus then instructed Peter to follow Him. Though the whole conversation must have been difficult for Peter, Jesus' statement of his future martyrdom was actually an expression of confidence in him. Peter would no longer deny Jesus, he would love Jesus fully, and he would tend Jesus' sheep. We do not have a record of Peter's crucifixion in the Bible, but Peter does refer to his impending death later (2 Peter 1:14; consider John 13:36), and we have strong evidence from sources outside of the Bible that Jesus' prediction was correct. Some of our duties in Christ's kingdom will be different than Peter's, but we all must love Christ completely and be willing to serve Him until death.

### **21:20-23 Peter Asks about Another's Death**

Peter (perhaps being impulsive again) turned around and asked Jesus about another disciple (almost certainly John). Jesus told Peter that speaking of how the other disciple would die or whether he would die before His coming was not the point of their conversation. What was important was for both of them to follow Him, as He had said to Peter in 21:19. In addition to the evidence in Chapter 19 that “the disciple whom Jesus loved” was also the author of the gospel (19:26, 35), some information from outside the New Testament indicates that John lived a very long life; that might help to explain the misconception that the disciple would never die.

## 21:24-25 John Gives His Testimony

John finished the book with his personal testimony (19:35).

### • Many More Things Are Left Unrecorded

#### Signs

#### World

John affirmed the truth of his testimony. He also said that many of the things Jesus did (probably including signs) were unrecorded. The world might not be able to contain all that could be written about Jesus' acts if all of them had been recorded.

We have only a small part of Jesus' life recorded in this gospel and in the other gospels. What we have is enough to know that He is the Christ and the Son of God (1:1; 20:30-31).

In our next lesson we will study how Jesus was glorified throughout the Gospel of John.

## Questions

What are some similarities between the account in Luke 5:1-11 and the catch of fish in 21:1-8?

How did Jesus address the disciples before they knew that it was He who was calling them (21:5)?

What are some similarities between the Feeding of the Five Thousand in 6:5-13 and the meal that Jesus and some disciples had on the shore (21:9-13)?

Which part of Jesus' first question to Peter was left out of His second question to Peter (21:15-16)?

When Peter asked Jesus about the fate of the other disciple, what did Jesus say was unimportant (21:21-22)?

What was important for all of the disciples?

Jesus told Peter to shepherd His sheep (21:16). Where in the New Testament can you find other commands to shepherd God's people?

Jesus said, "Follow Me!" in 21:19, 22. Where else in John can you find Jesus using the same phrase?

## Other Readings

John 13:36-38; Luke 5:1-11; 1 Peter 5:1-4; 2 Peter 1:13-14

## Parallels in Other Gospels

Jesus' appearance in Galilee (21:1-24) is also found in Matthew 28:16-20.

# Glorification in John

## "Glorify Your Son, That the Son May Glorify You" (17:1)

### Main Points:

#### **Glorify**

- True glory comes only from God.
- Jesus was glorious in His nature and glorified God by His works and sacrifice.
- Christians can glorify God by living and dying for Jesus.

Having completed the text of John, we close the series by studying two important topics in John. The first of these is glorification. What the world considers to be glorious and what God says is glorious are two entirely different things.

In this study, we will first study the source of glory, or from whom true glory comes. After that, we will examine the glorification of Jesus, including how He had received His glory and the things that He did that glorified Himself on the earth. The last section of the lesson shows us how Christians can glorify God today.

### The Source of Glory

Jesus did not seek to glorify Himself, but received His honor from the Father (8:50-54). Having that attitude set Him at odds with the people of His day, who thought they were honoring God when they were really glorifying themselves in the wrong way. He would not accept the kind of glory men would give, which they would often seek from one another, because He wanted true glory from God alone (5:41, 44). Jesus was not speaking from His own will, but from His Father's, because He was only seeking His Father's glory (7:16-18). As He prayed to His Father with the cross just hours away, He could ask the Father for **the glory He had possessed while with the Father because He had done what the Father had needed Him to do** (17:4-5). These two truths from the last passage will be emphasized in our next point: **Jesus had glory when He was with the Father before coming to the earth** and **He was further glorified by fulfilling the Father's will**.

### How Jesus Was Glorified

Jesus received glory from God in several ways, particularly through His obedience to His Father.

#### • By His Nature

Jesus had glory because of who He was (and is). Men on earth who were willing to examine His life and teaching would see the unique glory that He possessed because of His unique relationship with the Father (1:14). Being the Son of God and God the Son was glorious in itself. Because of His divine nature, the Spirit would glorify Him in revelation (16:12-15). What was the Father's and the Son's was what the Spirit would teach. No man can claim that kind of relationship with the Father and the Holy Spirit, but Jesus has from eternity shared the nature of God and has infinite glory in that respect.

#### • By His Works

Jesus was also glorified by His works while on earth. The miracles that He performed, such as changing the water into wine at Cana, displayed His glory (2:9-11). Even in doing them He did not seek personal glory by putting on a show, but simply provided the evidence required to verify the divine origin of Himself and His teaching. Another example is seen in the raising of Lazarus. God's glory was displayed in the miracle, and the Son of God was glorified as a result (11:4, 40). By doing what only God could do in the way God wanted it done, Jesus was glorified and His claims were demonstrated to be true.



