



THE GOSPEL OF JOHN
The Personal Teachings
of Jesus

A Bible Teaching Commentary
for personal or group study
by Fred Morris



JOHN Part 1
Chapters 1 to 11

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: Part 1, Chapters 1 to 11

- **Understanding the mind and heart of Jesus**
- **The personal things Jesus said to His followers**
- **Knowing more about the love of God through His Son**

- **Bringing others to Jesus in order to know God**
- **Finding the peace, purpose and power of God**
- **The faith and power to heal and change lives today**

THIS BOOK gives us a deeper understanding of the teachings of Jesus. This is because John was the closest friend of Jesus. John therefore helps us to know more about Jesus and more about Almighty God, the Father of Jesus. John also shows us the faith we can have in Jesus and the love and mercy of God and the miraculous power of His Holy Spirit.

MANNA PUBLICATIONS publish small Bible teaching commentaries written by Fred Morris. For many years Fred, and his wife Lorna, travelled round the world teaching and preaching. His books are easy to read, understand and translate into other languages. They give basic teaching to use on your own or to study in a group, plus additional notes for Bible students, teachers and pastors.

THESE BOOKS will help you to understand the truth from Almighty God. He is worshipped by millions of Jews and Christians worldwide. These books will also help you to receive salvation and eternal life through God's Son, Jesus the Christ who is Israel's Messiah. They will help you to talk about your faith in God and to pray to Him. They will help to guide you from going the wrong way in life. They will help you to live a life that is pleasing to God through the love and power of His Holy Spirit. This was promised to all believers after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus who believe He is the Son of God.

WE PRAY that you may have a new peace and purpose in life as you trust in God, read the Bible and use these commentaries. As you study the Old and New Testament truth from God, think about what Jesus taught and suffered 2000 years ago for your salvation and what He is calling you to say and do today to prepare the way for His return.

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THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: Part 1, Chapters 1 to 11

INTRODUCTION

In the Bible, two great men had the name John. John the Baptist or Baptiser and John the disciple or apostle. The Apostle John wrote this book. He was a disciple of Jesus. A disciple is a learner and a follower. Apostle means a messenger of God.

John the Apostle was the son of a fisherman. His mother was one of the women who supported Jesus (Matthew 27:55-56). He lived longer than the other apostles. He wrote these words about

50 years after Jesus ascended to Heaven.

John's book is different from other books about Jesus. His book explains some of the personal teachings of Jesus in detail. John was the closest friend and disciple of Jesus. He therefore gives us a deeper understanding of Jesus and the truth of God.

John helps us to know God through knowing Jesus. His writings explain the love of God in sending Jesus to die for our sins.

The Holy Spirit will guide you when you read John's writings. We must be ready to listen. These words are part of the Christian Bible. They are God's truth to us, which can change the way we live, now and forever.



The Four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke & John

There are three other books or gospels about Jesus. They are written by Matthew, Mark and Luke. They tell about the birth, teachings and works of Jesus. They also tell us about the death of Jesus as punishment for our sins, and how God brought Him back to life.

John the Apostle does not mention the early life of Jesus. Matthew and Luke wrote their books several years earlier for believers to read. John wrote down mainly new teachings of Jesus.

Matthew begins his book with Mary and Joseph. They knew that the baby carried by Mary was Jesus, God's Son. It tells how Mary and Joseph and the baby Jesus escaped to Egypt from the wicked King Herod. Matthew tells about the baptism of Jesus and His temptation by Satan.

Luke begins his book with the miracle births of Jesus and John the Baptiser. It tells what happened in the Temple when Jesus was eight days old. In addition, what happened when He was twelve years old (Luke 1:26 to 2:52).

Mark begins his book with the preaching ministry of John the Baptiser. John prepared the way for the ministry of Jesus.



Bible reading: John 1:1-13

JESUS IS GOD AND CREATOR

John wanted everyone to know about Jesus Christ. He said, "In the beginning was the Word" (John 1:1). 'The Word' is one of John's names for Jesus. It means 'the Voice' or 'the Word of God'. John said, 'The Word was with God and the Word was God.'

Jesus was with God at the beginning, before the creation of the world (1:2; 17:5). John said, "All things were made through [by, KJV] Him" (1:3).

Christians believe that Almighty God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). We call this Trinity, three in one. The Bible tells us what the Holy Trinity did at the beginning of the world. It says, "Let US make man in OUR likeness" (Genesis 1:26).

JESUS IS LIFE AND LIGHT

Jesus created all things. He is therefore life itself. 'That life was the light for all people' (John 1:4). Jesus left Heaven to be born as a baby without sin. In this way, the Son of God came to live with us as a man. He came down from Heaven for a short time over 2000 years ago. He came as life and light into a dark world of sin. He came to help us to know right from wrong.

There was no special light around Jesus' head. The light John spoke of was not that kind of light. Jesus came to rescue us from the darkness of sin. His light is stronger than the darkness (1:5). His light overcomes Satan's darkness. His light is the truth of God, which brings new life.

If we choose to walk in the darkness of sin, we do not receive the life of Christ. Nor do we understand the light of Christ.



The names that John used to describe Jesus

- The Word or voice of God (1:1-2, 14).
- The Life or nature of God (1:4; 14:6).
- The Light of the world (1:4-5, 9; 8:12).
- A human being (1:14, Philippians 2:6-8).
- The Son of God (1:14, 34; 3:16-17).
- Jesus the Christ, the Jewish Messiah (1:41).
- The Lamb of God (1:29).
- God's special Anointed One (1:26-30).
- The Son of Man (3:13).
- The bread of life (6:35, 48).
- The Good Shepherd (10:11).
- The resurrection and the life after death (11:21).

The Hebrew name of Jesus is Yeshua which means Saviour.

The writer of the book of Hebrews tells us: 'In the past, God spoke to us through the prophets. [He spoke] at many times and in different ways. However, in the Last Days, He has spoken to us through His Son ... God made everything through Him. He is the bright light of God's glory. He is the exact likeness of God. He provided the way for people to be pure and free from sin. Then He went back and sat down at the right hand of God in Heaven' (Hebrews 1:1-4).

JOHN THE BAPTISER PREPARES THE WAY FOR JESUS

Over 2000 years ago, another man came from God. He was John the Baptist and the last of the Old Testament Prophets of God (1:6). He came to bring a special message from God to the people of Israel. He prepared the way for Jesus, Israel's Messiah. This promise was given long ago in the Old Testament writings (Malachi 3:1; Isaiah 40:3).

John the Baptist came as a witness to Jesus (John 1:7). God gave him great words to speak (Matthew 3:1-3). He came to make men's hearts ready to receive Jesus their Messiah, or Christ.

John the Baptist was not the light from God, but a witness of it (John 1:7-8). He pointed men and women to Jesus. Jesus is the true light (1:9). Through Jesus, all people can know the truth about Almighty God. Through Jesus, we are saved (Acts 16:31).

Jesus came to His own people of Israel. He was born a Jew, but many of the Jews did not want Him (1:10-11). Many of the religious leaders at that time turned against Him. Some wanted to kill Him.

However, those who received Him as their Messiah are called children of God (1:12). This includes people who are not Jews. Jesus forgives all who choose to follow him. He enables them to become children of God. God promised this gift to all who put their faith in Jesus as their Saviour from sin. They are born again into a new life with God (1:13).



The truth that John believed about Jesus

- Jesus is God (1:1).
- Jesus is with God (1:1).
- Jesus was at the beginning before the world was created (1:1-2).
- God created all things through Jesus (1:3).
- Jesus brought eternal life for all who believed in Him (1:4; 1 John 5:11).
- His life brings the light of God to all people (1:4).
- His light from God is more powerful than all the darkness in the world (1:5; 8:12).

By faith in God's promise, we are joined into His family. This is not a physical birth from the waters in a mother's womb. It is a spiritual birth by the Holy Spirit of God and witnessed through the waters of baptism.



Talk about this:

1. How is John's book different from the books written by Matthew, Mark and Luke?
2. Why did Jesus have to leave Heaven and become a man?
3. Who can claim that they are a child of God (John 1:12-13)?



Think about this: What do you understand that John says about Jesus? How can we know God personally through Jesus?



Bible reading: John 1:14–51

JESUS CAME FROM HEAVEN TO SHOW US GOD

John the Apostle knew Jesus and His mother very well. The words of John are true. He wrote these words about Jesus: 'The Word became a human being. He made His home with us. We have seen His glory. It is the glory of the one and only Son. He came from the Father' (1:14).

Jesus Christ came and showed the world what God, the Father, was like. He was full of His Father's grace and truth (1:14).

Jesus came from Heaven and lived on Earth. He lived as a man, in a body like ours. He suffered as a man, and died as a man. Then God the Father raised Him from death and seated Him at His right hand. He did this so that all believers could enjoy everlasting life with the Son of God in Heaven (3:16). This is the love and salvation plan of Almighty God through Jesus our Saviour.

THE PURPOSE OF JOHN THE BAPTISER

John the Baptist came to witness about Jesus. He said, "This is the One I was talking about ... He who comes after me is more important than I am. He is more important because He existed before I was born" (1:15).

John the Baptist was a great prophet. However, Jesus was much greater. He was the promised Messiah or Christ.

John the Apostle said that through Jesus, we received many blessings. 'God's grace is not limited. Moses gave us the Law. Jesus Christ gave us grace and truth' (1:16-17). The grace and truth of God received through Jesus is a great blessing. It is greater than the grace and truth of God received through the Law of Moses.

John the Apostle also said that no-one has ever seen God. He then repeats that Jesus has shown us what God is like (1:18).

The religious leaders wanted to know who John the Baptist was (1:19). They found him preaching and baptising people in the River Jordan. He said, "I am not the Christ" (1:20).

They asked him again and again, "Who are you?" (1:21, 22). They were worried that John would cause trouble with the Roman rulers.

John told them he was not the promised Messiah. He was not someone like Moses or Elijah. He answered them with the words from Isaiah the prophet. "I am the messenger who is calling in the desert. 'Make the way for the Lord straight'" (1:23; Isaiah 40:3).

The religious leaders knew these words from Isaiah. However, they had further questions for John (1:25).

"I baptise people with water", John replied. "But One is standing among you whom you do not know ... I am not good enough to untie His sandals" (1:26-27). John meant God's Anointed One, the Messiah, Jesus the Christ. John knew that God wanted people to follow Jesus. John was a great messenger but he did not want any glory for himself.

JOHN SAYS THAT JESUS IS THE LAMB OF GOD

When John the Baptist saw Jesus the next day, he said, "Look! The Lamb of God! He takes away the sin of the world!" (1:29).

The Jews used healthy lambs without fault for sacrifice in their worship of God. This was necessary to forgive sins. God offered His Son as a final sacrifice without fault for the sins of the world. This is why Jesus is sometimes called the Lamb of God. Christians often say, "We are saved by the blood of the Lamb."



The Baptism of Jesus

The Bible books written by Matthew and Mark tell us about the baptism of Jesus.

