

HOME GROUP BIBLE STUDIES: The Gospel According to John

1. Introduction to the Gospel of John and the Disciple John

Aim: To help us appreciate the uniqueness of the Gospel of John and its human author.

Uniqueness of John's Gospel:

The Gospel of John is a most beloved Gospel in our NT. Why is that? What do you love about the Gospel of John? [Discuss]

The Gospel of John has the fewest number of miracles recorded (only seven), compared to the other Gospels. What are they? How are the miracles described (cf. John 2:11; 4:54)? Why is that?

Seven miracles are recorded – Jesus changing water into wine (John 2), healing of the royal official's son (John 4), healing of a paralytic at the pool of Bethesda (John 5), feeding over 5000 (John 6), walking on water (John 6), healing of a man born blind (John 9), and raising Lazarus from the dead (John 11). The miracles are called "signs" because they were a signpost pointing people to Jesus' divinity.

What does the Gospel of John have a lot more in it (though there are less miracles and events)?

The Gospel of John has a lot more of Jesus' teaching – incredible teaching, especially on His divinity and His relationship with God the Father. In the second half of John, we also have so much more on Jesus' final words before His death, as well as significant events at the Cross and after the Resurrection.

How much of John covers the three years of Jesus' ministry before His death? How much of John covers from the Last Supper to the final resurrection appearances in John? Why is this?

John 1-12 covers the three years of Jesus ministry, and John 13-21 covers from the Last Supper to the final resurrection appearances. Thus, there is so much more in John's Gospel on the last part of Jesus' life – this is because this is the most important part, both in what Jesus taught us and also in completing our salvation. [Note: No human biography or autobiography has been written like this]

The four Gospels, under the inspiration of God's Spirit, have been written for different reasons:

Matthew – Jesus is the Christ, the promised Messiah (it has many references to the Old Testament).

It has been written to help Jewish people believe that Jesus is the Messiah (Christ).

Mark – Jesus is the Son of God. It is packed with miracles and Jesus' awesome power. Helpful for all.

Luke – Jesus is the Son of Man. It presents more of Jesus' humanity and His compassion for people.

It has been written for Gentiles to believe in Jesus (Luke travelled with the apostle to the Gentiles).

John – Jesus is God. It presents powerful signs and gives incredible teaching on Christ's divinity.

It has been written for all people to believe in Jesus (John 20:30-31).

Uniqueness of the Disciple John:

Who was the author of John's Gospel? (Matt 4:18-22)

John was a fisherman on the Sea of Galilee, together with his brother James, and with Peter & Andrew.

What did John experience as he left his nets and followed Jesus? (1 John 1:1-3)

John heard and saw and touched Jesus. He was an eyewitness to all that Jesus taught and did while He walked this earth. He was even there (the only disciple) at the foot of the cross (John 19:26-27).

John appeared to be fiery, but what did he become through Christ? (Luke 9:52-56; 1 John 4:7-14)

Though he wanted to destroy a village with fire because it didn't welcome Jesus and His disciples, John later became known as the Apostle of Love. He taught more about God's love than anyone else.

John made up an inner group of disciples that was closest to Jesus (Matt 17:1-2; Matt 26:36-37).

Because of this, how did John refer to himself in his Gospel? (John 13:21-25; 20:1-2; 21:7; 21:20)

In his Gospel, John referred to himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved", or "the beloved disciple".

But John's uniqueness is best seen in what he wrote. Read John 1:1-18. What is apparent?

John had incredible insight into who Jesus is. He was enabled by the Holy Spirit to understand that Jesus wasn't just the Messiah and the Son of God, but also our Creator and our God Himself – one with the Father. His Gospel is full of the divinity of Christ. Indeed, he alone records the account of "doubting Thomas", where Thomas declares, after seeing the risen Jesus, "My Lord and my God".

Devotional Reading: John 1:1-18 (read a few verses each day, or read it several times during the week)

Questions to consider: *Why is Jesus called the Word? What divine attributes of Jesus are highlighted? How did people respond to Him? What's the blessing for those who receive Him? What glory shone from Him as He walked this earth? Why is He superior to Moses? What's so wonderful about John 1:18?*

Summary: **In the Gospel of John we have a most amazing testimony to Jesus being Lord and God.**

2. **Jesus the Divine Word, the Life and the Light (John 1:1-13)**

Aim: To help us appreciate the divinity of Christ and to receive Him as our Lord and God.

Review: *Share what God revealed to you as you read John 1:1-18 [Discuss]*

The Word and the Creator (John 1:1-3)

John's Gospel begins so differently to any of the other gospels. Read John 1:1.

We have in this first verse heaven's declaration of who Jesus is. What do we learn about Jesus?

Jesus is the Word – like words reveal thoughts, Jesus reveals the invisible God (John 1:18; Col 1:15)

Jesus was with God – Jesus was with God the Father, even at the beginning of time.

Jesus is God – He's not God the Father (there is no definite article before "God" in the phrase "the Word was God"). But He is God; 100% divine (cf. Phil 2:6; Heb 1:3) and He is one with God (John 10:30).

The beginning words in John 1:1 remind us of the beginning words in Genesis 1:1. What "big truth" is being declared in John 1:1-2?

Jesus was there in the beginning; which implies He was before the beginning of time; even before the Creation of the world. He existed before He came to earth as a man. Indeed, He is the Alpha and the Omega, like God the Father – cf. Rev 21:5-6; 22:12-13. That means He is eternal.

What big truth in John 1:3 affirms that Jesus is God?

Jesus created all things. Therefore, by definition, He is God. This amazing truth that Jesus is our Creator is found here in John 1:3, as well as in Col 1:16 and Heb 1:2. Strictly speaking, Jesus is our co-creator. The Father made all things (Rev 4:11) through the Son.

Jesus is also the Word in another sense. Consider Heb 1:1-2. Why should we call Him "the Word"? Jesus is the final "word" from God. In the past God spoke to us through the prophets (whose words became our Old Testament), but in these last days, God has spoken to us through His Son.

Why else should Jesus be considered the "Word"; the "powerful Word"? (Gen 1:3; Heb 1:3)

Jesus is the all-powerful Word, who spoke into existence the whole creation by His word.

Considering what we have learnt so far, how amazing that it was this Jesus who died on a cross!

The Life and the Light (John 1:4-5)

Read John 1:4-5. What two big truths do we glean about Jesus? What does this imply?

Jesus is the Life – He is the author and sustainer of all life. There is no life without Jesus. Even our very life has come from Him and is sustained by Him (Heb 1:3)

Jesus is the Light – He is the one (the only one) who is able to give us enlightenment and understanding about God and life and who we are, and all the other major questions we have.

Something has tried to extinguish Christ's light. What is it? But what has happened?

The darkness has tried to extinguish Christ's light – that includes the devil and his lies and deceptions – cf. 2 Cor 4:4. But the darkness has not overcome the light of Christ – just as you can't put out the sun.

Read John 1:6-8. Who was the "John" mentioned in these verses and what did he come to do?

The "John" here is John the Baptist. He came as a witness to testify that Jesus is the Light, and he also affirmed that he himself was not the light. We will see in John 1:19-34 how John the Baptist constantly testified to who Jesus truly is and pointing people away from himself and to the "light of the world".

In John 1:9 what do we especially see highlighted about Jesus being the light?

As the light of the world, Jesus came to enlighten our spiritually darkened minds. Without Jesus coming and giving us understanding, we are spiritually blind and lost (cf. John 8:12).

Rejection and Receiving (John 1:10-13)

Despite who Jesus is, what very sad truths do we read about in John 1:10-11?

When Jesus our Creator came, generally speaking, the people of this world did not recognise Him or know Him. When He came to the Jewish people, they rejected and did not receive Him.

What great joy is found in John 1:12-13?

All those who recognise who Jesus truly is (our Creator and God, the author of life and the light of the world), and who receive Him and believe in Him, they become children of God. Hallelujah!

Devotional Reading: John 1:19-34 (read a few verses each day, or read it several times during the week)

Questions to consider: *What did John the Baptist say about himself? What prophecy did he quote about himself; and why? How high did John the Baptist view Jesus? Who did he understand Jesus to be?*

Summary: **Jesus is God! The big question is this: Will we reject Him (like many) or receive Him.**

3. The Glory and Blessing of Christ's Coming (John 1:14-17)

Aim: To help us comprehend the glory and blessing of Christ coming into our world.

Review: *Share what God revealed to you as you read John 1:19-34 [Discuss]*

The Word Made Flesh (John 1:14)

In the first five verses of John's Gospel what incredible truths have we discovered about Jesus?

He was in the beginning (for He is eternal), He was with God the Father, He is God, He is our Creator, and He is the Word (the powerful Word bringing forth Life, and the true Word bringing forth Light).

When we consider who Jesus is, what we read in John 1:14 is most incredible. What is that?

Jesus became a human being; our God and Creator took on human flesh and dwelt among us.

Consider Phil 2:6-8. What do we learn from this passage regarding Jesus taking on humanity?

Jesus took on a humble form of humanity (cf. Isa 53:2). He came as a servant (or slave), not as a king. He laid aside (emptied Himself of) His divine glory and majesty in order to become a human and die for us.

Consider Heb 2:14-16. What do we learn in this passage?

Jesus chose to take on our "flesh and blood" and to die for us, in order to rescue us from the power of death and the devil. He came to save us from eternal death and grant us eternal life. He came to deliver us from Satan's kingdom and bring us into God's kingdom (Col 1:13). To do this, He became one of us.

In John 1:14 we don't have just in this single verse all that Jesus came to do, but we do have other glorious truths about Christ. What are they?

Jesus, even though He came so humbly, bore a glory that is described as being the "glory as of the only begotten from the Father", and then this is further described as being "full of grace and truth".

Although Jesus laid aside His divine majesty in order to be a human, Jesus still revealed the glory of His character, which is also seen in the Father. Consider Exodus 34:6 & Heb 1:3 and reflect on this.

The Father and the Son, in their character, are full of grace and truth. How beautiful is this to behold!

What does it mean that Jesus came into our world "full of grace"?

Jesus came into our world graciously - to save us, not to judge us (John 3:17).

What does it mean that Jesus came into our world "full of truth"?

He came into our world to set us free from the devil's lies and human deceptions, and to reveal the truth about God, life, us, salvation, etc. Everything Jesus taught us was the truth, for He is truth (John 14:6).

When the "Word became flesh" what truth do we hold to about Jesus being a man?

Jesus was 100% human and 100% divine. He was both fully God and full man. What a glorious mystery!

The Word's Blessing (John 1:15-17)

Read John 1:15. What was John the Baptist's testimony of Jesus?

John knew Jesus was so much higher than himself. Although John was the greatest man born of woman (Matt 11:11), Jesus was so much higher. Even though John was born before Jesus was born, John knew Jesus existed before he was born. He knew Jesus was eternal. He's always been; unlike us. Wow!

What do you make of John 1:16 and the phrase "grace upon grace"?

The grace us sinners have received from Jesus is extraordinary. He came full of grace and He continues to pour grace upon us, over and over again each day, longing for people to repent and receive Him (2 Pet 3:9).

For those of us who have received Jesus, what does John 1:16 mean for you?

We haven't just experienced grace when we first believed, but through every day of our life, Jesus has faithfully forgiven us of our sins when we have confessed them (1 John 1:9). What grace!

Read John 1:17. What have we received through Moses? What did this bring?

We received God's Law through Moses. Because we all sin (Rom 3:23), the Law convicted us of our sin (Rom 7:7) and brought condemnation and a fearful expectation of judgment.

In contrast to what we received through Moses, what did Jesus bring us?

Jesus came full of grace and truth. He came to reveal God's grace to us sinners. He came to reveal the truth from God that through faith in Jesus we have forgiveness of sins, salvation from judgment, and the blessings of eternal life and relationship with God. Praise God for Jesus' coming.

Devotional Reading: John 1:35-51 (read a few verses each day, or read it several times during the week)

Questions to consider: *Why did the first disciples follow Jesus? What did Jesus say to them? What did Andrew first do? What did Philip first do? What was Nathanael blown away by?*

Summary: **The eternal God became flesh – fully God, fully man. He came full of grace and truth.**

4. Jesus’ Coming – to Reveal and to Redeem (John 1:18-34)

Aim: To help us appreciate that Jesus came to reveal the Father and to redeem us.

Review: *Share what God revealed to you as you read John 1:35-51 [Discuss]*

Revealing the Father (John 1:18)

In John 1:18 what incredible truth is declared about Jesus’ mission in “becoming flesh” (v.14)?

Jesus came to reveal to us, or to explain to us, the unseen God.

How did Jesus reveal the Father? (John 14:8-10)

Jesus revealed the Father in every way; through His words, His conduct, His signs, and even in His character and person. Jesus could say “He who has seen Me has seen the Father”.

Consider Heb 1:3. How are we to compare the likeness of Jesus with the likeness of the Father?

It’s an exact match. Jesus is identical to God the Father. No wonder He perfectly revealed the Father.

In John 1:18, and right through the OT, we observe that God the Father cannot be seen by human eyes, except through visions or special encounters (cf. Exod 33:18-23). Why is that?

God is holy and we are not. His holy presence would cause us to be consumed on the spot.

Why weren’t humans consumed on the spot by Jesus’ presence? (Phil 2:6)

Jesus “emptied Himself” and took on humanity. This enabled God’s Son to walk among us without harm. Note: We also believe that some of the OT people encountered Jesus in a human form, and thus were able to engage with Him without incident (eg, Hagar in Gen 16:13; Joshua in Josh 5:13-15).

In John 1:18, what glorious reality do we see that makes Jesus perfect for revealing the Father?

Jesus is the “**only begotten God**”, who came from the Father – from the Father’s side/bosom. There is no one in all Creation more qualified in revealing the unseen God to us.

The Revelation of John (John 1:19-28)

In John 1:19-23, what do we learn about John the Baptist and his understanding of himself?

John knew he wasn’t the Christ, but the messenger prophesied in Isa 40:3-5. He was the forerunner to prepare people’s hearts for Jesus’ imminent coming and for the revealing of the glory of the Lord (Jesus).

How did John the Baptist prepare people’s hearts for the coming of Jesus? (Matt 3:1-6)

He prepared people’s hearts by calling them to repent of their sins and to be baptised as a sign of repentance. He was getting people ready to receive Jesus as God’s Son and our Saviour.

What was John’s response when he was questioned about baptising people? (John 1:24- 28)

He humbled himself and declared that his baptism in water, was so insignificant compared to the one coming who would baptise in the Holy Spirit (1:33b). He took every opportunity to exalt Christ. *Do we?*

The Redemption of Christ (John 1:29-34)

John 1:29 contains one of John the Baptist’s greatest testimonies of Jesus. Who is Jesus?

Jesus is the Lamb of God (God’s Lamb), whom God provided to redeem us (save us) from our sins.

What about all the sacrifices that humans provided in the Old Testament? (Heb 10:4-10)

All the sacrifices in the OT were only a “token” offering. They could never atone for sin (Heb 10:4). They all pointed to the sacrifice of God’s Lamb, for only He can redeem and save us from our sins (Heb 10:5-10).

Read John 1:27 & 30. What is John the Baptist’s testimony of Jesus?

Jesus is far greater than he. He was not worthy to do a servant thing and untie the thong of His sandals (v.27). He knew Jesus had a higher rank than he, and He even existed before him (He is eternal) – v.30.

How did John know assuredly who Jesus truly was? (John 1:31-34)

When John baptised Jesus, the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, came and remained on Jesus. He was told by God that this how he would know who the Christ would be, the Saviour of the world.

What else happened at Jesus’ baptism? What did John witness? (Matt 3:13-17)

Besides the Holy Spirit descending on Jesus in the form of a dove, he heard the Father declare that Jesus was God’s Son – the one He loves and is well-pleased with. Jesus is the Son of God (John 1:34).

Besides being the Lamb of God who came to redeem us, what also did Jesus come to do? (John 1:33)

He came to baptise in the Holy Spirit all who receive Him. This enables us to be born again and to have life.

Devotional Reading: John 2:1-11 (read a few verses each day, or read it several times during the week)

Questions to consider: *Why did Jesus’ earthly mother come to Jesus? Why did Jesus give the answer He did in John 2:4? Despite Jesus’ answer, what extraordinary sign did He do? What did this sign point to?*

Summary: **Jesus came to reveal the Father and to redeem us from our sins as the Lamb of God.**

5. Jesus' Call – "Follow Me" (John 1:35-51)

Aim: To consider the calling by Jesus of the first disciples and His responses to them.

Review: *Share what God revealed to you as you read John 2:1-11 [Discuss]*

Coming to Jesus – the Messiah (John 1:35-42)

Read John 1:35-37. What caused two of John the Baptist's disciples to leave John and follow Jesus? They followed Jesus because John pointed them away from himself to Jesus; the Lamb of God (John 1:29).

What important lesson can we learn from John the Baptist?

We are meant to point people away from ourselves to Jesus. We cannot rescue or save anyone. We cannot even heal or help anyone compared to what Christ can do. *Are you faithful in pointing others to Jesus?*

When Jesus saw them following Him, why did He ask them "What do you seek?" (John 1:38)

Jesus knows that many people seek to follow Him, but with wrong reasons (cf. John 6:26). He wanted to find out what they were after. *What would your answer be if Jesus asked you "Why do you seek Me?"*

Why was their response to Jesus' question pleasing to Him, so that He said "Come?" (Jn 1:38-39a)

They called Jesus "Rabbi", which means teacher, believing He was a "teacher from God" (cf. John 3:2). They also weren't interested in just a one-off meeting, but were committed to be with Him for the "long haul". Jesus would have been pleased with this. *Are you committed to Jesus for the "long haul"?*

Read John 1:39-41. One of the first disciples to follow Jesus was Andrew. What did he do first?

He went and found his brother Simon Peter. He wanted him to be introduced to Jesus. *What's your heart desire for others? Is it for family and friends to be saved though coming to Jesus?*

What was Andrew convinced of and why did he want his brother to come to Jesus? (John 1:41)

Andrew was convinced that Jesus was the Messiah ("Messiah" is a Hebrew word, and the equivalent in the Greek is "Christ"). Messiah/Christ is a term that applies to the unique One whom God promised to send into our world and whom God anointed to be our Saviour and King. *Are you convinced? Why?*

What was Jesus' response to Simon Peter? Why the name change? (John 1:42)

Jesus was welcoming of Simon Peter. He changed his name to "Cephas" (or "Peter"), because this word means "rock", and Jesus knew that Peter would end up being a "rock" in His church (cf. Matt 16:17-19).

What do we learn about Jesus in John 1:42?

Jesus knows all things. He knew Peter's past – he was the son of John. He knew Peter's future – a rock in His church. Jesus knows our past, our present and our future. *How do you feel about that?*

The Call of Jesus – "Follow Me" (John 1:43-51)

In John 1:43 Jesus met Philip. What important words did Philip hear? Why are they important?

Philip heard Jesus say to him "follow Me". This is the sum and substance of the Christian life. This is further emphasised in John's Gospel in 10:27, 12:26, 13:36, 21:19 and 21:22. *Are you a follower of Jesus?*

What did Philip do after coming to Jesus and committing himself to follow Jesus? (John 1:44-45)

He went and found Nathanael in order to bring him to Jesus. He, like Andrew, was convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, and he wanted his good friend to become a follower of Jesus too. *Are we like a Philip?*

How does Philip describe Jesus to Nathanael? What does this mean? (John 1:45)

Philip was saying that Jesus was the Messiah, for this is who Moses and the prophets spoke about.

What was Nathanael's response? Why? And what was Philip's reply? (John 1:46)

Nathanael couldn't believe that the Messiah would be from Nazareth – for it was "Galilee of the Gentiles" (Isa 9:1); ie, a place where heathen Jews lived. But Philip wasn't put off. He simply said "come and see".

How can we respond to people who dismiss Jesus? In what way can we be like Philip?

We can encourage people to church to hear Jesus, or to read the Gospels; in effect saying "come and see".

Read John 1:47-49. What was Nathanael impressed with when he met Jesus? What did he conclude?

He was impressed by Christ's knowledge of him, concluding correctly that Jesus must be the Son of God (ie, divine), and that He must be the King of Israel (ie, the Messiah).

Read John 1:50-51. What did Jesus say to Nathanael (and the other disciples) that he would see?

They would see far greater things – things that would convince them further that He is God and King.

Devotional Reading: John 2:12-25 (read a few verses each day, or read it several times during the week)

Questions to consider: *Why did Jesus do what He did in the temple? What was the sign that Jesus had the right to do what He did in the temple? Why did Jesus hold back from giving Himself into man's hands?*

Summary: **Jesus calls us to follow Him; we are to realise that He is the Son of God and the Messiah.**

6. The Revealing of Jesus' Glory (John 2:1-25)

Aim: To consider the start of Jesus' ministry and the revealing of His glory and authority.

Review: *Share what God revealed to you as you read John 2:12-25 [Discuss]*

Jesus' First Miracle (John 2:1-11)

Why did Jesus' mother come to Him? Why did Jesus give the answer He did? (John 2:1-4)

When the wine ran out at the wedding, Jesus' mother came to Him, as she seemed to understand that Jesus had divine power to resolve the problem. That's why Jesus' response is "My hour has not yet come".