### • By His Crucifixion

Sometimes in John men tried to glorify Jesus or get Him to glorify Himself in the wrong ways. After Jesus had fed five thousand men, the crowd intended to take Him by force and make Him king (6:15). Jesus' brothers, who did not believe in Him at the time, told Him that he ought to show Himself to the world at the Feast of Tabernacles if He wanted men to follow Him (7:3-8). Those ways were not God's way of glorifying Jesus - God would use the cross. Men do not associate glory with being executed, but God glorified Jesus in that way.

Several times John refers to the time of the crucifixion and the events around it as the time of Jesus' glorification. 7:37-39 explains that the Holy Spirit had not come because Jesus had not yet been glorified. The disciples did not understand the significance of the events at the Triumphal Entry until after Jesus had been glorified (12:12-16). Jesus specifically connected His glorification with His death (as a seed dies to produce fruit) in 12:23-25. The Father's voice glorified His own name and by doing so confirmed that Jesus' imminent death was necessary to achieve the glorious result of casting out Satan and drawing men to the Christ on the cross (12:27-33). Immediately before His arrest, Jesus prayed to the Father to glorify Him so that He could glorify the Father and bring eternal life (17:1-2). Through the horror and humiliation of the crucifixion Jesus gained eternal glory.

### How We Can Glorify God

The Gospel of John speaks not only of how Jesus glorified His Father, but it also tells us how we can glorify God as Christians. All true glory comes from God, and we can reflect that glory and lead other men to glorify our Lord. Some of the ways we can glorify God are related to the ways in which Jesus glorified the Father.

### • Asking in Faith

When Jesus was speaking to His disciples on the night of His arrest, He told them that God would be glorified in Him when He fulfilled the requests of His disciples (14:12-15). Similar statements about being confident of receiving our requests are given to all Christians, not just the disciples present with Jesus on that occasion (Matthew 7:7; James 1:5-8; 1 John 5:14-15). Having a sincere and obedient faith is necessary to make the kind of request that glorifies God.

### • Living for Christ

In 15:7-8, making requests of God is connected with bearing fruit, which also glorifies the Father. How Christians live their lives and bear fruit glorifies God. The good things that we do reflect upon Him. Shortly before His arrest, Jesus noted in His prayer that He had been glorified in His disciples (17:9-11). Faithful Christians united in Christ bring glory to their leader. Jesus also prayed that, as He had given His disciples glory, that they would be unified and one day see His glory from His Father (17:22-24). A faithful life glorifies Christ and allows the one who has lived it to see His glory for all eternity (Matthew 5:16).

### • Suffering for Christ

Not only faithful living but faithful dying glorifies Christ. After asking Peter if he loved Him three times, Jesus prophesied that Peter would be crucified as His Lord had been and thus glorify God (21:18-19; see also 1 Peter 4:12-16). The following verses show that not all faithful people would have to die in that way, but for some, a faithful death will be the outgrowth of a faithful life. No matter what our earthly fate may be, we need to follow Christ in everything we do (21:20-22) and thus glorify our Lord.

Jesus was glorified by His complete obedience to God's will, even when it cost Him everything physically. If we have the same attitude about God's revealed will, loving it enough to let it rule our lives (even at the cost of our lives), we will glorify God in our lives.

The final lesson is on a topic that has not been explicitly emphasized in this workbook but runs throughout the Gospel of John: love. All glory comes from the one who loves most of all.

## ***Questions***

How does John describe the glory of Jesus, the Word made flesh, at the beginning of His gospel (1:14)?

In 5:44, Jesus told His listeners that they could not believe because they were not seeking glory from God. Where were they seeking glory?

What did Jesus say in 11:1-4 was being used for the glory of God?

In 12:37-42, John quotes Isaiah 53:1; 6:9-10 and says that Isaiah saw “His” glory. Based on the context, whose glory specifically had Isaiah seen?

How did Jesus say the Holy Spirit would glorify Him in 16:13-15?

Find at least two other examples in the other gospels of miracles that caused people to glorify God. (Hint: Use a concordance to find “glorified” or “glorifying”.)

Find some of the things that caused glory to be given to God concerning His judgments in Revelation.

## ***Other Readings***

John 12:12-33; 17:1-5; Luke 13:10-17; Revelation 19:1-4

# Love in John

## "For God So Loved the World" (3:16)

### Main Points:

#### Love

- The Father and the Son showed an unconquerable love for each other.
- Jesus showed a selfless love for all of the people around Him.
- A complete love for Jesus demands a willingness to die for Him if necessary.

Love is a thread woven throughout the Gospel of John, even when the word is not used. 3:16 is probably the most famous statement of God's love for the world. The Father's sending His Son was done out of love. Saving man from eternal death was an act of love by God. Sending light into a world of darkness was love. People usually know love first from their families; offering man an opportunity to be part of God's family, to be adopted as sons, was a tremendous act of love by the Father (1 John 3:1). In this lesson we want to learn more about the love that God had and has for us and how a true love for what God has done for us should move us to obey Him.