While John baptised people, Jesus came to ask John to baptise Him (Matthew 3:13-15). Jesus was not baptised for forgiveness of sins. He did not need to repent, for He had no sin (Hebrews 4:15). However, Jesus told John that it was right for him to baptise Him. It was necessary for others to see this.

When Jesus came up out of the water three things happened (Mark 1:10-11):

- Heaven opened.
- The Holy Spirit came down and rested on Jesus.
- A voice spoke to Him from Heaven, "You are My Son and I love You. I am very pleased with You."

From that moment, John fully believed that Jesus was truly Israel's Messiah, God's Anointed One, the Christ.

John the Baptizer repeated that Jesus was more important than he was. Jesus was from the beginning of time (1:30).

John was sent by God to baptise people with water. God wanted him to show Israel that Jesus is their Messiah and Saviour. They knew God but did not know the Son of God (1:31). John baptised Jesus. John told them, "I saw the Spirit come down from Heaven like a dove. The Spirit remained on Jesus... He is the One who will baptise with the Holy Spirit" (1:31-33).

When we receive Jesus Christ as our Saviour, God gives us the Holy Spirit. We become children of God.

John the Baptizer ended his testimony about Jesus with these words. "I have seen it happen. And I give witness that this is the Son of God" (1:34).



The power in the blood of Jesus to forgive sin

In the Old Testament Law, sinners were cleansed with sacrificed blood. Without the spilling of blood, no-one could be forgiven (Hebrews 9:22). The Jews sacrificed lambs that were perfect in every way (Numbers 29:17). Jesus Christ came to die to take away sin for all time (John 1:29). His own sacrifice of innocent blood on the cross was enough to take away all the sin in the world. This was true then and is true today and forever, for those who believe He is the Son of God (Hebrews 9:12). John the Apostle wrote that the blood of Jesus cleans us from all sin (1 John 1:7).

Jesus is holy and without sin. He died to take away the sin of the world. He is 'the Lamb of God'. He was perfect in every way. He is now the only One who can forgive sin. This is possible through the blood of Jesus. There is power in the blood of the Lamb of God (Revelations 12:11). We are saved by the blood of the Lamb.

JESUS CHOOSES HIS DISCIPLES

The next day, John the Baptizer told two of his close friends about Jesus (1:35). He told them once again, "Look, the Lamb of God" (1:36). They began then to follow Jesus as His disciples. The purpose and ministry of John was now complete. He was happy that his friends followed Jesus.

Jesus turned round and saw them following. He asked, "What do you want [seek, KJV]?" (1:38). These words are the first words of Jesus written by John the Apostle. Jesus invited them, "Come with Me and see" (1:39)

The two disciples spent the rest of the day talking with Jesus (1:39). They began to find the peace, purpose and power of God in their lives through following Jesus.

One of the disciples was Andrew. Andrew ran to find his brother Simon. Andrew told Simon, "We have found the Messiah [Anointed One, KJV]" (that is, the Christ). Then he brought his brother to meet Jesus (1:41).

Jesus told Simon that one day he would be known as Peter, which means a strong rock (1:42). Simon (Peter) later helped to start groups of Christian believers around the world (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 2:20). This is church planting.

The next day, Jesus called Philip to follow him (John 1:43). Philip, Andrew and Simon (Peter) were from Bethsaida (1:44). This town was on the northeast shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Philip found Nathaniel and told him, "We have found the One Moses wrote about. The [Old Testament] prophets also wrote about Him. He is Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph" (1:45). Philip believed Jesus was the Messiah.

At first, Nathaniel wrongly judged Jesus because He came from Nazareth (1:46). However, Nathaniel soon changed his mind. He said, "You are the Son of God. You are the promised King of Israel" (1:49). God helped Nathaniel to understand. Instead of listening to what others said about Nazareth, he listened to Jesus the Son of God, from Nazareth.

Jesus then claimed that He was more important than the angels of God (1:51).



Talk about this:

1. What blessing have you received from God (1:16)?
2. What has Jesus shown us that helps us to know God better (1:18)?
3. What things did John the Baptist say about Jesus (1:29-30, 33-35)? What was John's purpose (1:31)?
4. What did Jesus say to the disciples of John? Tell what happened next (1:38-42).
5. What did Peter's new name mean for his future life (1:42; Matthew 16:18)?
6. Whose son did Nathaniel believe Jesus was (1:45, 49)? What changed his mind?
7. What did Jesus know about angels (1:51)?



Bringing others to follow Jesus

The first words of Jesus written by John are "What do you want [seek, KJV]?" (1:38). If we bring people to Jesus, they must be ready to answer this question.

The next words of Jesus are, "Come and see". If we bring people to meet Jesus, we should say, "Come and see for yourself" (1:39). We cannot force them to believe in Jesus.

If we bring people to Jesus, some might believe and become great servants of God (like Simon, 1:42). Some will be quick to believe in Jesus and tell others (like Philip, 1:45). Some will doubt at first (like Nathaniel, 1:46). Some will be given a divine revelation (1:49).



Think about this: The first words of Jesus written down by John are: "What do you want [seek, KJV]?" (1:38). How would you answer His question? How would you help others to answer this same question? How can you show others that Jesus is their Saviour (1:31)?



Bible reading: John Chapter 2

JESUS GOES TO A WEDDING

Jesus and His disciples went to a wedding at a home in Cana (2:1). His mother was there with Him.

Jewish weddings were always times of great joy and feasting. There was normally enough food and wine for all the guests. However, the people in Cana soon drank all the wine so there was none left.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, said to Him, "They have no more wine" (2:3). This was a huge embarrassment to the Jewish parents.

"Dear woman, why do you bring Me into this?" Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come" (2:4).

Mary knew that Jesus was sent by God (Luke 1:35). She wanted Jesus to perform a miracle. But she did not know when it was the right time for Him to show this to the people.

The servants did not know what to do. Mary said to them: "Do what Jesus tells you to do" (2:5). She did not know what Jesus would do, but her faith in Him was strong. She expected a miracle.

Six jars for water stood nearby. Jesus told the servants, "Fill the jars with water." So they filled the jars to the top. Then He told them, "Now draw some out. Take it to the person in charge of the feast" (2:7-8).

The master of the Feast tasted the water. It was now the best quality wine (2:9).

John tells us that this was the first miracle of Jesus. It brought Jesus praise. It also helped the disciples to believe in Him (2:11).



The marriage feast where Jesus turned water into wine

JESUS DRIVES OUT THE MARKET SELLERS

Later, Jesus, His mother, His brothers and His disciples went to the city of Capernaum. This was where He spent a lot of time in His ministry.

After a few days, Jesus and His disciples went to Jerusalem (2:13). It was almost time for the Passover Feast. Every year at Passover, thousands of Jewish believers came to the city. They came to worship God at the Temple. They came from every nation. They came to remember the day when God delivered His people out of Egypt 1500 years before the time of Jesus (Exodus chapter 12).

Jesus went into the courtyards that surrounded the Temple. He saw all who were buying and selling things there (John 2:14). The market sellers had tables to change money. Others sold animals or birds for sacrifice at the Temple.

Jesus became angry and sent them all out of the Temple courtyards. He shouted at them, "You have turned My Father's house into a marketplace" (2:16). These market sellers were there to earn money. The Temple was built for worship and prayer to God. Jesus later quoted the words of Isaiah, "My house will be called a house where people from all nations can pray" (11:17; Isaiah 56:7).

The religious leaders did not understand. His disciples remembered later what is written in the Old Testament writings. These holy writings say, 'My great love for Your house will destroy Me' (2:17; Psalm 69:9). Jesus fulfilled this prophecy. His great passion for teaching, worship, prayer and divine guidance gave Him authority to demand obedience to God His Father.

The religious leaders recognised Jesus. They asked Him to do a miracle to prove that He had authority to say these things (2:18). They demanded proof yet refused to believe!

Jesus answered, "Destroy this temple and I will raise it up again in three days" (2:19). They thought He wanted to destroy their Temple. The temple that Jesus meant was His own body (2:21). Jesus said this to give them a sign of His death and resurrection.

Jesus already knew that if they killed Him, God would raise Him up again after three days. Afterwards, the disciples remembered the holy writings and the words of Jesus and believed them (2:22).

He left the greedy men of the Temple. He had become their enemy. Their religious system was empty. Its leaders and priests were not listening to God. Instead, God moved on and did a new thing in Jesus without them. He left them to their traditions and their buildings. Their worship was empty and their hearts were cold. The Temple and all its sacrifices would soon be destroyed by the Roman army. This happened in AD 70.

However, many people believed who Jesus was. They believed in the miracles He did (2:23). But He did not trust them all. He knew what was in their hearts (2:25).



Talk about this:

1. How does the miracle of the water turned into wine show the love of Jesus?
2. Describe the events the Jews remember at Passover (Exodus 12).
3. Explain the words about Jesus from the Old Testament writings (Psalm 69:9).
4. What did the Jews think Jesus said about their Temple? What did He prophecy about His body (2:19-21; Matthew 27:40)?
5. What did the disciples and the crowds believe about Jesus (2:22, 23)?



Think about this: Why did Mary tell the servants to talk to Jesus (2:5)? Do we have faith in Jesus to tell others to listen to Him? Do we have faith to expect miracles from Jesus? How does that response of Jesus at the wedding and in the Temple courtyard show His compassion for needy people? What authority do we have under God's Holy Spirit anointing?



Pray about this: Ask God to increase your faith in Jesus. Pray for faith to expect miracles from Him. Invite the Holy Spirit to help you to talk to others about Jesus.



Bible reading: John Chapter 3

NICODEMUS COMES TO JESUS

A Jew named Nicodemus was a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night.

Nicodemus wanted to know more about Jesus. He said, "We know You are a teacher who has come from God. We know that God is with you" (3:2).

Nicodemus believed in the one true Almighty God whom Jews and Christians worship. Jesus knew that this man tried to keep the laws of Moses. He lived a holy life. He believed that Jesus was sent from God and was a great teacher and worked miracles. But that was not enough. He now needed to believe that Jesus was the Messiah, or Christ, and the Son of God. He needed to begin a new life as a follower of Jesus Christ.

John the Apostle then tells his readers what Jesus taught. What He taught Nicodemus is important for all tribes and nations today.

JESUS SAYS "YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN"

Jesus replied to Nicodemus. "What I am about to tell you is true. No-one can see God's Kingdom without being born again" (3:3).

"How can I be born when I am old?" Nicodemus asked. "I cannot be born a second time!" (3:4).

Jesus repeated His words. "What I am about to tell you is true. No-one can enter God's Kingdom without being born through [of, KJV] water and through [of, KJV] the Holy Spirit" (3:5). Women give birth to babies within the waters of their womb. But Jesus said that the Holy Spirit gives a new birth to the spirit within us (3:6). "You should not be surprised when I say, 'You must all be born again'" (3:7).

This happens when we turn from sin and believe that Jesus was sent from God to save us. The Holy Spirit comes upon us and lives within us when we are free from sin. We receive a new life (Corinthians 5:17). We are born again.