What do we learn from this about Jesus and the divine power He had to do miraculous things?

He didn't use His divine power whenever He wanted. It would appear that He didn't even use His power while growing up – it was reserved for when He would begin ministry (and according to God's will).

Read John 2:5. What was Mary's response to her son's words?

Mary was not perturbed. She had an inkling that it might be Jesus' time to reveal His glory by using His power to provide wine for the wedding – so she primed the servants to be ready to do what Jesus said.

Read John 2:6-7. What do you make of Mary's request now?

Mary's inkling was right. Jesus was about to reveal His glory by performing an extraordinary sign; not because Mary had requested it, but because God the Father had ordained it. It was time!

Note: It's amazing how, like for Mary, the Spirit can help us sense what God's will is.

What do you make of this first sign Jesus performed? (John 2:8-10)

It's extraordinary – Jesus having the power to transform water into wine. It's impossible; only the Creator could do such a thing. Does it not confirm the words of John 1:3 - Jesus was the Creator.

What was the quality of the wine? What do we learn from this?

Our God always does things well – everything He does is perfect.

So, what was the key thing to understand when Jesus turned water into wine? (John 2:11)

It was a powerful sign revealing His deity, and it was the beginning of Him revealing His divine glory.

Jesus' First Passover (John 2:12-25)

We've just read Jesus' first sign. Let us now consider His first Passover at the start of His ministry years. What extraordinary thing happened? Why? (John 2:13-16)

Jesus used His power to cleanse His Father's temple of the "marketplace" that had come onto the sacred grounds of the Temple. What was happening was against God's law; and besides, those selling things and exchanging money were seeking to exploit the worshippers who were coming to offer sacrifices to God.

Many see Jesus becoming angry when He cleansed the temple. Was He angry? Is that okay?

Jesus was passionate when He cleansed the temple of its ungodly activity. He was angry; but it was righteous anger - it wasn't sin. He was angry because His Father's name was being dishonoured.

The "cleansing of the Temple" also occurred at the end of Jesus' earthly ministry (Matt 21:12-13). At the start and end of His ministry these events occurred. Why? What did it signify? (John 2:17)

Jesus was passionate when it came to the worship of God. The Temple was for prayer, not for profit; for worship, not worldliness; for sacrifice, not self-service. Consider: *How pure are we, and also our church, when it comes to the worship of God? Are there things that we need to "clean out"?*

The Jewish leaders were not happy with what Jesus did. What was His response? (John 2:18-22)

His opponents asked for a sign, but Jesus would never give a sign when demanded for one. Instead, He pointed them to a future sign that would affirm His authority to cleanse the temple. That sign was His Resurrection, that proved He was the Son of God (Rom 1:4) – He had all the authority to do what He did.

Read John 2:23-25. People were being drawn to Jesus. Why did Jesus not entrust Himself to them?

Jesus knew that people were coming to Him for wrong reasons. They wanted to experience the blessings of His signs and miracles; eg, being healed. Later on they even wanted to make Him king to drive out the Romans (John 6:15). Sadly, they were not coming to Him as their Lord and Saviour (cf. John 6:26-27).

Devotional Reading: John 3:1-21 (read a few verses each day, or read it several times during the week)

Questions to consider: *Why do we need to be born again? What does it mean to be born again? What OT sign was a picture of what Jesus would do to save us? What must we do? Why was Jesus sent (3:16-17)?*

Summary: **Jesus revealed His glory by turning water into wine, and revealed His authority by cleansing the temple and pointing to His resurrection from the dead. Jesus is God.**

7. The Great Need to be Born Again and to be Saved (John 3:1-15)

Aim: To help us see our great need to be born again and how we can receive eternal life.

Review: *Share what God revealed to you as you read John 3:1-21 [Discuss]*

Being Born Again (John 3:1-8)

Why did the Pharisee Nicodemus come to Jesus? (John 3:1-2)

Although the Pharisees hated Jesus and did not consider Him to be the Christ, Nicodemus came because he knew He was a teacher from God and that God was with Him due to the miraculous signs He did.

Note: This was the purpose of Jesus' miracles – they were a divine sign that He was from God and is God.

Why did Nicodemus come to Jesus at night?

Nicodemus probably came to Jesus at night because he was fearful of the other Pharisees knowing, and of being removed from the Jewish ruling party. Later on, Nicodemus stood up for Jesus (John 7:50-52; 19:39) and was no longer ashamed of associating with Him or standing up for Him (cf. Luke 9:26).

Why did Jesus declare such a profound and important truth to Nicodemus straight up? (John 3:3)

Nicodemus was a religious leader. He should have been aware from the Old Testament Scriptures that we need to be renewed/recreated by the Holy Spirit (Ezek 36:26-27). This is what it means to be "born again".

Nicodemus completely misunderstood what Jesus said. He thought about Jesus' words from a physical perspective, not a spiritual perspective. So, what does "born again" mean? (John 3:4-5)

To be "born again" is to be born of the Spirit. It's when God's Holy Spirit comes to dwell in us through faith in Christ, and our lives are changed (Acts 2:38; 2 Cor 5:17).

What does the part of the phrase "born of water" mean?

There are several possibilities. It could refer to the need for us to repent, as John's water baptism was about that. It could be a double emphasis on the Holy Spirit, for Jesus refers to Him as the "water of life" (John 7:37-39). But it's not a reference to believer's baptism, as this is not essential for being "born again".

Why must we be "born again"? (John 3:3,5)

We cannot see or enter the kingdom of God (ie, be saved and be right with God), unless we are born again.

What else do learn about the Spirit and being "born again" in John 3:6-8?

We are born of the flesh and become a physical being, but we also need to be born of the Spirit through Christ and become a spiritual being - alive to God. It is mysterious who is born again, but the evidence is clear, just as it is when the wind is blowing (NB: wind, breath & spirit are synonymous terms in the OT).

Being Saved (John 3:9-15)

Read John 3:9-13. From Nicodemus' question (v.9), what do we learn further from Jesus?

Jesus gently berates Nicodemus for he should not only understand what He was teaching, but accept unreservedly His teaching, for Jesus was no ordinary teacher. He had descended from heaven, and His teaching was from God (the "we" in v.11 is probably referring to John the Baptist's testimony from God).

Note: *Do we accept unreservedly all that Jesus taught us and the inspired Word of God?*

What did Jesus mean by His words in John 3:13?

He is referring to the awesome truth that He had descended from heaven and become a man (the Incarnation), and that as the Son of Man, He would also ascend into heaven (the Ascension). Note: "Son of Man" is a title for the Messiah found in Dan 7:13-14, and that refers to His ascension and coronation.

Read John 3:14-15. What incredible truth and picture do we have in these verses?

Jesus explains in these verses how we receive the gift of eternal life (how we are saved). It's by looking to Jesus and believing in Him. He even gives His first reference to the cross. Just as the bronze serpent in Num 21:9 was lifted up and people were saved by looking to it, Jesus would be "lifted up" on a cross, and if we look to Him for salvation, we will be saved from our sins.

What's the key purpose of John 3:14-15 in the light of John 3:3-5?

In vv.3-5, Jesus doesn't explain how we are to be "born again", but just the absolute need we have to be "born again". In vv.14-15, He explains how we are to be "born again" – it's through faith in Jesus.

Devotional Reading: John 3:22-36 (read a few verses each day, or read it several times during the week)

Questions to consider: *What was John's response to the people going to Jesus? What must increase? What must decrease? What do we learn about the Father and the Son? Who has life? Who experiences wrath?*

Summary: **We must be born again by looking to Jesus & believing in Him and receiving His Spirit.**

8. The Love of God and the Wrath of God (John 3:16-36)

Aim: To consider God’s love in sending Jesus, and God’s wrath to those who won’t believe.

Review: *Share what God revealed to you as you read John 3:22-36 [Discuss]*

God’s Love and Grace (John 3:16-21)

This next section of John has some really important verses. Arguably, John 3:16 is the most well-known Bible verse in the world. What’s so special about it?

We read of God’s great love for the world – the people of the world (you and I). That love is especially in regard to what He has done to rescue us from the consequences of our sins. He sent Jesus to save us. Other great verses that declare God’s love to save us are Rom 5:8 and 1 John 4:10 [read].

What did Jesus come to save us from? What must we do?

Jesus came to save us from perishing eternally – facing eternity in hell. He came to save us so that we could have eternal life. We must believe in Him; that is, trust Him and look to Him (John 3:14-15).

V.17 is another very important verse that gives us further understanding of John 3:16. What is it? Jesus didn’t come to judge. In His second coming He will. But in His first coming, He came to save.

In John 3:18 we have a strong warning. What is it?

We will all face God’s judgment (Heb 9:27). If we believe in Jesus we will not be judged (Rom 8:1). But if we don’t believe, we already stand condemned; even before our sins are taken into account.

Read John 3:19-20. What is the verdict – a summary of Christ’s coming and our response to Him?

Jesus came to save us. He came as the Light to reveal our sin and to show us the way of salvation through Him. But because we love sin and darkness, we oppose Christ and don’t want Him to expose our sins.

But not all reject Christ. What have some done? (John 3:21)

Some have faced the truth about their sin and the danger of judgment. They have come to the Light; and though their sins have been exposed, they have found grace and forgiveness in Christ. They now love the Light and seek to practice good deeds, which actually are produced through God (Eph 2:10; Phil 2:13).

John the Baptist’s Testimony (John 3:22-30)

Read John 3:22-24. Why do you think John was still baptising, even though Jesus had now come?

He was still calling people to repent, turning them to Christ. Repentance is essential for salvation (Acts 2:38).

What was John’s response to the report that all were going to Jesus? (John 3:25-29)

He was full of joy. He was joyful that he had fulfilled his ministry from God to prepare people for the coming of the Lord. He was delighted that he had been sent ahead of the Christ. He was so thrilled to be the friend of the bridegroom (Jesus), and that the bride (people who believe in Jesus) had gone to Him.

Do you have joy in your Christian life? How can we have joy? (consider John the Baptist)

Joy comes from doing God’s will and being content with what He has given us to do.

Read John 3:30. What should be the dominant motive in all that we do and say?

We should desire, above all things, for Christ to increase (be exalted) and for self to decrease (be humbled). This desire to exalt Christ is seen in John the Baptist in the next section of John’s Gospel.

God’s Son and God’s Wrath (John 3:31-36)

What do we learn further about Jesus from John the Baptist’s testimony in John 3:31-35?

Jesus is from above (heaven) – and is above all. Jesus testifies to what He has seen and heard (in heaven) – it is reliable and true. He speaks the “words of God”, and He has the Spirit without measure. The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hands. WOW! How awesome is Jesus. May He be exalted!

Despite who Jesus is, what is the general response of humans to Jesus? (John 3:32-33)

Most people reject Jesus and will not receive His word. But some of us do receive Him, and we in turn, end up testifying to God’s truth – through the help of His Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8).

Contrast John 3:16 with John 3:36. What extremely important truth is declared to us here?

God’s love for us doesn’t mean we all go to heaven. If we turn to Jesus and trust in Him, we will. But if we reject Him and not accept/obey His word, we will bear God’s eternal wrath (hell). This is serious!

Devotional Reading: John 4:1-26 (read a few verses each day, or read it several times during the week)

Questions to consider: *How is Jesus’ humanity revealed? What can we learn from Jesus about evangelism? What can Jesus give us? What must we face about ourselves? What is true worship? Who is Jesus?*

Summary: **God loves us and sent Jesus, but if we don’t believe in Him we’ll perish and face His wrath.**

9. The Water of Life and the Worship of God (John 4:1-26)

Aim: To consider Christ's great gift of the "Water of Life" and what "True Worship" is.

Review: *Share what God revealed to you as you read John 4:1-26 [Discuss]*

The Water of Life (John 4:1-18, 25-26)

Why did Jesus leave Judea and why did He have to pass through Samaria? (John 4:1-4)

Jesus wanted to show the Pharisees that He was not competing with John the Baptist (John was an ally; not a rival). But He left Judea, and passed through Samaria, because He had a God-ordained appointment with a woman. Note: Samaria was despised by the Jews as Samaritans were considered to be "unholy Jews".

Read John 4:5-7. In what way do we see that Jesus was fully human in this passage?

Jesus was weary from His journey and He was also thirsty. Though He be God, He was also fully human.

Read John 4:7-9. Why was the woman surprised by Jesus' simple request?

In Jesus' time, Samaritans didn't associate with Jews; for Jews despised them. Not only that, but it was also not culturally right for a Jewish man to speak to a woman in private (cf. John 4:27).

Why did Jesus break cultural norms in speaking to the woman? What was Jesus seeking to do?

Jesus followed God's will, not man-made cultural norms. Besides, He was seeking to engage with her in a gospel conversation. And He began by simply requesting her for a drink of water. It's as simple as that!

After being "pushed back" on His request for a drink of water, what profound truth did Jesus share with the woman? (John 4:10)

Jesus had requested her for a drink of water. But if she knew who He truly was, and the gift of God, she would have asked Jesus for a drink of water - "living water".

Jesus' words in John 4:10 are profound. What did the woman think of them? (John 4:11-12)

She didn't understand them at all. She thought that Jesus was talking about getting water from the spring that feeds the well; but He didn't even have a bucket. Besides, she saw Jesus to be just a man inferior to their ancestor Jacob, who had made and given them the well. She wondered who He thought He was.

In John 4:13-14 Jesus explains what He meant by "living water". What is it? How do we get it?

"Living water" is a picture of spiritual life that Jesus alone can give us. It results in eternal life. It also satisfies us completely. In John 7:37-39, "living water" is one and the same as the Holy Spirit; what a gift!

The woman decided she wanted this "living water". What did Jesus do next? Why? (John 4:15-18)

Jesus revealed her sinfulness (she had been a loose-living woman). We cannot receive Christ's gift of "living water" and eternal life, unless we acknowledge our sin and come clean before Christ.

What did the woman do in response to Jesus' probing? (John 4:19-20)

She became scared of Jesus, perceiving that He was a prophet who knew all about her sinful life. She then deflected attention off herself to a controversial issue of the day. This is such a typical human response.

But with Jesus' patience and love, what happened to the woman? (John 4:25-26, 28-29)

She realised Jesus was more than a prophet; He was the Messiah/Christ. She believed in Him and was saved.

The Worship of God (John 4:19-24)

In deflecting attention from her sinfulness, the woman raised a controversial question on worship.

Why did Jesus not continue to press her about her sin? Why did He delve into worship? (John 4:19-20)

Jesus sensed that she knew she was a sinner – He didn't need to press it anymore. But her controversial question she raised was a most important one for Jesus. True worship really mattered to Him.

What do we learn about true worship in John 4:21-24?

The way humans worship the true God was changing. No longer would it be about the place. It would change, flowing from salvation in Christ (v.22), and it would be according to "spirit and truth".

What does it mean to worship the Father in "spirit and truth"? (John 4:23-24)

It means we must worship God spiritually (not physically by ritual and rote), and by revealed truth (not by our own understanding). Praise God that through faith in Jesus we are made spiritually alive through the Holy Spirit, and He reveals the truth about God to us. This alone enables us to worship God truly.

Devotional Reading: John 4:27-54 (read a few verses each day, or read it several times during the week)

Questions to consider: *Why did the woman believe that Jesus was the Christ? What did the disciples not understand? Why did the woman's villagers believe? What was so impressive about Jesus' second sign?*

Summary: **Christ alone can give us the water of life, and He alone enables us to worship God truly.**

10. The Conversion of a Woman and her Town (John 4:25-54)

Aim: To consider Christ saving a sinful woman as well as her town people.

Review: *Share what God revealed to you as you read John 4:27-54 [Discuss]*

Conviction (John 4:25-30)

In John 4:25-26, what incredible truth did the "woman at the well" hear from Jesus' lips Himself? She heard Jesus plainly tell her that He was the Christ (or Messiah) – that is, the promised anointed one of God who had come to save us, and the promised appointed one of God to be our good and gracious king.

What convicted the woman that Jesus was the Christ? (John 4:29-30)

Jesus knew all about her, including her "hidden" sins. But also, during her conversation with Jesus, she would have sensed that before her stood someone very great (cf. John 4:12). Jesus spoke such profound words to her about eternal life and about true worship. Surely, this was the Christ, the Messiah.

For our time, what causes us to be convicted that Jesus is the Christ? (cf. Matt 16:16-17)

It is God the Father through the Holy Spirit (John 16:8-11) who convicts us of sin and the truth that Jesus is the Christ. God even helps us to come to Jesus and trust in Him (cf. John 6:44-45).

What has convinced you that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God? [Discuss]

At the end of the day, it appears that Jesus never received his drink. But who did?

The woman did! By believing in Jesus she received living water – eternal life.

Concern (John 4:31-38)

The disciples were concerned about Jesus. Why? (John 4:27)

Breaking cultural norms, Jesus had spoken to a woman, and a Samaritan woman at that. Sometimes, godly behaviour that is according to the will of God can be misunderstood by others [*do you have any examples*].

The disciples were also concerned about Jesus having something to eat. But what was Jesus concerned about? (John 4:31-34)

Jesus was concerned about one thing only; above everything else. It was doing the will of God. This was more important than even eating. This is also meant to be the primary concern of all His followers – knowing and doing the will of God (cf. Matt 6:10, 6:33; Rom 12:1-2)

What is one of the big things when it comes to the will of God? (John 4:35-38)

God wants us to be engaged in helping people be saved, by sowing the Gospel in people's hearts and then reaping a harvest of salvation This is so needful that we should pray for more "workers" (cf. Matt 9:37-38).

Conversion (John 4:39-45)

Read John 4:39-42. Who else comes to believe in Jesus? Why?

The village of Sychar was converted to Christ. Although they were Samaritans ("unholy Jews"), they believed in Jesus from the woman's testimony, and then they believed in Him more from listening to Him.

Note: Our faith in Christ will grow as we listen to the word of Christ (Rom 10:17).

Read John 4:43-45. Who else was responding positively to Jesus? Who wasn't?

The Galileans did, but the Jews in Jerusalem didn't, nor the people from his hometown (cf. Matt 13:54-58).

Note: So often it's our own family that does not accept or want to hear our testimony of Jesus [*discuss*]

Confirmation (John 4:46-54)

In John 4:46-54 we have another awesome sign. What was it? What did this confirm about Jesus?

Jesus healed the royal official's son, who lay sick and at the point of death in another town. This confirmed Jesus' divinity. He can heal just by speaking a word (cf. Matt 8:5-13). Only the Divine Creator can do this.

In this healing, what challenge did Jesus give? (John 4:48) Why should we believe?

Many people won't believe in Jesus unless they see signs and wonders. How true this is for our day, where the saying is "seeing is believing". But we should believe in Jesus because He fulfills the Scriptures and because God has declared Him to be the Saviour of the world (cf. John 20:27-29).

Devotional Reading: John 5:1-24 (read a few verses each day, or read it several times during the week)

Questions to consider: *Did the cripple man Jesus healed have faith in Christ? Why did Jesus get in trouble for healing the man? Why did the Jews try to kill Jesus? Who will judge and who is saved from judgment?*

Summary: Christ's desire is to save us – if we would receive His word and come to Him.

11. Christ's Divinity – Power to heal & Equality with God (John 5:1-24)

Aim: To consider Christ's awesome power to heal, and that He is one and equal with God and our Saviour.

Power to Heal (John 5:1-9a)

Jesus mainly ministered in Galilee, but why did He go from time to time to Jerusalem? (John 5:1)
Even though Jesus is the Son of God, He obeyed every part of the law of Moses. It was required for every male to go to Jerusalem for the three big annual feasts (cf. Exod 23:14-17).

Read John 5:2-4. Some translations don't have verses 3b-4. Why is this?

Through the discovery of many of manuscript copies of the New Testament over the centuries, we can be absolutely sure what we have in our Bible is authentic. We even have indications in our modern translations when something is only found in an later manuscripts, and not in earlier ones.

If John 5:3b-4 was not in the original manuscript of John, why was it included later?

It was included by someone later on after John wrote His gospel to give sense to what we read in verse 7.

Read John 5:5-6. Why did Jesus ask this sick man "Do you wish to get well?"

Jesus was testing the man to see if he wanted to be made well. Some people prefer to remain sick or incapacitated so that they can receive attention from others. Jesus also was testing him to see if he recognised who was before him – the Son of God who can heal all diseases.

What does the man's response show? (John 5:7)

He did not recognise who Jesus was. But he did want to be made well, according to the legend of being the first to be placed into the water when it was stirred. But no one was by him to help this happen.

Read John 5:8-9a. What is so extraordinary about this healing?

Jesus healed a man who had been paralysed for 38 years. Though he hadn't walked all this time, his muscles were instantly strengthened, and he could walk normally. Also, Jesus healed a man who had no faith in Him and who had no idea of His power to heal. The man was healed from Christ's compassion.

Many were sick beside the pool of Bethesda (v.3). But Jesus only healed one person. Why?

Jesus had the power to heal everyone, but he only healed that one man because Jesus did only what the Father wanted Him to do. It was God's will, on that day, for this one man beside the pool to be healed.