### God's Love

#### • The Father's and the Son's Love for Each Other

The Father's love for the Son included giving Him all things (3:34-35). It also included showing the Son all that He was doing (5:19-20), which illustrated the oneness that was shared between Father and Son. One reason the Father loved Jesus was His willingness to be the sacrifice for sin (10:17). He stayed in the love of His Father by obeying Him (15:10). He showed His love by zealously cleansing His Father's house (2:14-17). Jesus went to the cross because He loved His Father (14:30-31). The love between them had existed before the world had (17:24).

#### • Jesus' Love for His Disciples and All People

Jesus loved His disciples as His Father had loved Him (15:9; 17:26), which is the greatest love imaginable. He showed love in giving His life for His sheep (10:11-18; 15:12-13; Revelation 1:5), and that is the way we know what love is (1 John 3:16). His love extended to practical service, washing their feet as He taught them humility (13:1-10). He lovingly prayed for a true unity among His disciples, present and future (17:15-23). He made sure that they were not taken when He was arrested (18:8). While Jesus felt a special love for His disciples, His love was not limited to them. He loved all people. 14:21-24 illustrates how Jesus made that love, which included His presence in this life and eternal salvation in the next, available to all who would obey. He also shared the love His Father had for the whole world (3:16).

#### • Jesus' Love for Individuals

Jesus not only showed love for His disciples and the world as a whole, He also showed love for many individuals and groups of people. Jesus taught the woman at the well and many other Samaritans despite the hatred that most Jews and Samaritans had for each other (4:1-42). He showed love for the people who had come to hear Him teach, helping them despite the fact that many of them would turn on Him (6:1-13, 60-66). He lovingly showed mercy to the woman who had been caught in adultery and brought to Him by unscrupulous scribes and Pharisees (8:3-11). He showed a selfless love by providing for His mother's care while Himself dying on the cross (19:25-27).

## **Man's Reactions to God's Love**

### **• Others' Love for Jesus**

Other instances of the love that Jesus had for others were reflected in the love that others had for Him. In Bethany, Mary's anointing His feet (12:1-8) was a reflection of the love He had shown for her family (11:5). Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus may have risked their positions in society to take care of His body after the crucifixion (19:38-42). Mary Magdalene showed devotion to Him after His resurrection (20:14-17).

### **• Hatred by Jesus' Enemies**

Many men did not return Jesus' love because they did not love the truth (3:19). The world as a whole is often pictured as hostile to Jesus. The world hated Jesus and would also hate His disciples (15:18-25; 17:14), with some even thinking that they were doing the right thing by persecuting them (16:1-2). The world was happy when Jesus had been killed (16:20).

Jesus did not return the hatred from His enemies. He loved them enough to try to correct them (Revelation 3:19). The warning and admonishing that Jesus did so often through debate and discussion was an expression of love, though it was not perceived as such by many of the people involved. Jesus even reached out to Judas shortly before the betrayal, sharing food with him at the supper, but Judas spurned the love that had been offered to him (13:21-30). God still reaches out to those who have turned from Him today.

## **Love in John's Epistles**

John would make some related points about love when writing his epistles. He said that no one could love God without loving other men (1 John 2:7-10; 3:10-12; 2 John 5-6). He showed that one cannot love the world (see the section above) and God at the same time (1 John 2:15-17). He said that God was love, and men could not know what love was without God's having sent His Son (1 John 4:7-12). When people love in the way Jesus did, perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:16-21). As we will see in our next section, loving God requires keeping His commandments (1 John 5:1-3).

## **What Love Demands**

Jesus made very clear that a true love for Him required keeping His commandments (13:34-35; 14:15, 21-24). John also records how some of the rulers were unacceptable to God because they loved men's approval more than His (12:42-43). Jesus demanded that men accept Him completely to be right with His Father (8:42). He made exclusive claims and expected much from His followers. He still does. Following Jesus is not a casual matter or something that can be successfully accomplished by the partially committed.

Peter thought that his love for Jesus was complete, saying that he was willing to die for Him, but Jesus knew that he did not yet measure up to love's demand (13:36-38). Peter confirmed Jesus' judgment about his lack of love when he denied Jesus (18:15-18, 25-27). After His resurrection, Jesus would show Peter that he would grow to have the kind of love that would cause Him to die for Jesus (21:15-19). The same kind of love is demanded of each of us. Would Jesus have the same conversation with us that He did with Peter? Will we love God enough to obey Him completely and to die for Him if necessary?

## **Questions**

According to 3:19, what did men choose to love instead of God's truth?

What did Jesus say was true of the person who did not love Him (8:42)?

What is the standard that Jesus gave for the kind of love Christians should have for one another (13:34-35)?

What did Jesus promise the person who would love Him and keep His commandments (14:21-23)?

Why did Jesus say that the Father loved His disciples in 16:26-27?

Read 1 John 3-4. What is said to be true of the one who loves his brother in those chapters?

In Mark 10, Jesus was said to have felt love for a certain person. What did Jesus tell that person to do?

### ***Other Readings***

John 3:14-21; 15:9-19; Mark 10:17-31; 1 John 2:4-10; 3:10-24



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