We do not know where and how the Holy Spirit works. He is like the wind. We cannot see the wind or know where it comes from or where it goes. Jesus used simple things, like the wind, to explain spiritual things. "It is the same for everyone who is born through the Spirit" (3:8).

THE TRUTH OF GOD THAT JESUS TOLD NICODEMUS

Jesus said a third time, "What I am about to tell you is true" (3:11). He knew that the religious leaders rejected the witness of Himself and His disciples. But Jesus wanted to tell Nicodemus many true things from Heaven (3:12). John the Apostle faithfully tells us what Jesus said. Millions of people have read these words and believed that they are true.

Jesus said these wonderful truths about Himself:

- Jesus, the Son of Man, came from Heaven as the Son of God (3:13). 'Son of Man' was one of the names of the promised Messiah given in the Old Testament writings.
- 'Moses lifted up the snake in the desert. The Son of Man must be lifted up also' (3:14; Numbers 21:8-9). Jesus spoke in this way about His death on the cross.
- 'Everyone who believes in Him can live with God for ever' (3:15).
- Such was the love of God for the world "that He gave His one and only Son" (3:16). Jesus died for our sins. He is Saviour.
- On the cross, the punishment and price for sin was paid by Him.
- 'Anyone who believes in Him will not die but will have eternal life' (3:16). Then all who believe in Him are forgiven forever.
- 'God did not send His Son into the world to judge [condemn, KJV] the world. He sent His Son to save the world through Him' (3:17).

The words of John 3:16-17 are famous words of God's love, purpose and provision. They fulfil the words of prophecy in Isaiah 53:4-12. These wonderful words of life that Jesus taught Nicodemus changed his life. At first his understanding was small. However, he became a secret and loving follower of Jesus. He later helped to prepare the place for the body of Jesus (19:38-42; Isaiah 53:9).

Christians have remembered the name of Nicodemus for nearly 2000 years. He knew the truth of God and he knew God personally through Jesus. The truth about Jesus and His Father set Nicodemus free from religious traditions and rules.

Jesus then warned that anyone who does not believe is judged by God (3:18). Jesus is a light in the dark world of sin. Many reject His light and choose darkness. They do evil things and are afraid of the light and truth of God (3:19-20).

He also said, 'Anyone who lives by the truth comes into the light... It will be easy to see that what he has done is with God's help' (3:21). Others will then see and understand what God has done in their lives.

WHAT JOHN THE BAPTISER SAID ABOUT JESUS

Jesus went into the villages of Judea near Jerusalem. He taught His disciples there. And He baptised new believers there (3:22).

John the Baptist also baptised people near Aenon (3:23). His disciples were upset because the disciples of Jesus were baptising more people than John (3:26).

John was not upset. 'A person can receive only what is given to him from Heaven... I am not the Christ. I was sent ahead of Him' to prepare the way for Him (3:27-28).

Then John the Baptist told a story about himself and Jesus. Jesus was the Bridegroom. John was His best friend in the story. John had been waiting for the Bridegroom to arrive. 'He is full of joy when he hears the Bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine and it is now complete' (3:29).

Now that Jesus had come, the work of John the Baptist was nearly over. He had prepared the people for their Messiah, and now they would follow Him. John said, "Jesus must become more important. I must become less important" (3:30).

Then John the Baptist explained that Jesus came from Heaven. He is greater than anyone else (3:13, 31).

Jesus told what He heard from God the Father in Heaven but few believed Him (3:32). Those who believed Jesus say, "Yes. God is truthful" (3:33).

John the Apostle wrote that the One whom God has sent from Heaven speaks God's words. And He gives the Holy Spirit fully to all who believe (3:34).

John also tells us what John the Baptist said about Jesus and about Almighty God (3:35-36):

- God the Father loves Jesus His Son.
- God has given Jesus all power. He has authority over everything.
- Anyone who believes in Jesus has eternal life.
- Anyone who does not believe will not have eternal life.
- God is sad when people reject Jesus. His judgement remains on them.



Talk about this:

1. How can a person be born into God's family (3:3-7)?
2. What did Jesus say about Nicodemus (3:10-12)?
3. What did Jesus say about Himself (3:14-15)?
4. What did Jesus say about His Father and His Father's love (3:16-17)?
5. Is Jesus the only way to God and to Heaven (3:15-16)?
6. Why did God send Jesus to die (3:16)?
7. What did John the Baptist tell his disciples about Jesus (3:27-31; 35-36)?
8. What did John learn about witnessing for Jesus (3:30)?



Think about this: Describe in your own words the wonderful teachings of God's salvation plan (3:13-20). How have they changed your life so far (3:21)? How do I let Christ live in me? How can you help others to know the wonderful truth about Jesus? Ask Jesus to give you His joy in bringing people from darkness into God's light. Ask the Holy Spirit to remove any doubts or fear others may have of meeting Jesus.

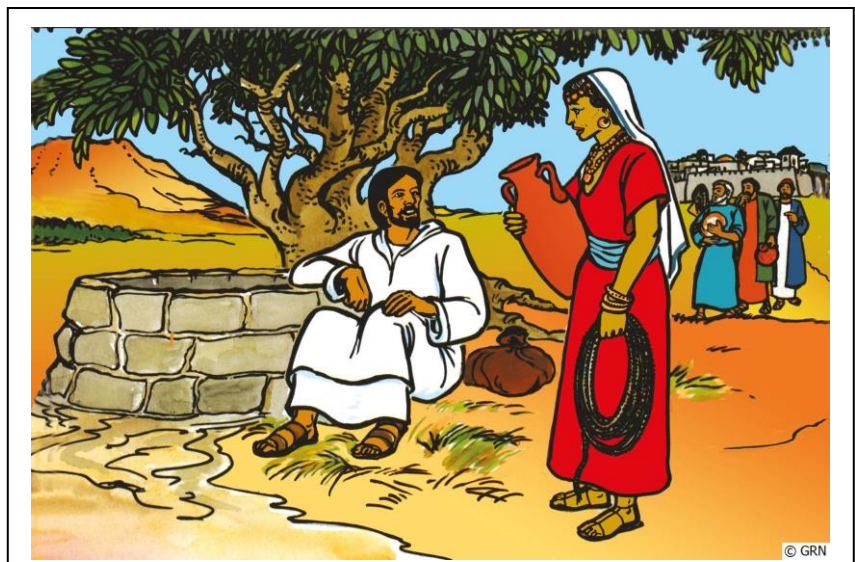


Bible reading: John 4:1–42

JESUS TALKS WITH A WOMAN AT A WELL

Many people now followed Jesus. His disciples baptised the new believers (4:1). The religious leaders heard that Jesus was baptising more people than John. Therefore, Jesus left Jerusalem and went back to Galilee (4:3). He travelled with His disciples through the region of Samaria (4:4).

The Jews in Jerusalem did not like the Samaritan Jews. Samaritans did not



Jesus speaks to a Samaritan woman at Sychar

worship God in the Temple at Jerusalem. They worshipped God in Samaria. There was enmity for 500 years until the time of Jesus.

Jesus came to Sychar and sat down at the well. It was the middle of the day. He was tired and thirsty (4:6). His disciples went into the town to buy food (4:8).

A Samaritan woman came to draw water from the well. Jesus spoke to her. A Jew would not normally speak to a Samaritan. Jesus asked the woman, "Will you give Me a drink?" (4:7).

She was surprised. She said, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (4:9).

So Jesus answered her, "You do not know what God's gift is. And you do not know who is asking you for a drink. If you did, you would have asked Him. He would have given you living water" (4:10). The woman did not know about the new life through God's gift of His Holy Spirit. Jesus explains this in verse 14.

Jesus knew her deepest needs. He knew she needed something more than water. He could offer her the greatest thing in the entire world.

THE WOMAN ASKS FOR LIVING WATER

The woman did not understand Jesus. She asked Him, "Where can you get this living water?" (4:11). She knew that Jacob, the grandson of Abraham, dug their well at Sychar. So she asked Jesus, "Are you more important than he is?" (4:12).

Jesus answered, "All who drink this water will thirst again. But anyone who drinks the water I give him will never be thirsty... The water I give him will be a spring of water inside him. It will rise up into eternal life" (4:13-14). In this way, Jesus offered to give the Samaritan woman His life-giving Spirit.

The woman said, "Sir, give me this water. Then I will never be thirsty again" (4:15). She could see that Jesus was a prophet.

Jesus knew that sin in her life would hinder her from receiving the Holy Spirit. "Go, get your husband and come back," Jesus told the woman. The woman said that she had no husband. Jesus told her that He already knew this. He told her that He knew she had five husbands before the man she now lived with (4:18).

The woman knew immediately that Jesus was a prophet (4:19). So she began to speak about her religious beliefs and her place of worship (4:20).

To God, it is not important where we worship, but how we worship Him. To God, our religious traditions are less important than our love for Him and our obedience. Jesus said to her, "True worshippers must worship God in spirit and in truth" (4:23).

True worshippers can come to our loving and almighty God at any time and in any place. They worship God from a loving heart. They do not need special times and special places to worship. Jesus said, "They are the kind of worshippers the Father is looking and waiting for" (4:23). He then repeated His words that true worshippers must worship God in spirit and in truth (4:24).

The Samaritan woman then spoke about her faith in the promised Messiah. This promise from God is written down over 100 times in the words of the Old Testament writings. The woman said to Jesus, "I know that Messiah [the Anointed One, KJV] is coming. He is called Christ. When He comes, He will explain everything to us" (4:25).

Jesus said, "I, the One speaking to you, am He" (4:26).

When she heard this, the Samaritan woman hurried back to the town to tell others about Jesus. She said to the people, "Come. See a man who told me everything I've ever done. Could this be the Christ?" (4:28-29)

God's Holy Spirit changed her life as she told people about Jesus. The people believed her and wanted to see Jesus (4:30). The Holy Spirit used her to change the lives of others.

JESUS STAYS IN SAMARIA TO TEACH

Meanwhile, the disciples arrived with food from the town (4:27). They were surprised that He spoke to a Samaritan woman. It was the tradition for Jewish men not to talk to foreign women (4:9).

His disciples said, "Rabbi, eat." But He said to them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about... My food is to do what My Father sent Me to do. My food is to finish His work" (4:32, 34). He wanted to teach about God's work to save and to change sinners. His food was to do the work of His Father. He obeyed His Father.

Jesus then taught His disciples about God's work for them. Their work was to bring in the harvest of people who are ready to obey God.

God's harvest is ready now, today. Do not say that in four months it is harvest (4:35). Jesus told them to open their eyes and see the harvest of people who are ready to obey God now.

Jesus told them that there are already many joyful workers bringing in a harvest of people. The people they bring in will receive eternal life (4:36).

Everyone has a task in God's harvest. One person sows seeds or plants. Another person picks or cuts the crops (4:37). 'Those who plant and those who bring in the harvest can now be glad together' (4:36).

Some workers will do little work in the harvest. Other workers will do most of the hard work. Some workers will prepare the way. Some will bring in the harvest that others have worked for (4:38).