Equal with God (John 5:9b-24)

Jesus healed the sick man on a Sabbath day. Trouble resulted. Why? (John 5:9b-12)

The religious authorities ruled the healing unlawful, as it was on a Sabbath Day, and so they wanted to find out who had done this unlawful act. Note: According to God's law it wasn't lawful.

Read John 5:13. What is so striking about the healing of the crippled man?

Jesus performed the healing quietly and then slipped away. He did not do it for "show". How humble He is.

What do you make of Jesus words to the man in v.14?

We don't know the reason why the man was a cripple in the first place. It could be that he did something bad that led to his condition. Jesus' words to the man are really a call for him to repent, as well as to fear the Lord – God has the right to discipline us for our sins. But praise God for what we read in Psa 103:10.

The religious leaders persecuted Jesus for healing the man. How did Jesus respond? (John 5:15-17)

He dismissed their man-made law of how you couldn't heal on the Sabbath, by declaring that God is at work every day, even on the Sabbath. What a glorious truth that our God is active and at work in our world.

When Jesus called God "Father", how did the religious leaders hear this? (John 5:18)

They heard it as Jesus making Himself equal with God. They were right to hear it that way! Jesus is one with God (John 10:30) and equal with God (John 1:1). But how wrong they were to seek to kill Him.

Under the threat of death, what did Jesus teach the leaders about Himself in John 5:19-23?

Jesus is equal and one with God the Father. He only does what the Father wants, the Father loves Him and reveals all things to Him, Jesus has the same power as the Father to give life to whoever He wishes, and he has been entrusted by the Father to be the judge of all. As a result, all should honour Him.

Although Jesus is equal with God and our judge, what great truth do we have in John 5:24?

Jesus is our Saviour from judgment & death. If we would receive Him & believe in Him, we will be saved.

Devotional Reading: John 5:25-47 (read a few verses each day, or read it several times during the week)

Questions to consider: *What do we learn about the Resurrection at the end of time? Who and what testifies to Jesus being one and equal with God the Father? What sad truth does Jesus reveal in vv.39-40?*

Summary: **Christ is one with God and equal to Him. He is also the judge. But He came to save us.**

12. Christ's Power and the Solid Testimony of who He is (John 5:25-47)

Aim: To appreciate Christ's power, and to consider the solid testimony of who Jesus is.

From Death to Life (John 5:24-30)

Last week we ended on John 5:24 (a verse we should all memorise). What's so special about it? Even though in the previous verses we learn that God has entrusted all judgment to His Son (v.22), if we listen to Jesus and look to Him as the one God sent to save us, we will be spared judgment. Also, immediately we trust in Jesus, we pass from death to life; we immediately begin to enjoy eternal life.

In John 5:25-29 Jesus confirms and expands on what He taught in the previous verses - vv.19-23. Read John 5:21 and 5:25-26. What do learn from Jesus's lips?

Jesus has power to give life to whomever He chooses. Specifically, since Jesus began ministering, He had the power to grant eternal life to anyone who would hear Him and receive Him. The "dead" in v.25 refers to sinners who are spiritually dead, but come alive when they come to Jesus (v.24).

Consider John 5:22 and 5:27. What important truth is affirmed? Why is this fitting?

Jesus is the One who will judge us (cf. also Matt 25:31-33; Acts 17:30-31). It is so fitting that he be our judge, for not only is He the Son of God, but He is also the Son of Man – He has experienced humanity.

In John 5:28-29 what do we learn about Jesus' judgment at the end of the age?

By His power Jesus will raise all people to life – the righteous (those who trusted in Jesus and lived for Him) and the wicked (those who did not receive Jesus). All will receive a resurrection body. The righteous, in their new body, will enjoy life in God's new Creation. The wicked will experience judgment and punishment, in their resurrected body - weeping and gnashing of teeth will be real (Matt 13:41-42).

Read John 5:30. What can we be sure about when it comes to Jesus' judgment?

Jesus' judgment of us will be fair and just (cf. Psa 97:1-2). There will be no favouritism.

From Doubt to Faith (John 5:31-47)

In John 5:19-30 Jesus gives incredible teaching on Himself and His relationship with the Father (He is truly equal with God – v.18). What is He concerned about in John 5:31-32?

Jesus is aware that His testimony needs back-up. The good news is that there are incredible witnesses to affirm who He is and all that He taught us. As a result, we can be sure that Jesus is the Christ, God's Son.

Who is the first witness Jesus cites? What did he testify? (John 5:33-35)

The first witness Jesus cites is John the Baptist – cf. John 1:29-34. John was the forerunner prophesied about in Isa 40:3-5. Even John the Baptist's testimony is sufficient for us to believe in Jesus and be saved.

In escalating order, what is the next witness that testifies of Jesus? (John 5:36)

The miraculous works of Jesus testify to the truth that He is God and that He is the Christ. In John's Gospel, the seven miracles recorded are referred to as signs – as they point us to Jesus being God's Son.

Read John 5:37-38. Who is the third witness to who Jesus truly is?

It is the God the Father. Through the Scriptures God affirms to us that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, because of how He fulfilled God's Word. Also, occasionally, God affirmed audibly who Jesus is (cf. Jesus' baptism – Matt 3:16-17; the transfiguration - John 17:5; just before the cross – John 12:27-28).

What do we learn from Jesus' words in John 5:39-40?

The Scriptures themselves cannot grant us eternal life, but they point us to the One who can; even Jesus our Lord. How important to understand that the Scriptures don't point us to law and commandment, but to Jesus. He alone is able to save us and deliver us from our sins and grant us eternal life (cf. Luke 24:27).

Read John 5:41-44. What is Jesus highlighting to the Jewish religious leaders?

They had failed to understand the Scriptures and to receive the testimony of Jesus. They were willing to receive someone else with little or no testimony, and to reject Jesus despite the overwhelming evidence that declares Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of the living God. How most people are the same today.

In the end, who will condemn unbelieving Jewish leaders to eternal death? (John 5:45-47)

It will be their hero Moses, for he not only gave the Law, but he spoke of Jesus and pointed people to Him (Deut 18:15). At the end of the day, none of us has an excuse. God has testified (cf. 1 John 5:11-12).

Devotional Reading: John 6:1-21 (read a few verses each day, or read it several times during the week)

Questions to consider: *What two outstanding miracles did Jesus perform? What do they reveal about Jesus?*

Summary: **Jesus is God's Son, the Christ and our Saviour; the testimony is strong and sure.**

13. Christ our Saviour King is truly Christ the Creator (John 6:1-21)

Aim: To appreciate Christ's power over Creation, affirming again His divinity and that He is God.

The Miraculous Feeding (John 6:1-14)

In John 6:1, why did Jesus go to Tiberias? Consider the background to this story? (Mark 6:25-32)

Jesus went with His disciples to Tiberias, away from the crowds, to rest; especially after John the Baptist's execution. Cf. Jesus was not all about busy-ness and activity. We need time to rest and grieve.

Even though Jesus sought rest for His disciples and Himself, what do we learn in Mark 6:33-34?

The crowds worked out where Jesus was going and met Him there. Jesus' response was not one of frustration and annoyance, but one of grace and compassion. What a heart He had for people. He saw them as wandering, lost sheep – sheep without a shepherd. *Do we see people rightly, and love them?*

What motivated the crowd to follow Jesus to a distant shore of the Sea of Galilee? (John 6:2)

They followed Jesus because of the miraculous signs He was performing – healing the sick. *Why do you follow Jesus? For blessings, for good health, for success?* We ought to follow Him because of who He is.

Read John 6:3-6. Why did Jesus want to feed the crowd (Matt 14:15)? Why did He ask Philip?

The disciples knew that the crowd needed food; as did Jesus. They had been listening to Him all day and would have been hungry. What a caring Saviour! He wanted to feed them. And although Jesus knew what He would do, He asked Philip to test Him; ie, to test His faith (cf. 1 Peter 1:6-7).

What was Philip, and then, Andrew's, response? (John 6:7-9)

Philip had no faith – he believed that to feed such a group of people was impossible. Andrew also pointed out the obvious (without faith) – there was a lad with some food, but how could that feed a crowd.

Read John 6:9-13. What a miracle. What lessons do we learn from this extraordinary sign?

1. Jesus was able to multiply the food to an extraordinary degree. He was able to create something from nothing, showing us that He is the Creator God who brought all things into existence from nothing.
2. Jesus fed the people well – there were even leftovers. Jesus always gives generously.
3. In the hands of Jesus, that boy's lunch was more than enough to feed the boy and everyone. Never underestimate what Jesus can do with what you give Him – even if it's small and insignificant.

Why did the crowd jump to the conclusion in John 6:14? What should they have concluded?

In 2 Kings 4 the prophet Elisha was involved in having the widow's oil not run out until every jar was filled; and Moses spoke of "the prophet" coming into the world (Deut 18:15). But Jesus was so much more than a prophet – the miraculous signs He performed reinforced what we read in John 1:1-2.

The Miraculous Walk (John 6:15-21)

Read John 6:15. What did the crowd want to do? Why did Jesus respond the way He did?

It sounds good they wanted Jesus to be their king – but according to what they wanted Him to do. Jesus will never agree to that. Instead, He longs for us to be His king, if we would submit and surrender to Him.

Read John 6:16-17. Why didn't Jesus join His disciples (cf. Matt 14:23)

Jesus wanted time alone to pray to His Father in heaven. Having time alone with God is so important.

In John 6:18-19, we read of an extraordinary miracle - Jesus walking on water. How can we be sure it was a real miracle? What do we learn about who Jesus is?

Three or four miles implies that the boat was in the middle and deep part of the lake (Jesus wasn't on a sandbar). Also, Jesus wasn't walking on flat water; but over and above the waves whipped up by the winds. What a picture - Jesus is truly our Creator God, who is over and above even the laws of the universe.

The disciples were absolutely frightened by Jesus walking on water. Why? (cf. Matt 14:26)

They thought they were seeing a ghost. They didn't realise it was Jesus – not yet!

What was Jesus' response to His disciples, and how did the disciples respond? (John 6:20-21)

Jesus lovingly calmed them down, letting them know it was He. Then they received Him into the boat. Cf. We have a lovely picture here of the need we have for Jesus to calm us and for us to receive Him.

What other miracle occurred when Jesus came into the boat? (John 6:21b)

They reached the shore immediately. Who Jesus is and His awesome power is more than we can understand.

Devotional Reading: John 6:22-40 (read a few verses each day, or read it several times during the week)

Questions to consider: *Why did the crowds follow Jesus? Why should they be following Him? Who is Jesus (the first of seven "I Am" statements)? What does Jesus promise every believer (vv.35-40)?*

Summary: **Jesus our Saviour is truly our Creator; creating food from nothing, walking on water.**

14. Christ the Bread of Life (John 6:22-40)

Aim: To consider Christ's words "I am the Bread of Life (the first of His seven "I am" statements)

Seeking Jesus (John 6:22-35)

After the miraculous feeding (feeding of the 5000) the crowds were at a loss to know where Jesus had gone (He hadn't gone with His disciples). Where was He and how did He get there? (John 6:22-25) Jesus had gone from Tiberias to Capernaum; the other side of the lake. What the crowd didn't realise is that He had walked on water to the disciples' boat, and then it immediately came to Capernaum (v.21).

The crowds were seeking Jesus. What was Jesus' comments on this? (John 6:26)

It's a good thing to seek Jesus, but our motives need to be right. Sadly, as Jesus pointed out, the crowds were seeking Him to have their stomachs filled, and not because of the sign (the feeding of the 5000) that pointed to Him being the Son of God and the promised Messiah. That's why they should have sought Him.

In our days we also have people seeking Jesus for the wrong reason. What's some examples?

People seek Jesus to be healthy, wealthy and prosperous; to have a spiritual "high"; to have all their problems taken away; to get a free ticket to heaven, etc.

Why should we seek Jesus? (Jer 29:13; Isa 55:6-7; John 6:27)

We should seek Jesus because of who He is. We ought to seek His person (Jer 29:13) and to seek the salvation He is able to grant us sinners (Isa 55:6-7). In Jesus' words, we ought to seek Him, not for the physical food He could miraculously provide a crowd, but for the spiritual food that produces eternal life.

Read John 6:27-29. What does it mean to work for this "food" that gives eternal life?

It means to believe in Jesus. He alone is the One God the Father has testified to (set His seal) through His Word and through Christ's works; only Jesus can grant us eternal life.

We know that "works" cannot save us (Eph 2:8-9). But what "special work" can? And why does Jesus call it a "work"? (John 6:27-29)

We cannot be saved by good works, but by faith alone in Christ. But true faith in Christ is never alone. True faith is always accompanied by a "special work" - coming to Christ and calling on Him to save us.

In John 6:30-31, why did the crowd respond the way they did?

Before they believed in Jesus, they wanted Him to perform another sign, equivalent to Moses providing Manna (bread from heaven) to Israel in the wilderness. Cf.: Why did they ask for another sign? They had just seen an amazing one - Jesus feeding over 5000 people with 5 loaves and 2 fish.

How did Jesus respond to their challenge? (John 6:32-33)

He firstly corrected them - Moses didn't provide Manna from heaven - God did. And now the greatest miracle and gift stood before them - Jesus, the "true bread from heaven" who provides spiritual and eternal life to people of the world - if we would turn to Him and trust in Him.

The crowds didn't understand Jesus. What did He do? (John 6:34-35)

He made it absolutely clear that He is the bread of life. This is the first of Jesus' seven "I Am" statements. Jesus alone is the one who can satisfy our spiritual hunger and thirst and give us eternal and abundant life.

Secure in Jesus (John 6:36-40)

After such an awesome declaration of Himself in v.35, what did Jesus point out in John 6:36?

Most people before Him did not believe in Him - He knew that. It's the same in our time as well.

Despite many not believing, what do we learn from Jesus in John 6:37?

There are those who will come to Jesus and believe in Him; the ones the Father helps (and "gifts" to His Son). Those who come to Jesus, no matter who they are or what they've done, will be received by Him. He will never reject anyone who comes. How glorious is this truth - it's such a great truth to rejoice in.

Jesus will never reject anyone who comes to Him; although He knows our past, and knows our ups and downs, failures and frailties, in the future. How do we know He will never reject us? (John 6:38-40)

It is God's will that all who come to Jesus, according to the Father's doing, will never be cast out. They are assured of eternal life and being raised to life on the last day. Our salvation is secure in Christ.

Devotional Reading: John 6:41-58 (read a few verses each day, or read it several times during the week)

Questions to consider: *Can we come to Jesus whenever we want? How are we enabled to come to Jesus? What does it mean to "eat" Jesus' flesh and to "drink" His blood? Is Jesus speaking of cannibalism?*

Summary: Jesus is the Bread of Life; He alone can save us and satisfy us; and His salvation is sure.

15. Coming to Christ for Life (John 6:41-58)

Aim: To understand how to come to Christ for spiritual and eternal life.

Life in Jesus (John 6:41-51)

What did Jesus mean when He said that He was "the true bread out of heaven" and "the Bread of Life"? (John 6:32-35)

Jesus alone came from heaven (sent by the Father) to give us true life (spiritual and eternal life). Without Him we perish spiritually, just as we perish physically without physical bread (food). He also is the one who alone can satisfy our spiritual hunger and spiritual thirst; both now and for all eternity.

What was the reaction of the Jews after Jesus said that He was "the Bread of Life"? (John 6:41-42)
They despised Him! They just saw Jesus to be a fellow human being – not someone from heaven. They argued that since they knew His mother and father, He was no one special.

Note: Many people today in our secular society only see Jesus as a plain Jewish man. But He's so much more than that – He is the Son of God. Also note the reference to Jesus' earthly father – from this verse it feels that Joseph may still have been around – we just don't know.

As Jesus considered the reaction of the Jews, and their lack of faith in Him after the miraculous feeding of the 5000, what truth comforted His heart? (John 6:43-45)

Jesus knew that no one could come to Him and believe in Him, despite the impressive signs and miracles He performed, unless God the Father drew them to Him. We need God to teach us and show us who Jesus really is and our need for Him before we will come to Jesus and believe in Him

In the light of John 6:44-45, can we come to Jesus whenever we want?

No we can't! Coming to Jesus and calling on Him to save us is not something that we can do in our own strength or with our own intellect. We need God to draw us through His Spirit (cf. John 16:7-11). But when God is drawing us and Christ is calling us, we need to respond by giving ourselves to Jesus.

What is emphasised in John 6:39, 40 and 44? What does this mean?

When we come to Jesus through God's help, Jesus will raise us up on the last day; ie, we will be resurrected to eternal life, with a new eternal body to clothe our eternal soul and spirit (1 Thess 4:13-18). This is guaranteed and assured for all who come to Jesus and believe in Him.

What great truths does Jesus declare in John 6:46-47?

Even though God the Father draws us to Jesus, it is only Jesus who can reveal and reconcile us to the invisible God (cf. John 1:18). Jesus also is the giver of eternal life. Only He can grant this to people.

What did Jesus want to make clear to the Jews in John 6:48-51?

The miraculous manna (bread from heaven) that Israel ate in the wilderness didn't stop the people dying. But Jesus, the "living bread from heaven" is different. When we come to Him, we are granted eternal life by Jesus. We will not die. We will live forever (cf. John 11:25-26).

Abiding in Jesus (John 6:52-58)

Read John 6:52. What did the Jewish people think of Jesus' words in v.51? Why?

They thought Jesus was speaking of cannibalism. That's because they were not hearing Him properly. Jesus was speaking to them spiritually in spiritual words (cf. John 6:63).

Read John 6:53-56. How are we to understand Jesus' words in v.51?

We are to receive Jesus into our heart & being (cf. John 1:12) so that, by faith, He abides in us and we in Him. Just as we take into our body food and water to live physically, we need to take into our being the Lord Jesus so that we might have spiritual and eternal life.

What big truths does Jesus conclude with in John 6:57-58?

Jesus words are all about life – spiritual and eternal life. The **living** Father sent Him, Jesus **lives** because of the Father, and we truly **live** when we come to Jesus and take Him into our being.

In John 6:53-58, is Jesus establishing the practice of Communion?

No! Some wrongly use these words to teach transubstantiation – the bread and wine becoming the actual body and blood of Christ. This is not true. Jesus is simply speaking figuratively and spiritually.

Devotional Reading: John 6:59-71 (read a few verses each day, or read it several times during the week)

Questions to consider: *Have you ever been tempted to turn away from Christ? Why? What led many followers of Jesus to turn away? What was the response of those who were true disciples of Christ?*

Summary: **Jesus is the Bread of Life; we must come to Him and receive Him to have eternal life.**

16. Christ Alone has the Words of Eternal Life (John 6:59-71)

Aim: To appreciate the importance of remaining with Jesus for He alone has the words of eternal life.

Turning away from Jesus (John 6:59-65)

In John 6:32-58 Jesus taught things that were difficult to understand. What did the crowd struggle to accept or understand? (cf. John 6:41-42, 51-52)

They found it difficult to accept that Jesus had come down from heaven – they believed he was just another man. They also thought He was saying that they needed to eat His flesh (commit cannibalism) in order to have eternal life. They couldn't make sense of His words.

Due to many finding Jesus' teaching too difficult to accept, what did many do? (John 6:59-60, 66)

They walked away from Jesus – they no longer chose to follow Him. This included many disciples; not His 12 disciples, but many others who had been following Jesus.

Many today turn away from Jesus; even people who had a Christian background. Why is this?

They don't find any relevance in Jesus' teaching; they find His teaching too narrow (ie, Jesus taught "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life"); they don't agree with Christian teaching on certain matters such as same-sex marriage, abortion, transgender, etc; they want to be free of Jesus' rule and teaching.

Have you ever turned away from Jesus? What brought this about? If you finally came back to Him, how did that happen?

What was Jesus' response to the crowds deserting Him? (John 6:61-63)

Jesus wasn't devastated. He knew that people wouldn't accept His words or believe in Him, unless the Spirit gave them spiritual life and spiritual understanding (cf. 1 Cor 2:14-16). He also made it clear that what He spoke was spiritual truth that led to spiritual life (He wasn't teaching cannibalism).

What do you think Jesus meant by His words in John 6:62? What point is He making?

What Jesus had taught the people was not beyond them or too difficult. He could so easily have taught them things that were beyond them; especially in relation to who He truly is and where He had come from. The point is: whatever Jesus teaches, it is the truth – whether difficult or easy. Do we believe in Him?

Read John 6:64. What do we learn from Jesus about His understanding of people?

Jesus knows us all. He knew everyone in that crowd; even those who looked like they followed Him but did not really believe. He even knew the one who would betray Him (Judas Iscariot – one of the 12).

What truth did Jesus know when it came to people coming to Him and believing in Him? (v.65)

In the end, Jesus knew that the ones who would come to Him and believe in Him would be the ones that God had granted to be saved and who would be drawn by God (cf. John 6:37, 44-45, 65).

Turning to Jesus (John 6:66-71)

Read John 6:66. Try and picture the crowds turning away from Jesus. If you were one of the twelve, how would you be feeling? What thoughts might you be having (crowd pressure is powerful)? [Discuss]

Jesus was aware of the temptation of His own twelve disciples walking away. So He asked them outrightly what they wanted to do. What's so beautiful about what Jesus did? (John 6:67)

He gave them the freedom to choose what to do. Our Lord is not into forcing compliance but giving us the freedom to choose Him and follow Him – how lovely is that. True Christianity is not a cult!

What was the disciples' response (Peter particularly) to Jesus' challenge in v.67? (John 6:68-69)

Peter's response is so beautiful. Although the crowds turned away from Jesus, Peter would not be walking away. Despite the difficulties in Jesus' teaching, Peter knew that Jesus alone had the words of eternal life, and that He was God's Son. He would be sticking around! *Do you have the same conviction?*

We may have expected Jesus to speak encouraging words after Peter's response. Did He? What did He want to remind them? (John 6:70-71)

Jesus made it clear that one of the 12 was a "devil"; a pretend follower. He would betray Jesus in the end.

Why did Peter believe in Jesus, whereas Judas didn't and many in the crowd turned away?

Peter was God's gift to Jesus (6:37). He had been drawn to Jesus by God (6:44). *Is that true of you?*

Devotional Reading: John 7:1-24 (read a few verses each day, or read it several times during the week)

Questions to consider: *How did Jesus' brothers view Him (v.5)? Why does the world hate Jesus (v.7)? What did the crowds say about Jesus (v.12) What did Jesus say about Himself (vv.16-18)?*

Summary: Jesus has the words of eternal life and is God's Holy Son. We must remain in Him.

17. Christ being Threatened and Wrongly Judged (John 7:1-24)

Aim: To consider Jesus and to judge Him rightly, despite surrounding unbelief and crowd opinions.

Death Threats and Unbelieving brothers (John 7:1-9)

In John 7:1 we read that the Jews in Judea (Jerusalem) wanted to kill Jesus. Why was that?

In John 5, Jesus healed a paralytic on a Sabbath Day in Jerusalem and made Himself equal with God. In John 6, what Jesus had done and taught would have been reported to the Jewish leaders in Judea. They wanted to kill Him because He was taking people away from them (cf. John 11:47-48; 12:18-19).

Did Jesus minister in Galilee because He was afraid of the Jews in Judea? (cf. Isa 9:1-2)

No! He did not fear any man. He ministered in Galilee to fulfil Scripture, and besides that, he always did the Father's will. He did go to Jerusalem from time to time, as we shall see in the next event in John 7.

What attitude did Jesus' brothers have toward Jesus going to the next Jewish feast? (John 7:2-5)

They sarcastically urged Jesus to go to Jerusalem to make a name for Himself. In v.5, we learn they didn't believe who Jesus was (the Christ, God's Son). Note: Later on, they did believe – after His resurrection.

What was Jesus' response to His brothers? (John 7:6-9)

It appears that Jesus wouldn't be going to the feast. But He did go (as we shall see). He would go when it was the right time, according to God the Father; but He wouldn't be going to be a "big shot".

What do you make of Jesus' words in John 7:7?

Jesus knew He would go to Jerusalem and be hated by the religious leaders. Indeed, He knew that the world hated Him, because His light and truth exposes our sin and darkness (John 3:19-20).

Crowd Opinions and Challenging the Crowds (John 7:10-24)

Jesus did go to the Feast of Booths in the end. Why? How did He go up? (John 7:10)

Jesus went to the Feast of Booths to obey the Law God had given Moses (Deut 16:16). But Jesus went up quietly and secretly; not like how His brothers had suggested - for Jesus was humble.

What were the crowds in Jerusalem doing concerning Jesus? How does our society view Jesus?

They were seeking Jesus and talking privately about Him. They had heard about Jesus and had divided opinions on Him. We have, very much, the same in our society – people with divided opinions.

Despite death threats, what did Jesus do according to John 7:14? What do we learn from this?

In the midst of the Feast, Jesus went to the temple and taught. He truly wasn't afraid of death threats.

As the Jews in Jerusalem listened to Jesus, what impressed them? (John 7:15)

They were impressed with Jesus' knowledge of God and His Word, because they viewed Him as an uneducated man; ie, He hadn't been trained in one of the well-known Jewish rabbi schools of Jerusalem.

Seizing on their words, what did Jesus affirm to the crowds as they listened? (John 7:16-17)

He was "learned" because He was sent by God into the world, and what He taught was from God. Indeed, we know Jesus is God and is one with God and is the Word of God (cf. John 1:1-2; Heb 1:1-2).

What was Jesus emphasising in John 7:18?

All that Jesus taught was not for His glory, but for the glory of His Father. All that He taught was true and righteous. Every word He taught could be fully trusted and believed in. Amen!

In John 7:19, Jesus challenged the crowd. In what way?

Jesus used the Law of Moses to condemn those in the crowd who wanted to kill Him (especially the Jewish religious leaders). What they were thinking and plotting violated the Law. What hypocrites!

Why did the crowd react like they did in John 7:20?

Some would have denied that they wanted to kill Jesus. Others would have thought He was crazy, for they had no thought of killing Him – little did they know that others did, especially their own leaders.

What was Jesus' response to the words of the crowd in v.20? (John 7:20-23)

Jesus pointed out their obvious inconsistency; they circumcise on the Sabbath (according to God), but condemn Him for healing (according to man). They believed they kept the Law of Moses, but they didn't.

What important lesson can we learn from Jesus in John 7:24?

We are to judge rightly – that includes judging Jesus rightly. Only with God & His Word can we do that.

Devotional Reading: John 7:25-52 (read a few verses each day, or read it several times during the week)

Questions to consider: *Why couldn't Jesus be seized (v.30)? Why should we come to Jesus (vv.37-38)?*

What did the arresting officers report back to their leaders (v.46)? What do we see Nicodemus doing?

Summary: **Jesus has always been misunderstood. May we judge Him rightly and love Him.**

18. Jesus' True Identity and the Gift of Living Water (John 7:25-52)

Aim: To understand and appreciate Jesus' true identity, and the gift of living water He can give us.

Getting Jesus' identity right (John 7:25-36)

Before we look at the second half of John 7, what was the key point Jesus made in John 7:21-24? He had been wrongly judged. He had been condemned for healing a paralytic on a Sabbath Day (John 5), and yet His condemners were willing to break God's Law and kill Him.

What do we learn about the attitude of some in Jerusalem concerning Jesus? (John 7:25-26) They knew the religious leaders wanted to kill Jesus, and yet they weren't seeing them take any action. They assumed that their leaders were divided – ie, that they were not sure if Jesus was the Christ or not.

But what did these people conclude about who Jesus was? (John 7:27) They concluded that Jesus was not the Christ, because they knew where He had come from (Nazareth, Galilee – so they thought). They wrongly believed that the Christ's origin would be unknown.

From the Scriptures, what do we know about the Christ's origin and birthplace? (Mic 5:2) Jesus came from heaven (John 6:51). As to His human birth, He was born in Bethlehem according to prophecy. Later, He grew up in Nazareth, Galilee. He was truly the Christ – if only the people realised.

What was Jesus' response to the wrong judgment and the wrong conclusion that people were making of His being and where He had come from? (John 7:28-29)

Jesus affirmed who He really was – sent by God the Father into the world and the One who came from God and knew God. They thought they knew Him, but they didn't. They thought He was a nobody, for they even claimed to know Jesus' parents (John 6:42).

Why did some in the crowd want to seize Him again? (John 7:30a)

This is because they understood what He was saying (Jesus made Himself one with God from v.29).

Why couldn't people seize Him and kill Him? (John 7:30)

It was not Jesus' time to die. Nothing could happen to Him until it was time for Him to die on a cross. God's sovereignty would ensure this. NB: Nothing can happen to us until it is God's time (Psa 139:16).

Despite the crowds and religious leaders wrongly judging Him, what do we learn in John 7:31? Many still believed in Jesus; and they were believing rightly because of the signs He was performing.

In John 7:32, how did the Pharisees react to the divided opinions of the Jewish crowds?

They wanted Jesus seized immediately; they didn't want anyone believing in Jesus – even if it was a few.

Read John 7:33-36. What was Jesus referring to? How did the Jewish crowds understand Him?

Jesus knew He would soon be home with His Father. They thought He was referring to going abroad.

Getting Living Water (John 7:37-52)

Despite being misunderstood, what awesome truth did Jesus declare in John 7:37-39?

Jesus can give us living water that results in eternal life (cf. John 4:10, 13-14). The gift of living water is none other than the Holy Spirit, who was given to believers after Christ's resurrection and glorification.

What must we do to receive living water (the Holy Spirit) and the gift of eternal life?

All we need to do is to come to Jesus and ask Him – and He will not cast us away but give us life.

In John 7:40-44 what do we learn about the Jewish crowds listening to Jesus?

They were very divided; some believed He was the Christ and others wanted to seize Him. Sadly, many were drawing wrong conclusions because they didn't know that He actually had been born in Bethlehem.

What amazing response did the officers make who had been sent to arrest Jesus? (John 7:45-46)

They declared that Jesus was like no other – especially in the way He spoke (with authority and clarity).

What was the response of the chief priests and Pharisees? (John 7:47-49)

They scolded them, and the crowds, for being naïve and stupid. They believed Jesus was not the Christ.

At least one Pharisee thought otherwise. Who was that? What did he seek to do? (John 7:50-52)

It was Nicodemus, who came to Jesus at night (John 3:1-2). He secretly believed in Jesus, and he was hoping to help his fellow Pharisees to reconsider Jesus' claims and signs so that they might believe in Him.

Devotional Reading: John 7:53-8:20 (read a few verses each day, or read it several times in the week)

Questions to consider: *What was Jesus' response to the woman caught in adultery? What second great "I Am" statement did Jesus make in John 8:12? Who/what testifies to Jesus' awesome claims?*

Summary: **It's so important we get Jesus' identity right, and receive from Him living water.**

19. Jesus Came to Save Sinners & Give the Light of Life (John 7:53-8:20)

Aim: To appreciate Jesus’ heart to save sinners and to give the light of life.

Jesus and the Woman caught in Adultery (John 7:53 – 8:11)

In John 6:35 and 7:37-39 what two great statements did Jesus give? What do they signify?

John 6:35 is the first of the seven great “I Am” statements in John’s Gospel. It expresses how only Jesus can give us spiritual life and satisfaction; and Jesus’ statement in John 7:37-39 is similar.

As we come to our next section, we will consider the second great “I Am” statement (John 8:12). But before we look at this, why is John 7:53 – 8:11 indicated in many Bibles not to be in the original?

Over the centuries, many manuscripts have been found that are copies of the original books in the Bible. They verify the accuracy, and what was in the original manuscripts. Since John 7:53-8:11 is not found in the copies of the oldest manuscripts for John’s Gospel, scholars know this must have been added in later.

Many Bible translations still include the content of John 7:53-8:11. Should we?

It is a legitimate story as it rings true to the character of Jesus, and it was also found in copies of manuscripts that are still very old. Don’t forget that Jesus did so much more than what is recorded in our Gospel accounts (John 21:25); so, John 7:53-8:11 is probably one of those extra accounts.

Read John 7:53-8-11. Firstly, how is this story consistent with the character of Jesus?

Jesus didn’t come to condemn but to save (John 3:17; Mark 2:17). He was seeking to save the woman.

Looking more closely at the story, who is missing in John 8:3-5. Why might this be? (John 8:6)

They caught a woman in the act of adultery. So, if this is the case, where is the man who was committing adultery with her? But the man wasn’t there because the religious leaders weren’t interested in the man or the woman, but whether Jesus would follow the Law of Moses; if not, they could condemn Him.

What did Jesus write on the ground? (John 8:6b)

We have no idea! Many a sermon has been preached on what Jesus wrote. The thing is, we don’t know, as what He wrote is not the main point of the story – otherwise it would have been recorded for us.

It’s true that a man and a woman who committed adultery were to be killed according to the law of Moses (Lev 20:10) – through stoning. Why didn’t Jesus appear to uphold this law? (John 8:7)

Jesus didn’t come to judge – that wasn’t His ministry. Others had been appointed to do that (cf. Jesus words in Luke 12:13-14); they should have taken the adulterers to the judges. But Jesus came to save.

In response to Jesus’ words in v.7, what happened? Who walked away first? Why?

The religious leaders walked away after Jesus’ words – for who is without sin! Interestingly, the older ones walked away first, because older people are more aware of their sins and shortcomings.

What important teaching did Jesus give to the woman caught in adultery? (John 8:10-11)

Jesus had the power to free the woman from condemnation and to forgive sin (cf. Mark 2:5). He also called her to repent (“go and sin no more”). This is still Christ’s message when we come to Him by faith.

Jesus the Light of the World (John 8:12-20)

Read John 8:12. What most important declaration did Jesus make? Why is this important for us?

Jesus is the light of the world (cf. also John 1:4-9). Jesus “lights up” through His teaching who God is, what life is about, how we can be saved, what is to come, etc. Without Jesus and His truth, we are in darkness. We are lost and in darkness. We all need Jesus so much! Only He can give us “life’s light”.

The religious leaders believed Jesus’ declaration of Himself in John 8:12 was not valid, as He was claiming this without witnesses. What was Christ’s response to them? (John 8:13-18)

His declaration was valid for He knew who He was and where He had come from (He knew He was the Son of God, the Son of Man, and had come from the Father’s side – John 1:18). Not only that, but the Father testified of Jesus and His words – through signs and through fulfilment of prophecy and by voice.

The religious leaders didn’t understand what Jesus meant. What did He teach them? (John 8:19)

If they knew and believed in Him, they would know the Father (God the Father) as well – cf. John 14:6.

Perhaps some reacted to Jesus calling God “Father” (cf. 5:18). But what couldn’t they do?

They couldn’t kill Jesus for His time had not yet come. Nothing could stop Jesus dying on the cross for us.

Devotional Reading: John 8:21-8:38 (read a few verses each day, or read it several times in the week)

Questions to consider: *If we don’t believe in Jesus what will happen to us (8:21, 24)? What did Jesus always have and always do (8:29)? What are all humans enslaved to? Who and what can set us free?*

Summary: **Jesus alone can forgive sin and give us the light of life.**

20. Jesus Words are Truth and they Set us Free (John 8:21-38)

Aim: To appreciate that Jesus always spoke the truth directly from God and that His truth sets us free.

Jesus' words are from God (John 8:21-30)

What important phrase does Jesus repeat twice in John 8:21-24? What did He mean by this?

Jesus declared "You will die in your sins"; that is, a person will perish as a sinner with unforgiven sins, which will result in them being judged by God and being condemned to death (eternal death in hell).

Will all "die in their sins"? Are there any exceptions?

The good news is that there is. If we believe who Jesus truly is (v.24) and if we would seek Him and come to Him by faith, then we won't die in our sins. Instead, we will be saved from our sins and we will be blessed with eternal life in God's presence; not eternal death in hell – cf. John 5:24.

When Jesus spoke those words in John 8:21, how did the Jews understand it? (John 8:22)

They didn't take to heart Jesus' warning that "you will die in your sins"; a most important thing to hear and be concerned about. They were more concerned about His words "where I am going you cannot come".

After saying twice "you will die in your sins", what did Jesus share with the Jews in John 8:23-24?

Jesus was not another teacher - of the earth. He had come from above (heaven). He knew we will "die in our sins" unless we believe in Him. We need His forgiveness, so that when we physically die, we don't die in our sins, but die free of our sins; all through what He did for us at the cross (1 Peter 2:24; Col 1:13-14).

Even after explaining things a second time to the Jews, there is no response by them in regard to this most important warning "you will die in your sins" if they don't believe in Jesus. Why was that?

They believed, because they were from Abraham, they would never "die in their sins", but live forever.

After questioning Jesus' claim that "he was from above" (v.23), the Jews challenged Him with the question "Who are You?" What was Jesus' response to this great question? (John 8:25)

Even though Jesus could have said so much, He just reminded them that He was what He had been declaring all along – ie, that He is the Son of God, the Son of Man, the Messiah King, the Saviour.

What important truth about Himself did Jesus make clear to the Jews in John 8:26-29?

Every word Jesus spoke was from God the Father, and every activity and work, was according to what the Father wanted Him to do - for God the Father was with Him. What a testimony! That's why His words and actions are to be taken seriously – He always spoke the truth and He always did the Father's will.

When would the Jews realise the truth about Jesus? What happened while He spoke? (John 8:28, 30)

Jesus knew many would realise the truth who He was after He died and was raised to life. But even before that great day, we read in v.30 that many were believing in Jesus.

Jesus' words set us free (John 8:31-38)

In John 8:31 we have an important definition of a true disciple of Jesus. What is it?

A true disciple doesn't just believe in Jesus; they continue in Christ's truth. *Does that describe you?*

What great blessings are for those who trust in Jesus and live by His truth? (John 8:32)

They become more convinced of the truth that is in Jesus, and that that truth "set us free".

In what way does Jesus' truth "set us free"?

It sets us free from lies and deceptions, from misunderstanding God and Jesus, from misunderstanding the purpose of life, from sin and judgment, and it sets us free to live life fully (John 10:10)

How did the Jews respond to these glorious words of Jesus? (John 8:33)

They reacted negatively, believing they didn't need to be set free, as they were descendants of Abraham.

Even though they were descendants of Abraham, what didn't they understand? (John 8:34-36)

Every human being is a slave of sin; as well as a slave of the devil (Eph 2:1-3). That's because through sin, we become enslaved to that sin we committed. This is why we continue to sin again and again in the same area. But Jesus is able to release us from being a slave to sin and make us a son/daughter of God.

Read John 8:37-37. Were the Jews who "believed" in Jesus true disciples? Why or why not?

Even though they believed in Jesus (vv.30-31), they didn't live or continue in Christ's words. As a result of Jesus' teaching, they wanted to kill Him, for they were offended by Him when He called them slaves.

Devotional Reading: John 8:39-59 (read a few verses each day, or read it several times in the week)

Questions to consider: *Who is our father if we don't believe in and follow Jesus? What is this other father truly like (v.44)? What did the unbelieving crowd judge Jesus to be (v.48)? Who is Jesus (v.58)?*

Summary: **Jesus always spoke the truth from God the Father, and that truth alone sets us free.**

21. Who is our Father? Who is Jesus? (John 8:37-59)

Aim: To show that either God is our Father or the devil; and that Jesus saves us from the devil and death.

Who is our Father - God or the devil? (John 8:37-48)

Last week we considered the Jews reacting to Jesus' words that they were slaves of sin needing Him to set them free; for they believed they weren't slaves, for they were Abraham's descendants. What did Jesus challenge them about next? (John 8:36-37)

Jesus, who sees all things, knew they wanted to kill Him (v.37), and had no place for His words. They weren't true disciples (v.31); they weren't even God's children, despite them being Abraham's offspring.

In John 8:38 Jesus begins to point out who their true father was. Who did the Jews think their true father was? Who was their father according to Jesus? (John 8:38-40, 44a)

The Jews believed Abraham was their father, but they didn't behave like their father Abraham; even though they had descended from him biologically. Indeed, their true father was the devil (v.44a).

Read John 8:41-43. What did the Jews claim? What did Jesus make clear?

After Jesus pointed out that Abraham wasn't their father because of their evil intentions, they appealed to God being their father. But as Jesus made clear, God wasn't their father either, for if He was, then they would love Him and listen to Him – for He had come from God and was sent by God.

At the start of John 8:44(a) we have a very important truth. What is it?

If we do not love Jesus and listen to Him, then God is not our Father, but the devil is. His influence in the world and in us will lead us to behave like him (cf. Eph 2:1-2).

When we come to Jesus we are not just saved from our sins. What else happens? (Col 1:13)

We are rescued from the domain of darkness – that is, from Satan's kingdom and power over us. This is what God prophesied would happen through Christ way back in the garden of Eden (Gen 3:15).

How does Jesus describe the true nature of the devil? How does this compare to the world's view?

The devil is more horrible and despicable than we could ever imagine. He is a destroyer and a murderer – if he could, he would kill us all. He is the master liar and deceiver, and always opposes Christ and His truth. Yet, the world presents the devil as a being that "loves a little bit of naughtiness". What a lie!

Jesus always speaks the truth (John 14:6). If we don't believe that, why is that? (John 8:45-47)

It shows us that we are not of God – God is not our Father. Otherwise, we would know Jesus speaks truth.

In reaction to Jesus' words about the devil being their father, how did the Jews react? (John 8:48)

They lashed out Jesus claiming Him to be a demon. Their behaviour affirmed who their true father was – the devil. *What do our reactions and behaviours say about who our father is?*

Jesus – saves us from death and was before Abraham (John 8:49-59)

In John 8:49-51 Jesus moved on from challenging them to offering hope. What is that hope?

After affirming he wasn't a demon, but that He always honours the Father, Jesus offered them hope – believe and keep His word and live forever (you will not taste of death). What grace Jesus offers them!

The Jews didn't respond kindly to Jesus' gracious words. What did they do? (John 8:52-53)

They mocked Jesus believing that His claim of someone not tasting death was farcical.

In John 8:54-56 Jesus gave the Jews a most glorious answer. What was it?