These Samaritan people needed to know about Jesus. He was their Messiah, too. God loved them all. The disciples must learn that Jesus is everyone's Messiah. The Samaritans were treated badly by the Jews but they too could become part of the Kingdom of God.

When the crowds came from Sychar to the well to see Jesus, many believed in Him. They came to Jesus because of the woman's witness (4:39).

They wanted to know more about the teachings of Jesus. They wanted Jesus to stay with them. So He stayed two days (4:40).



Witnessing to strangers and starting new fellowships for believers

Many preachers teach from John's true story in Chapter 4 about Jesus and the woman at the well in Samaria. It explains how the understanding, love and wisdom of Jesus can change a person's life and those around them. It explains how the Holy Spirit in the life of a new believer can extend the Kingdom of God. It explains how followers of Jesus can start new groups or fellowships of believers. This is called church planting.

Here are some words of action from this Bible story. It is about the conversion of the Samaritans through the ministry of Jesus to one stranger:

- *Starting* conversations with strangers in a public place (v.7)
- *Ignoring* social barriers and traditions (v.9)
- *Talking* about faith in God (v.10)
- *Developing* the conversation spiritually (v.11-12)
- *Attracting* interest and *forgetting* personal needs (v.13)
- *Promising* eternal life through Jesus (v.14)
- *Listening* carefully to people's requests (v.15)
- *Understanding* people's true needs (v.16-18)
- *Overcoming* excuses (v.19-20)
- *Offering* salvation through *preaching* the truth of God (v.21-22)
- *Explaining* what God is looking for (v.23)
- *Guiding* new believers (v.24)
- *Expressing* faith and belief (v.25)
- *Revealing* who Jesus really is (v.26)
- *Witnessing* about Jesus through personal testimony (v.29, 39)
- *Teaching* new believers (v.40)
- *Establishing* groups of new believers in Christ (v.41)
- *Moving on* to the next place (v.43)

This story describes the beginning of a group or fellowship of Christian believers in Sychar. It began through the love of Jesus for the Samaritans whom others did not like. He knew that they needed a Saviour.

The Samaritans said to the woman, "We no longer believe because of what you said to us. We have heard for ourselves and we know that this man really is the Saviour of the world" (4:42).

In this way, the new believers started a group or fellowship of believers in Sychar, Samaria. It was an early example of church planting. Later, Jesus told his disciples to do the same throughout Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and all over the world (Acts 1:8). Read how it happened in Acts 8:4-8.



Talk about this:

1. Why was the woman at the well surprised that Jesus spoke to her (4:9)?
2. Where does Jesus get 'living water' (4:10)? What change does this bring (4:14)?
3. What words did Jesus repeat to the woman? (4:23-24). Why?
4. What did Jesus offer the Samaritan women that no-one else had offered before (4:23-26)? What message do these words give today?
5. How did the woman's faith in Jesus grow and grow (4:15, 17, 19, 25, 29, 39)?
6. What food did Jesus enjoy the most (4:34)? What harvest did He talk about (4:35-38)?
7. How was Jesus able to change the lives of all the Samaritans at Sychar (4:39-42)?



Think about this: Why is John Chapter 4 used a lot by teachers and preachers? Are you willing to talk to good and bad people about Jesus? Pray that others will see the understanding, love and wisdom of Jesus in you.



Pray about this: Ask God to help others to seek and find the 'living water' that Jesus offers. Pray that they will ask for and find a new life in Jesus. Ask the Holy Spirit to bring a harvest of people, nearby and in places further away. Pray for new groups and fellowships of believers, that their faith will grow and grow.



Bible reading: John 4:43–54

JESUS CONTINUES HIS MINISTRY IN GALILEE

After two days, Jesus continued His walk to the region of Galilee (4:43). Many people were glad to welcome Him. They had seen His miracles at the Passover Feast in Jerusalem (4:45).

Jesus and His disciples went back to the village of Cana. An officer of the king went to meet Him there. This man knew about the miracles of Jesus. He had a sick son who was dying in Capernaum. He begged Jesus to go with him to heal his son (4:47). He believed the miracles of Jesus.

“Unless you see miraculous signs and wonders,” Jesus said, “you will never believe” (4:48).

“Sir, come down before my child dies,” he begged (4:49).

“You may go now,” Jesus told him. “Your son will live.”

The officer believed the words of Jesus. So he left to go back to Capernaum. He left Jesus with faith to believe that his son would live (4:50).

His servants met him and told him that his son was alive and well (4:51). This miracle happened at the exact moment that Jesus promised to heal the boy (4:52-53).

The officer and all his family then believed in Jesus (4:53). They believed that He was the promised Messiah, the Son of God.



Bible reading: John Chapter 5

JESUS HEALS A LAME MAN ON THE SABBATH

Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem again. He was near the Sheep Gate. The Jews brought the lambs that way for their blood sacrifices at Passover.

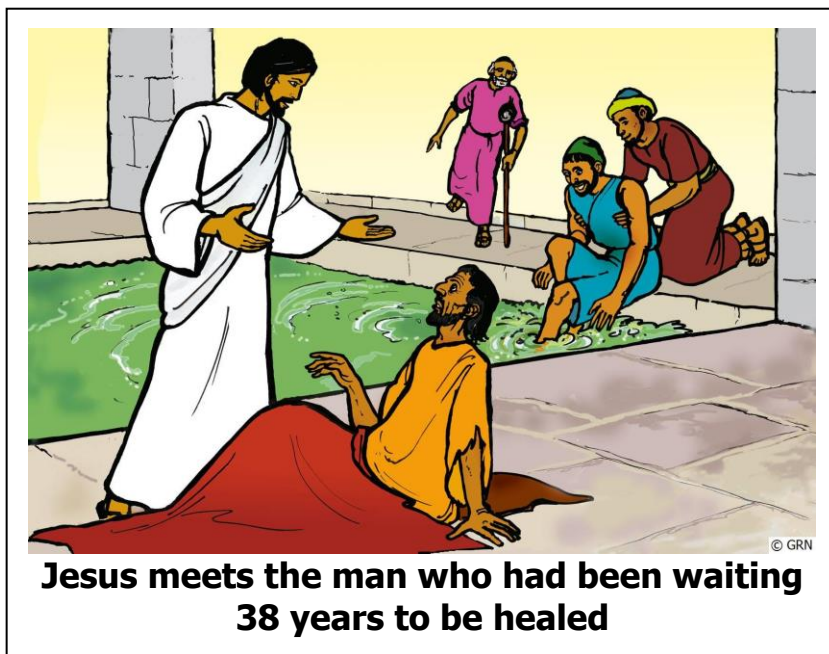
Nearby there was an ancient pool of water where disabled people lay in the shade (5:2-4). The sick, the blind and the lame lay there. A man who could not walk lay there for 38 years waiting for someone to help him into the pool.

The Jews believed an angel visited there. The first person into the water after the angel stirred up the water was healed. The lame man had no-one to help him into the water. So the others jumped in first (5:7).

Jesus saw the man lying there. Jesus knew all about him. So He asked him, “Do you want to get well?” (5:6). He knew exactly how to help this man and set him free from his life-long problem.

The lame man did not know who Jesus was. “Sir”, the disabled man replied, “I have no-one to help me into the pool” (5:7).

Jesus ignored his excuses. “Get up!” Jesus told him, “Pick up your mat and walk” (5:8). The man who had been waiting 38



Jesus meets the man who had been waiting 38 years to be healed

years obeyed Jesus and was healed immediately. He picked up his mat and walked away.

This is another example of the understanding, love and wisdom of Jesus. He helped the man even though it led to trouble for Himself.

It was the Sabbath day. Some of the religious leaders saw the man who Jesus healed. They said, "It is the Sabbath, The Law does not allow you to carry your mat" (5:10).

He replied, "The man who made me well said to me 'Pick up your mat and walk'" (5:11).

They asked him, "Who told you to pick it up and walk?" (5:12). But the man did not know who had healed him.

When Jesus returned to the Temple, He found the man. He said, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning, or something worse might happen to you" (5:14). Jesus knew that sin causes trouble and often much sickness. Therefore we must all be careful to live holy and clean lives.

For 38 years this man's faith was in the angel. The man went away with faith in Jesus Christ. He then told the Jewish leaders that Jesus healed him (5:15).

Because Jesus did these things on the Sabbath, the religious leaders were angry. They knew the Law of Moses, but not the meaning of it. They did not have the love of Christ for the disabled person who was healed. They cared only about their own rules. Satan tried to use their faith in religious traditions to destroy the man's faith in Jesus. This was after waiting for 38 years for a miracle to happen!

JESUS HAS THE WORDS OF ETERNAL LIFE

Jesus did not stop His work of healing and blessing people on the Sabbath. "My Father is always doing His work. He is working right up to this day. I am working, too" He told them (5:17).

This meant that Jesus was calling God His own Father and was making Himself equal with God. So this made the Jewish leaders even more angry. They wanted to kill Him (5:18).

- 'The Son [of God] can do nothing by Himself. He does only what He sees His Father doing' (5:19).
- 'The Father loves the Son. He shows Him everything He does... He will show Him even greater things than these' (5:20).
- 'The Father raises the dead... In the same way the Son gives life' (5:21).
- 'The Father does not judge anyone.' God has given His Son the task of judging those who follow Him. This is because He is the promised Messiah, Son of God and Son of Man (5:22, 27).

- 'Then all people will honour the Son, just as they honour the Father' (5:23).
- 'Anyone who hears My words and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life... He has crossed over from death to life' (5:24).
- Those who believe the words of the Son of God will live forever (5:25).
- The Father gives the Son His own everlasting life (5:26). The eternal life of God lives in Jesus.

Those who are 'in Christ' will understand these teachings and "honour the Father" (5:23). Jesus said, "Do not be amazed at this. A time is coming when all who are in the grave will hear His voice... Those who have done good things will rise up and live again. Those who have done evil will rise and be found guilty" (5:28–29).

However, Jesus said, "My judging is fair. I do not try to please Myself. I try only to please the One who sent Me" (5:30).

THE WITNESS ABOUT JESUS

Jesus said that John the Baptist gave witness to the truth about Jesus (5:33). His witness about Jesus was like a lamp that gave true light (5:35). Jesus then said:

- "The witness I have is more important than John's" (5:36).
- "I am doing the work the Father gave Me to finish. It gives witness that the Father has sent Me" (5:36).
- "The Father who sent Me has given witness about Me" (5:37; Mark 1:11).

Jesus told them that they had never heard the voice of God. Nor did His word live in them (5:37-38). "This is because you do not believe the One He sent" (5:38). Then He said more things about Himself:

- "The [Old Testament] Scriptures you study give witness about Me" (5:39).
- "But you refuse to come to Me and receive life" (5:40).
- "I do not accept praise from people. [And] I know that you do not have love for [of, KJV] God in your hearts" (5:41-42).
- "I have come in My Father's name and you do not accept Me" (5:43).

Many refused the words of Jesus. They refused to believe what Moses said about Jesus. They also refused to believe what Jesus said about Himself (5:46-47).