He spoke of His relationship with the God the Father – He knew Him and kept His word, and God glorified Him. But then He mentioned Abraham – Abraham had seen Jesus and had rejoiced in it (this is probably a reference to the Lord appearing to Abraham in Gen 18 and calling out to him in Gen 22).

After the Jews mocked Jesus' words of truth, how did Jesus respond to them? (John 8:57-58)

He declared Himself to have lived before Abraham – in other words, He has always been and therefore He is divine. What a glorious truth – just as the apostle John made clear in John 1:1-2.

What reaction did the Jews have to Jesus' words? How do you react?

The Jews wanted to kill Him instantly (for blasphemy). We rejoice, knowing our Saviour truly is God.

Devotional Reading: John 9:1-23 (read a few verses each day, or read it several times in the week)

Questions to consider: *What's a possibility for some of our sicknesses? Why did Jesus get in trouble for healing? Why wouldn't the Jewish leaders accept the healing, nor what it said about who Jesus is?*

Summary: **By faith in Jesus' words, God is our Father, and we are rescued from the devil & death.**

22. An Extraordinary Healing – that Divided (John 9:1-23)

Aim: To consider the division that occurred over Jesus after He miraculously healed a blind man.

An Extraordinary Healing – declaring the glory of God (John 9:1-7)

In John 9 we have the sixth of the seven miracles that John records for us (even though Jesus did so many more miracles – John 21:25). What was the point of each miracle John recorded? (John 2:11)
The miracles are called signs by John, pointing us to the glory and divinity of Christ. They were selected by John under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit so that we might believe in Jesus (John 20:30-31).

Before the miracle, what interesting question did Jesus disciples ask? Why? (John 9:1-2)
When they saw the man blind from birth, they assumed this had happened because of sin – either he had sinned (or would sin), or his parents had sinned. The blindness, in other words, was a punishment for sin.

What important truth did Jesus point out to His disciples in John 9:3?
Not all sicknesses/illnesses are a punishment for sin. This one was for the glory of God – which would occur very soon. Sicknesses/illnesses can be due to sin (1 Cor 11:27-30), or they can be due to us simply being in a fallen world, or they can even come from the devil (if he’s permitted) - like in the story of Job.

What did Jesus mean by His words in John 9:4?
Jesus knew this was the time for Him to do the works of God so that people might believe in Him. He knew the day was near when He would surrender His life to evil men (“when it would be “night”).

What important truth does Jesus reiterate to His disciples in John 9:5? Why is this so important?
Jesus is the light of the world (cf. also John 1:4-5, 1:9, 8:12). Without Him, we are lost and in spiritual darkness. Only He can enable us to see God clearly, and the way of salvation and the way to heaven.

Jesus healed people differently. What’s so special about this man’s healing? (John 9:6-7)
There were two parts to the healing – the intimate touch by Jesus and then the need for the man to exercise faith. It’s the same for us; Jesus seeks to touch us, and we also need to exercise faith.

An Extraordinary Reaction – dismissing the glory of God (John 9:8-23)

How did people respond to the man’s healing? Does this reaction sound familiar? (John 9:8-9)
They were divided. Some believed the blind man had been healed; others dismissed it. It’s the same today when it comes to God doing a miracle or a person being saved – people are divided about such matters.

What was the man’s testimony to the crowd? (John 9:10-12)
He insisted that he had been healed by Jesus, affirming what Jesus had done and what he had to do (“go to Siloam and wash”). But where Jesus had gone was a mystery – He had slipped away (cf. John 5:13).

What was the religious leaders’ reaction to the miracle? Why? (John 9:13-16)
They were divided too! Some dismissed what had happened and who Jesus is simply because He had healed the man on a Sabbath. According to their law, Jesus could not be a man of God by healing on a Sabbath. Others found it difficult to dismiss Jesus, as it was an extraordinary miracle He had performed.

What conclusion did the blind man come to about Jesus? Why? (John 9:17)
He concluded Jesus was a prophet; for the OT prophets could perform extraordinary signs by God.
When Jesus was declared a prophet, what did the religious leaders do? Why? (John 9:18a)
They completely dismissed the healing and believed he had “faked” it – that he had never been blind. This was, of course, their way to discredit Jesus; they could not entertain the thought that He was a prophet.

What did the religious leaders do and what shock did they receive? (John 9:18-21)
They found out from the man’s parents that this was their son and that he had been born blind. There was no mistaking; an extraordinary miracle had occurred - one that showed the glory and divinity of Christ.

Why did the parents not share too much about their son’s healing? (John 9:22-23)
They were afraid of being kicked out of the synagogue if they should uphold their son’s thought that Jesus was a prophet, or if they should say Jesus was the Messiah (probably what they had concluded).

Do you share who Jesus is to those about you? Are you afraid to share? What are you fearful of?

Devotional Reading: John 9:24-41 (read a few verses each day, or read it several times in the week)

Questions to consider: *What did the blind man come to realise about Jesus (v.33)? How did the leaders treat him (v.34)? What did Jesus do for the man and how did he respond? Who is blind, who is not?*

Summary: Jesus divides us; we either believe in Him and worship Him, or despise and dismiss Him.

23. Opening the eyes of the physically & spiritually blind (John 9:24-41)

Aim: To see Jesus in the light of healing a blind man, and opening the eyes of the spiritually blind.

Recap of John 9:1-23 – the healing of the blind man

As we continue in the story of Jesus healing the man born blind, let's recap what happened in John 9:1-23. What two elements were part of this unique healing by Jesus? (John 9:6-7)

There was the **touch** of Christ and the need for the man to act by **faith** and go to the pool of Siloam. We also need to be conscious of the same. Many times Jesus touches us, and we are to walk by faith.

What did the miracle cause amongst the religious leaders (including the crowd)? (John 9:16)
It created a division, many dismissed what Jesus had done, but others believed it was real. Some believed Jesus was from God, but others could not entertain this thought. Today, it's the same. Jesus divides us.

The parents of the blind man were called in to confirm their son had been born blind. Why didn't they confess that Jesus was the Messiah (it appears that's what they had concluded)? (John 9:22-23)
Fear held them back from confessing who they believed Christ was. Does fear stop you from sharing?

A glorious testimony of a man born blind (John 9:24-34)

The religious leaders questioned again the man. What had they concluded? Why? (John 9:24)
They concluded Jesus was a sinner; a wicked man. This was all because Jesus had healed on a Sabbath.

Consider the blind man's response in John 9:25. What's so delightful about this?
He knew assuredly that Jesus had touched him and healed him, even though he hadn't seen him (his eyes weren't opened until after he washed). He gloried in Christ's love and power. *Are you the same when people question your faith and mock Christ? Do you use your testimony of Christ to glorify Him?*

Read John 9:26-27. What's quite amusing in the man's response?
After being questioned again and again about Jesus healing him, he riled them by asking them if they wanted to be Jesus' disciples too (he knew they didn't – but he wanted to stir them up). Also, the 'too' is our first indication that the man was being drawn to Jesus as the questioning continued.

The religious leaders' response to the man solidified their attitude to Christ after He had performed such an outstanding miracle. What was their response? (John 9:28-29)
They had no regard for Jesus. They despised and dismissed Him, claiming instead to be faithful to Moses. But if they were true disciples of Moses, then they would have believed in Jesus (cf. John 5:45-47).

Instead of backing down, how did the man respond to the religious leaders?
With courage and conviction, he honoured Christ, using simple reasoning and testimony to help these hardened leaders see that this Jesus must have come from God. He was no sinner, as they had claimed.

Read John 9:34. In response to the man's words of truth, what did the leaders say? Why?
Being so proud, they ridiculed the man and would not accept his words. They even put him out – probably meaning that he was banished from going to the synagogue.

A glorious Saviour who opens our eyes spiritually (John 9:35-41)

After being put out, what lovely event occurred straight after? (John 9:35)
Jesus found the man – in a way, he "touched" him a second time. What a Saviour who knows when we need His help and comfort and encouragement.

But Jesus didn't just "touch" him. What did Jesus want to bring about? (John 9:36-38)
Jesus wanted him to see who He truly was; He was not just a prophet (as the man had thought – John 9:17). The phrase "Son of Man" is a messianic title from Dan 7:13-14. Jesus was the Christ (Messiah)!

How did the man respond to Jesus? Why was he sure that Jesus was the Christ? (John 9:38)
He believed and worshipped Jesus. The Greek word for 'worship' here is *proskuneo* – he would have fallen down before Jesus in worship. He was convinced of Jesus' true identity because he knew who else could open the eyes of a man born blind (John 9:32-33). *Are you convinced who Jesus truly is?*

The last few verses of John 9 highlight a very important truth. What is it? (John 9:39-41)
Jesus came to open the eyes of the spiritually blind (John 1:9). Many think they see – eg, the Jewish leaders believed their eyes were already open because they had the law of Moses. They were blind to the most important truth of all - who Jesus was and how He alone can save us from our sins. How good it is when we can see. In the words of the hymn Amazing Grace - "I once was blind but now I see".

Summary: Jesus desires to open our eyes spiritually so that we might know Him and be saved.

24. Jesus is the Shepherd and the Door (John 10:1-9)

Aim: To see that Jesus is the shepherd of God's people and the door to God's kingdom and eternal life.

Recap of John 1 to 9

What key lessons can you recall from our previous studies last year through John 1 to 9. [Discuss] Consider the following key verses: What great truths do we learn?

- John 1:1-5 Jesus is our God and Creator; Jesus is the Light and the Life.
John 1:14 Jesus our God took on human flesh, and came into our world full of grace and truth.
John 1:18 Jesus not only came to redeem us, but to reveal God the Father to us.
John 3:3-5 We must be born again (born from above) to be saved and to enter God's kingdom.
John 3:16-17 Jesus came because of God's love for us; Jesus came to save – not to condemn.
John 3:36 Eternal life is by faith in Jesus; God's wrath is on all those who do not believe and obey.
John 4:10, 14 Jesus alone is the giver of living water (spiritual "water" that results in eternal life).
John 5:22-24 Jesus will judge all people one day. Faith in Him will save us from judgment and death.
John 6:35 Jesus is the Bread of Life – He alone can satisfy us completely.
John 6:37-40 Jesus will not reject anyone who comes to Him; our salvation is secure in Him.
John 7:37-39 Jesus is the giver of living water and eternal life; the "living water" is God's Spirit.
John 8:12 Jesus is the Light of the World – through faith in Him, He gives us the Light of Life.
John 8:31-36 Jesus' truth (knowing it and continuing in it) sets us free (especially from condemnation).

The Shepherd (John 10:1-5)

We now come to John 10. Jesus gives us two powerful pictures of who He is. What's the first picture in John 10:1-5?

Jesus is the Shepherd – He shepherds God's sheep; that is, those who belong to and believe in the Lord.

In the Old Testament, God the Father was described as the Shepherd of His people. What kind of shepherd was He? (consider Psalm 23)

He was a good shepherd, looking after His sheep, being with them, providing for them, protecting them, blessing them. Psalm 23 is a picture of Jesus – our good Shepherd.

In the Old Testament, the leaders of God's people were considered shepherds of God's people. But they were often bad shepherds. What did God promise to do? (Ezek 34:7-12)

God promised to not entrust shepherding to anyone but Himself. He would shepherd His people – Jesus' coming fulfilled this promise. He has been appointed by God to shepherd God's people.

In Jesus' time, shepherds would keep their sheep in a pen overnight. The shepherd would come and call his flock, and would lead his sheep to green pastures and to clean water, and then bring them back safely to the pen. With this in mind, what do we learn about Jesus our shepherd from John 10:1-5?

- Jesus is not an imposter. He is not a thief or a robber, nor a stranger. The doorkeeper, God, recognises Jesus to be the shepherd of His sheep, and the sheep know His voice and follow Him.
- Jesus knows His sheep by name, and He leads them, feeds them and cares for them.

The Door (John 10:6-9)

The other picture of Jesus in John 10 is in verses 7-10. Who is Jesus? (John 10:7-9)

Jesus is not only the Shepherd of God's people, but the Door – the only way into God's pen (or kingdom).

For a lost sheep to come into God's pen (kingdom), what must we do? (Matt 16:24-25; John 14:6)

We must leave our old life behind and come to Jesus. Like knocking on a door, we must come to Jesus and ask Him to accept us into His kingdom – that requires us repenting of our sins and believing in Him, asking Him to forgive us and receive us. That's how we enter into God's kingdom.

What is the promise in John 10:9 for those who come to Jesus the Door and enter?

We will be saved (have eternal life), and we will be blessed with spiritual blessings (pastures).

Many think that they will one day be in heaven. But why will many miss out? (John 10:8)

They have listened and followed other people or religions. Only Jesus can save us. He alone is the door.

Many may be familiar with Jesus and know about Him, but are never saved. Why? (John 10:9)

They never enter through Jesus. This requires us coming to Him and personally giving ourselves to Him.

Read John 10:6. What did the crowd fail to understand. What do people fail to understand today?

People fail to understand who Jesus truly is. Only through Him can we be saved and enter heaven.

Summary: Jesus alone is the Shepherd of God's people and the Door to Salvation.

25. Jesus the Good Shepherd (John 10:10-18)

Aim: To see that Jesus is the Good Shepherd - the Shepherd who gave His life and gives us life.

Recap of John 10:1-9

In John 10:1-5, Jesus gives the picture of Him being our Shepherd. What kind of shepherd is He?
He is a very good shepherd – He cares for us and protects us, and He knows us and loves us (Psa 23).

In John 10:7-9, what picture does Jesus give of Himself for us to be saved & enter God's kingdom?
He is the door (gate). Only by coming to Him and entering God's kingdom through Him can we be saved.

The Giver of Life (John 10:10)

Read John 10:10. What did Jesus our Shepherd come to bring us?

He came to bring us life – fullness of life, abundant life, spiritual life, eternal life.

Why is this so glorious? What state are we in before we meet Jesus? (Eph 2:1-3)

We are spiritually dead – cut off from God through our sins. We were only existing; not living.

Jesus came to give us life. Read Eph 2:4-5 and re-read John 10:10. What is this "abundant life"?

By coming to Jesus and believing in Him we are made alive. Not only will we inherit eternal life, but here on earth, we are made alive spiritually. We are made "alive to God". We come to be in relationship with Him, and experience fullness of life, including peace, joy, and contentment, as well as purpose and hope.

Who are the "thieves" that Jesus speaks of in John 10:10?

The "thieves" are everyone else who seeks to shepherd us. They may promise life and other things, but they are out for themselves – they kill and destroy. In our modern times, the "thieves" include other religions and cults, human philosophies and political idealisms, as well as false teachers in the church.

The Good Shepherd (John 10:11-18)

Compared to the "thieves", who is Jesus in John 10:11?

He is not just the shepherd of God's people, but the "Good Shepherd". This is His fourth "I Am" statement.

What makes Jesus the most extraordinary and best shepherd of all? (John 10:11)

He would lay down His life for the sheep. No middle-eastern shepherd would ever do that. They would protect the sheep, but not at the cost of their own life. But Jesus would give His life for us.

Why would Jesus lay down His life for the sheep (God's people)?

It is because He loves us and this was the only way for Him to deliver us from the consequences of our sins and to save us from the jaws of death and the judgment of God. Only by Him laying down His Life, and then taking it up again, could we be forgiven and be granted spiritual, eternal and abundant life.

Read John 10:12-13. Why does Jesus share these verses?

He wants to assure us that He is fully committed to the care and the protection of us – His sheep. We matter to Him, because we belong to Him. He is the owner of the sheep; not a hired hand.

What glorious truth do we see in John 10:14-15?

Jesus our Good Shepherd knows every one of His sheep. He knows us as much as the Father and the Son have known each other for all eternity. We are known, we are loved, and that's why Jesus would lay down His life for us. Not only does He know us, but when we put our faith in Jesus, we come to know Him.

Read John 10:16. Who are the "other sheep"?(cf. also Rev 5:9)

The "other sheep" most likely refers to non-Jews. Jesus' Gospel would go out to the whole world, and Jesus would call all different people groups to Himself. There is only one shepherd for all God's people, and there is only one flock – there's not a Jewish flock, a Gentile flock, but one flock (cf. Eph 2:11-18).

The Father loves the Son, but what does the Father especially love about His Son? (John 10:17)

The Father loves the way His Son was so obedient to Him (Phil 2:6-8), humbling Himself, and laying down His life for God's people (His sheep) to save them, as well as rising again to impart life to them.

Who took Jesus' life from Him? (John 10:18)

No one took Jesus' life from Him; not the Jews, Romans, or the devil. He chose to lay down His life. If He hadn't, He would never have died. He had all power to save His life from death (cf. Matt 26:53).

What authority or power did Jesus have? (John 10:18)

He had authority, as the living God, to lay down His life and to take it up again. No one, no devil, could stop Him from laying down His life for us, His sheep, and from taking it up again (cf. Acts 2:24).

Summary: Jesus is the Good Shepherd - He laid down His life to save us and to give us life.

26. Jesus – the Good Shepherd - will never let go of us (John 10:19-30)

Aim: To understand who a true follower of Jesus is ("my sheep") and how He will never lose us.

Recap of John 10:10-18

Why is Jesus the Good Shepherd? (John 10:11, 14)

Jesus willingly laid down His life to save His sheep (us). He also knows us so well and cares for us.

What power or authority was Jesus given by the Father? (John 10:18)

He had the authority to lay down His life and to take it up again. No one could take His life from Him until He chose to lay it down, and no one could stop Him from rising from the dead three days later.

Reactions to Jesus (John 10:19-21)

In response to Jesus' words in John 10:7-18, how did the Jewish crowd respond? (John 10:19-21)

They were divided. Many considered Him to be mad and insane; even possessed by a demon. But others couldn't make sense of that in the light of how He healed a blind man from birth (John 9). Like what the healed blind man said in John 9:31-33, how could this man not be from God – He had given him sight.

Why did many consider Jesus to be demon possessed?

They knew a supernatural power had caused the man born blind to see, but they couldn't accept this power was from God (so they concluded it was from the devil). They couldn't accept that this mere man was the Son of God, the Good Shepherd and the Door to Salvation – they reacted to His claims.

We live in a world where many react negatively to Jesus' person. In what way? [Discuss]

Many want to believe that Jesus was just an ordinary man, and that any "miracles" were the embellished stories of His disciples. They won't accept that Jesus came from God. There is also a very strong reaction to Jesus stating He is the only way to God and heaven, and that we need Him to save us.

Reasons for the Reactions (John 10:22-26)

Read John 10:22-24. What were the crowds asking Him? Why?

They were asking Him if He was the Christ (Messiah). Every Jew knew that one day one would come who would be the Christ – God's appointed and anointed leader and Saviour of His people. They knew this because of the many prophecies about the Christ (Messiah) in the Old Testament scriptures.

What was Jesus' answer to their question? (John 10:25)

He had been telling them that He was the Christ. Even John the Baptist had started doing this. And besides that, Jesus had performed amazing miracles showing that He was the Christ (cf. Matt 11:2-5).

What did Jesus say was the reason why they didn't believe He was the Christ (They even thought He was demon-possessed – John 10:20)? (John 10:26)

They weren't "His sheep"; that is, they hadn't had their eyes opened to the truth about Jesus and they hadn't been drawn to Him. Even though there is call for all to come to Christ, we need the Holy Spirit to help us become one of Jesus' sheep (cf. John 6:37, 44, 65). Most of the crowd hadn't experienced this.

Response and Blessing being Christ's Sheep (John 10:27-30)

Who is a "true sheep" according to Jesus? (Read John 10:16, 27)

They hear the voice of Jesus and are drawn to Him, and they commit their life to follow Him. This is the test of a true Christian. It's not a measure of our head knowledge or church attendance, but knowing Christ.

How do we "hear the voice of Jesus"?

It's not by audible means (this is rare), but by God's Spirit convicting us of our sins, revealing Jesus to us, and helping us see our need for Jesus to save us from our sins by coming to Him. It happens as we read the Bible or hear a sermon. It's so powerful and real, it's like we are "hearing the voice of Jesus".

What awesome promise is given by Jesus to His "true sheep" in John 10:28?

We **will** have eternal life, we **will** not perish (ie, be judged and face eternity in hell), and we **will** never be snatched away from Jesus. He holds us strongly and securely. Satan, the world, or even our sins, cannot undo His hold on us. We are and will be saved - all because of His love for us and what He's done for us.

To make us sure of our security and salvation in Christ, what else does Jesus say in John 10:29?

The Father holds us in His hands too, just as Jesus does, and no power can ever sever us from God. Amen!

What did Jesus mean by John 10:30?

Jesus and the Father are one in their purposes: none of God's sheep will perish. Jesus is also one with God.

Summary: Jesus will not lose one of His sheep - we are His sheep if we hear His voice & follow Him.

27. Jesus the Son of God Facing Death Threats (John 10:31-42)

Aim: To appreciate that Jesus is God's Son despite many turning against Him and wanting to kill Him.

Recap of John 10:19-30

Jesus uses the metaphor of a "sheep" to describe a true Christian. According to John 10:27, what characterises one of Jesus' sheep (a true Christian)?

They have heard and continue to hear Jesus' voice, and they follow Him. Hearing the voice of Jesus is through the Spirit speaking to our soul, especially through the Gospel and God's Word.

What promise did Jesus give to all His true sheep in John 10:28?

We have eternal life, we won't perish, and our salvation is secure; no one can snatch us out of His hand.

Rejection of Jesus (John 10:31-33)

Immediately after hearing the most wonderful words from Jesus' lips about His sheep not ever perishing, but having eternal life and a secure salvation, what did the Jews do? Why? (John 10:31-33)

The Jews wanted to kill Him by stoning because they believed He was blaspheming; by making Himself out to be God. The majority of the crowd just believed He was a mere man, and not the Son of God.

What made the Jews deduce that Jesus was claiming to be God? (cf. John 5:18, John 10:30)

In John 10:30, Jesus claimed to be "one with God", and earlier in John 5:18 we saw the Jews' reaction when He called God "His own Father". In John 10, Jesus referred to God as "Father" and "my Father" many times. The Jews were right. Jesus was claiming to be God – for He is!

Why should the Jews have believed that Jesus was God and the Son of God? (John 10:32)

The good works of Jesus proved who He was – He could not have just been a "mere" man. The crowds saw Him miraculously feed more than 5000 people, and heal a man born blind. As the blind man testified in John 9:31-33, this man Jesus had to be from God. Who could do such things as He did.

Why couldn't the Jews realise that Jesus was God from the good and miraculous works He did?

They looked at His human form only and saw Him to be just a "mere" man, and so they despised Him.

The Reasoning of Jesus (John 10:34-38)

What was Jesus' response to the Jews rejecting Him and wanting to stone Him? (John 10:34-36)

Jesus reasoned with them from the Old Testament scriptures (in particular, Psalm 82:6). In this psalm, Israel's rulers are called "gods" and "sons of the Most High" because they represent and rule for God. Jesus' argument is simply this: if they were called "gods" and "sons of the Most High", why couldn't He be.

But there is a very important reason why Jesus should be called "GOD", and "THE SON OF GOD". What is that? (John 10:36)

Jesus was sanctified by the Father to be "the Son of God". It was God who set apart the second One in the Godhead and designated Him to be "the Son of God" (cf. Psa 2:7-9). This sanctification was seen at His baptism and throughout His life. Also, Jesus was sent into the world by the Father; He came from heaven.

Read John 10:37-38. What else does Jesus share to help them know that He is the eternal and one and only (begotten) "Son of God"?

Jesus refers to His works. All the miracles He did were signs pointing to the truth He was Emmanuel, God with us, and God the Son. The works also testified that He and the Father were completely one and connected – the Father was in Him and He was in the Father.

Response of the People (John 10:39-42)

In response to Jesus' reasoning and using the OT scriptures, how did the Jews react? (10:39)

They tried to seize Him and kill Him, but He alluded them. This occurred many times in Jesus' life (at least eight times). But on every occasion, no one could kill Him, for it was not His time (cf. John 10:18).

Where did the death threats against Jesus occur? (John 10:22-23). What did Jesus do? (10:40)

He faced death threats in Jerusalem. So, Jesus went from there to a wilderness area; the place where John the Baptist had baptised. Jesus taught His own disciples to flee persecution (Matt 10:23) if it's God's will.

Despite the Jews hating Jesus and wanting to kill Him, what do we read in John 10:41-42?

Many still believed in Jesus. John the Baptist's testimony of Jesus rang true for them, and the miraculous signs Jesus did proved beyond all doubt He was the Son of God and the Saviour of the world (John 1:29). May we also believe in Him too, despite the world we live in that despises Jesus and seeks to destroy Him.

Summary: Jesus is God's Son, despite many who reject Him. His awesome miraculous works prove it.

28. Jesus' Love for Us and His Desire to God's Will (John 11:1-16)

Aim: To appreciate Jesus' love for us and His desire to always do His Father's will for His glory.

Recap of John 10:31-42

Many Jews rejected Jesus and wanted to kill Him. Why? (cf. John 5:18, 10:33)

They believed He was just a mere man and was committing blasphemy by claiming to be God.

Why should all people believe that Jesus is God's Son and one with God? (John 10:36-38)

He was set apart by God the Father to be His eternal Son through fulfilling prophecy, through His birth and baptism, and especially through His awesome signs (miracles) that showed He and the Father are one.

Jesus' Love for Us (John 11:1-6)

In John 11 Jesus would do an extraordinary miracle raising Lazarus from the dead that would powerfully prove He was God's eternal Son. This miracle is second only to what other one? (Rom 1:4)
It is second only to Christ's own resurrection from the dead. This proved beyond doubt Jesus' divinity.

What do we learn in John 11:1-3 regarding the background to the raising of Lazarus from the dead?

Jesus was good friends with a family in the village of Bethany (near the Mount of Olives), consisting of the siblings Martha, Mary and Lazarus. Because of their mutual love for each other, they called on their friend Jesus to come and heal Lazarus when he became sick.

Martha, Mary and Lazarus knew Jesus loved them and was their friend. Do you see Jesus like this?

Jesus is not just the Lord of Glory, the Saviour of the world and the King of Kings. To every true child of God, we are to see Him as the one who "loves me" and who is "my very best friend". *Is that true for you?*

Jesus would do a most loving thing for them. So would Mary to Jesus. What was that? (John 12:3)

Mary would take a very expensive vial of perfume and pour it on Jesus' feet and wipe her feet with her hair – an act of great love with great humility to the one she loved more than anyone or anything else. *What is our devotion to Christ like? Do we serve out of duty, or because we love Jesus more than anyone/thing?*

What do you make of Jesus' words in John 11:4, especially if you are familiar with John 11?

Lazarus would die and his body would decay. But Jesus knew what God's will was, bringing Lazarus back to life from the dead. He also knew this was for the purpose of glorifying God and Himself.

At the end of John 11:4 we have the whole motive behind everything Jesus did. What is it?

He used His power to heal and His knowledge to teach, all for the glory of His Father and for people to see His true glory – our Lord and Saviour. We, also, are meant to do things for God's glory (1 Cor 10:31).

How might we interpret John 11:6 on its own?

It seems Jesus didn't love Lazarus and his sisters by His delay (He wasn't too far away from them; John 10:40). Martha and Mary would also wrestle with this perceived "lack of care" (John 11:21, 32).

What does John 11:5 reveal? Why did Jesus delay going to Lazarus?

Jesus did love them; for Christ's love is never fickle or self-pleasing. He loved them deeply; as He does us. His delay was according to God's will and God's glory – not because He didn't love them. Note: We often question Jesus' love for us when things don't happen when we expect – how wrong we are!

Jesus's Desire to Glorify God (John 11:7-16)

Read John 11:7-8. Why are the disciples shocked with Jesus' decision?

To the disciples it seemed that Jesus had decided not to go and heal Lazarus in Judea. But for Him to now go to Judea was "madness"; as the Jews had tried to kill Him there several times (John 10:31, 39).

What did Jesus mean by His words in John 11:9-10?

Even though Jesus had had death threats made against Him, it was still "daytime" for Him to do ministry; nothing could stop Him or trip Him up from doing ministry until it was time for Him to lay down His life. But there's something else in these words regarding us – we must make sure we walk in His light every day while we have breath, so that we don't stumble and fall from the world's darkness (cf. John 8:12).

What did Jesus reveal to His disciples in John 11:11-16? What did they make of what He said?

Lazarus had died, and Jesus would go and raise him from the dead. They thought Jesus was going to wake up "sleeping Lazarus", but when they realised he was dead, they thought Jesus meant that they should die and join Lazarus. How wrong they were! How wrong we can be in understanding God's will and purpose.

What was behind Jesus' delay in going to Lazarus? (John 10:4, 15)

The raising of Lazarus from the dead was to glorify God and to help us believe in His person and glory.

Summary: Jesus always loves us and always does His Father's will to glorify Him. So should we!

29. Jesus – the Resurrection and the Life (John 11:17-37)

Aim: To take in that Jesus has all power to give us life when we die – He is the Resurrection & the Life.

Recap of John 11:1-16

How is Jesus' friendship with a family in Bethany described? (John 11:3,5) How does He see us? He loved them. And He loves us too - if we are His by faith. He loves us unconditionally and sacrificially.

What motive drove everything Jesus said and did? (John 11:4, 15)

It was His desire to glorify God and for His own glory to be seen, so that people would believe in Him.

Martha's Faith and Change (John 11:17-22)

When Jesus came to Bethany, to comfort Lazarus' sisters, Martha and Mary, how long had it been since Lazarus died? (John 11:17-18) What did this imply? (cf. also John 11:39)

Lazarus had been dead four days; he must have died quite quickly after becoming sick; and then he was buried in a tomb quite quickly – according to Jewish custom. By the time Jesus had travelled and arrived at Bethany, Lazarus' body was well past restoration – it was in a state of decay and decomposition.

In John 11:19 what do we learn that helps us appreciate the impact of what Jesus was about to do? Martha and Mary, as well as Lazarus, were well known. Many came from Bethany and the surrounding areas, including the city of Jerusalem, to console the grieving sisters of Lazarus. What Jesus was about to do would have a huge impact on many (cf. John 11:45). This would be Jesus' last main miracle (sign).

Who came to meet Jesus first? What did she say to Jesus? Why? (John 11:20-22)

Martha was the first one to see Jesus. She expressed her faith in Jesus healing any disease. If only He had come earlier, then Lazarus would not have died. But she seemed to have the faith to believe that Jesus could do something further – but not raise the dead (cf. John 11:39). *Do you put limits on Jesus' power?*

Compare Luke 10:38-42 to what we read in John 11:20. What can we conclude?

Martha had changed – she had learnt her lesson. Instead of remaining in her house, serving all the guests who had come, she went immediately to see Jesus. Being with Jesus was more important than serving.

NB: Are we growing and learning from Jesus? Are we changing? (cf. 2 Cor 3:18)

Jesus' Power (John 11:23-27)

In John 11:23, what did Jesus tell Martha? What did she think this meant? (John 11:24)

Martha thought Jesus was referring to the resurrection of those who have faith in God at the end of time (cf. Job 19:25-26). This was the hope of an Old Testament believer.

In His fifth great "I Am" statement, what did Jesus declare to Martha? (John 11:25-26)

Jesus declared an awesome truth about Himself being the resurrection and the life. It is He who has the power to give life and to raise the dead believer, giving them a new body (at His return; 1 Thess 4:16-17).

What did Jesus mean by the phrases "will live even if he dies" and "will never die"?

Through His own death and resurrection, Jesus would establish the New Covenant. Under this, a believer in Jesus, who physically died, wouldn't actually die and go to Hades - their soul and spirit would go to be with the Lord (cf. 2 Cor 5:8; Phil 1:21-23); in that sense, the one who believes in Jesus never dies.

After Jesus' glorious statement, Jesus asked Martha a question. What was her reply? (John 11:27)

Even though Martha probably didn't understand completely what Jesus meant, she believed – she believed in who Jesus truly was and she believed in every word that proceeded from His mouth.

Jesus Weeping (John 11:28-37)

Read John 11:28-32. When Mary came to Jesus, what did she ask Him? Why?

Like Martha, she wished that Jesus had come earlier, for she believed that Jesus could have healed her brother and stopped him from dying. Soon, however, both sisters would behold something extraordinary.

In John 11:33-35, we come across the shortest verse in the Bible. What is it? Why did Jesus do this? "Jesus wept"; this was because of the grief and sadness in the hearts of Martha and Mary, and in their friends. It wasn't because Lazarus had died, for Jesus knew what He would do soon. Jesus is impacted by our grief and sorrow. He feels our sorrow and seeks to comfort us and help us (cf. Isa 53:4a, Heb 4:15-16).

Read John 11:36-37. What do we learn from these verses?

Jesus was always under scrutiny – being judged. Some honoured Him; many despised Him. We also are under scrutiny. We will even face harsh judgments. May we follow Jesus' example (cf. 1 Peter 2:21-23).

Summary: Jesus is the Resurrection & the Life; through faith in Him, death is but a doorway to life.

30. Jesus Power to Raise the Dead & the Plot to Kill Him (John 11:38-57)

Aim: To explore Jesus' power over death but also to consider the evil of men plotting to kill Him.

Recap of John 11:17-37

What amazing declaration did Jesus make to Martha in John 11:25-26? What did He mean?

If we believe in Jesus, we will never die. Our soul and spirit go to be with the Lord, and one day, even our earthly body will be resurrected (at Christ's return). By Jesus' sacrifice and power this is all possible.

What is the shortest verse in the Bible? What does it teach us? (John 11:35)

Jesus has compassion for us in our sorrow. He sees the effects of sin and death and weeps with us.

Power of Jesus over Death (John 11:38-46)

After Jesus wept before the people, what did He do next? Why? (John 11:38)

Jesus went to the tomb because He knew what He would be doing according to God's will (John 11:4, 23).

What was Martha's response to Jesus words? Why? (John 11:39)

Jesus called for the stone (boulder) sealing Lazarus' tomb to be removed. Martha protested, for she knew her brother's body would be well and truly decaying, giving off a stench (he had been dead four days).

What's so important about the "four days" repeated in John 11:17 and 39?

Raising Lazarus from the dead would be truly awesome and miraculous. Every cell in Lazarus' body was dead and putrefied. What power Jesus had to make every cell alive and to make every organ function again.

What was Jesus' response to Martha's protest of removing the stone? (John 11:40)

He gently lifted up her eyes to help her realise that He was about to do something truly glorious – she and all the others would see the glory of God. NB: Remember that Martha had faith earlier on to wonder if Jesus could do more, after her brother had died (cf. John 11:21-22).

Read John 11:41-42. What did Jesus do before all the people? Why?

He prayed (probably loudly), so that everyone would know His connection with God, and know it was God's power through Him that raised Lazarus from the dead – and so that all would put their faith in Jesus.

Read John 11:43-44. Picture what happened before the people's eyes. What did they behold?

They beheld the glory of Christ – His power over death. He just simply spoke and Lazarus came forth.

How did Lazarus come out of the tomb?

Lazarus came out of the tomb, initially in a mummified state. That's why Jesus commanded he be unbound. How extraordinary that Lazarus' wrapped body could be transported out of the tomb and that he be alive.

What was the response of the people to this extraordinary miracle? (John 11:45-46)

Many people believed in Jesus, but others went and told the Pharisees – probably spies within the crowd. Their desire was to please the Pharisees, rather than to fall before Jesus and worship Him. NB: Even after this outstanding miracle, there still was a division between those who believed and who didn't believe.

The Plot to Kill Jesus (John 11:47-57)

After the extraordinary miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead before so many people, what did the Jewish religious leaders think about it all? (John 11:47-48)

They were no closer to believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Instead, they were desperate to get rid of Him, for they felt everyone would turn to Him and they would lose their position and place.

What was so amazing about the comments of the high priest Caiaphas? (John 11:49-52)

He spoke of the need for Jesus to die so that the nation of Israel might not perish. His words, in actual fact, were in line with God's Spirit, for Jesus was to die – not to save the Jews from the Romans but to save us all from sin and Satan, if we would believe in Him. How amazing that Caiaphas spoke God's word. He prophesied without him knowing it, and despite his horrible attitude toward Jesus.

Read John 11:53-54. What was Jesus aware of?

Jesus knew that the religious leaders wanted to kill Him – so He moved away from Jerusalem into the wilderness. He also knew that no one could take His life until it was time (John 11:18, 31, 39).

Read John 11:55-57. How do we know Jesus's sacrifice was near? What state were the people in?

The Passover was near – the one where Jesus would die as our Passover Lamb. The people wondered about Jesus, but the religious leaders were out to seize and kill Him – despite two extraordinary miracles; giving sight to a man born blind (John 9) and raising Lazarus from the dead (John 11). How spiritually blind and dead they were – like so many today. Praise God if you believe in and love Jesus (cf. John 6:44).

Summary: Jesus has Power over Death – we can trust Him with our death and know we will live.

31. Jesus' Anointing and Entry (John 12:1-19)

Aim: To consider an act of love towards Jesus and His entrance into Jerusalem.

Recap of John 11

What incredible truth did Jesus share with Martha in John 11:25-26?

He is the Resurrection and the Life. If we believe in Him, we shall never die; physical death is a doorway into God's eternal presence. He has the power to make us live forever and to resurrect our earthly bodies.

How did Jesus demonstrate His power over death? (John 11:43-44)

Lazarus, after being dead four days, came alive. Also, Jesus Himself would rise from the dead.

The Anointing (John 12:1-11)

Within a week of the Jewish Passover, what happened? Where did it happen? (John 12:1-2)

Jesus came to Bethany, which was near Jerusalem (John 11:18). He came to have a meal in the house of Martha & Mary, and Lazarus their brother was there - dining with them, after being raised from the dead.

Note: This was so near to the time when Jesus would be crucified (the Saturday before Good Friday).

According to God's will, Jesus would be crucified during the Passover meal as our Passover Lamb.

During the meal, what did Mary do? What heart did she have? (John 12:3)

Mary took some very expensive perfume and anointed Jesus' feet, wiping His feet with her hair. With humility, sacrifice and devotion, she showed her love for Jesus. *How do you express your love for Jesus?*

What Mary did was surprising. How did Judas respond? Why? (John 12:4-6)

Judas believed the perfume should have been sold to help the poor; not because he loved the poor, but because he loved money. He hoped, if the perfume had been sold, to have taken some of the profits.

NB: It was Judas' love of money that was part of the reason why he betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.

Read 1 Tim 6:10 and Heb 13:5. What are we warned about? How are we to live?

The love of money is very dangerous. It leads us away from God. We are to live by being free of the **love** of money, and that happens when we are thankful and content with what we have.

Jesus protected Mary from Judas' harsh criticism. What else did He share? (John 12:7-8)

Mary without realising it, had prepared Jesus' body for burial – for He would be crucified and buried without any time for His body to be anointed according to Jewish custom. Besides, very soon Jesus would no longer be on earth. That's what He meant by saying the poor would always be around, but not Him.

Read John 12:9. What resulted from Jesus being near Jerusalem in the village of Bethany?

The crowds had been waiting to see if Jesus would come to the Passover Feast (cf. John 11:55-56). When they heard He was nearby, they went to see Him – and also Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead.

What was the response of the chief priests and Jewish leaders? (John 12:10-11)

They weren't just planning on killing Jesus (cf. John 11:47-48, 53), but even killing Lazarus - as many Jews were believing in Jesus due to Him raising Lazarus from the dead.

The Entrance (John 12:12-19)

Read John 12:12-13. When did this occur? Why did the crowds respond the way they did?

Jesus came into Jerusalem on a Sunday (cf. John 12:1 and that Jesus died on a Friday at Passover). We call this Sunday "Palm Sunday" due to palm branches being cut down to honour Jesus middle-eastern style. The crowds honoured Him as the "King of Israel"; hoping He would free them from the Romans.

What prophecy did Jesus fulfil? Why did He come into Jerusalem? (John 12:14-16; Zech 9:9)

Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey's colt, fulfilling a prophecy about Him in Zech 9:9. The prophecy highlighted Jesus's heart - He came humbly and gently. It also made clear why He came – for salvation.

Why did Jesus come humbly and gently into Jerusalem? What salvation was He bringing?

Jesus didn't come powerfully to save Israel from the Romans, but He came humbly and gently to die for us and to save us from the consequences of our sins and from Satan. The crowds misunderstood this.

Read John 12:17-18. What do we learn from these verses?

Great crowds accompanied Jesus into Jerusalem; more than we can imagine – crowds from Bethany and Jerusalem. They all thought Jesus was coming to the capital city to be their king to drive out the Romans.

How did some of the religious leaders feel about what was happening? (John 12:19)

They became more alarmed – in their eyes all were turning to Him. But Jesus knew it was not for the right reason. He is not to be our king for what we want (cf. John 6:15), but the king that saves us from sin.

Summary: Jesus died for us. We are to love Him like Mary and to look to Him as our Saviour King.

32. Seeking Jesus and Seeking to Glorify God (John 12:20-30)

Aim: To consider the importance of seeking Jesus and seeking to glorify God the Father (like Jesus did).

Recap of John 12:1-19

What act of love did Mary (Lazarus’ sister) do? What did it prepare Jesus’ body for? (John 12:3, 7)
With love, humility and sacrifice, Mary anointed Jesus’ feet with expensive perfume and wiped His feet with her hair. She didn’t realise, until Jesus spoke, that what she did was to prepare His body for burial.

What was so amazing about Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem before His crucifixion? (John 12:14-16)
He fulfilled a prophecy from Zech 9:9. He came humbly on a donkey’s colt, not to save the Jews from the Romans but to humbly surrender His life in order to save us from our sins; as the prophecy declares.

Seeking Jesus (John 12:20-26)

What question did some Greeks ask Jesus’ disciples? What was their desire? (John 12:20-22)
They had come for the Passover, but they also were wanting to see Jesus. They were **seeking** Jesus.

What is so good about seeking Jesus? (cf. Jer 29:13)

The promise is that those who seek the Lord will find Him - and will find life; for in Him is life.

Jesus used this situation of some Greeks seeking Him to give some very important teaching. What did He tell His disciples in John 12:23? What did He mean by this?