Talk about this:

1. Describe the growth of faith in the officer at Cana (4:47-53).
2. Describe the change of faith in the lame man at the pool (5:5-14).
3. What kind of work did Jesus do on the Sabbath (5:6-9)?
4. What important teachings does John want us to remember about God the Father and God the Son (5:18-24)?

5. What did Jesus say about everlasting life and about His authority given by God (5:26-27)?
6. What does Jesus teach about the End Times (5:28-29)?
7. Describe the witness Jesus gave about Himself (5:36-43).



Think about this: The officer believed that Jesus did not need to see his sick son to heal him. What was the result of his faith (4:53)? How can we encourage the faith of others to grow? Ask God to increase your understanding of the teachings of Jesus about Himself and His Father given by John in chapter 5. Pray that others will believe because of what you tell them about Jesus.



Bible reading: John Chapter 6

JESUS FEEDS THE HUNGRY CROWDS

Jesus wanted to have time alone to teach His disciples. They crossed over the Sea of Galilee by boat (6:1). The crowds followed Him along the shore (6:2). This was because they knew He loved them and healed their sick.

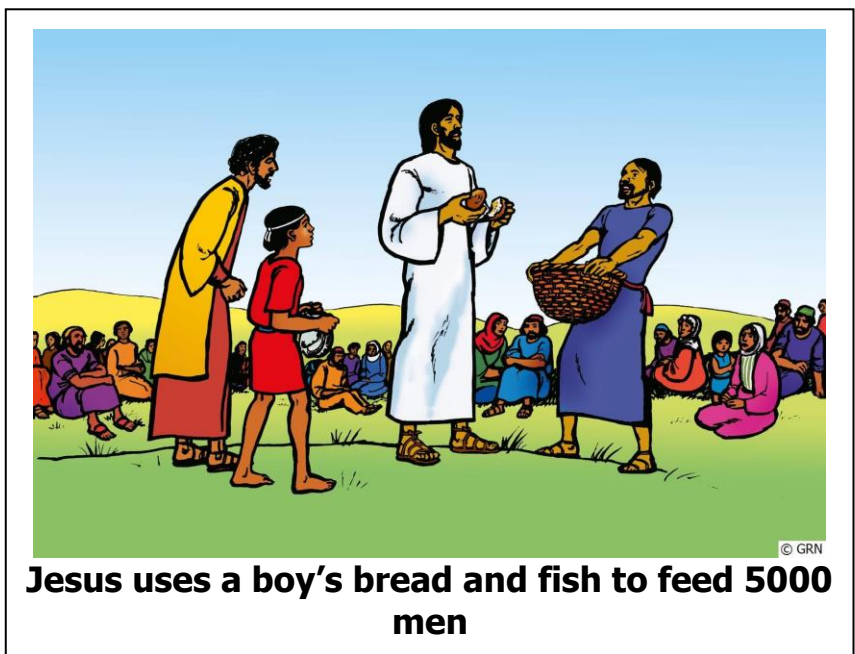
Jesus went up the side of a mountain to teach His disciples (6:3). However, He saw the crowds coming (6:5). He saw that they were hungry and decided to feed them.

He said to Philip, "Where can we buy bread for these people to eat?" He asked this to test his faith (6:6). Jesus already knew what to do.

Philip said that it would cost a large amount of money (6:7). However, Andrew said, "Here is a boy with five small loaves of barley bread. He also has two small fish. But how far will that go in such a large crowd" (6:8-9)? These remarks from Philip and Andrew show both doubt and faith, also a genuine question for Jesus to answer.

Jesus said, "Make the people sit down" (6:10). He gave thanks to God and broke the loaves of bread. He then fed 5000 men plus the women and children. He did the same with the fish (6:11).

The disciples took the loaves and fish from Jesus and gave them to the crowds. There was enough food for everyone. A lot of food was left uneaten (6:12-13). It was enough to fill twelve baskets.



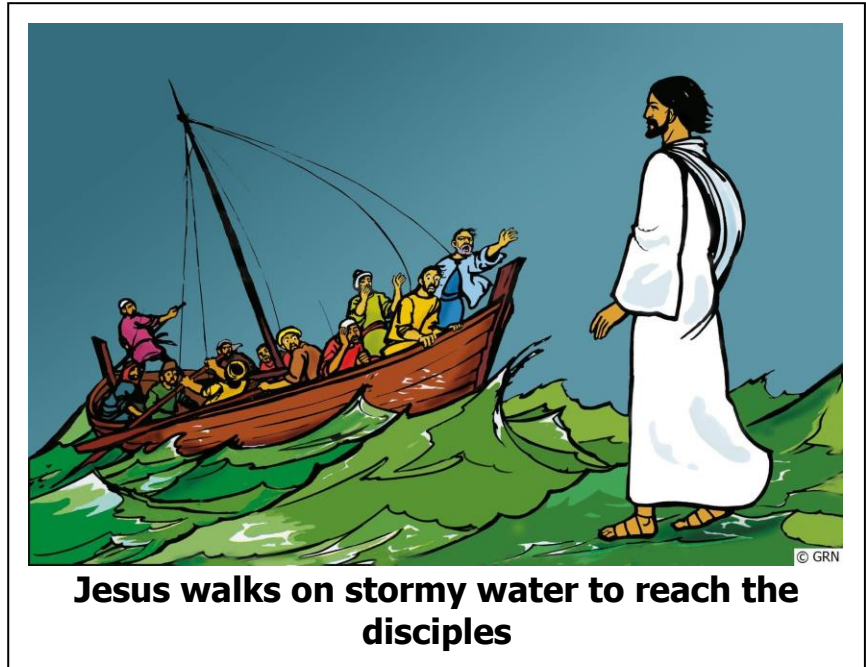
The people watched the miracle. They believed He was the Great Prophet who God promised would come into the world (6:14). They wanted to make Him their king (6:15). Instead, Jesus went away to a mountain alone to pray to God His Father.

JESUS WALKS ON WATER

Jesus was on the mountain praying. He saw the disciples on the lake rowing hard against the wind. It became dark. They had only rowed about 5 kilometres (6:16-19).

Jesus went out to them walking on the water. They were afraid at first when they saw Him. Then the disciples heard the voice of Jesus, "It is I. Do not be afraid" (6:20). It was the voice of their Master.

Jesus came into the boat with them. Then the boat immediately arrived at the other shore (6:21).



JESUS TELLS US WHAT IS THE TRUE WORK OF GOD

People arrived from the place where Jesus fed the 5000 men. They went to look for Him in Capernaum (6:23-24). Then they found Him on the other side of the Lake (6:25).

They asked Him, "Rabbi [Teacher], when did you get here?"

Jesus told the crowd, "You are looking for Me because you ate loaves until you were full. Do not work for food that spoils. Work for food that lasts forever" (6:26-27). He was not against working miracles. However, He wanted them to believe in Him as their Saviour. He wanted to give them food that is the bread of life, which leads to eternal life.

They then asked Jesus an important question. "What does God want from us? What work does He want us to do?" (6:28).

Jesus answered, "God's work is to believe in the One He has sent" (6:29). He did not say, 'Do the best you can and you will go to Heaven.' Some people say these things, but they are not true. Jesus told them that the best work for God is to believe in His Son. We can do much more work for God through faith in the name of Jesus.

The word 'believe' means to trust Jesus, to trust totally in Him. Stop trusting yourself! Let Jesus guide your life. Faith in Jesus produces action. You act under God's guidance with His Spirit's power. You can then stop doing wrong things and start doing the work of God through Jesus Christ. You will no longer live the unholy life you used to live.

MANNA AND THE TRUE BREAD OF LIFE

The crowd still wanted to see more miracles of food. They said, "Long ago our people ate manna from Heaven in the desert" (6:31).

Jesus said, "It is not Moses who gave you bread from Heaven. It is My Father who gives you the true bread from Heaven (6:32). The bread of God is the One who comes down from Heaven. He gives life to the world" (6:33).

The crowd asked Jesus for this bread. He gave them a very important reply. "I am the bread of life. No-one who comes to Me will ever go hungry. And no-one who believes in Me will ever be thirsty" (6:35).

"But... you have seen Me and you still do not believe" (6:36). They knew about the history of the Jews, but rejected their own Messiah.

Then Jesus said more important things about Himself and His Father in Heaven:

- God guides people to come to Jesus (6:37).
- Jesus will never send anyone away who comes to Him (6:37).
- Jesus came down from Heaven to do the will of His Father, not His own will (6:38).
- God does not want to lose anyone that He has given to Jesus (6:39).
- Jesus will raise up every believer on the last day (6:39).
- God wants all who believe in Jesus to have eternal life (6:40).

THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS ARGUE WITH JESUS

The Jewish leaders began to complain about Jesus. This was because He said, "I am the bread that came down from Heaven" (6:41). They knew His father and mother so they refused to believe that He was from Heaven.

"Isn't this Jesus, the son of Joseph?" they asked each other (6:42).

Jesus told them to stop arguing (6:43). He told them these things about Himself:

- "No-one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me brings him. Then I will raise him up on the last day" (6:44).
- "Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from Him comes to Me" (6:45).
- "No-one has seen the Father except the One who has come from God. Only He has seen the Father" (6:46).
- "Everyone who believes [Me] has life for ever" (6:47).
- "I am the bread of life" (6:48).

“Long ago your people ate the manna in the desert and yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from Heaven. I am the living bread that came down from Heaven... Everyone who eats this bread will live forever. The bread is My body. I will give it for the life of the world” (6:49-51).

Then the Jews argued even more. “How can this man give us his body to eat?” (6:52).

Jesus said further things to shock them. “What I am about to tell you is true... Anyone who eats My body and drinks My blood has eternal life. I will raise them up on the last day” (6:53-54). Jesus meant that if they believed and fed on Him they would receive eternal life.

“Anyone who eats My body and drinks My blood remains in Me. And I remain in Him” (6:56).

Jesus also said, “The living Father sent me, and I live because of Him. In the same way, those who feed on Me will live because of Me” (6:57).

He said again that long ago the Jewish people ate manna from Heaven and died in the desert. “But those who feed on this bread will live forever” (6:58).

MANY OF THE FOLLOWERS OF JESUS LEAVE HIM

The followers of Jesus thought that His teachings were difficult to understand (6:60-61). What would they think if they saw Him going back up to Heaven (6:62)?

People are taught to understand these truths by God’s Holy Spirit. Jesus said that it is the Spirit who gives life. The flesh or body means nothing at all. “These words I have spoken to you are from the Spirit. They give life” (6:63).

Jesus said, “There are some of you who do not believe.” He already knew who would betray Him to His enemies (6:64).

Many people believed only the miracle of the bread and fish. They missed a greater truth that Jesus is the bread of life. He said again, “No-one can come to Me unless the Father helps him” (6:65).

From this time many of the people turned back and no longer followed Him (6:66). Jesus asked the twelve disciples if they also wanted to leave Him (6:67). Jesus wanted them to stay with Him but He knew they must make the choice themselves to stay or to go. So must we!