Jesus was about to be glorified; that is, he was about to die in our place to save us from sin and judgment. We may think the resurrection and the ascension was when He was glorified; but in His death He was glorified too. All heaven praises Jesus continually for being “the Lamb that was slain”.

Read John 12:24. What is Jesus teaching us here? What is He referring to? (cf. Isa 53:10-11)

Jesus gives a little parable – unless a grain of wheat is buried in the soil it can’t bear a crop. In the same way, Jesus knew that unless He died for us, He could not bring about the fruit of eternal life – for those of us who love Him and trust in Him.

What Jesus did, in not holding onto His life, is a picture for us too. In what way? (John 12:25)

When we come to Jesus and die to sin and self and society, not only are we saved, but our life will bear much fruit too – spiritual fruit for God’s glory and the fruit of eternal life (cf. Matt 16:24-25).

Seeking to Glorify God (John 12:27-30)

Read John 12:27. What state was Jesus in? Why? (cf. Luke 22:39-44)

Jesus was troubled. We see how troubled He was particularly in the Garden of Gethsemane (four days later). We believe Jesus was troubled, not because of physical death and the pain He would endure, but because He would bear God’s wrath and punishment for our sins and be separated from His Father.

What was Jesus’ resolve as He approached the cross, despite being troubled? (John 12:27-28a)

His resolve wasn’t to ask the Father to save Him from the cross. He knew that He had come for this very purpose – more than the teaching and the miracles, He had come to die to save us. As a result, He cried out in prayer “Father, glorify Your name”. His desire was to glorify God through His sacrificial death.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, it appears that Jesus did ask the Father to save Him from the cross.

How are we to understand this, in the light of John 12:27? (cf. Mark 14:35-36)

What trouble seized Jesus the very night He was arrested. This “trouble” must have been mounting since His entry into Jerusalem. Although He did ask to be saved from the cross (“remove this cup”), His resolve was still strong to submit to God’s will, even if it meant facing His Father’s wrath as He bore our sin.

What was the Father’s response to Jesus’ prayer “Father, glorify Your name”? (John 12:28-29)

There was an immediate audible response from the Father from heaven – how awesome and how rare. It shows us how close the Father was to the Son, with His immediate response to glorify His name again.

What did the Father mean by His words?

In Jesus’ life, every word and miracle and action had glorified the Father. The Father was now about to glorify His name again through His obedient Son dying as our substitute and sacrifice, and rising again.

The crowd was confused about the heavenly voice. Why did God speak? (John 12:29-30)

Even though the Father’s voice would have been so encouraging and reassuring for Jesus’ troubled heart, Jesus said these words of the Father were for the sake of the people - that they might understand Jesus’ connection to the Father and what He was about to do for us – die on a cross.

Summary: Let us seek Jesus; and let us seek to glorify God (even if we are troubled – like Jesus was).

33. Jesus' Words on the Cross and His Closing Words (John 12:30-50)

Aim: To consider Jesus words on the cross and His closing words before the Last Supper.

Recap of John 12:20-30

What should every human do? Why? (John 12:20-21)

We should seek Jesus – for if we seek Him we will find Him (cf. Jer 29:13). He is the Light and the Life.

What should our heart's desire be according to John 12:27-28a - which is seen in Jesus?

We should seek to glorify God's name – even if our heart is troubled.

The Cross and our Choice (John 12:30-43)

After the crowd heard God's audible words to Jesus, what did Jesus point out? (John 12:28-30)

The words from the Father were for the sake of the people - that they might know that Jesus is God's Son.

After God spoke from heaven, Jesus taught some important truths in relation to His death on the cross. What judgment would fall when Jesus died? (John 12:31)

Judgment would fall on the people of the world – for condemning Jesus to death and for not believing in Him. That judgment continues today as people reject Jesus – they stand condemned before God. But Satan would also be judged and condemned. He would be cast out of heaven (cf. Col 2:13-15; Rev 12:7-9).

Not only would the cross bring judgment, but what else did Jesus teach in John 12:32-33?

Jesus revealed how He would die. He wouldn't be stoned or beheaded, but He would be lifted up – ie, be crucified. Also, in His very public crucifixion, He would draw people to Himself for salvation. Today, the cross and the message of Him being "lifted up" for us, continues to draw people to Jesus for salvation.

After the Father's voice and Christ's teaching, how did the crowd respond? (John 12:34)

Instead of believing in Jesus, they continued to question Him. They didn't believe He was the Christ. Yet, they also were perplexed from their understanding of the Scriptures in regard to the Messiah.

Nearing the end of His earthly ministry, what did Jesus challenge the crowd with? (John 12:35-36)

He appealed to the crowd to believe in Him – for He, the Messiah, was the light of the world (John 8:12). This was their opportunity to believe while He was still with them; to come out of spiritual darkness and lostness, into the glorious light and salvation of Christ.

What sad conclusion did John come to as he wrote his Gospel? (John 12:37)

Despite Jesus performing extraordinary miracles, that pointed to Him being the Messiah, the Son of God, and despite His teaching and how He fulfilled prophecy, most did not believe in Him. It is the same today – with more evidence of a Creator God, and with more prophecies being fulfilled, most don't believe.

But the Jews' unbelief was not unexpected. What do we read in John 12:38-41?

The prophet Isaiah beheld the days of Christ, and His rejection by the Jews. What happened fulfilled prophecy. The disciple John saw this too and wrote about it – both here and in John 1:11.

The prophecy quoted in John 12:40 can be difficult. How should we understand it?

God desires all people to be saved (2 Pet 3:9), but if we continue to reject Jesus, God can and will leave us in that state; blind to the truth and hardened in our hearts. We should never test the limits of God's patience.

Despite the prevailing unbelief, what did John assure his readers of? (John 12:42-43)

Many did believe in Jesus, including some Jewish rulers (like Nicodemus), but they didn't openly confess Him because of fear and because they sought human approval rather than God's approval. Cf. *Do you openly confess your faith in Jesus to others? Are you fearful? Whose approval do you seek? (cf. Mark 8:38).*

The Closing Words of the Christ (John 12:44-50)

What was most important to Jesus as He closed His public earthly ministry? (John 12:44-46)

He wanted to encourage those who had put their faith in Him. In believing in Him, they were also believing in the true God who had sent Him. They were also blessed to be in the light; not in the darkness.

Jesus also gave a strong challenge. Who was it to? What did Jesus warn them of? (John 12:47-48)

Jesus addressed those who had not believed in Him – they would be judged for rejecting Him. NB: Jesus didn't come to judge, but to save. In the end, the words of truth Jesus spoke would judge them.

Why should we receive and not reject Jesus' words? (John 12:49-50)

Everything Jesus spoke was the truth and it was from God. In effect, it was God the Father who was speaking to us through His Son (cf. Heb 1:1-2). When we reject Jesus' words, we are rejecting God.

Summary: Let us believe in Jesus – every word He spoke was truth; and he was "lifted up" to save us.

34. Jesus' Love and Cleansing and Serving (John 13:1-20)

Aim: To consider Jesus' love for His followers and how He served them; setting an example for us.

Recap of John 12:30-50

What sad conclusion do we read in John 12:37-40 as Jesus' earthly ministry came to a close?

Most Jewish people (according to prophecy) did not believe in Jesus – despite all that He did and taught.

What can we be sure about in regard to all that Jesus taught? (John 12:49-50)

Everything He said was from the Father – He spoke words of truth and words of life continually.

The Loving Christ (John 13:1-4)

We now come to the "last supper" - the last meal Jesus had with His disciples before He was arrested and crucified. When did this happen? What was so special? (Matt 26:17-19; John 13:1)

The Last Supper was on the first evening of the 7-day feast of unleavened bread; that first meal being the "Passover". At this meal Jesus' disciples celebrated God's deliverance of His people Israel from Egypt, and the shedding of the blood of a lamb so that the angel of death "passed over" their homes. The next day, Jesus would die to deliver us from sin and satan. Jesus is our Passover Lamb (1 Cor 5:7).

As Jesus and the disciples celebrated the Passover, what do we see in Jesus' heart? (John 13:1)

We see His love for His disciples. He had loved them and cared for them – and He would continue to do that to the end. What a love! Even though Jesus would be abandoned by His disciples in His time of need.

What do we learn in John 13:2, 11? (cf. Matt 26:13-16)

Judas had already agreed, even before the Last Supper occurred, to betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. There he was, at the Supper dining with the others, with no disciple knowing this. But Jesus knew.

What is one thing that enabled Jesus to "love to the end"? (John 13:3-4)

He knew who He was, God's beloved Son and the heir of all things, and He knew where He had come from and where He was going. This enabled Jesus to be free of worry and concern, and to be selfless and giving. We will also be able to live like Jesus when we are secure in our relationship with God.

The Cleansing Christ (John 13:5-11)

Read John 13:5. How did Jesus practically love His disciples? What's so surprising?

It was so surprising that Jesus washed the feet of His disciples – something that a servant or attendant would do. Their Lord and King washed their feet! And how surprising that He washed their feet, the feet of Judas, the feet of Peter, the feet of all them, in the light of how they would treat Him and turn away.

Which disciple protested to Jesus washing his feet? Why do you think he said this? (John 13:6-8a)

It was Peter who protested. He didn't want Jesus to wash His feet because it wasn't right. Jesus was the Lord. He also felt unworthy for Jesus to do such a thing. Peter was aware of his sinfulness (cf. Luke 5:8).

Jesus used Peter's protest to teach something very important. What was it? (John 13:8-11)

Those who come to Christ, like Peter did, are washed clean of all their sins (past, present and future). We will not be judged. We are saved and free from condemnation (Rom 8:1). The picture for this is having our body "bathed". But we have a need to "have our feet washed"; that is, to confess our sins to God daily through Christ, not for salvation, but for maintaining our fellowship with God (cf. 1 John 1:5-9).

What is so lovely about Peter's response in John 13:9?

Peter wanted Jesus so much – to never part from Him; so he asked Jesus to wash him whole.

The Serving Christ (John 13:12-20)

What important object lesson did Jesus set before His disciples? (John 13:12-15)

As Christ's followers, we are to serve one another. We are to serve one another, no matter what our perceived status in Christ's church is. We are to serve one another by doing lowly tasks. We are to serve because of love; love for each other and love for Christ - by serving His saved and cherished children.

Read John 13:16-17. How did Jesus encourage His disciples to serve?

We are blessed if we would serve one another; if we would follow our Captain and Commander and do what He did. Jesus' whole life was service and blessing – even at the cross (cf. Mark 10:45; Phil 2:6-8).

What do we learn from Jesus in John 13:18-20?

Judas' betrayal was foretold. He was never a true disciple, and therefore, he would never serve. If we are Christ's chosen people, then we will serve, believe in Jesus, and do things that God will reward us for.

Summary: Let us love Christ and serve as He did – loving and serving Christians humbly.

35. Jesus Knows & Loves us, and His Great Command (John 13:21-38)

Aim: To consider how Jesus knows and loves us, and to consider His greatest command to us followers.

Recap of John 13:1-20

In His time of great need, what enabled Jesus to selflessly love His disciples? (John 13:3-4)

Jesus knew who He was and where He was going. This enabled Him to be selfless and loving.

What two things did Jesus teach His disciples by washing their feet? (John 13:10, 14)

We are to daily confess our sins to maintain fellowship with God, and we are to serve each other in love.

Jesus knew what Judas would do (John 13:21-30)

Read John 13:10-11, 13:18, 13:21. What did Jesus know? How did He feel? Why?

He knew that Judas, one of His own disciples, would betray Him. He had known this from the beginning (cf. John 6:70-71), and that this had been prophesied. Even so, what Judas would do still affected Jesus. He was troubled by it because He cared for Judas (for He loves us); troubled that Judas would betray him and perish.

Even though Jesus knew what Judas would do, what about the disciples? (John 13:22)

They were completely in shock after hearing Jesus say that one of them would betray Him. They had not suspected at all that Judas wasn't a true follower of Christ. NB: people can be so deceptive.

Read John 13:23-26. Which disciple asked Jesus who the betrayer was? How did Jesus reveal this?

It was John who learnt who the betrayer was. He humbly referred to himself as “the disciple whom Jesus loved”. And what a way Jesus revealed the betrayer – by giving Judas a portion of food.

The moment Judas took the portion of food, what happened? What does this indicate? (John 13:27)

After Judas took the portion of food from Jesus, Satan entered him - he became possessed by the devil. Before that, Satan could only “plant” the thought of betraying Jesus into his mind (John 13:2). NB: Judas' possession by Satan was controlled by Jesus – for our Lord Jesus rules over all things – even over Satan.

Read John 13:28-29. What do we discover in these verses?

Only the disciple John knew what Judas was about to do – all because Jesus had revealed this to him. The other disciples thought that Jesus had asked Judas to do something; as he looked after the money box. How wrong they were – and so often we are as well, unless we have Jesus' wisdom and discernment.

What striking word is used to describe Judas getting up and leaving the disciples? (John 13:30)

“It was night”; for darkness filled his soul as Satan entered into him. Sadly, Judas had failed to come to the Light, even to Jesus, so now darkness filled him (cf. John 12:35-36).

Jesus gives the Greatest Commandment (John 13:31-35)

Read John 13:31-32. The subject of “glory” comes up again (cf. John 12:27-28). Why?

Despite Judas going out to betray Him, Jesus was consumed with one thing – not personal hurt, but the glory of God. His imminent death on a cross was for our salvation and for God's glory; and that mattered most to Jesus. By dying for us, God would be glorified through Jesus, and God would glorify Jesus.

In John 13:33 what was Jesus seeking to do?

He was seeking to prepare His disciples with the reality that He would not be with them – what care!

During the Last Supper Jesus gave His disciples the greatest command. What was it? (John 13:34)

It was for us to love one another just as Christ loved us (ie, sacrificially & unconditionally). We are to love all people as we love ourselves (Mark 12:31); but we are to love fellow believers at a higher level. We are to love one another as Christ has loved us.

What is the outcome when Christians love each other as Christ loved us? (John 13:35)

Non-believers will know that we are a true disciple of Christ – love would be our distinguishing feature.

Jesus knew what Peter would do (John 13:36-38)

Read John 13:36-37. What did Peter declare before all the disciples? (cf. also Matt 26:31-33)

Peter believed he would never fall away from Jesus. He was prepared to lay down his life for Him.

But what did Jesus know, with such accuracy, in regard to what Peter would do? (John 13:38)

Jesus knew Peter would fall away, and for fear of his life, he would deny Jesus three times – and that a rooster would crow after the third time. This is exactly what happened (John 18:25-27).

Although Jesus knows all about our falls and failures, what can we be sure of? (John 13:1)

Jesus will love every true follower of His unconditionally; even to the end and into eternity (Rev 1:5).

Summary: Christ knows us and will always love us; and we are to love one another with His love.

36. Jesus is the Way to the Father & to Know the Father (John 14:1-11)

Aim: To consider how Jesus is the only way to God the Father, and through Him we can know the Father.

Recap of John 13:21-38

What great commandment did Jesus give? What would living this out result in? (John 13:34-35)

We are to love fellow believers the way Christ loves us; sacrificially and unconditionally. This unique and deep love for each other would distinguish us to be a true disciple of Jesus.

Jesus knew Peter would deny Him. But what could Peter (and we) be sure of? (John 13:36-38)

Jesus would not stop loving Peter, despite him denying Jesus three times and deserting Him (cf. John 13:36b, John 13:1). When we are Christ's, we are loved eternally; despite our falls and failings.

The Way to the Father (John 14:1-6)

Humans can be troubled by many things. What can give us a settled heart? (John 14:1)

Trust in God our Father and in Jesus causes our hearts to be settled; rather than troubled (cf. Psalms 62:1-2).

In what way was Jesus setting an example for His disciples (and us)? (cf. the setting of John 14:1)

Jesus was troubled by the cross (John 12:27). Yet, He trusted in His Father. As a result, He was settled – settled to love His disciples to the end (John 13:1), and to encourage them with certain hope (John 14:1).

In the most troubling thing of all, facing death, why don't we need to be troubled? (John 14:2)

If we have turned to Jesus and are trusting in Him, then we have an eternal place to go to in the next life; a place in the Father's house, which is being prepared by Jesus Himself. How good is that!

When we die now, we go to be with the Lord (2 Cor 5:8; Phil 1:21-23). What then, is Jesus referring to when He speaks of "My Father's house"? (cf. Rev 21:1-4)

He is most probably referring to the "New Jerusalem" on the New Earth in the age to come. With glorious resurrected and eternal bodies, we will live in this city – with our Father and our Lord Jesus. This is what Jesus is preparing for us by His awesome creative power; the same power that created the first Creation.

What other special truth do we read about in John 14:3?

Even though He hadn't died and been raised up yet, Jesus knew He would come back again. On that day, we will have our bodies changed or raised up, and we will forever be with the Lord (1 Thess 4:16-17).

In John 14:4-5 what do we see? Can you relate to the disciples?

The disciples did not understand what Jesus was sharing. How often we can be the same.

In one of the greatest "I AM" statements of Jesus, what did Jesus affirm? (John 14:6)

Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. He is the way to God and heaven, He is the truth in regard to understanding life and knowing God, and He is the life – the giver of eternal and abundant life. No one can ever enter heaven or ever know God except through Jesus.

Jesus' statement of no one coming to the Father except through Him was conditional on what?

It was conditional on Him going to the cross and bearing the punishment of our sins, and rising again on the third day, so that we could be forgiven and saved from judgment – if we put our faith in Him.

Many people of the world view Jesus' declaration in John 14:6 as Him being arrogant; for it implies that all other religions and religious leaders cannot bring us to God. Why isn't He arrogant?

Only He is God's Son; only He came from heaven and became human to lift us up to God; only He died in our place bearing the penalty for our sins so that we could be forgiven; only He was resurrected from the dead.

Knowing the Father (John 14:7-11)

Read John 14:7-9. What awesome truth did Jesus share with His disciples? What did He mean?

If we know Jesus, we know the Father; when we see Jesus (for us, it is by faith), we see the Father. Jesus isn't the Father, but He is exactly the same as the Father (cf. Heb 1:3). He is God and bears God's character perfectly and precisely. He is divine (cf. John 1:1) and one with the Father (cf. John 10:30).

In John 14:10-11 what reason does Jesus give as to why He is the same as the Father?

The Father and Jesus co-habit together; the Father in Him and He in the Father. Every work Jesus did and every word He spoke was from and with the Father.

Through Christ and His Spirit, what blessing can we experience and know? (cf. John 14:20; 15:4)

We can experience God dwelling in us, and us being in God; this is what Jesus came to bring about through His atoning death and awesome resurrection for us sinners. This is fullness of life! (cf. John 10:10).

Summary: Christ is the only way to the Father, and through Him we can know the Father personally.

37. Love for Christ and the Promise of the Holy Spirit (John 14:12-24)

Aim: To look at what it means to love Christ and to consider Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit.

Recap of John 14:1-11

What most important declaration did Jesus make about Himself in John 14:6? Why could He?

Jesus is the Son of God. Because of who He is, He is the truth and the life. Because of what He would do for us, dying on the cross and rising from the dead, He is the only Way to God – only if we believe in Him.

Why could Jesus say "He who has seen Me has seen the Father"? (John 14:9-11)

Jesus is exactly the same as the Father (Heb 1:3), and everything He said and everything He did was the result of Him being in the Father, and the Father being in Him. The Father and Jesus are one (John 10:30).

Love for Christ (John 14:12-15)

Jesus performed amazing miracles as God's Son. What did He mean by His words in John 14:12?

Believers in Jesus would be able to do great works as Jesus, and even greater works - through His Spirit. The apostles demonstrated this, as seen in the book of Acts. But it wasn't just restricted to them.

What is the greatest work of all that we can be involved in?

It is the saving of a soul through living out and declaring the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is truly an awesome miracle when a spiritually dead person is made alive; when they are born again.

Read John 14:13-14. In what way are we to be involved in doing "great works" for Jesus?

It's not by any power or authority residing in us – it's by asking the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. If it's God's will (cf. 1 John 5:14-15), and for His glory, then God is pleased to do what we ask.

One of the greatest things we can do is to love Christ. How are we to show our love for Christ?

What does Jesus recognise as love for Him? (John 14:15)

It's not telling Jesus how much we love Him or singing worship songs passionately. It's listening to Jesus and obeying His word – this is how we love Christ. This is the way Jesus loved the Father (John 15:10).

The Promise of the Spirit (John 14:16-24)

Jesus would soon be going home to heaven; after His atoning death and awesome resurrection.

Who did He promise to send? What would He do? (John 14:16-17)

He promised the Holy Spirit; whom He sent after His ascension into heaven (John 16:7; Acts 1:4-5). He would be our "helper" (the Greek word is *paraklytos* – one called alongside to help). He would be the Spirit of Truth – leading us into truth (John 16:13). He would remain (abide) in us and be with us forever.

How is the coming of the Spirit through Jesus different to how the Spirit was given in the OT?

In the OT, the Spirit only came on certain individuals (eg, prophets of God). He would come and go. But under the new covenant, through Jesus, He would come upon every believer and be with them forever.

What's one of the great blessings of having the Holy Spirit? (John 14:18)

Even though Jesus went home to heaven, we are not alone. We are not orphans – "abandoned" children of God. The Father and the Son are with us by the Spirit; abiding with us and in us.

What great truth did Jesus share with His disciples in John 14:19?

After His atoning death, Jesus would be resurrected, and He would reveal Himself to His disciples – helping them to know He was truly alive (cf. Acts 1:3). They would see Him. Also, because Jesus came alive forevermore, through His resurrection power, we would also live – forever (cf. John 11:25-26).

What would the resurrection convince the disciples of? (John 14:20)

They would be convinced of Jesus' true identity (cf. Rom 1:4), and that He came from the Father and was in the Father; and in the same way, we can be in Him and He in us.

Who is a true follower of Jesus? What is the promise given to every true follower? (John 14:21)

A true follower follows Jesus – they listen to His words and keep His commands. These are they that truly love Jesus. Such ones are loved by the Father, and Jesus promises to reveal Himself to them.

Read John 14:22-23. Through a question from one of Jesus' disciples, what does Jesus affirm?

Those who love Jesus and keep His word (His commandments), will be loved by the Father, and God (the Father and the Son) will make their home in our being – this is through the Spirit.

The final word from Jesus is a warning -what is it? (John 14:24)

If we don't keep (or obey) Jesus' words, we don't love Christ, and we will not have God abiding in us.

Summary: We show our love for Christ by obeying Him; and Jesus promised us His Holy Spirit.

38. The Blessings of Christ's Spirit's & Abiding in Christ (John 14:25-15:11)

Aim: To look at the blessings of the Spirit and the importance of abiding in (remaining with) Christ.

Recap of John 14:12-24

How do we best show our love for Christ? (John 14:15)

We best show our love for Christ by listening to Jesus, and keeping/obeying His commands.

What promises did Jesus give, that would come about after His ascension? (John 14:16, 18, 21, 23)
Jesus would not leave us as orphans; He would send His Spirit to be with us forever.

The Blessings of the Spirit (John 14:25-31)

Read John 14:25-26. What do we learn about the Spirit's coming? (cf. also Acts 1:4-5)

The Father promised two greatest gifts; the gift of His Son to save us and the gift of the Spirit to give us life. After Jesus' ascension, the Father sent the promised Spirit into believer's hearts in the name of Jesus.

What would the coming of the Spirit result in, according to John 14:26?

Besides being our Helper and Comforter and Advocate (the meaning of the Greek word *paraklytos*), the Holy Spirit would teach us and remind us of all that Jesus taught us (cf. also John 16:13 and 1 John 2:27).

Connected to the Spirit, what glorious promise did Jesus give us? (John 14:27; Phil 4:6-7)

Jesus would give us peace; even as we live in a troubled world. This peace surpasses comprehension (Phil 4:7) and is not dependent on our circumstances. We receive this peace through trusting in Christ (by praying – Phil 4:6-7) and relying on His Spirit (peace is part of the fruit of the Spirit - Gal 5:22-23).

In John 14:28 how does Jesus prepare His followers for His ascension?

Jesus would be going back to heaven, but He would come to us through His Spirit abiding in us. We should be delighted that Jesus went home to be with the Father, for from the Father's side He would send the Spirit and He would intercede for us (Rom 8:34) and would prepare a place for us (John 14:2-3).

Jesus said in John 14:28 that the "Father is greater than I". What did He mean?

Even though Jesus is God (John 1:1), and one with the Father (John 10:30), the Father is still greater than Jesus in elevation and position. This is why Jesus lovingly submits to Him (cf. 1 Cor 15:28).

In John 14:29-31, what does Jesus reveal?

Jesus was explaining what was about to happen, so that when it was fulfilled it would help us to believe that He is the Son of God. He also wanted us to know that Satan had no power over Him, not even in His death, and that He has and always will love the Father – doing His will unto death. What a testimony!

The Blessings of Abiding in Christ (John 15:1-11)

In John 15, Jesus gives us a most helpful picture. If we are likened to a vine branch, how should we view God our Father and the Lord Jesus Himself? (John 15:1-2)

Jesus is the vine (the main life-giving trunk) giving sustenance to the vine branches (us), and the Father is the vinedresser (gardener), removing unfruitful branches (those not connected to Jesus) and pruning the fruitful branches (those who are connected to Jesus) to make them more fruitful.

Read John 15:2-3. How are we to understand the last part of v.2 and v.3?

A Christian has already been "cleaned" by believing in God's Word and trusting in God's Son; we are forgiven and are clean before God through Jesus. But we continue to need regular "pruning", having worldliness and ungodliness removed, so that we might remain in fellowship with God and bear fruit.

What absolutely critical truth about the Christian life does Jesus share with us in John 15:4-5?

We must continue to abide in (remain in/cling to) Jesus, for we only have spiritual life and bear fruit for God's glory when we are connected to Him. Without Him we cannot do anything useful and glorifying.

How do we abide in Christ and what's the evidence for it? (John 15:7-8)?

"Abiding" in Christ is where we are in fellowship with Him, through reading God's Word and prayer. The evidence of "abiding in Christ" is bearing spiritual fruit (good works & behaviours) that glorify God.

What identifies those who are false believers? What will happen to them? (John 15:6)

False believers do not abide in Christ. They are spiritually dead and barren. One day they will face hell.

How much does Christ love His followers? (John 15:9)

Just as the Father loves the Son, Jesus loves us – what an amazing truth. We are so loved! (cf. Rev 1:5)

Besides abiding in Christ, we're to abide (remain) in His love. How? What results? (John 15:10-11)

We do that by obeying Christ; just as He obeyed the Father and remained in His love. This brings joy!

Summary: We are so blessed having the Spirit; our obligation is to abide in Christ and His love.

39. Christ's Love and the Spirit's Help (John 15:12-27)

Aim: To consider Christ's love for His friends and the Spirit's help in a world that hates Christians.

Recap of John 14:25-15:11

What blessings come to us by having the Holy Spirit? (John 14:26-27)

The Holy Spirit would be our teacher, reminding us of Jesus' words; and He would also give us peace.

What picture and what command did Jesus give His followers in John 15:1-5?

The Father is the gardener, Jesus is the vine, and we are the branches. We must abide in (remain in, or be connected to) Jesus the vine – unless we do, we will not be able to bear spiritual fruit for God's glory.

Christ's Love (John 15:12-17)

Read John 13:34. What most important command does Jesus repeat in John 15:12 and 15:17?

We are to love one another (fellow believers) as Christ has loved us – sacrificially and unconditionally.

When we obey Jesus and love others as He loves us, what are we also doing? (John 14:15, 15:10)

We are loving Jesus – obeying His commands is how we express our love for Jesus.

In John 15:13 Jesus gives us the greatest expression of love. What is it? How did He show this?

The greatest expression of love is to lay down one's life for another – not haphazardly, but deliberately, in order to rescue or save another person's life. Jesus did this for us at the cross – dying for us to save us.

How does Jesus refer to those whom He would die for and who would follow Him? (John 15:13-14)

He calls us "friends". What an amazing term, considering that we were once God's enemies (Rom 5:10).

Christians are referred to as a "child of God" (1 John 3:1), a "servant of Christ" (Col 1:7), as well as "Christ's friend" (John 15:14). How are we to understand all these different terms?

In relation to our Father we are a dearly beloved child; in respect of us serving Christ our King, we are His servant. In terms of our relationship with Christ, we are His friend, and He is our brother (Heb 2:11).

Being a friend of Jesus, what blessings do we receive (besides His love)? (John 15:15)

As Christ's friends, we are blessed to know what God is doing; both now and into the future. God is pleased to reveal to us through the Spirit His awesome plans and purposes and our hope (cf. 1 Cor 2:9-10).

In John 15:16, what important purpose has God revealed to every follower of Jesus?

Our purpose is to bear fruit (spiritual fruit) for God's glory. That's done by abiding in Christ (John 15:4).

In declaring our purpose, what else did Jesus make known in the first part of John 15:16?

We didn't choose Jesus – He chose us. He chose us to be His friends, and in choosing us, He also appointed us to bear much fruit; or in the words of Eph 1:3-4 – to be holy and blameless.

The Spirit's Help (John 15:18-27)

In some of Jesus' last words before His arrest, what did He prepare us for? (John 15:18-19)

He prepared us for being hated by the people of this fallen world. Not everyone will hate us, but many will – all because we are not of this world but have been brought into Christ's kingdom (cf. Col 1:13-14).

Why will we be persecuted and hated? (John 15:18, 20-21)

The world persecuted and hated Jesus, and so we should not expect anything different. It will do the same to us as they did to our Master. The people of this world will do this because they don't know the Father and they don't recognise Jesus to be God's Son. They also are influenced by the devil (cf. Rev 12:17).

One reason why people hated Jesus is in John 15:22-24. What is it? Can we relate to this?

People hated Jesus because His presence and His teaching revealed sin (cf. John 3:19-20). We also can relate to this. Since Jesus lives in us, our life and our godly behaviour can make others feel uncomfortable and they can resent and even hate us. *Have you experienced this with family/friends [discuss]*

Hating Jesus is very serious. Why? (John 15:23)

It means we hate the Father and are not saved – no matter how religious we might appear (eg, Pharisees).

Jesus was hated, and that would have affected Him; but what truth comforted Him? (John 15:25).

It was prophesied that He would be hated without cause (Psa 69:4). God's Word comforts our soul.

Knowing what would happen to His followers, what encouragement did Jesus give in John 15:26-27?

The Holy Spirit would come and help us to stand firm against those who hate us and to testify about Christ – even before rulers and authorities (cf. Luke 12:11-12). Consider Peter and John in Acts 4:8-12.

Summary: We are loved as Christ's friends, and have Christ's Spirit when the world hates us.

40. The Spirit’s Work in our World (John 16:1-15)

Aim: To consider Christ’s comforting words in the face of trials, and the Spirit’s work and teaching.

Recap of John 15:12-27

What is the greatest act of love? What did Jesus do to express His love for us? (John 15:13)

The greatest act of love is to lay down one’s life for another – this is what Jesus did to save us from sin.

What did Jesus warn His disciples (and us) about in John 15:18-19?

We would be hated by the world for following Jesus; just as people hated and persecuted Jesus.

The Saviour’s Comforting Words (John 16:1-4)

Read John 16:1. Why did Jesus warn us that this fallen world will hate and persecute us?

Jesus warned us so that we would be forewarned and prepared – and not lose heart. Persecution can tempt us to turn away from following Christ; but Christ’s “heads-up” enables us to persevere (cf. Rev 13:10).

What other things did Jesus prepare His disciples (and us) for? (John 16:2-3)

Persecution from religious people would be our greatest challenge. Initially it was from Jewish people. Today there is severe persecution of Christians in India by Hindus, in the Middle East by Muslims, and in communist countries by religious atheists. People would justify killing us as a service to God – just as Jesus was put to death by the Jewish leaders who thought they were serving God (cf. Paul in Acts 22:3-5).

How did Jesus specifically comfort His disciples in John 16:4 about being hated and persecuted?

He protected them from persecution and hatred while He walked with them (cf. John 17:12). He even protected them from being seized in the Garden of Gethsemane (John 18:8). And now He told them what would happen so that they might not be surprised (cf. 1 Peter 4:12), and that they might trust His words.

The Spirit’s Work (John 16:5-11)

In John 14:16-26 Jesus gave us important teaching on the coming of the Holy Spirit, the “paraklytos”. What do we learn in John 16:5-7? Why was it better that Jesus went back to the Father? Although we might think it would have been better for Jesus to have remained here after His resurrection, it was better that He go back to the Father so that He could send us the Holy Spirit. Instead of Jesus being in one physical place and on the outside of us, the coming of the Spirit would allow Jesus to be in all of us.

Besides comforting us, what work would the Spirit do in our world? (John 16:8-11)

The Spirit would convict people – about sin, about Christ’s righteousness, and about God’s judgment.

Why is the Spirit’s work of conviction so critically important?

Without the Spirit’s work we could never be saved. We must be convicted of our sins; and the most serious one of not believing in Jesus. We must be convicted of Christ’s righteousness and that only His righteous life and atoning death can enable us to be saved. We must be convicted of God’s righteous judgment against the devil and all who will not believe in Jesus. The Spirit’s work enables us to turn to Jesus.

The Spirit’s Teaching (John 16:12-15)

Read John 16:12. What does Jesus graciously observe about His disciples? What can we learn?

He knew that the disciples had been “overloaded” with His teaching, and yet He had so much more to tell them. What a loving Saviour who knows our limits and how much we can handle.

Even though Jesus needed to “wind down” His teaching, what was He confident in? (John 16:13)

He was confident that when the Holy Spirit came, He would continue to be their teacher and lead them into all the truth. He would remind them of what Jesus had taught them (John 14:26), as well other things. We are so blessed to have the Spirit’s teachings through the apostles – as recorded in our New Testament.

Would the Holy Spirit just lead Jesus’ disciples “into all the truth”? (cf. 1 John 2:27)

We have also been anointed by the Holy Spirit. He is our teacher and leads us into all the truth as well.

Specifically, what do we learn from Jesus about the Holy Spirit’s teaching in John 16:13-14?

Just like Jesus only spoke the Father’s words, the Holy Spirit would only speak Jesus’ words. He would disclose the future, glorify Jesus, and what the Spirit reveals/discloses to us would be from Jesus.

Read John 16:15. What glorious truth do we see in this verse?

The Father and the Son are one. All that the Father has belongs to Jesus; including all truth & knowledge.

Summary: The Holy Spirit convicts us and brings us to Christ and blesses us with Christ’s words.

41. Through Jesus – Joy, Prayer Access, and Overcoming (John 16:16-33)

Aim: To consider, in Jesus, how we have joy in His victories, prayer access, and courage to overcome.

Recap of John 16:1-15

What would the coming of the Holy Spirit to our world bring about? Why? (John 16:8-11)

Conviction – conviction of sin, righteousness and judgment – in order to draw us to Christ for salvation.

What work would the Holy Spirit do in those who believed in Christ? (John 16:13-14)

He would guide them into all the truth, glorifying Jesus, and making known to us Christ's words.

Joy after Grief (John 16:16-22)

Read John 16:16-18. The disciples didn't understand His words. What do you think Jesus meant?

During His trial, crucifixion and burial, the disciples would barely see Jesus. But after a little while (three days) they would see Him again. How good to see the disciples not always getting things; just like us.

Jesus made clear what He meant in John 16:19-20. What does He emphasise?

They would weep and lament when they couldn't see Him, for Jesus knew that they would be greatly impacted by His trial and death. But afterwards, when He rose from the dead, their joy would abound.

What illustration did Jesus give them, to help them understand His words? (John 16:21-22)

He gave the illustration of a woman in labour pains. After the labour pains comes the joy of holding a new life, and the joy completely vanquishes the pain. So, this would be the disciples' experience too - a joy that would completely evaporate the pain and sorrow they previously experienced.

We may go through times of sorrow and pain; but what can we look forward to? (Psa 30:5)

We can look forward to the sorrow and pain passing and having joy. This is something we can experience now, but in a much greater way when we leave this life and are with the Lord in glory forever.

Praying to the Father (John 16:23-28)

In the next section of John 16 Jesus gives us important teaching on prayer. What do we learn in John 16:23-24? What are we promised?

Jesus, for the first time, introduces to us praying to God the Father in His name: "in Jesus' name". We are promised, by praying in His name, that the Father will grant our request so that our joy may be made full.

Are there any restrictions on this prayer promise? (cf. Psa 66:18; 1 John 5:14-15)

Yes! We must be clean of sin through repentance and confession, and it's subject to God's good will.

Read John 16:25-27. What does Jesus emphasise in regard to prayer?

We can pray directly to the Father. Jesus doesn't encourage us to pray to Him so that He can pass our request on to the Father. Through Jesus, in His name, we can approach God directly (cf. Heb 10:19-22).

Why is the Father pleased to hear us directly on the basis of Jesus' name?

It's because we have come to love Jesus and have come to believe that He came (and was sent) by God.

Read John 16:28. What do we learn about Jesus?

He had a perfect understanding of who He was, where He had come from and where He was going.

Overcoming the World (John 16:29-33)

In John 16:29-30 why did the disciples say what they did (ie, that Jesus knew all things)?

They responded like this because of Jesus' words in v.28. They could see that Jesus absolutely knew who He was, where He had come from and where He was going. This helped them to believe so much more.

What was Jesus' response to His disciples' words? (John 16:31)

He challenged them as to why they had taken so long to be absolutely sure about who He was. *Are you sure? What enables you to be completely confident that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God?*

Before His closing prayer (John 17) and His travail in the Garden of Gethsemane (John 18), what were Jesus' closing words about at the end of John 16? (John 16:32)

It was to let His disciples know that they would scatter and leave Him all alone; which they did when Jesus was arrested (because of fear). But He assured them that He was never alone; God was with Him.

In John 16:32-33 what important lessons did Jesus teach His disciples?

When we feel deserted, we are never alone; God is with us. Also, in our trials we are not to be troubled. We can overcome, like Jesus did, and have peace, because Jesus is greater than the world (1 John 4:4).

Summary: We will experience many trials. Through Christ we have joy, prayer and can overcome.

42. The Lord's High Priestly Prayer – part 1 (John 17:1-12)

Aim: To consider the first half of Jesus' prayer in John 17 – praying for God's glory and our protection.

Recap: *During the Last Supper, what key things did Jesus show us and teach us in John 13-16? [Discuss]* Setting us an example of love and service by washing the disciples' feet; commanding us to love one another as He loves us; preparing a place for us in the Father's house (our eternal home); seeing Jesus is seeing the Father; the coming of the Holy Spirit so that we won't be alone and the blessings we will experience; abiding in Jesus (He is the vine, we are the branches) to bear fruit; being hated by the world but helped by the Spirit; magnificent prayer promises and praying in Jesus' name.

God's Glory (John 17:1-5)

Read John 17:1. What do you notice about the way Jesus prayed?

Jesus lifted up His eyes to God the Father in heaven; His faith was like sight. May we have such faith too.

What was the first thing Jesus prayed for? What was uppermost in His mind? (John 17:1)

Jesus knew the hour had come for His death. He knew the Father would glorify Him in His death and resurrection. He wanted, more than anything, for His Father to be glorified through Him. As we pray and live life, God's glory is what we are meant to be focussed on above anything else (cf. 1 Cor 10:31).

NB: In His example prayer in Matt 6:9, what did Jesus teach us to pray first? – to glorify and honour God.

In John 17:2 what was Jesus so thankful for?

He was so thankful and appreciative, not only that His Father would glorify Him (despite the shame of the Cross), but that His Father had given Him the authority to grant eternal life to those whom God had given Him; ie, the ones who would come to Him to be saved through the drawing work of the Spirit (John 6:44).

According to Jesus, what is eternal life? (John 17:3)

It's being in relationship with the Father and our Lord Jesus. It's not about length of time or being in heaven. It's knowing God personally. Eternal life begins when we turn to Jesus and come to know God.

Read John 17:4-5. What is so beautiful in Jesus' prayer to His Father?

The Son's great desire throughout His life was to glorify the Father. As He approached the cross, His request was for He and His Father to be glorified together. Jesus even refers to the glory He had with the Father before He came to earth and before the world was made (what an awesome thing to think about!).

God's Protection (John 17:6-12)

Read John 17:6-8. In His prayer, what did Jesus say that He had done for His disciples?

He had made known to His disciples the name of God; that is, the character of God. Through faithfully sharing God's words with them, they had come to know Jesus' connection with the Father, and that Jesus had come from God and was even sent into the world by God. Jesus' Spirit does this same work for us.

How does Jesus describe a true follower of His? (John 17:6-8)

Every true follower of Christ first belonged to God the Father. We were His even when we weren't saved. We were His before the foundation of the world. And on that day we responded to Jesus and came to Him (true for Jesus' disciples and us) we become Jesus' – that is, the Father gives us to Christ (cf. John 6:37).

What special request did Jesus make for His disciples in John 17:9-11

With His imminent departure from this world, Jesus requested that the Father keep and protect His disciples for they would face opposition and persecution from the devil and this fallen world. He asked, that by God's all powerful name they would be kept.

What did Jesus mean by His disciples "being kept"?

He was asking that they be kept from falling away from the faith, from giving up, and from disunity and dissension (notice Jesus' emphasis on unity). This prayer was specific to His disciples, who would become the apostles and leaders in Christ's church. In John 17:13-17 Jesus prays the same things for us.

In John 17:9-10, what beautiful thing do we see Jesus sharing about He and His Father?

Everything the Father has belongs to Jesus and vice versa; including us. We belong to the Father and Son.

Read John 17:12. What did Jesus do while He walked this earth?

Jesus kept His disciples from harm and danger. They did not fall away, but were kept, and grew in their faith – except for one, Judas Iscariot, who was never a true disciple (his demise fulfilled prophecy). From heaven, Jesus keeps us. He will not lose any of us, if we are His (cf. John 6:37-40; Heb 7:25; 1 John 5:18).

Summary: Jesus prayed that He would glorify His Father and we would be protected. What a prayer!