Then John wrote down these amazing words of faith spoken by Peter. “Lord, who can we go to? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God” (6:68-69).

But one of the twelve was Judas Iscariot who later betrayed Jesus (6:70-71).



Talk about this:

1. What happened when Jesus blessed the bread (6:11)? What part did the disciples play in the miracle? Did Jesus need them to help Him?
2. Why did crowds follow Jesus? What brings people to Jesus today?
3. What should we do to do the works of God (6:29-30)?
4. Tell in your own words why Jesus is the Bread of Life (6:27-35; 53-54).
5. Explain the important teachings of Jesus in 6:37-65.
6. What did Jesus mean by "eat My flesh and drink My blood" (6:53-54)?
7. Who helps us to understand and become a follower of Jesus (6:63)?
8. What is important about the words of Peter in 6:68-69?



Think about this: Why did Jesus not want the people to make Him king (6:15)? Why did Jesus ask the twelve disciples if they wanted to leave Him (6:67)?



Pray about this: Ask God to supply daily the food that you need. Food for your body and food for your spirit. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you the work that God wants you to do in your life. Ask Him to show you the miracles to pray for in the name of Jesus. Use bold words of faith to speak to Jesus as Peter did.



Bible reading: John Chapter 7

JESUS GOES SECRETLY TO THE FEAST IN JERUSALEM

After this, Jesus continued teaching and performing miracles in the region of Galilee. The religious leaders in Jerusalem wanted to kill Him. So He stayed away from Jerusalem and the region of Judea (7:1).

Soon it was harvest, when many Jews go up to Jerusalem for the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles.

At this time, the half-brothers of Jesus did not believe that He was the Son of God. "No-one who wants to be well known does these things in secret", they told Him. "Since you are doing these things, show Yourself to the world" (7:3-5). So they told Him to go to Jerusalem.

Jesus told them, "The right time for Me has not yet come... They hate Me. This is because I give witness that what they do is evil" (7:6-7). Jesus trusted in God's timing.

His brothers went up to Jerusalem for the Feast. Jesus went up later, in secret (7:10). Many people were looking for Him. Some believed that He was good and some did not believe in Him (7:11-12).

When the Feast was half over, Jesus went to the Temple and taught the people (7:14). The Jews were amazed at His teaching. They asked, "How did this man learn so much?" (7:15).

Jesus answered, "What I teach is not My own. It comes from the One who sent Me. Anyone who chooses to do what God wants him to do, will find out whether My teaching comes from God or from Me" (7:16-17).

Jesus then said that the person who works for the honour of God has the truth of God within him (7:18). Jesus spoke these words about Himself, but the words are also true for all followers of Jesus.

Jesus knew that some of the religious leaders wanted to kill Him for doing good works on the Sabbath day.

He said to them, "Not one of you keeps the Law [of Moses]. Why are you trying to kill Me?" (7:19-20). "You circumcise boys on the Sabbath ... Why are you angry with Me? I healed a whole man on the Sabbath... Judge correctly!" (7:23-24).

THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS TRY TO ARREST JESUS

The crowds began to ask if Jesus was the Christ, the promised Messiah (7:25-26). Jews believed that their Messiah would come secretly. They knew that Jesus was from Nazareth. "When the Christ comes, no-one will know where He is from" they said (7:27). This was false teaching.

Jesus was teaching the people who were standing in the Temple courtyard. He cried out, "Yes, you know [the town] where I am from. [But] the One who sent Me... you do not know" (7:28). "I know Him... and He sent Me" (7:29). Jesus came from God through the Holy Spirit giving Him human life in the womb of Mary, the future wife of Joseph of Nazareth. In Heaven Jesus is part of the Holy Trinity of God.

When Jesus said this they tried to arrest Him. But no-one touched him. The time for His crucifixion had not yet come (7:30).



The arguments about who Jesus is (John 7:40-43)

Some people believed that Jesus was the Great Prophet promised in the Old Testament writings who would come before the Messiah. Others believed that Jesus was the promised Messiah, or Christ.

The Old Testament writings said that the Messiah would come from the family of King David. He would come from the town of Bethlehem where David lived. The people knew that Jesus grew up with Mary and Joseph in Nazareth. They did not know at that time that Jesus was born in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:1-6). They did not know that Joseph was from the family of King David (Matthew 1). They did not know that Mary was also from the family of King David. So the people could not or would not agree about who Jesus really was. They doubted or disagreed, but many just argued and refused to believe. People still argue and doubt today.

Many people in the crowd put their faith in Jesus at that time. Their reason was the many amazing miracles He did (7:31). The religious leaders heard what they said. So they sent for help to arrest Jesus (7:32).

Jesus knew this and said "I am with you only a short time" (7:33). It was almost time for Him to go back to His Father in Heaven. "I will go back to the One who sent Me. You will look for Me, but you will not find Me. You cannot come where I am going" (7:34).

The religious leaders still did not understand (7:35-36).

JESUS SAYS "IF ANYONE IS THIRSTY... COME TO ME"

On the last great day of the Feast, Jesus stood up and spoke in a loud voice. "Let anyone who is thirsty come to Me and drink" (7:37).

When we believe in Jesus, we receive the living water of His Spirit. The Spirit springs up within us and flows out to others. Jesus said, "Does anyone believe in Me? Then streams of living water will flow from inside him" (7:38).

When He said this, He meant the Holy Spirit (7:39). Jesus gave this same promise to the woman He met at the well of Samaria (4:10, 14). Those who believed in Jesus would receive the Spirit later. Up to that time, the Spirit had not been given to His followers (7:39). Since the resurrection of Jesus, the Spirit is given to all who believe (Acts 2:38-39).

When they heard these words of Jesus, many believed in Him (John 7:40-41). Others doubted, or just argued. Arguments destroy faith.

The Temple guards went away without arresting Jesus. They said, "No-one ever spoke the way that this man does" (7:45-46). The words of Jesus gave them important true sayings to think about.

The Jewish leader Nicodemus believed in Jesus. He spoke out in their meeting place. He asked "Does our law find someone guilty without hearing him first?" (7:51).

Then everyone went home. Many could not or would not believe that a great prophet had come from Nazareth or the region of Galilee who was Israel's Messiah (7:52-53).



Talk about this:

1. Why did the brothers of Jesus want Him to go back to Jerusalem (7:1-5)?
2. What reason did Jesus give for not going to the Feast immediately (7:6-8)?
3. How can we have the truth of God within us (7:18)?
4. Why did some people become followers of Jesus (7:31)?
5. What did Jesus mean by saying "You cannot come where I am going" (7:36)?
6. What did Jesus say about receiving the Holy Spirit (7:37-39)?



Think about this: What reasons did people give for not believing in Jesus (7:41-43)? Describe how arguments hinder faith today. What was the reason for Jesus being so popular with the crowds (7:31)? Thank God for the truth about Jesus is now fully revealed!



Pray about this: Ask God for His truth to live in you at all times. Ask Him to show you the religious traditions that hinder your work for Him. Tell Jesus you wish to share God's love and truth in the way He did on Earth, including miracles. Ask Him for wisdom to know when to walk away from those who argue or refuse to believe that Jesus is the Son of God.



Bible reading: John Chapter 8

JESUS FORGIVES A SINFUL WOMAN

That night, Jesus rested at the Mount of Olives just outside Jerusalem (8:1). It had a small garden with olive trees, which are still grown there today. Early the next morning, Jesus went back to the Temple. He sat down and taught the people in the Temple courtyard.

The religious leaders could not find a reason to arrest Him. So they brought to Him a woman caught in adultery (8:3). They wanted to see what Jesus would say.

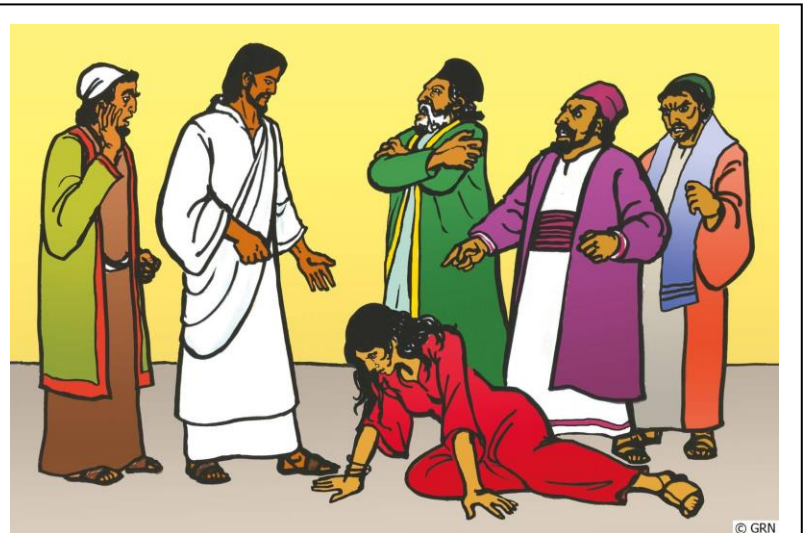
The Law of Moses said that she should be stoned to death (8:5). Jesus waited then He said, "Has any one of you not sinned? Then you be the first person to throw a stone at her" (8:7). These men knew that they were all sinners. One by one, they went away without saying a word. Jesus was left alone with the woman.

Jesus ... asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has not anyone found you guilty?"

"No-one, sir," she said.

Then Jesus said the kindest words ever spoken to a sinner, "Then I do not find you guilty either. Go now and leave your life of sin" (8:11). She was free to go without punishment and follow Jesus.

Because of the forgiveness of Jesus, God no longer looked on her as a sinner. She must now stop sinning and follow Jesus.



The religious leaders bring a sinful woman to Jesus to test what He will do

The light of Jesus shone into a sinful woman's heart. It took away her fear of punishment, shame and rejection. It helped her to live a new life. The sinful woman believed and received the mercy of God shown through Jesus.

JESUS SAYS, "I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD"

Jesus spoke to the people again. He said, "I am the light of the world" (8:12).

The apostle Peter wrote, "God chose you to be His special people. He brought you out of darkness into His wonderful light" (1 Peter 2:9-10).

The light of Jesus gives us all hope in life. That is why He said, "Those who follow Me will never walk in darkness. They will have the light that leads to life" (John 8:12).

The religious leaders began to argue with Jesus again (8:13). Jesus said, "I know where I came from. And I know where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going" (8:14). Jesus knew His Father's purpose for His life on Earth. It was His Father God who sent Him (8:16, 18).

They asked Jesus, "Where is your father?" (8:19).

"You do not know Me or My Father," Jesus replied. "If you knew Me, you would know My Father also." If we want to know God, we should look at Jesus. He is God who came down to Earth. He is exactly like God (Hebrews 1:3).

These religious leaders refused to look and see God in Jesus. However, they did not arrest Him. His time to die had not yet come (John 8:20).

Jesus warned that He would leave them. "You cannot come where I am going", He said (8:21).

This made the religious leaders ask, "Will He kill Himself?" (8:22).

Jesus said, "You are from below; I am from Heaven" (8:23). They were dying in their sins because of their religious traditions (8:24). They would not enter Heaven. To die in sin is to die without hope of eternal life.

"Who are you?" they asked (8:25). Jesus wanted them to say that they believed He was the promised Messiah, the Son of God. He said, "Just what I have been claiming all along". This is very important. Jesus is our Saviour. He is God's merciful plan to save us all. The decision to believe must not be left for another day. It may be too late then.

After Jesus rose from death, He knew that His words would prove to be true. "Then you will know that I am the One I claim to be... I speak just what the Father has taught Me" (8:28).

JESUS AND ABRAHAM

Again, many people in the crowd put their faith in Jesus (8:30). He taught them these famous words. "If you obey My teaching, you are really My disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free" (8:31-32). Jesus offers forgiveness, faith and freedom.

Some asked, "We are Abraham's children. We have never been slaves of anyone. So how can you say that we will be set free?" (8:33).

Jesus reminded them, "Everyone who sins is a slave of sin... If the Son of Man sets you free, you will really be free" (8:34, 36). The Son of Man was one of the names of the promised Messiah given in the Old Testament which Jesus used for Himself.

Then there followed a long discussion over who was the father of the Jews: Abraham or God. The Jews were proud that they were sons of Abraham. Jesus told some of them that they were not really Abraham's children, because they did not behave like Abraham (8:39). They were born Jews, but that did not make them true sons of Abraham nor sons of God. Jesus heard the truth from God His Father (8:40).

"Everyone who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear His truth is that you do not belong to God" (8:47).

They shouted at Jesus, "You are controlled by a demon" (8:48).

"I am not controlled by a demon", said Jesus (8:49). "What I am telling you is true. Anyone who obeys My word will never die" (8:51). Jesus meant anyone who believes that He is the Son of God will have eternal life.

Then the Jewish leaders cried out... "Are You greater than our father Abraham? ... Who do You think You are?" (8:53).

Jesus replied, "You claim that My Father is your God. He is the One who brings glory to Me. You do not know Him. But I know Him. If I said I did not [know Him], I would be a liar like you. But I do know Him... And I obey His word" (8:54-55). Jesus wanted them to honour Him as the Son of God.

"Your father Abraham was filled with joy at the thought of seeing My day. He saw it and was glad" (8:56).

The crowds were shocked that Jesus claimed to know Abraham (8:57).

Jesus then said, "Before Abraham was born, I AM!" (8:58). As soon as He used these famous words 'I AM', they took up stones to kill Him (8:59). By saying this, they knew He was claiming to be equal with God, the great I AM (Exodus 3:14).

Jesus then hid Himself away from the Temple area (John 8:59).



Talk about this:

1. What did Jesus say to the woman who was caught in sin (8:11)? What hope does this give for sinners today?
2. What did Jesus say to the religious leaders (8:7, 12, 19)? What warning is this for the churches today? What message of hope does it bring?
3. What instruction and promise did Jesus give to His followers (8:31-32)? What did Jesus mean by "the truth will set you free"?
4. Why do many people go the wrong way in life (8:47)?
5. What is the result of obeying Jesus (8:51)?
6. What did Jesus mean by saying "I AM" (8:58)?



Think about this: Jesus knew His Father's purpose in life for Himself (8:14-18). Do you know God's purpose for your life? What hinders the truth, purpose and hope in your life and in your church? What is the answer to the question, "Who do you think Jesus is"(8:53)?



Pray about this: If you have not already done so, ask God to forgive your sins and help you to 'go and sin no more'. Ask Jesus to help you not to judge sinners but to give you His eyes to see them as He does. Ask for the Holy Spirit to give you the light of Jesus in your life so that others will see Christ in you.



The famous "I AM" words of Jesus

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 4:26. | "I AM the Christ". |
| 6:35, 48. | "I AM the bread of life." |
| 6:41, 51; 8:23. | "I AM the living bread that came down from Heaven." |
| 7:29. | "I AM from God." |
| 8:12; 9:5. | "I AM the light of the world." |
| 8:58. | "Before Abraham was born, I AM." |
| 10:7, 9. | "I AM a gate for the sheep." |
| 10:11, 14. | "I AM the Good Shepherd." |
| 10:36. | "I AM God's Son." |
| 10:38. | "I AM in the Father." |
| 11:25. | "I AM the resurrection and the life." |



Bible reading: John Chapter 9

JESUS HEALS A BLIND MAN ON THE SABBATH

Jesus and His disciples walked along the road. They saw a man who was blind from his birth (9:1). It was the Jewish Sabbath, a day of rest.

His disciples asked, "Rabbi [Master], who sinned? Is this man blind because he sinned? Or did his parents sin?" (9:2).

Jesus said that his blindness was not because of sin. It happened "so that the work of God might be shown in his life" (9:3).

"While it is still day, we must do the work of the One who sent Me" (9:4). Notice that Jesus said, "We must do the works" not "I must do the works".

Jesus then warned that there would be dark times ahead. Then it will be too late to work in His Kingdom. We, too, must serve God now, before it is too late.

"While I am [here] in the world, I am the light of the world" (9:5).

Jesus understood His purpose on Earth. He refused to let false teachings and traditions hinder the work of God. He did not believe that the man's blindness was because of sin. He wanted to heal this blind man, immediately, even on the Sabbath day.

So Jesus spat on the ground and made some mud with it. Then He put the mud on the blind man's eyes (9:6).

The man walked in faith to the pool of Siloam to wash his eyes. When he washed his eyes, he could see (9:7). It was not mud that healed him. His faith and obedience healed him.

THE MAN SAYS THAT JESUS IS A PROPHET

The man went home. Some of His neighbours at first did not believe it was the same man (9:8-9). However, they asked him, "How were your eyes opened?" (9:10). He told them that the miracle was through "the man they call Jesus" (9:11).

Some of the religious leaders asked the man how he could see. "He put mud on my eyes", the man said... "And now I can see" (9:15).

They said that Jesus could not be from God because He broke their rules. He had healed the blind man on the Sabbath day (9:16).

Others asked, "How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?" So they did not agree with each other who Jesus was.

They wanted to know more about Jesus. They asked the man, "What do you ... say about Him?" The man replied, "He is a prophet" (9:17).

They still believed he was a sinner punished by God, even though he was born blind. And they refused to believe the change that Jesus had made. They then asked his parents, "Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?" (9:19).

They said, "We do not know how he can now see... We do not know who opened his eyes. Ask him. He is an adult. He can speak for himself!" (9:21). His parents said this because they were afraid. Anyone who believed Jesus was the Christ would be thrown out of their local Jewish synagogue (9:22). That was a serious punishment.

THE MAN SAYS "LORD, I BELIEVE!"

The religious leaders said to the man who was born blind, "Give glory to God by telling the truth! We know that the man who healed you is a sinner."

He replied, "I do not know if He is a sinner or not. I do know one thing. I was blind, but now I can see!" (9:25). Then the leaders argued with the man who was born blind.

Finally, the man said, "We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to godly people who do what He wants them to do... If this man was not from God, He could do nothing" (9:31, 33).

"How dare you talk like that to us!" Then they threw him out of the synagogue (9:34). They were trying to stop his faith in Jesus.

Jesus heard that the Pharisees had thrown the man out. He found the man and asked him, "Do you believe in the Son of Man [Son of God, KJV]?" (9:35).

"Who is He, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me, so I can believe in Him" (9:36).

Jesus said, "You have now seen Him... He is the One speaking with you" (9:37).

Then the man said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshipped Jesus (9:38).

Jesus calls us all to have faith in Him. He is the promised Messiah. He is the Son of God and the Son of Man. People who reject the light of Jesus Christ become blind to the truth of God. "I have come into this world, so that the blind will see. And those who see will become blind" (9:39).

Some religious leaders asked, "Are we blind, too?"

Jesus replied, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin. But as you claim you can see, you remain guilty" (9:41). Their sin of unbelief made them guilty. They were blind to the truth of God in Jesus.



Talk about this:

1. Why did Jesus say, "While it is still day we must do the work of the One who sent Me" (9:4)?
2. How is Jesus at work in the world today (9:5)?
3. What upset some of the religious leaders (9:16)?
4. What did the man's parents believe about Jesus (9:21)? What did some of the Jewish leaders believe about Jesus (9:24)? What did the blind man believe about Jesus (9:17, 25, 33, 38)?
5. Explain John's words of Jesus written down in this story (9:39, 41).



Think about this: Think of ways that we can help people to say these words of faith in Jesus. "I was blind, but now I can see" (9:25). "Tell me so that I can believe in Him" (9:36). "Lord, I believe" (9:38).



Pray about this: Ask God to use you to help spiritually blind people to see Jesus. Ask Jesus to give you the joy of helping others to know Him as their personal saviour. Ask the Holy Spirit to help people who are tested in their faith because others refuse to believe (9:34).



Bible reading: John Chapter 10

THE GOOD SHEPHERD LOVES HIS SHEEP

Jesus told a story about sheep and about the shepherds who care for their sheep. At night the shepherd puts his sheep inside a safe place. He sleeps in the gateway. Jesus said that anyone who does not enter through the gate, but climbs in over the wall, is a thief (10:1).

In Israel, shepherds walk in front of their sheep. The sheep follow their shepherd because they know his voice. The shepherd knows every sheep by name. Jesus said that they will never follow a stranger (10:5).

The religious leaders did not understand why He was telling them this story (10:6). So Jesus said, "I am like a gate for the sheep" (10:7). "Anyone who enters through Me will be saved. He will come in and go out. And he will find plenty of food" (10:9).

Jesus also warned that bad shepherds do not care about their sheep. They are like thieves. "The thief comes only to kill and destroy. I have come so they can have life. I want them to have it in the fullest possible way" (10:10).

We understand now the words of Jesus. We are the sheep and He is the Shepherd.

He said, "I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd gives his life for the sheep" (10:11).

Jesus repeated these well-known words, "I am the Good Shepherd. I know My sheep and My sheep know Me... And I give My life for the sheep" (10:14-15).

Jesus told this story to show us that He would be ready to die for all who follow Him. His words fulfil prophecy given in the Old Testament writings (Isaiah 53:6-8).

Jesus then said, "I have other sheep... I must bring them in too. They also will listen to my voice. Then there will be one flock and one shepherd" (10:16). Jesus meant that He came as Messiah and Saviour for Jews but also Saviour for the rest of the world. (See Acts 26:17-18).

"The reason My Father loves Me is that I give up My life" (John 10:17). Followers of Jesus must understand the love that God has for the Good Shepherd and His sheep. God's own Son died to save the world from sin. Jesus chose to give up His life for His sheep. No-one took His life from Him. He said, "I give it up Myself" (10:18).

We know that ungodly men killed Jesus. But we also believe that Jesus chose to follow God's way of suffering. He gave up His life to save those who followed Him. Then God raised Him up again from death. It was His Father's plan, not the plan of men (Galatians 1:4; Acts 2:23).

Jesus will always be the Good Shepherd for those who love Him. He chose to give up His life for us who are His sheep.

THE LEADERS SAY "IF YOU ARE THE CHRIST, TELL US!"

The religious leaders still did not agree with each other when Jesus said these things (John 10:19-21). Later, they asked Him, "How long will you keep us waiting? If you are the Christ [the Messiah], tell us plainly" (10:24).

Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe the miracles I do in My Father's name... You do not believe, because you are not My sheep. My sheep listen to My voice. I know them, and they follow Me" (10:25-27).

To those who follow Him, Jesus promises eternal life. He said, "My sheep... will never die" (10:28).

Jesus gave another great promise to those who were His sheep: "No-one can steal them out of My hand" (10:28). "My Father has given them to Me. He is greater than anyone. No-one can steal them out of My Father's hand. I and the Father are one" (10:29-30).

Again, the Jews picked up stones to throw at Him (10:31). They said they were stoning Him because He spoke blasphemy against God. "You are only a man but claim to be God", they said (10:33).

They believed in Almighty God but they rejected His Son as their Saviour. God's name for Jesus in Hebrew is Yeshua. His name means Saviour.

Jesus said, "Even if you do not believe Me, believe the miracles. Then you will know and understand that the Father is in Me and I am in the Father" (10:38). In this way Jesus claimed He was the Son of God.

The angry leaders tried to arrest Him, but again He escaped from them (10:39).

Jesus went back to the River Jordan. He went to the place where John baptised Him.

Jesus stayed there for a time free from persecution. Many people came to Him. They said, "John never did a miraculous sign. But everything that he said about this man was true" (10:41).

Many believed in Jesus. They believed because of the miracles and because what He said was true (10:41-42).



Talk about this:

1. Why did Jesus say that He was the gate for the sheep (10:7)?
2. What is the secret to living a full life (10:9-10)?
3. Why did Jesus say that He was the Good Shepherd (10:11)?
4. What has Jesus promised for you and for others (10:16)?
5. Who did Jesus say He was (10:30)?
6. What important things do we learn about Jesus in this chapter (10:10, 16, 28, 30, 38)?
7. What evidence proved that Jesus was the Messiah and Son of God (10:41)?



Think about this: Why did Jesus quote the words from Psalm 82? Are the words true today about some leaders?



Pray about this: Give thanks to God that the Good Shepherd is caring for you now and at all times. Join with Jesus in praying to His Father for other sheep that belong to Him. Pray to God that He will save the followers of Jesus from bad leaders. Pray that the Holy Spirit will fill all our leaders with true understanding, love and good advice.



What Jesus said about Psalm 82 (John 10:34-36)

Jesus quoted from Psalm 82. It warned against religious leaders who behaved like gods. They ruled the people badly and did not care for them.

“How long will you stand up for those who are not fair to others? How long will you show favour to sinful people? Stand up for those who are weak and for those whose fathers have died. Treat fairly those who are poor and those who are beaten down. Save the weak and those who are in need. Save them from the power of sinful people” (Psalm 82:2-4).

The Jews at the time of Jesus knew that Psalm 82 judged their religious leaders. It was written by the prophet Asaph 1000 years before the time of Jesus Christ. Asaph said, “You rulers and judges do not know anything. You do not understand anything. You are in the dark about what is right. Justice has been destroyed all over the world” by people who rule badly (82:5).

Jesus believed that these Old Testament writings were still true at that time. We believe that they are still true today.

Pray for your religious leaders, that they seek understanding from God to meet the needs of their congregations. Also, that they are filled with the love of Christ for those who are weak. Also, that they meet their needs for today with love and wise advice.



Bible reading: John Chapter 11

JESUS PLANS TO BRING LAZARUS BACK TO LIFE

When Jesus visited Jerusalem, He often stayed with his friends Mary, Martha and Lazarus. They were a brother and two sisters who lived at Bethany, three kilometres from the city.

While Jesus was at the River Jordan, Lazarus became ill. The two sisters sent a message to Jesus (11:3). They were united in their love for Jesus and they knew that He loved their brother.

Jesus told his disciples, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory. God's Son will receive glory because of it" (11:4). Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. However, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, He stayed where He was (11:5-6).

Then after two days Jesus said, "Let us go back to Judea" (11:7). Judea is the region around Jerusalem. The disciples were surprised and also afraid. They wondered why Jesus wanted to go back to Jerusalem where the Jewish leaders tried to kill Him (11:8).

Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? A person who walks during the daytime will not trip and fall" (11:9).

After He said this, Jesus went on speaking to them. "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep... I am going there to wake him up" (11:11). Jesus meant that Lazarus was now dead and He would go there to raise him up from death. "For your sakes, I am glad I was not there. Now you will believe," He said (11:15).

Thomas said to the others, "Let us go also. Then we can die with Jesus" (11:16). Thomas showed much courage and faith at that time. He was the one who later refused to believe the resurrection of Jesus from death (20:25). He became known as Doubting Thomas. However, for the rest of his life, he became a great witness for Jesus in India.

MARTHA AND MARY MEET JESUS

Jesus arrived in Jerusalem four days after the death of Lazarus (11:17). Many Jewish friends were with Martha and Mary to comfort them (11:19). Martha went out to meet Jesus. Mary stayed at home (11:20).

"Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "I wish You had been here! Then my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give You anything You ask for" (11:21-22).

Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again" (11:23).

Martha had a strong faith in Jesus. She also knew there would be a resurrection of the dead. This was taught by Jesus and promised in the Old Testament writings (John 5:29; 6:44; Daniel 12:2). Therefore, Martha said, "I

know that he will rise again. This will happen when people are raised from death on the Last Day" (John 11:24).

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies. And those who live and believe in me will never die" (11:25-26). These are the well-known words of Jesus which are often read at funeral services today.

Then Jesus said to Martha, "Do you believe this?"

Martha did not understand everything, but she knew the One who spoke to her. "Yes, Lord" she told Him. "I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God" (11:27). Martha believed that Jesus was the promised Messiah and Saviour to come into the world. For Martha, and for us all, this truth is the beginning of our salvation and eternal life.

Martha hurried home to talk to her sister Mary. Then Mary went quickly to meet Jesus (11:28-29). Others followed her.

Mary fell at the feet of Jesus. She said, "Lord, I wish You had been here! Then my brother would not have died" (11:32).

Jesus looked at Mary and her friends crying. His spirit became very sad and He was troubled. "Where have you put him?" He asked (11:33-34).

Then Jesus wept. The Jews saw how much Jesus loved Lazarus and His sisters (11:35-36). Some said, "He opened the eyes of the blind. Could not He stop this man from dying?" (11:37).

JESUS RAISES LAZARUS FROM DEATH

Once more Jesus became very sad. He went to the place where the body of Lazarus lay. There was a heavy stone across the entrance of the tomb (11:38).

"Take away the stone", He said (11:39).

"But Lord," said Martha... "by this time there is a bad smell. Lazarus has been in the tomb four days" (11:39).

Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" (11:40). So they took away the stone (11:41).

Jesus looked up and thanked His Father for hearing Him. "I know that You always hear Me." He said this for the sake of the people standing there. He wanted them all to believe that His Father, our Almighty God and Creator, had sent Him (11:42).

Then Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man walked out of the tomb covered in strips of cloth. Our Father God listens to the voice of His Son when He makes requests on behalf of His people today (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25).

Jesus said to them "Take off the clothes he was buried in and let him go" (11:44).



Jesus raises a baby from death in Malawi

Manna Publications distributor, Pastor Enock Dimba, was serving as interpreter at a 'bush service' in a remote village in southern Malawi. The speaker was his mission supporter from Scotland, Jim Figgis. He reports:

"A mother brought her small baby to me to lay hands on. I took the baby, and found his body was cold and limp, lifeless. Enock agreed that he had stopped breathing. My feeling was that the mother might blame me for the death of her child, but prayed on in the name of Jesus. Soon, Enock said, "His stomach is moving up and down!" We praised God, and I handed the baby back to the mother, with great relief."

THE PLAN TO KILL JESUS

Because of this miracle, many of the visitors put their faith in Jesus (11:45). Some of them told the religious leaders what had happened. They called a meeting of the Temple Court.

"What can we do?" they asked. "If we let Him [do these miracles], everyone will believe in Him. Then the Roman [rulers] will come. They will take away our Temple and our nation" (11:47-48).

Caiaphas, the Jewish high priest at that time, said ... "It is better if one man dies for the people than if the whole nation is destroyed" (11:50). The words that he said were a prophecy, he was used to fulfil the purpose of God in Christ.

Caiaphas also prophesied that Jesus would die for Jews and God's children everywhere. "He would die to bring them together and make them one" (11:51-52). The followers of Jesus would become one kingdom under God (Acts 10:35; Ephesians 1:10; Colossians 3:11, 15).

The religious leaders then made plans to kill Jesus (11:53).

Jesus and His disciples went to Ephraim, about 20 km from Jerusalem. They stayed there until the Passover Feast (11:53-54). Many Jews came to Jerusalem for the Feast. They kept looking for Jesus (11:55-56).

The religious leaders again gave the order to arrest Jesus. They also ordered the people to tell them where Jesus was (11:57). This law made many believers afraid to follow Jesus.

However, this same plan to kill Jesus fulfilled God's own promise and plan to overcome sin and the power of Satan.

Let us give thanks for the love and mercy of God. The punishment and sacrifice of His Son was for our eternal salvation.



Talk about this:

1. Why did Jesus stay away from Bethany for a few days (11:4, 15)?
2. What do we know about Thomas (11:16; 20:25)? Are you like him?
3. Explain the words of eternal life that Jesus told Martha (11:25-26).
4. Why did Jesus weep (11:33, 35, 38)?
5. What did the people do to help in the miracle of Lazarus (11:41, 44)?
6. How did the enemies of Jesus help to fulfil God's plan of salvation (11:46-53)?
7. Why were the religious leaders afraid to believe in Jesus (11:48)?
8. Why were the people suddenly afraid to follow Jesus (11:57)?



Think about this: In what ways did Thomas, Martha, Mary, the disciples and the mourners show their faith in Jesus? Are you ready to help with miracles of Jesus today? Is your love and faith strong to follow Jesus today?



Pray about this: Ask God to show you what helps and what hinders the work of Jesus today. Pray that you will see clearly how God uses believers AND unbelievers in His plan of salvation. Worship Jesus as Messiah and Saviour in every nation. Ask for help to accept God's love and mercy in His salvation plan for yourself. Ask for help to follow Jesus without fear.

CONCLUSIONS

The writings of John the Apostle help us to complete our understanding of Jesus Christ given to us by Matthew, Mark and Luke. John says at the end of his Gospel, "These [things] are written down so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. If you believe this, you will have life because you belong to Him" (20:31).

John lived longer than the other Gospel writers. He proved again and again the love and mercy of God in sacrificing His only Son for our salvation.

We praise God for the personal teachings of Jesus given before His death and resurrection. We praise God for the gift of His Holy Spirit promised for us to help us to learn and to teach others the truth from God.

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